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LSC 5505

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### Multi-Level Book Selection Project

#### **Booklist 1**

Grade: 4th

Curricular thematic unit: families

specific topic: divorce

Genre	Fiction
Citation	Wilson, Jacqueline. <i>The Suitcase Kid</i> . Illus. Ying-Hwa Hu. New York: Bantam, 1997. Print.
Annotation	This book is about a 10 year old girl experiencing the pains of her parents' divorce. As she goes through the changes of living for a week at each parent's house, Andy must learn to accept and come to terms with the new partners her parents have and their children. She looks at each situation realistically, humorously and honestly as she relies on a favorite stuffed toy to help her navigate these new waters.
Justification	This book was selected because the main character is someone most kids can relate to and identify with. Her name is Andy and she is at the preadolescent age where sex is not that important. I particularly liked the clever manner in which the book was written. Each chapter is the letter of the alphabet, representing an important noun in the main character's life. I felt as Weisman states that the book is "at turns, funny, sad, and poignant and sure to captivate fans." When I read how Andy goes into the bathroom for privacy and to read, it left a very sad impression. I could feel this girl's despair at not being able to read "every single story in the book box at school.....and now my own books are shoved in a cardboard box somewhere and I can't even get at them." Another strength is the main character has a very strong voice.

	Not only is the book a good read for children to understand the problems encountered with divorce and new families, but it can also serve as a mentor text for writing since it is easy to understand and written in the first person through a child's perspective.
Professional Review	I found this review in Children's Literature Reviews for <i>The Booklist</i> , Oct. 15, 1997, 94, 4; pg. 407. Reviewer Kay Weisman writes "When 10-year-old Andrea's parents divorce, she begins spending alternate weeks with each of them. Living out of a suitcase is tough, and her parents' new partners, two sets of obnoxious stepsiblings, and inconvenient bus routes to and from school further complicate her life. Looking for some peace and quiet, Andy and her stuffed rabbit, Radish, discover a yard near her school that has a mulberry tree like her former home. After Radish drops into a hole in the tree, Andy spends a frantic night searching for her treasured toy and finally meets the yard's elderly owners, who generously invite her to visit any time. Wilson's frank portrayal of the realities of shared custody will ring true for young readers, especially many who are experiencing its effects firsthand. Andrea's attempts to cope with her challenging life are, at turns, funny, sad, and poignant and sure to captivate fans of this genre. Category: Middle Readers. 1997, Delacorte, \$15.95. Gr. 4-6."

Genre	Fiction
Citation	Alvarez, Julia. <i>How Tia Lola Learned to Teach</i> . New York: Knopf, 2010. Print.
Annotation	This book is about an offbeat, unusual and unique Dominican aunt who is staying with her nephew and niece, who recently moved from NYC to Vermont. The non-English speaking aunt is prodded to teach Spanish at school. The children are going through many changes from a recent divorce, their father leaving and living far away with his girlfriend and moving to a new and mostly white neighborhood.
Justification	I selected this book since it writes about diverse characters. I am a strong believer in having a wide range of books that appeal to various ethnic groups. This book enlightens readers about the Spanish culture and the difficulty of assimilating in the US, especially in the school setting. At the same time, the reader can understand the protagonist's frustration in dealing with the loss of his father in the household. This was one of the few books that dealt with a young male's perspective, which is important for children to be aware of. In addition, children of Dominican or Spanish descent will relate to this book and identify with many cultural elements the writer astutely includes. Similarly to the

	<p>reviewer, I also found many playful takes on language throughout the book. “Is that like every cloud has a silver lining?” Juanita wants to know. Tia Lola looks surprised. “I had no idea that clouds had silver in them.” This must be science she never learned because she never went past fourth grade. So Miguel and Juanita have to explain. It’s a saying, just like the ones she had been teaching them in Spanish.”</p>
Professional Review	<p>This was found in Children’s Literature Reviews. <i>The Booklist</i> reviews it in its publication dated Dec. 1, 2010, 107, 7, pg. 60.</p> <p><b>“How Tía Lola Learned to Teach. By Julia Alvarez.</b></p> <p>2010. 144p. Knopf, \$15.99 (9780375864605); lib.ed., \$18.99 (9780375964602). Gr. 4–7. Just as warm and upbeat as <i>How Tía Lola Came to (Visit) Stay</i> (2001), the second book about Miguel and Juanita’s aunt, who comes from the Dominican Republic to live with the kids’ family in Vermont, is written in the same lively, playful style. Language is a central focus as Tia Lola volunteers to teach Spanish in the local elementary school. The story builds to a tense climax when her visa is about to expire, and the whole town rallies for her to stay. Readers will enjoy both the messages and the humor in Tía’s wry, wise sayings.”</p>

