IMPACT II
THE TEACHERS' NETWORK

1996
Disseminator Grants
Ventura County Teacher-Developed Curriculum Ideas

co-sponsored by
Ventura County Economic Development Association
and the
Ventura County Superintendent of Schools
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What is IMPACT II?

IMPACT II is starting its fifth year in Ventura County and is part of a national curriculum-sharing and recognition program for teachers in grades kindergarten—12 in all subject matter areas and specializations.

More than 30 IMPACT II business/school partnerships exist in cities throughout the United States, including New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles, as well as in smaller districts, counties, and even entire states. The program now has several thousand selectively chosen teacher members.

The Ventura County IMPACT II program is a partnership between the Ventura County Economic Development Association (VCEDA) and the Ventura County Superintendent of Schools Office.

Important Events - 1997

February
Teachers send Grant application.

March
Disseminator Grants awarded.

May
Teacher Business Recognition Program.

August
Display Grants at Summer Conference.

September
Distribution of IMPACT II catalog of teachers' award winning ideas.

Through IMPACT II teachers can apply for $400 Disseminator individual grants for classroom-tested curriculum ideas which they have developed. Collaborative grants for 2 or more teachers are $600. A committee of teachers, school administrators, and business leaders selects the most ready-to-share ideas for grants. Business leaders award the grants at the spring Teacher Recognition Program.

An IMPACT II catalog published each year, distributes these "cutting edge" ideas countywide. Any interested teacher may attend the fall Curriculum Fair to meet the teacher Disseminators and order teacher materials. This fall the award winning lessons will also be accessible on the Ventura County Superintendent of Schools home page on the internet.

Why IMPACT II?

IMPACT II is cost effective. The County Education Office funds the day-to-day operation of IMPACT II, so your contributions go directly to teachers and classrooms for student projects.

IMPACT II puts cutting edge classroom projects into the mainstream, turning students on to learning.

IMPACT II enables excellent teaching ideas to reach all teachers in the county, and raises community awareness of exemplary classroom practices.

IMPACT II boosts teacher morale by recognizing innovative teaching as well as enhancing teacher professionalism through local/national training and teacher presentations.
Message from the Ventura County Superintendent of Schools

The IMPACT II program continues to grow and flourish in Ventura County in its fourth year of operation. The teacher and business leader response to IMPACT II has been gratifying. Two hundred three applications have been received from teachers and ninety-nine deserving grants have been awarded since we began in 1993; thirty-seven were awarded in 1996. Our number of business partners has grown from six in our first year to twenty-six in 1996. Additionally, the fund contributions received and distributed have grown each year. In 1996, the Steering Committee established and awarded the first Ed Lyon Excellence in Education Award presented to the grant recipient who best reflects the criteria of innovativeness, creativity and adaptability.

The purpose of IMPACT II is to spread excellent teaching through the recognition and distribution of good ideas. Our early indications are that this effort is paying off and the "good teaching ideas" are spreading throughout the County. This catalogue is sent to all schools and libraries in Ventura County and is available electronically through the home page for the Ventura County Superintendent of Schools office on the Internet @www.vcss.k12.ca.us. Please share this document with fellow educators and business leaders. I encourage you to read the descriptions of winning lessons and look for ideas that may enhance your classroom. Feel free to borrow ideas at will and use them in your classroom as often as appropriate. Our only purpose in publishing this document is to assist you in teaching your students.

Throughout the four year period during which IMPACT II has been in existence in Ventura County, every business contribution received has been earmarked for grants to teachers. All overhead costs are borne by the County Superintendent of Schools office. I continue to invest in IMPACT II because I believe that recognizing and distributing good teaching ideas will help spread quality education throughout Ventura County. Additionally, I believe that a closer connection between business and education will provide mutual benefit. IMPACT II is one of our partner programs with the Ventura County Economic Development Association (VCEDA) guided by the theme, "A Handshake, Not A Handout." This slogan succinctly describes our philosophy that a true partnership should benefit both parties. I believe that IMPACT II fills that bill.

IMPACT II could not survive and grow without the continued support and active involvement of business leaders like Kim Peterson of AT&T Wireless Services, Stacy Roscoe of Procter and Gamble, Judy Winzor of TransWorld Bank, John Stahl of Weyerhaeuser, Jeannette Hudson of Corlund Electronics, Lee Edwards of Malabar International, Dave Bouchet of American Commercial Bank, Rudy Gonzalez of Southern California Edison, Kim Gibas of Santa Barbara Bank and Trust, and Ron Entzel of CallResources LLC. All of the above business-persons are members of the IMPACT II Steering Committee. I appreciate the forum that this organization has provided to enable IMPACT II to grow. I also want to express my appreciation to Phil Palbaum of the County Superintendent of Schools office, Department of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment for providing the leadership and "Commitment to Quality Education for All." We are truly blessed, in Ventura County, to have such outstanding leaders.

IMPACT II will continue to grow and spread throughout Ventura County. The teacher network will grow and increase in influence over the years to come. I am committed to continuing our effort with our business partners to recognize and reward our many exceptional teachers while spreading successful instructional practices throughout Ventura County.

Charles Weis, Ph.D.
Ventura County Superintendent of Schools
June 1996
Acknowledgements

The IMPACT II Advisory Council plays an important role in the success of the entire IMPACT II program. They provide direction by establishing policy, planning the awards program, evaluating previous years events, and most important of all, reading and selecting grant recipients.

1995-96 IMPACT II Advisory Council

Teacher Representatives:

Bev Aggen  Pleasant Valley  Los Altos Intermediate
Sандee Ayers  Oak Park  Medea Creek Middle
Yvonne Backus  Simi Valley  Katherine School
Carol Berger  Conejo Valley  Acacia
Jan Brovold  Ventura  Blanche Reynolds
Carol Brunnett  Simi Valley  Big Springs
Helen Faul  Ocean View  Tierra Vista
Susan Freeman  Conejo Valley  Sequoia Intermediate
Cyndy Hall  Oak Park  Brookside
Kathy Heftman  Fillmore  Fillmore Junior High
Ruth Hofmeister  Simi Valley  Sinaloa Junior High
Sherri Kerman  Pleasant Valley  Campus Canyon
Judy Laumann  Moorpark  Oxnard High
Jerry Neidenbach  Oxnard UHSD  Ocean View Junior High
Jack Oliver  Ocean View  Montalvo
Patty Peinado  Ventura  Newbury Park High
Susan Pray  VCSS  Balboa Middle
Marilyn Renger  Ventura  Tierra Linda
Beverly Rueckert  Pleasant Valley  Ocean View Junior High
Carol Williams  Ocean View Elementary

PTA Representatives:

Martha Goodsell  PTA—12th District
Karen Savaya  PTA—12th District
Loretta Schieffer  PTA—12th District
Elda Tonello  PTA—12th District

Business Representatives:

Jeanette Hudson  Corlund Electronics
Marilyn Newsstrom  Naval Air Warfare
Ed Romero  Point Mugu
Stacy Roscoe  Procter & Gamble
Kerry Roscoe  Design Signature
1996 Impact II Partners

**Benefactor**
AT&T Wireless Services
Hansen Trust

**Patron**
CalResources LLC
Procter & Gamble
VCEDA
Weyerhaeuser Company Foundation

**Donor**
American Commercial Bank
Malabar International
Pemko Manufacturing
Santa Barbara Bank & Trust
Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce

**Sponsor**
San Buenaventura Chamber of Commerce
Camarillo Community Bank
Camarillo Rotary (Noon Meeting)
Corlund Electronics Corporation
General Telephone & Electronics
Moorpark Chamber of Commerce
Oxnard Board of Realtors
RELATE Corporation
Southern California Edison

**Friend**
Buena Chevron (Kevin Corse)

**In Kind Services**
Fast Frame (Ventura and Thousand Oaks)
Printing Carousel
Ventura County Superintendent of Schools Office
Welcome business partners, teachers, administrators and family to the fourth annual Impact II Awards dinner.

