Activity 1: “Cultural Quilt”
Introductory/Language Arts Lesson
*Differentiated for Cultural Differences and Cognitive Readiness

Standard: Reading Applications: Literary Text
Benchmark: Demonstrate comprehension by inferring themes, patterns and symbols.
Grade Level Indicator: 1. Analyze the features of the setting and their importance in a
   text. 2. Identify recurring themes, patterns, and symbols found in literature from
   different eras and cultures.

Timeframe: (2) 50 minute class periods

Description of Activity: This activity will serve as the introductory lesson for the unit on
culture. The teacher will read Patricia Polacco’s “The Keeping Quilt” to introduce the
concept of the quilt as well as culture. After reading the story, students will be put into
pre-assigned groups to talk about the book and write down answers to both abstract and
concrete questions like “What things in the story would have changed if Anna’s family had
not immigrated to the US?”, “How did Anna’s family keep their family traditions alive?”,
“What might have been different if the family had not stayed in New York?”, “How would
things have been different for the family if Anna had not learned to speak English? If the
family had returned to Russia?”. The recorder of the group will write down answers on a
provided handout. Other tasks will be assigned such as a task manager, discussion leader,
etc. Students will discuss their own nationalities and decide on a symbol of their family
culture (such as a flag) and draw it on paper. The students will then transfer the design
onto fabric by cutting a square of fabric on top of their paper design and taping the two to
a window; therefore allowing them to trace the design onto the fabric. The students can
use paint to add color to the quilt, and once dry the teacher will sew the squares together
to create a classroom quilt. This will represent the students’ individuality, as well as how
their uniqueness comes together to create one single classroom. One student from each
group will report to the rest of the class the different cultures and symbols found in their
group. This will take approximately two periods. Students will also receive their first clue
to where the “taker of the key” has mysteriously disappeared to. The first clue is that the
thief has gone to a far off place where there is ample sand and ancient burial tombs known
as pyramids.
Assessment: Students will complete an exit slip, which will help the teacher get a grasp of the students' understanding of setting and other story elements. Students will answer the following questions: "Name one culture other than your own within your small group, as well as something you learned about that culture" and "Describe one interesting symbol or fact learned from “The Keeping Quilt”". The teacher will also observe students working together while in their flexible groups, and complete an observational checklist.

*Differentiation:
Why: This activity has been designed to accommodate for cultural differences and cognitive readiness. The reasoning behind this is to help students become accustomed to different cultures that they may not be familiar with or have had previous exposure to. Cognitive differentiation is done to accommodate for students who are at different learning levels.

What: This activity is accommodated to the students by having the teacher pre-assign the groups in terms of cultural difference, as well as cognitive readiness.

How: Readiness and cultural differences for this activity will be accounted for by keeping the grouping flexible, as well as by assigning tasks of various levels of difficulty to individual group members (i.e. task manager, recorder, presenter, time keeper, etc.).