Genre	Poetry
Citation	<p>Worthen, Tom, PhD, comp. <i>broken hearts .....healing</i>. Utah: Poet Tree, 2001. Print.</p>
Annotation	<p>This book has poems written by children for children on the painful subject of divorce. This is a must read as it relates the fear, pain, anger, isolation, rejection and other wide range of emotions children experience throughout the divorce process.</p>
Justification	<p>I selected this book since it was written by various children authors. Who else could best understand the emotional onslaught that children experience when going through such a difficult stage as their family structure and life as they know it changes? In addition, it is important to include a different genre as it permits students choice in reading selection. The book succinctly zeroes in on the child’s perspective on a sensitive and difficult subject. I particularly like the fact that the authors are from a wide range of ages and states across the U.S. In addition, poem subjects vary from two homes to whose fault it is and being caught in the middle of divorce. As reviewer Carter states, “the feelings expressed always are real.” This is illustrated in the poem <i>Why Do the Kids Pay?</i> “Is it my fault? Did I do something wrong? / ‘Cause I don’t see what I did to ruin a father-daughter bond. / I try to hold back and fight the pain, / But how is a 12 year old suppose to do that and stay sane? / I hope to see you again some day / so you can answer my</p>

	question: in divorce why do parents pay? “
Professional Review	<p>Children’s Literature Reviews had this <i>Voice of Youth Advocates’</i> review by Kim Carter dated Oct. 2001, Vol. 24, 4. “A compilation of work from young poets aged nine through eighteen, this collection was inspired by the editor’s own children, who “felt they were the only kids at their school whose parents were divorced.” Free verse as well as rhymed couplets testify to the range of emotions and the lasting effects divorce creates. “Before I was perfect / you were always around / but now that I am not / you can never be found.” The quality of the poems also runs the gamut, from truly inspired to mundane, but the feelings expressed always are real: “An arrow piercing the heart as / Two angels descend into the fiery pits of hell / changing so many lives forever--/ With me. / Watching it all.” “Divorces aren’t good / Kids don’t like them / There are broken hearts / that sometimes don’t heal.” Anger, loneliness, fear, abandonment, and confusion all are interwoven, with love being the one constant as children process the loss of the family they once knew, the mystery of the parent they never know, and the confusion of the new families they are struggling to understand. This reviewer’s fourteen-year-old son, not one for poetry, nonetheless found his own favorite in the book’s first poem by eleven-year-old Chloe from Texas: “Divorce to me is / pain and agony / but mostly sadness. / Divorce is / crying and / separation / and people lost / from view. / Divorce to me is / like being on a / drug until / reality comes / to hurt and / haunt you / forever. / Divorce is knowing / life will go on, / but without being / the same ever again.” The premise and the power of this collection is recognition of the power of knowing that one is not alone, one can be heard, \$14.95 Trade pb. Illus. VOYA CODES: 3Q 3P M J (Readable without serious defects; Will appeal with pushing; Middle School, defined as grades 6 to 8; Junior High, defined as grades 7 to 9). 2001, Poet Tree Press, 248p, \$26.95. Ages 11 to 15.”</p>

Genre	Fiction
Citation	Krishnaswami, Uma. <i>Naming Maya</i> . New York: Farrar Straus, 2004. Print.
Annotation	This book is about a young Indian girl who learns more about her heritage and parents’ divorce during a summer stay back home in India. Unfortunately, she uncovers the root of the divorce beginning from her name being chosen and she feels guilty.
Justification	I selected this book to add to the various cultures being represented in the other books on divorce. I want to make children aware that family problems do not discriminate by color, culture or creed. Many problems