Business Partners played a major role in the success of the awards evening.

Grant recipients and business partners set up their displays prior to the awards dinner.

Smiles and good feelings make the 1996 Awards Dinner a great place to be!

Three happy Grant recipients share their Impact II award winning project.

There was time planned where Grant recipients and business partners could meet each other.

Jane Sweetland received the Ed Lyon Excellence in Education Award.
AWARDS DINNER

Over 140 people attended the 1996 Impact II awards dinner. Carol Williams and Judy Winzor kept the program moving.

A few samples of the Impact II projects on display. “How proud we are!”
Ed Lyon

Excellence in Education Award

Presented to the Grant recipient who best reflects the criteria of
innovativeness, creativity and adaptability

“My proudest work has been in the educational community, trying to bring about a partnership between business and education.”

In 1996 the Impact II Steering Committee established the Ed Lyon Excellence in Education Award in honor of Ed's decades long commitment to youth and quality education in Ventura County. His involvement in education at all levels and his tireless efforts over the years have set a laudable example for other community business people to follow.

With 30 years experience in the oil business, he is founder and owner of Gaviota Maintenance Service and has served on the boards of numerous petroleum industry associations. Despite his extensive professional involvements, Ed has made a personal commitment to volunteer work for the community. His activities include work as a Fair Junior Livestock Program supporter, a member of the Ventura Boys and Girls Club Board of Directors, a past United Way co-chairman, and president of the St. Bonaventure High School Parent Teacher Guild. A past president of VCEDA and board member for 21 years, he has expanded the VCEDA Education Committee with programs like Ventura County Science Fair, Ventura County Business Week, Teacher-Business Intern Program, classroom-to-business bus tours, Schools-to-Career Conference, and Tech Prep advisory participation. In 1993 Ed was instrumental in bringing the Impact II program to educators in Ventura County. Additionally, he has spearheaded the drive for a four year California State University campus in the County.

So it is with great pride that we dedicate this award to Ed Lyon, a true advocate of Excellence in Education.
IMPACT II

1996
Grant Recipients
A Cloak For A Dreamer...

The Idea and Its Value

A Cloak For A Dreamer entices students into the world of mathematics and allows them to think critically, problem solve, and work cooperatively while unravelling the magic of algebraic equations in a most unusual fashion. By weaving mathematics, literature, art, and social studies together, we capture the interest of students.

Throughout history we focus on people who believed in their dreams and made a difference in society. A Cloak For A Dreamer acquaints students with marvellous literature written by Aliceen Friedman and allows them latitude to compare famous dreamers such as Columbus, Marco Polo, Martin Luther King Jr., Abraham Lincoln, or any other historical figure, to the main character in the story. The students are drawn into a wonderful unit that allows individual creativity and a chance to be successful in many areas of the curriculum.

After sharing the piece of literature and using Venn diagrams to compare and contrast the main character, Mishav, to other famous dreamers, the students are invited to investigate the mathematical concepts used in the story. Geometry, patterns, shapes, and design, numeration, fractions, ratios, multiplication, dividing, and many other strands are discussed.

To promote higher level thinking skills and allow students to apply the knowledge they have gained, they will display their own creativity by creating a personal book of Cloaks For Dreamers. For each dreamer the student, or pair of students, follows an algebraic recipe to arrive at the number and specific shapes that are to be used in fashioning a cloak for that dreamer. Then each student is allowed to select a "fabric" (we used different types of gift wrap) and fashion it into an art design of a cloak for the dreamer. By labeling this page with the numbers and shapes used in the cloak, the students are displaying their understanding of proportions, ratios, fractions, algebra, and geometry.

The assessment is in the form of their finished books as well as oral descriptions given by the students. The ability to work with a partner if they so wished was an added benefit of learning, revising, teaching, and cooperation. Success was attainable for all classroom learners and some beautiful expressions were shared and respected. The beauty of this unit is that all students could participate or excel in any facet and the outcome reflected their strengths.

This unit can be adapted for any length of time and has great flexibility in the "dreamers" the teacher may want to incorporate. In my second grade class we did the bulk of the unit in two weeks using our history social science theme to introduce famous historical figures as our dreamers, but even now we often refer back to our Cloaks For Dreamers books to review or introduce mathematical concepts as well as revisiting some famous American heroes that we incorporated.

The benefit of A Cloak For A Dreamer is that it is a fun, creative, and exciting way to teach and assess an integrated program based on mathematics which will become a building block for the rest of the school year. Students revealed their strengths and shared with each other since the unit is student based. A key revelation was the ability to share, ask for help, critique, and praise each other. The students appreciated the value of each others work.

State Framework

This unit supports the Math framework by incorporating math strands, unifying ideas and providing all learners the opportunity to process mathematical concepts and then apply them in a problem solving situation using critical and higher level thinking skills. It is also in line with the equal access for all learners and is easily adapted for bilingual students. It also supports the Language Arts and History Social Science frameworks by providing introduction to writing techniques, writing opportunities, and integrating historical figures into the curriculum.

Students

A Cloak for A Dreamer is geared toward 3rd through 4th grades but can be adapted from Kindergarten (recognizing, counting, and arranging shapes) to high school level by the modification of the algebraic recipes to reflect the areas of focus and to increase the challenge level of each equation.

This was presented at a workshop of 1st through 3rd grade teachers in my school district and also the Tri-County Math Project (Kindergarten through high school) using an adaptable second grade format. My second grade class had tremendous success with the unit.

Facilities/Materials

A Cloak For A Dreamer is teacher friendly, student based and can be used in part or in its entirety. Teachers choose historical figures as dictated by grade level needs. Also a copy of the book, A Cloak For A Dreamer by Aliceen Friedman and the algebraic recipes are necessary as well as squares of gift wrap or other paper to make the cloaks. No other resources are necessary.

Staff

Mrs. Moore teaches second grade. She is a Mentor teacher in the Pleasant Valley School district and has conducted a series of parent workshops regarding the integration of mathematics. She is a fellow in the Tri-County Math Project.
Ferris Wheels and Merry-Go-Rounds

Grades 5-7
Math
Fine Arts
Language Arts
Science

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The Idea and Its Value
This Ferris wheels and merry-go-rounds unit is a fun mathematics project, which incorporates fine arts, language arts, and science. The program is an innovative way to let students demonstrate their real-world math knowledge in creative ways. It makes discovering circles an exciting, personal experience. It adapts to student's various learning modalities and is truly child-centered. This unit promotes higher-level thinking skills by having students discover strategies of using various tools. Students work together in teams to create either a Ferris wheel or a merry-go-round as the culmination to this unit.

I begin this month-long unit by introducing the students to circles and their attributes of diameter, chords, radius and circumference. Students are asked to find something circular and bring it in to share. This creates an awareness for geometry in their environment. Next, the class is exposed to the use of the compass. Students are given paper and asked to draw different sizes of circles. Once the students are familiar with its use, an art project is assigned. Children make different sizes of various colored circles into beautiful patterns.

The life of George Washington Ferris, the inventor of the Ferris wheel, is another avenue of exploration into circles. Students researched and reported, both written and orally, on the designing and building of the huge Ferris wheel displayed at the Chicago World's Fair.

