Fraction Activities

- Use peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to create fractions, i.e., 1/2, 1/4, 1/8, 1/16, and 1/32.
- Order fraction pieces from least to greatest and greatest to least.
- Compare fraction pieces, (<, >, =).
- Add, subtract, multiply, and divide fraction pieces and create own problems.
- Illustrate equivalent fractions using fraction pieces.
- Use calculator to convert fractions to decimals and percents; illustrate that 1/2 and 1 divided by 2 are the same.

Also address the shapes of the fraction pieces: diagonal cut makes a triangle and down the middle makes a rectangle, then discuss if this is the same amount even though the shapes are different (Piaget, conservation). **All of this was especially important to my SPED students because the more concrete and hands-on, the better able they were to grasp concepts.

Science Activities

- Investigate how peanut butter and jelly are made; either take field trips to a jelly plant (Smucker's was our school adopter at this time) or peanut farm or invite guest speakers into the classroom from those places.
- Students make their own peanut butter and butter in class.
- Place a peanut plant in the science center for students to explore and discover and discuss how peanuts and other plants grow.
- Students discover and discuss through research and use of food labels the vitamins, minerals, and nutrients found in peanut butter and jelly, then list those items on a T-chart.
- Place a variety of items with oil content in center; determine which item has the greatest amount of oil using the scientific method (form a hypothesis, identify the problem, manipulate the data, and form a conclusion based on your findings). **Experiment:** Label items on the paper bag, then thinly spread each item underneath its label on the bag. After spreading each item as thinly as possible, hold back to the light. Item that is most translucent has the most oil content. Record findings and leave your group's bag in the center.

Morals/Values/Character Education – *Joe Joe* series literature books

Social Studies

- Have students complete cooperative biographies on each of the African American historical figures that they are introduced to through the *Joe Joe* series.

- Have students compare and contrast, using a Venn diagram, how their families are similar to and different from Joe Joe's family. Facilitate a discussion about their families.
- Using life ropes, have students create a timeline of the historical figures in the stories and where they fit in history using words and pictures for descriptors. (They could do this individually, in small groups, or as the whole class.)
- Have students create a map showing all of the places that were mentioned in relation to the historical figures and have students go on a scavenger hunt to gather as much as information as they can about these various places.
- Facilitate discussion among the students about the various decisions that Joe Joe had to make and how they would have reacted or changed the decision that Joe Joe made. This addresses character education issues.
- Have students investigate other people who were the first from their ethnic group to integrate a particular field or sport.
- Have students investigate other people or interview a family member who had a dream and how they made it come true, as well as writing about their own dream.
- Have students brainstorm and discuss their own family customs, traditions, culture, rituals, and kinship patterns and compare to Joe Joe and with themselves. The teacher should participate in this activity.
- Have students collaborate with family members to create a family crest, quilt, or book of thoughts.
- Have students research, then report back to the class why African American baseball players were able to play baseball in Cuban and other leagues versus in the major leagues in the United States, or why Bessie Coleman moved to Paris, France in order to be a pilot (i.e., what were the differences in the governments, laws, people, etc.).

Reading/Language Arts

- Have students discuss the issues that Joe Joe faced in each story by creating their own talk show format (i.e., a "hot topics" discussion about the issues from the story like the ladies from The View would have).
- Have students create a character web to analyze Joe Joe's traits and cite specific examples from the book to support each trait identified.
- Have students create a newspaper front page, including stories based on information from the book that they feel deserves front-page coverage. They should create headlines and stories and explain why they chose those items for their front page.

- Have the students reenact a scene from the story and instead of role-playing the scene the way it happened in the book, have them change the way the scene ends and explain why they chose that ending.
- Have the students create a comic strip with illustrations and dialogue of their favorite scene form the story. Have them explain why this was their group's favorite scene.
- Have the students write a letter to the editor of the local newspaper stating why Joe Joe was a hero in several instances to his friends and family.
- Have the students design an advertising campaign that would convince other students to read the *Joe Joe* books. They can use a TV commercial, billboard, ad in the newspaper, or Internet pop-up ad, etc. They should write a creative rap, song, jingle, poem, etc., then explain why this is a good story for other students to read.
- Have students engage in the writing process to write or type using the word processor a letter to the author sharing their thoughts about the book.

Science

- Study how cotton crops are grown and the many uses of cotton (*I Have a Dream, Too!* mentions that Mary McLeod Bethune worked in the cotton fields).
- Study motion and movement (*Just Call Me Joe Joe*, Joe Joe learns about the game of baseball through the Negro Leagues); further this study through having students investigate how the ball and bat connect, what principles of science are at play here.
- Study aeronautics and aerospace engineering (*I'll Fly My Own Plane*, this is the story where Joe Joe learns about all of the great African American pilots and astronauts).

Math

- Have students investigate the batting averages of their favorite players and teach them how to find out their own averages (also integrates P. E. because you take them outside to hit to determine their own batting average). Also, have them transfer this knowledge to averaging their grades for class.
- Create a classroom graph of students' favorite sports (i.e., football, basketball, baseball, etc.) as well as graphing their favorite sports stars and teams.
- Have students use numbers from tables in the sports section of the paper to create their own math problems for addition, subtraction,

multiplication, and division. In addition, students can use these same numbers to create word problems that they can leave in the center for classmates to solve.

The activities presented are only a sampling of where teachers can take these books. They may subtract or add to these suggestions based on the grade level that they teach and the learning needs of the students in their classes. They must also determine where these stories will best fit in the curriculum that they must teach.

Book Titles: Author, Jean Alicia Elster

- *Just Call Me Joe Joe*
- *I Have a Dream, Too!*
- *I'll Fly My Own Plane!*
- *I'll Do the Right Thing!*

Southern States Unit

Social Studies

- Use the temperature chart in the newspaper to find temperatures of at least four cities within the state you are researching.
- Create a travel map from Memphis to a city in the state you are researching. Create a key for distance, then plot distance on your map.
- Create an information board or PowerPoint presentation that tells about your state and present to the class.
- Create an ad campaign for your state convincing people to come to visit your state. Use attractions, landmarks, climate, etc. as part of the campaign.
- Play Southern States Jeopardy to review what was learned about the different southern states studied.

Math

- Use the temperatures found for different cities in your state to compare and order two-digit numbers.
- Use the temperatures found for different cities in your state to add and subtract two-digit numbers with/without regrouping/trading.
- Use the calculator to find the average temperature for your state. Also determine the median, mode, and range for those temperatures.
- Create a graph illustrating the different temperatures across your state, label the graph with cities and temperatures. Answer the following questions: What is the highest and lowest temperature on your graph? Which cities, if any, have the same temperatures?