	<p>students encounter and feel like they are all alone in are problems many children face all over the world from different walks of life. As a bonus, the book also highlights the fact that children of diversity sometimes feel isolated if they are not just like their peers. I strongly feel that students should learn at an early age that color is irrelevant and all people have feelings, emotions and experience painful situations through life's ups and downs. The author writes about the "difficulty of straddling two cultures" as best asserted by the reviewer when the main character states "It's funny...I'm America here, but in America, I'm Indian....a bunch of teenagers drove by and shouted at us. They called us dirty dotheads." The bulk of this book was set in India, which also provides a sense of geography for readers and a basic understanding into south Asian culture.</p>
Professional Review	<p>This recommendation was found in Children's Literature Reviews for <i>Voices of Youth Advocate</i>, June 2004, Vol. 27, No. 2 by Lora Morgaine Shinn. "Krishnaswami's entry into young adult literature is welcome for its lyrically sparse prose exploring rich matters of culture, family, and loss. Twelve-year-old Maya returns to India with her mother to sell the ancestral home. They are greeted at the doorstep by Kamala Mami, a housekeeper and nanny who inexplicably insists on staying with them. Maya is soon swept up in familial reunions and female bonding with a girl cousin, but tension between Maya and her mother concerning her father's desertion slowly builds throughout the novel. As Maya grows estranged from her mother, she rekindles a friendship with Mami, only to find that Mami holds secrets of her own. Maya's resolution lies in finding a way to let go of her anger, hurt, and preconceived ideas of others. Slowly simmering like a good masala, Krishnaswami's novel combines elements of American and Indian life through Maya's eyes. She carefully sprinkles Tamil words throughout the text and includes a glossary. Nevertheless she does not portray India as "exotic" for Maya, and global similarity is typified in an encounter with Maya, her cousin, and the cool girls--wearing tight jeans and black lipstick, naturally--down the block. Neither does she gloss over the difficulties of straddling dual cultures, equally depicting American-borne racism and India's economic and safety issues. This book is a welcome addition to an ever-growing collection of global young adult literature by diverse authors and is a recommended buy for public, middle school, and high school libraries. VOYA CODES: 4Q 3P J S (Better than most, marred only by occasional lapses; Will appeal with pushing; Junior High, defined as grades 7 to 9; Senior High, defined as grades 10 to 12). 2004, Farrar Straus Giroux, 192p.; Glossary., \$16. Ages 12 to 18."</p>

**Booklist 2**

Grade: 6th

Curricular/thematic area: Immigration

specific topic: Asian Americans

Genre	Fiction
Citation	Shea, Pegi Dietz. <i>Tangled Threads: A Hmong Girl's Story</i> . New York: Clarion, 2003. Print.
Annotation	This book is set in both Thailand and America. It offers in depth looks at the difficulty of assimilating and adjusting to American life from Asian culture. The 13 year old female protagonist must become a pillar of support for the grandmother who always gave her guidance, as both attempt to adjust to a western way of life while trying to preserve their culture and traditions.
Justification	This book was selected since it has a western and far eastern setting. I believe it provides students insights into the different ways of life and cultures. I like the fact that it focuses and exposes students to the Thai culture, since students often think of Asian as limited to Japanese, Chinese and Korean. This supports the reviewer's statement that it is an important book as it is the first to have a "Hmong protagonist." One of the books strengths is that the main character begins as an underdog, but slowly gains her courage and voice as she learns more about life. That is an important and powerful message for all teenage girls. "Life in her new country turns out harder than Mai expected." This can be seen in a scene when they quickly sell their embroidery crafts for below market value in America but above regular Thai prices. Mai reflects "I didn't want to show my face to anybody. In only ten days I'd made two huge mistakes about money. No one told me I'd need it so much in America." Further, there are many issues occurring with the main character that readers will be able to identify with such as trying to fit in as a teenager, cultural differences, and family relationships and roles.
Professional Review	This professional review was found in Children's Literature Reviews. Voices of Youth Advocates reviewer Michelle Levy writes in the December 2003 issue, volume 26, no. 5 "In what is essentially a sequel to her fine picture book <i>The Whispering Cloth: A Refugee's Story</i> (Boyd's Mills Press, 1995), Shea tells the tale of Mai Yang, a Hmong girl growing up under her grandmother's guidance in the grim Ban Vinai refugee camp on the Thai border. Mai, now thirteen, lost her parents to a North Vietnamese poison gas