Our final project was given to teams consisting of two to three students. They were to produce either a Ferris wheel or a merry-go-round. The teams could use any medium desired. The criteria for their projects was that they must be three-dimensional, have motion, and be free-standing. Students utilized class time to plan their strategies. Research is done during school hours. The actual project building is primarily done outside of school. This project promoted team spirit, cooperation, pride of workmanship and discovery! This project is not text-book generated, but hands-on learning! Higher level thinking skills are incorporated through the use of special relationships, reasoning, and adaptation of utilizing tools to construct the projects. This is a terrific way to teach about circles and their aspects in a way that will be remembered by students! Students shared their projects with the class, told about the circle's attributes, how they constructed their wheels, and demonstrated its motion. A rubric was used for assessment. The beautiful wheels were displayed in the District office for all to admire!

State Framework
This project supports the Mathematics Framework of real-world, hands-on experiences for all students, promoting higher-level reasoning skills while working in cooperative settings. It includes the Language Arts Framework of listening, speaking, writing and reading. Fine Arts is addressed as the students paint and design their wheels. Science is addressed as the students demonstrate their knowledge of the "Law of Motion" with the wheels.

Students
For the 1995-96 school year, all thirty students in our sixth-grade class participated. This geometry unit could be adapted to fifth through seventh grades.

Facilities/Materials
Library time, computer-generated encyclopedias and class time were devoted to this project. In most cases, materials were provided by the students.

Staff
I have taught sixth grade for three years. I am currently working on my M.A. in computer technology and serve on many math committees throughout the county and district.
Camping With Your Class for Less Than $12.00
(While Maintaining Your Sanity)

The Idea and Its Value
Three hundred twenty students embark on an overnight "being there" experience at McCallum State Beach. Inspired by the Coastal Wetlands Project entitled "Seeking the Treasures of the Santa Clara Estuary" and other outdoor science classroom programs, this innovative idea was born. We wanted to provide our students with a similar yet inexpensive outdoor experience costing only $19.00 per student. This unit involves students in highly motivating and diverse curricular activities at school and in the field.

At the onset of this six-week "Ocean Unit" students are placed in teams. Students are highly motivated to complete assignments and learn curriculum material. As they work in groups they develop positive behavior and self control among peers. While at the camp out the students must work together to accomplish their goals such as set up tents, design a campfire presentation, compete in a splash zone scavenger hunt, and complete a mile hike crossing the estuary.

This experience gives students a common base of knowledge on which to build further instruction. They will also find that parents become highly involved and parent-teacher partnerships are formed. The unit addresses different learning styles, is extremely adaptable, and creates a real life sense of team building and community among students.

- Instructional activities and experiments included in the unit are tidal zones, camouflage and coloration, waves versus currents, basal movement, water pressure, sea exploration, mapping, terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems and environmental concerns.
- In preparation for the overnight experience students are involved in learning basic first aid, rescue breathing, campfire procedures and tent assembly.
- Higher-level thinking skills are used throughout the unit as students are required to apply, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize concepts.
- Math, Science, Language Arts, Physical Education and Fine Arts are integrated throughout the unit.

This program, can be altered to meet any teacher's curricular demands. Teachers can take this unit, which includes instructions on how to set up an overnight outdoor experience, and adapt it to any local camp ground. It can also be changed to encompass a wide variety of themes such as habitats, historical sites of importance, life, earth and physical science units, geological interests and environmental concerns. If an overnight experience seems a little too daring, you can opt for an all day field trip.

State Framework
Criteria laid out in the California State Science Framework in the areas of content, themes, and instructional practices are met by this unit. Topics required for grades three through six covered in this unit are properties of matter, reaction and interaction, force and motion, energy sources and transformations, water cycle, geological composition and activity, planetary movement and interaction and oceanography. The themes interwoven in this unit are energy evolution, patterns of change and stability and systems and interactions. This unit is thematically designed, contains "hands-on" experience oriented activities and has students using the scientific method throughout.

Students and Assessment
The eight classes of third through sixth grade children included Resource, Chapter One, ELD and GATE students. Since activities in the unit encompass Gamer's Seven Intelligences, all learning modalities are addressed. Therefore all students participating in this event gained self confidence, experience and knowledge.

The success of our program was assessed in a variety of ways. The activities before the field trip had the students producing products in the form of journals, experiments and lab write-ups, essay tests, multiple choice questions and practive problems. There were also oral presentations and performances. While participating in the overnight experience the students completed field sketch books and journals. The following are quotes we received from teachers, parents and students:

"Crossing the estuary was the greatest. It was a lot of fun and a lot of work."

"I never knew there were so many animals on the rocks. I thought they were just bumps."

"My son couldn't wait to show me his sketch book since I couldn't go on the camp out."

"At first I was afraid to take my class overnight, but it was so worth it, I want to do it again."

Outside Resources
We used a variety of resources to make this unit successful. Some outside resources were National and State parks, Ranger Services, Destine for camping reservations the public library, Channel Island National Marine Sanctuary, Channel Coast National History Association, and the American Red Cross Parent involvement is a must as they provide camping equipment, expertise, and involvement in activities such as food preparation and supervision.

We have compiled all the information needed to complete the unit. Available is list of books and resources needed in our area of curricular study. We have both a file of activities, lessons and experiments to be done in the classroom, as well as a file of activities and events to occur while on the overnight experience. Also contained in the unit are step by step instructions on organizing and procuring equipment, securing parent participation, preparing menus, and buying the right amount of groceries. A check list of "to do's" prior to the campout and sample letters to parents are included.
Flight: Getting Off the Ground

The Idea and Its Value
Flight is a 9-week thematic, integrated mini-science course that gives my students a hands-on experience with the physics, aerodynamics and biology of flight in living organisms and machines. The purpose of this unit is to strengthen student abilities to follow directions, to measure, to observe, to research, to make and test their own hypotheses, to record and interpret accurate data, and to clearly and effectively communicate their new knowledge. Students use computer programs, videos and see teacher demonstrations on the basics of flight. Then they design, assemble and fly their own paper airplanes to test their knowledge of the principles they have learned. Students also build kites, rubber band powered balsa wood airplanes, and even solid propellant model rockets. They make an altitude tracker that measures the height of the objects they launch. Students write about historical contributions in the development of aviation and space exploration, the problems encountered by pilots as they pit human physiology against the seemingly insurmountable laws of physics, and methods that are used by birds to produce lift. My students construct bird models, and learn how birds are adapted to their natural environment.

Students use measurement, metric unit conversion, formulas and manipulation of algebraic equations to solve science problems associated with speed, acceleration, momentum and energy. Students with special needs and/or learning disabilities are encouraged by the variety of activities and the ability to succeed with the many hands-on projects. Students are given the opportunity to evaluate the course, and their feedback is used to refine and improve the course.

State Framework
The idea for teaching this course was generated, in part, by the State Science Framework which emphasizes a departure from didactic factoid science minutia and trivia, and a new approach toward doing science rather than reading about science. Flight is taught in a hands-on, inquiry based approach, and is definitely thematic and integrated not only across science disciplines, but across the entire high school curriculum.

Students
Over the past 3 years, Flight has been experienced by over 1,000 9th graders at Moorpark High School. Flight is non-tracked and serves the needs of the general school population including special needs learners. Depending on the level of students being taught, Flight can be adapted by making it complex. This course is a more descriptive or more mathematically natural for fitting in with social studies, English, math, English Language Development/Sheltered Education, and industrial education and as a thematic basis for "academy" style across-disciplines high school programs.

Materials/Facilities
There are many fine books available as teacher resources that center around student projects for creating paper airplanes, rockets, balsa wood models and hot air balloons. A VCR/TVM show videotapes, and the availability of a computer lab are advisable. Student materials for projects are relatively inexpensive and are available at local hobby and craft stores. Funding for these materials is not difficult to obtain through grants from local corporations, parent donations and special location budgets.

Outside Resources
There are many private and commercial airplane pilots, flight instructors and aerospace engineers who are happy to guest speak in your classroom. Most aerospace corporations will allow you to bring your classes to their plants to see new technology. Libraries are often well-stocked with books and journals that contain information for students who want to research in the areas of aerodynamics, the history of aviation, and spaceflight.
Students in Stitches

The idea and Its Value

Students in Stitches is an interdisciplinary unit in which students design and sew Civil War quilts after studying a Civil War novel, researching states' involvement, flags, battles, soldiers, and effects of the war on our nation. Students do an in-depth notebook with various research projects, engage in simulation exercises, and then design and create their own personal square for a Civil War quilt. Three of several completed quilts are given away in a culminating assembly, and one is raffled off at the eighth grade graduation. Students and parents alike have commented on the effectiveness of this type of "hands-on" activity. (The motivation of the unit carried over to summer vacation with three students who convinced their parents to go on tours of the Civil War battlefields.) This project has been recognized "For Excellence" by the Moorpark Chamber of Commerce.

After an introduction of the events which lead to the Civil War, each student mounts every page of the novel Across Five Aprils in a notebook. They begin an intricate note taking process as aspects of the battles and people involved are discussed in history, science and language. Maps follow the characters, and reproductions of newspapers of the times are examined and compared to accounts of battles in other references. Students participate in history simulations, study medical practices and advances in science, cock, play computer games, and research their assigned state. As the unit progresses they assemble a 12 X 12 square of a symbol they have personally designed. Parent volunteers help students cut out their patterns and prepare their squares of muslin for sewing. This entire unit takes approximately six weeks. Students of all learning styles and abilities have been involved, including ESL and Special Education.

"At risk" students seem particularly excited by the variety of activities and the involvement in producing a product admired by their peers and the community.

State Framework

The unit is part of the recommended area of study for history as well as user friendly for the writing and reading goals of the language arts program. Science has been able to adopt their human body and medicine as well as health units to fit this period of study. Students in Stitches demonstrates the "Hands on" and "Process in Product" theories of learning which are highly recommended in both the framework and in Caught in the Middle.
Flight: Getting Off the Ground

Grades 9-11
Science
Math
Social Studies

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Trans World Bank

The Idea and Its Value
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Over the past 3 years, Flight has been experienced by over 1,000 9th graders at Moorpark High School. Flight is non-tracked and serves the needs of the general school population including special needs learners. Depending on the level of students being taught, Flight can be adapted by making it complex. This course is a more descriptive or more mathematically natural for fitting in with social studies, English, math, English Language development/Sheltered Education, and Industrial Education and as a thematic unit for "academy" style across-disciplines high school programs.

Materials/Facilities
There are many fine books available as teacher resources that center around student projects for creating paper airplanes, rockets, balsa wood models and hot air balloons. VCR/TV to show videotapes, and the availability of a computer lab are advisable. Student materials for projects are relatively inexpensive and are available at local hobby and craft stores. Funding for these materials is not difficult to obtain through grants from local corporations, parent donations and special location budgets.

Outside Resources
There are many private and commercial airplane pilots, flight instructors and aerospace engineers who are happy to guest speak in your classroom. Most aerospace corporations will allow you to bring your classes to their plants to see new technology. Libraries are often well-stocked with books and journals that contain information for students who want to research in the areas of aerodynamics, the history of aviation, and spaceflight.
Drum Taps: The Civil War as Seen Through Its Music

Grades 7-10
History
Music
Language Arts

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The Idea & Its Value
Tapping into the adolescent’s love of music, the Drum-Taps project engages the student in a research project in which he/she explores the significance of key words in the lyrics of Civil War songs.

Students learn about significant people and events of the Civil War by using these songs as primary documents that represent the period. After first researching the key people, issues or events that are mentioned in the songs, students present their findings using a variety of techniques including prose, drawing, collage and other media. The project lends itself particularly well to the use of computer technology.

Once they have chosen their song, students are given a copy of the lyrics with key names and terms underlined. It becomes their responsibility to research these names and terms to determine their significance within the context presented in the song. Because they are limited to the context of the song, students must use critical thinking skills to evaluate which information is relevant to their song and which is not. For example, in analyzing the song, "Jine the Cavalry," it is not appropriate to report on the history of horse-mounted armies, students are expected to explain the role of the cavalry during the Civil War.

Once the student has selected the appropriate material, he/she creates a visual presentation of their findings. Although most students choose to create elaborate poster projects for their song analysis, this project can be completed using inexpensive materials, even a dozen sheets of plain white paper - one for each key term - would suffice.

State Frameworks
Supports the History/Social Science recommendations encouraging the use of primary source materials.

Students
Some of the songs are easy to research and some are more difficult. Students are permitted to choose which song they wish to research, which makes this project attractive to both challenged and gifted students. Most students were able to complete their projects within 3-5 days. Even though this was an optional project, most students chose to try it, and several of those who enjoyed the project so much that they asked permission to do a second, then a third! Although some students needed a second chance to explain the significance of some terms rather than simply identify them, most were successful on their first try.

Facilities/Materials
The teacher should supply a selection of lyrics with key terms underlined from which students choose their song. If the teacher prefers to have students complete the project in class, it is necessary to provide a selection of Civil War reference materials. However, most school libraries, and certainly the public library, usually have adequate resources. Of course, students enjoy hearing "their" song, so a collection of tapes or CDs is helpful, although not necessary. Materials from which to create the projects such as poster paper, markers and paste may be provided.

Outside Resources
Depending on the time of year, students may choose to attend one of several Civil War re-enactments in the area during which they might interview Civil War experts about their song. In addition to using some of the available CD-ROM encyclopedias available for their research, students may find help through some of the history, education or Civil War sites on the Information Superhighway.
Dinosaurs: We Dig ‘Em!

The Idea and Its Value
Dinosaurs: We Dig ‘Em instills scientific process and procedures using highly motivational subject matter. Students work both cooperatively and independently to discover the world of palaeontology and prehistoric animals first hand. Our window of opportunity opens when a paleontologist invites children to write to her, listing the qualities they possess that should allow them to go on the dig.

Along the way, quality literature such as Patrick’s Dinosaur is read and dramatized. Children employ the methods of Writer’s Workshop to write both fiction (When My Pet Dinosaur Came to School …) and informative pieces (research and report on their favorite dinosaur …). Using Venn diagrams, bar graphs, and units of measure, students integrate mathematical skills into their study.

Students use critical thinking skills when they actually go to a site, dig up and piece together their own fossils (that the teacher strategically buried). Then they decide what those pieces should tell them. The teacher works as a guide, not as a “presenter,” leading children to their own discoveries. This role enables him/her to frequently authentically assess each child in a meaningful way. Students must work cooperatively with their team on the dig, and take personal responsibility for the recording of what transpired. As in life, each team member has a role to fulfill (recorder, illustrator, digger, problem solver, cleaner, etc…).

This six week unit is a compilation of my own ideas and those gathered from various articles and workshops. It can be used anytime, and is especially ideal for starting in April or May. At this time it can transition beautifully from a plant or earth study that may occur in honor of Earth Week. Also, parents have the opportunity during Open House, to walk into “our museum” filled with team recordings, a video of the dig, class stones, individual dioramas, paintings, prints, and reports.

Even more importantly is the lifelong value this study provides. All children have succeeded in making a valuable contribution to their team, they have learned to give and take, and they have become self sufficient by writing sophisticated reports and engaging in complex work without adults. The academic, social and emotional skills acquired throughout are immeasurable.

Students
Teachers of first through fifth grade can successfully adapt this unit for their entire class. It provides equal access for all students, involving each modality to meet the various talents and abilities within the heterogeneous classroom. The cooperative group and independent activities allow for the building of community and self esteem.