	<p>attack and can barely remember life outside the camp. When word comes that she and her grandmother have been chosen to immigrate to the United States where she has family in Providence, Rhode Island, Mai is filled with joy. But life in her new country turns out to be harder than Mai expected. Even her cousins, now named Heather and Lisa, seem strange and at times hostile. Her grandmother, a strong support back in Thailand, is even more bewildered by life in their new home than Mai is. There have been many young adult novels about East and Southeast Asians adjusting to life in the West in recent years, but few as engaging as this one. Mai is a delightful protagonist, and Shea adeptly uses her first-person narrative to fully engage the reader in Mai's struggle to understand and be accepted. This book is also important because it is the first YA novel of any sort with a Hmong protagonist. Libraries with Hmong patrons should purchase multiple copies. The book is good enough to be enjoyed by any middle school student. VOYA CODES: 4Q 3P M J (Better than most, marred only by occasional lapses; Will appeal with pushing; Middle School, defined as grades 6 to 8; Junior High, defined as grades 7 to 9). 2003, Clarion, 240p., \$15. Ages 11 to 15."</p>
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Genre	Mostly fiction with bibliographical references.
Citation	Yep, Laurence and Kathleen. <i>The Dragon's Child: A Story of Angel Island</i> . New York: Harper, 2008. Print.
Annotation	This book is a fictional narrative based on actual family history and real conversations with the author and his father. It details the journey of the two from China into California as they navigate the immigration process at Angel Island and become reacquainted .
Justification	This book was selected because it has many important factual elements such as the admission and interview process at Angel Island. It is also based on actual conversations and documents a family's immigration history. I liked how the book documents the discrimination and prejudice against Chinese during a time when they were constructing the railroads and assisting in the development of the U.S. infrastructure. The strengths of this book are it is a fairly quick read and easily comprehensible for almost all 6 <sup>th</sup> grade students. It is a touching account

	of a father/son bond during trying times. In addition, the protagonist is dealing with a slight handicap, stuttering. I believe it is important for youths to be aware of handicaps and accepting and understanding of them.
Professional Review	I found this April 1, 2008, volume 104, number 15, Booklist review in the Children's Literature Reviews database. Reviewer Hazel Rochman writes "Yep's many fine books about the Chinese American experience include his Newbery Honor <i>Dragonwings</i> (1975). Now in a dramatic blend of fact and fiction, Laurence Yep and his niece draw on family stories, immigration records, and memories of Laurence's own conversations to tell his dad's story of coming to America at age 10 with his Chinese American dad. Each chapter begins with a simple question to his dad: Were you sad when you left your village? Were you nervous about America? The answers personalize the young immigrant's heart-wrenching leaving, the journey over, the racism, and climax of the rigorous interview at Angel Island, where Yep's father faces the threat of being refused entry to America. Tension builds and secrets are revealed as his father practices for the Test, tries not to act nervous, and hides his left-handedness and his stammer. With family photos, a historical note, and a long bibliography, this stirring narrative will spark readers' own search for roots. Grades 3-6"

Genre	Fiction
Citation	Budhos, Marina. <i>Ask Me No Questions</i> . New York: Simon, 2006. Print.
Annotation	This book is a fictional account of a Muslim family of illegal aliens. The main character's father is arrested as the family tries to maintain normalcy and remain united. Their future is unknown and they fear the possibility of returning to Bangladesh, a country they do not know.
Justification	This book was chosen because it told from a different perspective, that of an illegal alien. It is a firsthand, fictional account of a young Muslim girl as she struggles with discrimination and injustices in the U.S. as she tries to be responsible and strong for her family. The strengths of this book are that it is a different and refreshing story, the Muslim perspective after 9/11, not often told. The book also deals with everyday preteen problems, in addition to greater problems such as terrorism, immigration and politics. As the reviewer states "the complexity of this novel comes in the myriad of other conflicts." This