State Frameworks
An integrated unit touches each of the State’s Frameworks. Throughout Dinosaurs, students are involved in hands-on real life situations that demand higher level thinking skills encouraged by the Science Framework. Utilizing the areas of listening, writing, reading, and speaking of the Language Arts Framework, children read and interact with quality literature, write various genre, and present their teams’ discoveries to the class. Children explore various strands within the mathematics realm, as recommended by the framework—activities include graphing, measuring, sorting, etc. Working cooperatively in small teams with a common goal, children build upon the Social Science (and QUEST) foundation becoming interdependent and self-reliant.

Facilities/Materials
Materials primarily come from standard classroom supplies. Additional materials included, but not required, are: sand, plaster of paris, shovels, toothbrushes, and dinosaur books. The INTERACT unit also provides a wealth of information. A wide variety of technology, such as videos, CD-ROM and other computer games are available and can enhance the instruction as well.

Outside Resources
To enrich the unit, a field trip to the Museum of Natural History is a good choice. Additionally, inviting a docent or scientist is a valuable opportunity.

Staff
Rebecca Coger has taught first grade for the past four years. She is a former Language Arts Mentor for OPUSD and a current member of the Ventura County Language Arts Symposium group.

Grades 1-5
Science English/Language Arts Social Science Math Fine Arts

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Biome, Biome, It's Off To...

Grade 6
Geography
Language Arts
Science
Technology
Art

More Information
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Dr. Robert Donahue,
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VCEDA

The Idea and Its Value
Biome, Biome, It's Off To... provides 6th grade students working in cooperative groups the opportunity to explore and become biogeographical experts on one of the major land or aquatic biomes of the world while using research skills, database and multimedia presentation technology, and art. The student outcomes are to use technology related to science, to conduct research on a given topic, to work collaboratively with others, to instruct other students in an effective manner about the topic, to learn about the biomes of the world. The two to three-week unit begins with student groups selecting one of the eight biome regions. Throughout the next two weeks students will design, draw, and color a mural or poster of the biome which includes indigenous plant and animal life, create a radio advertisement to attract tourists to the biome, identify its worldwide locations on a map, design, draw, and color a flag to represent the biome, create a database of information on the biome to share with the class, and present the project to the class in multimedia format using MediaMax, HyperStudio, bar codes, laserdisc, and/or video. Since most students don’t live for research, it is motivational knowing that each will only research one subtopic (animals, plants, locations and climate, and various impacts on the environment) and then enter that information on the computer in a database format.

The variety of components to the project enables all students to work in an area of strength and interest. Enthusiasm abounds as murals, maps, and flags begin filling up wall, window, cabinet, and chalkboard space. The classroom becomes the world. Students eagerly examine laserdiscs for just the right frames and record radio broadcasts—some as ads, others in talk show format. Student technicians begin using the computer to put their multimedia presentations together.

Finally the presentations are ready and the third week is reserved for this as each group formally presents the biome to the class. Each student receives a copy of the group’s database for a reference. After all presentations are made and students have an opportunity to assimilate the information presented they are asked to write about the biomes of the world in a compare and contrast format. The final applause comes during open house when parents are awed by the student accomplishments and are able to view portions of all groups’ presentations which the teacher has video taped.

State Frameworks
The Science Framework states “To be effective, science education should be enjoyable.” Biome, Biome supports the framework by taking a thematic approach, systems and interactions, in a highly motivating project through which students develop confidence and competence as they acquire skills and concepts about the earth’s ecosystems. The tools of technology are integrated with the curriculum. The unit format is adaptable to history and other science topics, and appropriate for grades 5–8.

Students
Two 6th grade core groups of 33 students each, including gifted & talented and resource students participated in this project.

Facilities/Materials
Materials needed are a cart of reference and resource books checked out from the school library, at least one TV, laserdisc player, laser discs such as Coronet’s on biomes, or Bio Sci or Windows on Science, computer with MediaMax or HyperStudio and database programs, butcher paper, construction paper, duplicating paper, glue, markers or crayons, cassette and recorder.

Staff
I have taught 30 years at several grade levels, 10 years at 6th grade. The last six years I have taught in a 6th grade core program focusing on science and math. I am currently in my third year as a Science Mentor for the Pleasant Valley School District.
Quality is a Hamburger

The Idea and Its Value

Quality is a Hamburger teaches students of all age levels the importance of quality control, using the all-too-familiar hamburger. Students begin the year with a lesson about quality control at a local fast-food outlet (we found many to choose from in our area). Students grade the hamburger by its completeness, freshness, neatness, and overall appearance (grading scale A to F). Parts of the hamburger like the bun, meat, tomato, etc. are removed, at teacher’s discretion, for regrading purposes. The students collaborate on revised grades and are excited to lower the grade of the incomplete burger. Reassembling the A+ burger refocuses students to the quality product needed for success. Now the fun part begins, with all eyes focused on the burger, students are asked to verify its quality. With a resounding “Yes” the teacher smashizes the hamburger and asks, “Is it still quality?” This leads to a lively and meaningful discussion of completion of assignments with all parts in place, yet the product lacks in quality. Students generate a list of checkpoints for quality control of their assignments and create a rubric that will be used as a grading scale throughout the year. The students’ collaboration encourages self-assessment and motivation to use quality in their work, both inside and outside of the classroom. Student motivation is developed intrinsically and extrinsically with use of “C” stamps, hamburger slips, and homework passes (a reward for 5 hamburger slips), not to mention higher grades and high self-esteem! Integrated activities that grow out of the initial quality lesson cover a variety of areas. Focusing on writing a “quality” paragraph, the hamburger parts are transposed into the parts of a paragraph. A bulletin board of this Hamburger Paragraph, which remains up for the year, serves as a constant reminder that “Quality is Job #1” in all assignments throughout all curricular areas. During student-led conferences, students teach their parents the quality paragraph. Parents remark that if they had been taught this in school they would have been better writers; some even said they were going to take it into work. Image the child’s empowerment knowing they had taught their parents something so useful. Students use graphic art software during computer time to recreate the Hamburger Paragraph and its parts. In Social Studies, the continents are taught using the hamburger theme. Students earn materials to build a combination meal (from a local fast-food outlet) as they locate the continents from which the food originated. Students then build globes on which they place their continents. Globes can be made in Art using papier-mache or pumpkins can be used seasonally to become your world. In all aspects of the curriculum, “Quality is Job #1!”

State Frameworks

The state frameworks are embedded within the unit. The unit emphasizes the study of place, cultural and economic literacy in the Social Studies framework, incorporating the goals of skills attainment and social participation. The mathematical strands of measurement, geometry, patterns and functions, and logic have the most emphasis in the unit. Also, following the Task Force’s recommendation, written mathematical communication skills are heightened. In the science framework, the emphasis is on the life and earth sciences. Lastly, Language Arts skills are embedded throughout the unit and strengthened through use of the Quality Paragraph.

Students

Quality is a Hamburger is written for 2nd through 8th graders. Resource to GATE, Primary and Second Language Learners, who need to use quality in their educational endeavors. These lessons serve as a bridge between school and real life for students from all different socioeconomic levels. 64 students in our multi-age program, aged 9-12 years, participated during the 1994-95 school year. This unit was taught to students in the RSP program, LEP students, GATE, and regular ed students.

Resources

Quality is a Hamburger is extremely teacher-friendly. Teachers may choose to use the unit in part, or in its entirety. Teaching styles, ranging from traditional to eclectic, will find these lessons easily adaptable to their curriculum and style. The only resource you will need outside of school will be a local fast-food outlet (which won’t need to find!) Teachers will also need to dedicate wall space for their “Quality is Job #1” board. We will provide lesson plans and troubleshooting advice to interested teachers. Support materials such as hamburger slips, homework passes can be provided as needed.

Staff

Mrs. DeMaria and Mrs. Quiros have taught 4th and 5th grade traditional classrooms. Presently, they creatively team teach a multi-age 4th and 5th grade program in the Moorpark Unified School District.

Grades Elementary - High School

Language Arts
Science
Social Studies
Math
Art
Technology

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VCEDA
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N.A.M.E.S.: A Path to Balanced Literacy

Grades Pre-School 1-2
Visual Performing Arts
Math
Language Arts
Social Skills

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The Idea and its Value
The N.A.M.E.S. (Numerals, Alphabet, Memory, Emergent Skills) activity is a year long, ongoing, learning center that builds on the various numerical and literacy skills developed throughout the year. Children are introduced to the center by the reading of A. My Name Is Alice. Children’s class pictures are mounted on tops from frozen orange juice cans and magnetic strips are attached to the backs. Sentence strips with the children’s names also have magnetic strips attached to the backs. The children manipulate the pictures and name strips. They may match names that begin with the same letter, match names that are the same, match pictures to the names, arrange names alphabetically, match names according to the final letter, and use the names to write about different classmates. Later in the year, individual letter tiles are made available for the children to manipulate and spell the names—first by copying and then from memory. Often after the children become familiar with the early literacy skills that enable them to read the names, some children will draw pictures that correspond to a unit of study (i.e., animals, vehicles, etc.) and ask to mount them on magnetic strips. Then they will match these to beginning letter sounds of the word. Pupils will use the name pictures to make a pattern (i.e., boy, girl, boy, girl) or to sort and classify the children by various attributes, and then count the number of pictures in each classification. Often children will count the number of letters in a name and classify accordingly. After modeling the alphabetizing of names by using the alphabet chart, many of the children have taken 5 or 6 names and alphabetized them. We use this list to determine who is the helper for each day of the week. Through this activity, the children have learned a fair and democratic way of taking turns in a meaningful manner. Meaning and oral language is embedded in the language process as children choose a name and describe the child’s dress, activity, or feelings in a dictated sentence or more to accompany the drawing or painting of the child whose name he/she chose. Children work in small groups and there is continual self and group correcting as the pupils work with the names. If two names begin with the same letter, children will sometimes match the name to the picture incorrectly. I can often hear the students discussing the matching process. “Do you think that this is Ryan? ’No, this is Bob.” “Why?” “Rob has only three letters and this one has four.” Not only are the children interacting socially but they are employing critical thinking skills as they verify their thinking and justify their answers. The children are reading high-frequency words since their names appear throughout the classroom—i.e., their storage area, math graphs, displayed work, etc. The matching of the pictures to the printed name increases the child’s awareness that print contains a message. In February, the N.A.M.E.S. center is expanded into a classroom post office project and children write to other children. The N.A.M.E.S. center has been an effective way of introducing my pupils to the components of a balanced reading and writing program. In order for a child to emerge into a competent reader, he/she needs to know how to:

- bring meaning and oral language to stories
- understand the concepts of print
- match a spoken word with the written word
- read and write some high frequency words
- visually perceive print
- hear the sounds (phonemes)
- identify alphabet letters
- self-correct their reading
- use available print, people, and visual resources

Children’s names offer a meaningful, highly motivating vehicle to achieve the above objectives in a multi-faceted, stress free environment that enables pupils to experience success at their level of development.

Students
Over the past two years, 160 children have participated in N.A.M.E.S. This center allows children of various ages and stages of development to successfully participate and develop confidence and self-esteem.

State Frameworks
N.A.M.E.S. supports the goals of “Every Child A Reader” by offering a balanced early literacy program that integrates oral language and writing skills into all areas of the curriculum. Children are learning Science and Math framework skills as they sort, classify, count, compare, and contrast. All the State frameworks stress the importance of open ended, manipulative activities and ongoing assessment. N.A.M.E.S. affords the teacher an opportunity to observe and assess many literacy skills.

Facilities/Materials
A My Name Is Alice by J. Bayer, orange juice lids, magnetic strips, oil pen for magnetic board, alphabet letters or tiles, alphabet chart, and class pictures are the needed materials to set up the center.

Outside Resources
None are required but parents are encouraged to help the children write words and make “orange juice lid” pictures to add to the center. It’s Elementary recommendations include the importance of parental and family support.
The Strain that Strained to Survive

The Idea and Its Value
This beautifully integrated unit incorporates the use of the novel, The Andromeda Strain, by Michael Crichton, to be read and studied in English classes (grades 7-12) and at the same time be studied and discussed in the Science classes. Program Overview. This Andromeda Strain Unit is a perfect unit as California Education is moving toward integrating the curriculum. This unit introduces the science fiction novel in the English class by reading the poem, “Sonnet--To Science” by Edgar Allen Poe. The students are immediately thrust into interpreting the general meaning of the poem, analyzing what they think science is about, and discussing the idea of science running fantasy. This helps them put their views about science into perspective and understand the abstract concept of science as an entity. This discussion is followed up in the science class and a “scientific” view is introduced.

Students will be guided through the novel with character charts, dead body analysis charts, maps, reading schedules, thought-provoking discussion questions, fun and meaningful activities, and much more. These activities are designed to promote the use of higher-level thinking skills. For example, the discussion questions for each chapter not only ask for factual feedback, but some of the questions like “Compare and contrast the green spot and the black rock” allow the student to use the language arts skills he/she has already learned. A question like “What did you learn from the conversation between Mr. Jackson and Hall?” causes a student to examine not only the material he has read, but also what he/she has gotten out of it. “How does the ending of this chapter make you feel?” makes the student recollect his feelings while reading the novel.

Positive student attitudes and behavior naturally occur when students are presented with the writing activity for chapters three and four. In this activity, students choose one of several “real life” crises in which they might find themselves. The students will then write a detailed, ten-step plan to deal with the crisis. At the end of the novel, their ten steps will be compared to the Wildfire team’s steps in handling their crisis.

While the English classes read the novel, study the vocabulary and analyze the book from a literary point of view, the science classes are discussing what a strain is, blood types, blood clotting, unknown bacteria, known bacteria (E-Coli), etc. This unit was done for the first time last year (94-95) and it was exciting to see the positive responses by those students and teachers involved when something learned from the science class was brought into the English class so that all the students (and teachers) could have a broader understanding of the novel.

Real enthusiasm was expressed when the students were presented with a project list and were told that they could turn in one project for both classes. Some examples of the projects include creating an architectural blueprint of the Wildfire Lab, researching an unknown bacteria using a process parallel to the one Dr. Stone used, researching what is known as the flesh-eating bacteria, creating life histories for the characters, putting together a video news broadcast and more.

In this 47 week unit (the amount of time depends on student level), all learners benefit from the discussions, projects, reading and writing activities, because often they will be writing about themselves, or working in pairs or groups to complete the assignments. Any teaching team interested in using this outstanding, integrated, thematic unit will quickly see the benefits and enjoy watching his/her class come alive with the joy of learning.

State Frameworks
These lessons support the science and language arts frameworks by emphasizing integration and hands on activities. This unit also develops skills in observation and reflection.

Students
One hundred sophomore students at the general level participated in this project.

Facilities/Materials
A class set of the novel, The Andromeda Strain, by Michael Crichton, an overhead for maps and sequencing activity, science lab.

Outside Resources
Maps, “Science World” (January 15, 1994), or any articles on bacteria.

Grades 7-12
Language Arts
Science

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Grades 6-12
English/Language Arts

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The Idea and Its Value
This unit has proven to be the most stimulating, enriching and
most well-received unit that we have developed during our teach-
ing careers. We share this enthusiastically so that more students
will be able to reap the benefits of personal growth and self-esteem
building that we have seen in our classrooms.