	provides an all encompassing background of awareness for your average 6 <sup>th</sup> grade readers and makes them thankful for the simple problems they may have.
Professional Review	<p>I found this Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books review in the Children’s Literature Reviews database. In the March 2006 issue, volume 59, no. 7, reviewer Hope Morrison writes “Fourteen-year-old Nadira’s family has been living illegally in the United States since she was seven; they, like many others, came on tourist visas from Bangladesh and never left. In the post-9/11 world, however, a new law requiring Muslim men to register with the government has led her family to journey to the Canadian border and plead for asylum. They are denied and, upon returning to the U.S. border crossing, her father is arrested and imprisoned. Budhos’ novel follows Nadira and her sister Aisha, who return to New York City and attempt to go about life as usual while their mother moves into a Vermont shelter to be near their father and help his cause. The complexity of this novel comes in the myriad other conflicts the two girls are dealing with in addition to their father’s imprisonment; in many ways, the novel reads like an exploration of different methods of coping, from the angry to the silent, from finding one’s voice to losing it. Much of the novel is devoted to exploring the tension between Nadira, an average, overweight, passive freshman, and eighteen-year-old Aisha, the seemingly perfect, overachieving valedictorian (“You’re on the road with your sister, and your father is in INS detention, and your ma is sleeping on a shelter cot, and you figure maybe the two of you have a lot to talk about. We don’t”). It is, in fact, Aisha’s own self-destruction that motivates Nadira to be more proactive, and this surge of activity unearths the information necessary to help get her father out of jail. Budhos has composed a compelling and thought-provoking contemporary examination of the human side of the law; further, in illustrating the secret burden that Nadira and Aisha carry with them to school each day as they pretend that nothing is the matter, she reminds readers to think differently about the people around them. Sure to elicit discussion, this novel would work very well for a teen book club selection. An endnote is included. Review Code: R -- Recommended. (c) Copyright 2006, The Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois. 2006, 'Seo/Atheneum', 162p, \$16.95. Grades 7-12.”</p>

Genre	Nonfiction
Citation	Cooper, Michael L. <i>Fighting for Honor: Japanese Americans and World War II</i> . New York: Clarion, 2000. Print.
Annotation	Directly after the Pearl Harbor attack, many Japanese Americans fought

	<p>in WW II to defend a country, America, that was discriminating against them and placing many Japanese Americans in internment camps. This book shows the Japanese American perspective from a factual point of view.</p>
Justification	<p>This book was selected because it is an upper level 6<sup>th</sup> grade read that can be considered for more advanced students. It includes pictures, propaganda, news archives and other relevant sources of nonfiction information that are supportive of the Common Core Standards. It is appealing to educators since it shows an uncensored look at the lives, living conditions, educational deprivation and lack of privacy in the camps. This supports the reviewer's claims that the Japanese were left in "dismal and poorly equip camps." This book is also appealing to students since it generates greater curiosity as to the different stages America and Americans have gone through in order to reach the state we are presently in. The ideas of loyalty, honor, courage and that "Americanism is a matter of mind and heart...not race" foster a great deal of critical thinking as to what is important. I included this book since it shows an honest account of the injustices our government has done to others that helped build this country. It is an important read for all Americans.</p>
Professional Review	<p>I found this nonfiction work in the Children's Literature Reviews. Janice M. Del Negro reviewed it for The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books, February 2001, volume 54, no. 6. She writes "Cooper relates the injustice done to Japanese residents of the United States sent to internment camps during World War II, and the subsequent efforts of their sons and daughters to prove their patriotism on the battlefields of World War II. The book starkly presents the rising war hysteria and the racism that led to the internment of a half-million Japanese in dismal and poorly equipped camps. The author leaves the camps to follow the young Japanese-American men who volunteered to fight in World War II. The combat training and military experiences of the two Japanese-American battalions, the 100th and 442nd, make up the bulk of this history. The first battalion to see action was the 100th, referred to as "the Purple Heart Battalion" because of the heavy casualties its men suffered; the 442nd became famous for finding a lost regiment trapped behind enemy lines. The author tells two parallel stories, juxtaposing the saga of the soldiers who gave their lives and limbs for their country with the tale of that country's treatment of the soldiers' families back home. Black-and-white period photographs make the featured individuals painfully real, quotes from internees and soldiers bring the shame close to home, and stories of horror and heroism under fire keep the pace moving. A chronology of events, detailed notes, a bibliography, and an index are included. Review Code: R -- Recommended. (c) Copyright 2001, The Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois. 2000, Clarion, 118p, \$16.00. Grades 5-8."</p>

**Promotional Tool**

Animoto:

<http://animoto.com/play/00qbZqSCH61XToa26SpfFw>

Book: broken hearts healing, young poets speak out on divorce

( I had difficulty and was unable to upload the music I really wanted.)