The Literary Hall of Fame is a culminating unit designed to
challenge students to critically evaluate the positive or negative
impact of characters from the literature read throughout the year.
The focus for the idea emerged when two English colleagues at-
terned a GATE workshop designed to differentiate and adapt our
curriculum for all levels in addition to providing challenging con-
textual research skills. Many steps have been developed to appeal to
the wide range of ways that students express their talents. The final
step was created to promote class unity and self-esteem.

Step One: Group Brainstorming. Groups of four compile a list of
significant characters, both protagonists and antagonists, from
short stories, novels, plays, nonfiction and poetry read during the
year. Next, the group members analyze and defend each
character's significance based on the following criteria:

- impact on the lives of others in the story
- impact on the reader through the right or wrong choices made
  by the literary character
- enhanced learning of a culture or time period
- exemplified honorable or positive traits
- character resolved conflict in his or her life
- grew from the challenges overcome

Step Two: Group Presentations. After narrowing their list down to
four characters, each group member defends one of the charac-
ters to the class. All students take notes during these presentations.

Step Three: Homework. Each student is given three 5 x 8 cards.
Their homework is to select the three characters that they person-
ally wish to choose as their candidates for the Literary Hall of Fame.
One side of the card is used for a picture or symbol of the charac-
ter with a border and the other side includes the following written
information:

- three significant facts from the literary character's life
- how this character resolved conflict in his or her life and grew
  from the challenges that he/she faced
- three adjectives that describe the character
- two incidents from the literature that illustrate how this charac-
ter had an effect on others
- NOMINATION STATEMENT: "I nominate ____ as a member of
  the Literary Hall of Fame because..."

Step Four: Group Nominations. Students partner with a neighbor to
share the cards prepared for homework. Together they select the
top three cards from their combined pile of six. They make their
selections based on a review of the criteria listed above. Then each
pair meets with another pair and goes through the same process.
Finally, each group meets with another group of four and again
decides on the three top candidates for the Literary Hall of Fame.
From the groups of eight, three students are selected to prepare a
one-minute campaign speech for each of the candidates chosen by
the group.

Step Five: Voting. The candidates are listed on the board while the
campaign speeches are given. Then each class member votes for
their two favorite. Narrowing personal selections down to two
requires considerable critical reevaluation of the criteria. Votes are
totaled to determine the top three candidates.

Step Six: Bulletin Board Display. The first, second and third place
candidates are displayed for each period. Students from all classes
are likely interested in the selections made by the other periods.
The entire bulletin board is bordered by numerous cards—the best
efforts of all students.

Step Seven: Culminating Essay. Each student selects one of the lit-
erary characters to describe in an essay using the following student
Instruct:

1. Introduce the concept that characters in literature often enable
the reader to relate to life's experiences. This leads into your thesis
statement where you will name your significant character and list
three reasons why you have selected this particular character.

2. Defend one of your reasons with an experience from the
story and give commentary (perhaps resolving or creating con-
flict, perhaps affecting other characters, etc.).

3. Present your second reason and support it with an example from
the literature.

4. Present your third reason and support it with example from
the literature, history, or present day experiences.

5. Conclude with how this character affected you personally.
In other words, tell what you learned from this character that can be
applied to your own life experiences.

Step Eight: Class Hall of Fame. Each class member draws from a hat
the name of another student without revealing the name to anyone.
For homework each student designs a card for the name drawn
following the format used for the Literary Characters except this
criteria applies to class interactions. This is one homework assign-
ment embedded by all students—even the low achiever.

Step Nine: Class Celebration of Talents and Contributions. Each stu-
dent shares his or her card with the class and tells how the indi-
vidual has contributed to the class during the year. Dramatic
roles, reading talents, class participation, etc. It is very satisfying
to watch the facial expressions while praise is being given. This
final step was definitely a self-esteem builder and unanimously ac-
claimed in the students' end-of-year evaluation surveys.

State Frameworks
This unit supports many elements of the framework: high level
thinking activities, interdisciplinary connections, group dis-
cussion, organization, and expansion of listening, speaking, read-
ing and writing that guide students through a range of thinking
processes. The framework also encourages collaboration as well as
writing tasks that include presentation.

Students
All GATE students, GATE to resource students, and all ELP students
benefit from this activity with success and high interest for all.

Materials
5 x 8 cards (4 per student), markers, crayons or colored pencils,
availability of literature read throughout the year.
Build Your Own City

Build Your Own City is a culminating hands-on activity that enables students to analyze the effects of setting on characters from a piece of literature on society in general. It was adapted from a student teacher project where the idea was expanded to include a wide range of student modalities for expression of the final product. Students create a setting and speculate on the impact their setting would have had on their novel’s characters. Before they create their new city, as a group they examine the aspects of setting that affected the lives of their literary characters. Their analysis leads them to the choices they make in the creation of their own group city. Different student strengths are accessed through the variety of modes of expression and divergent thinking incorporated in this project.

Students are placed into groups where they draw upon their critical thinking skills and imagination to create a city with a specific type of government, commerce, currency, foods, music, art, leisure activities, and cultural information. They determine how the characters from their novels (I used A Day No Pigs Would Die by Robert Reck and The Pearl by John Steinbeck) would have been affected if they had lived in their newly created city. As a group they create a hand-copy product of the setting using poster board, paper, dioramas, computer generated graphics, or the SIM program. They dramatically present their city to the class using visual aids, realia, music, etc. and turn in a well-written essay that presents group ideas.

This project begins at the culmination of the novel unit and takes a minimum of three class periods (students complete individual aspects of the project for homework). This minimum is broken down into one day to conference, one work day with more conferencing, and a presentation day.

Students especially enjoy the capability of creating a “better” society where their beloved literary characters wouldn’t have had to suffer the slings and arrows of a less innovative society. One group created a futuristic society where computer chips replaced the Visa card and their form of commerce would have allowed their character’s pet pig to survive and Kino’s pearl to be properly marketed so Coyote could have lived to become an adult. Students feel a sense of pride at being able to offer options to characters who had significant life struggles.

Build Your Own City was implemented in a heterogeneously grouped 9th grade English class and all students met with success because this project appeals to the varied talents of students: innovative thinkers give birth to dynamic ideas, musicians create/select music, artists design scenes, writers write scripts and essays, speakers dramatically present information, and kinesthetic learners create concrete aspects of their group’s city.

The steps in Build Your Own City:

*Task #1: SETTING: Identify the kind of government, location of city, and the name of it. Give class a general sense of setting. Also explain the kind of food eaten, the trade or businesses available in the city, and how people make a living.

*Task #2: CHARACTER PREDICTIONS: Predict how novel characters (Ivan and Kino in The Pearl or Robert and Haven in A Day No Pigs Would Die) would live in the city and how the novel outcome would have changed based on the setting changes.

*Task #3: ART: Make a completed model of the setting of the city through picture, props, diorama, computer graphics, etc.—your choice!

*Task #4: MUSIC: Play a selection of appropriate music that is thematically united to the setting of the city and explain how it relates to the city.

*Task #5: ESSAY: Explain in a well-written essay the group’s ideas.

All students contribute to the presentation through skit, song, news report, demonstration, etc. A rubric is attached that breaks down each area of responsibility.

State Framework

This unit supports many elements of the Framework: high level thinking activities, interdisciplinary activities, drama, group activities, integration of listening, speaking, reading and writing that guide students through a range of thinking processes. The Framework also encourages collaboration as well as writing tasks that include presentation.

Students

GATE to resource students as well as LEP students benefit from this activity with success and high interest for all.

Materials

Supplementary novels where setting is a key aspect (A Day No Pigs Would Die, The Pearl, etc.), butcher paper for scenes, paper, markers, poster board, CD or tape player.

Grades 6-12

Language Arts
Social Studies
Industrial Technology

More Information

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Fat Chance: A Unit of Fast Food, Fractions, Decimals & Percents

Grades 5-8
Fraction & Decimals
Percents
Science

More Information
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The Idea and Its Value
Fat Chance is a realistic, motivating unit in which middle grade students use fractions, decimals and percents to investigate healthy fast food choices. Building on their natural interest in food and friends, Fat Chance has students work together to explore the nutritional value of “Big Macs”, “Whoppers” and other popular fast foods. Fat Chance is designed to address students’ need for conceptualization and practice in the area of rational numbers. Traditionally, these topics have been taught in isolation and students have not developed a fundamental understanding of the part to whole relationships.

The beginning lessons, lay a groundwork of basic nutritional information as the students construct and analyze the “Food Pyramid.” They estimate and calculate the percent of fat in “Ten Popular Foods.” Current videos, such as “The Nutrition Facts Label” and “Cut the Fat,” help clarify the information on food labels and the health reasons to limit fat intake. These introductory activities provide the rationale for healthy nutritional choices.

“Snacktastic Bar” then introduces a chart or spreadsheet format for analyzing food labels and deciding whether a single food item or an entire meal falls within the recommended diet. Now, students have the nutritional background and mathematical skills to analyze fast food meals. Each group chooses a nutrition facts chart from a local fast food restaurant. Their task is to act as a public relations team for their restaurant and promote a healthy meal which would attract health-conscious customers.

In their culminating investigation, students are fulfilling the objectives of the unit:

- Gathering data from charts
- Using formulas
- Creating ratios
- Converting fractions to decimals and percents
- Rounding decimals
- Utilizing calculators and protractors
- Creating circle graphs
- Comparing results to a given standard

Fat Chance is a strong interdisciplinary math/science unit for middle grade students. It helps students understand fractions, decimals, percents and graphs in a realistic context. It encourages them to work cooperatively with a partner and engage in analytical thinking. This unit empowers them with practical information about nutrition, so they won’t have to take a Fat Chance with their health.

State Frameworks
The California Mathematics Framework emphasizes Math Power for All. Fat Chance is an accessible and mathematically rich unit for all students. It incorporates the three unifying ideas for grades 5-8: proportional reasoning, multiple representations, and patterns and generalizations. Finally, it is a coherent unit with a balance between conceptual understanding, problem-solving and basic skills.

Students
Fat Chance was taught in October and November of 1995. The unit spanned six weeks for 400 eighth graders in heterogeneous groupings in grades 5-8. It was adapted to a math class and also taught as an interdisciplinary math/science unit.

Facilities/Materials
The unit’s inspiration came from an article by Brenda Shannon, “Our Diets Are Killing Us,” in Mathematics Teaching in the Middle School. It needs nutrition facts labels from fast food restaurants, nutrition facts charts from fast food restaurants, calculators, compasses and protractors. Valuable supplements are the videos: “The Nutrition Facts Label” and “Cut The Fat.”

Staff
Julie Mosher has taught eighth grade mathematics for five years at E.O. Green School in the Hueneme School District.

Vicki Vierra has taught for ten years in Yuma, Arizona; El Paso, Texas; Department of Defense Dependents Schools in Panama, Soma Elementary School and E.O. Green School in the Hueneme School District.

Both teachers are active with the Tri-County Math Project at UCSB and frequent presenters for Ventura County Superintendent of Schools staff development opportunities.
Conflict Resolution: Are You a Shark, Turtle, Teddy Bear, Fox, or Owl?

The Idea and Its Value

Conflict Resolution is a classroom and school-wide program to promote positive student relations. The success or failure of our future rests with our interpersonal skills, especially the ability to resolve conflict. Students learn that conflict resolution is one thing they can use forever... with teachers, others students, boyfriends & girlfriends, their marriages, their jobs, and someday, even their own teenagers!

Ocean View has developed a four-session curriculum which teaches basic conflict-resolution skills with a strong focus on understanding emotions, attitudes and corresponding behaviors of others, and awareness of our own ways of coping with conflict. Students learn some appropriate ways to deal with the "enemy's assault" and other appropriate survival skills. The four-part curriculum is interactive in nature, using simulation and discussion. A unique application has been tried at Ocean View Junior High: the class is comprised of a mixture of adolescent special class students and leadership students! Following the four lessons, students may participate in a new mediation with someone with whom they're in conflict.

Following the conflict resolution class, there are usually several students with the interest and ability to become Peer Mediators, including several SDC students! These Peer Mediators assist in 1) resolving mild conflicts on campus, often as an alternative to suspension, 2) co-leading counseling groups for students actually suspended for fighting, and 3) training other students to become Peer Mediators.

The classroom lessons are co-taught by the special day class teacher, the school counselor and the Peer Mediators. Additionally, mediation sessions are supervised by selected teachers, the school counselor or administrator. The outcome of the groups and needed mediations is 1) to give the participants some problem-solving strategies other than aggression, and 2) to provide a chance for "fighters" to mediate their conflict and reach a mutually binding agreement.

State Framework

This project provides "real life applications" and promotes "higher level thinking abilities." Active learning principles, co-operative learning and enhancing self-esteem are utilized in development of the students' personal and interpersonal growth.

Students

Approximately 45 students per year receive the basic four-part curriculum. Over the course of the year, the students selected as Peer Mediators provide lessons and mediations to approximately 30 more students, all of whom have had actual conflict.

A current goal of the program is to have Peer Mediators train elementary school Student Council members in a "playground mediation" model, as well as offer the "Conflict Resolution Group Workbook" lessons to peers in the Advisement classes. A long range goal is to have a school-wide program in which Peer Mediators provide the programs to all 750 students, and provide regular support to the elementary school sites.

Facilities/Materials

Our "Conflict Resolution Group Handbook," used in the four sessions, was written in Spring of 1994 by Principal Sharon Anderson, Special Day Class Teacher George Morton, School Counselor Stef Sisman, and the late Jane Shroult, Director of Deficiency Prevention for INTERFACE.

Materials needed are minimal. We can provide a "Xerox-ready" copy of our workbook, which is ten pages in length. Facilities needed are: space in the office where staff can supervise peer mediations.

Resources

Our students are interested in providing a "Win-Workshop" with other Peer Mediators from other schools. Call us!

Staff

The individuals involved in providing the Conflict Resolution program are the Peer Mediators (truly the greatest assets), Special Day Class and Leadership Class Teacher George Morton, and District Guidance Counselor Stef Sisman.
Poem in Your Pocket Week

Grades 4-10
Language Arts

More Information
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Business Partner
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"Poetry is the language of the gods." — S. Rogers

The Idea and Its Value
Poem In Your Pocket Week provides 6th grade students in language arts classes the opportunity to understand, appreciate, and enjoy one of the great classical genres by selecting and sharing favorite poems with their classmates while earning "points" for caring the poem on their persons.

This two-week unit began with an announcement that we were about to study poetry. They groaned. They moaned. "It's drivel," they said. "It's corny and mushy, and nobody understands it." We then discussed the fact that many people are afraid of poetry and students tried to figure out why. "The words are hard," one student complained. "Poetry doesn't make any sense," said another. I then presented a poem, Robert Frost's "Mending Wall." We talked about metaphor and hidden meaning. Most were astounded that a poem could have two meanings! Next I announced that we were going to have a Poem In Your Pocket Week during which students could earn points if they were carrying a poem in their pocket when I "tagged" them on campus. I got the idea when I read in a history book that James Madison attended the Constitutional Convention with a "pocket in his pocket" and adapted it to fit in with my poetry unit.

I asked my students to find a poem that meant something to them and that they would be willing to share with the rest of the class. I specified that it come from a poetry book and that it be a poem that they had never studied in school. They were thrilled! Points for carrying a poem? What could be easier? Several of them knew of poems they wanted to share, but they did not know the author's name. They learned that in some poetry anthologies you can find a poem by knowing only the first line. Many spent several hours reading poetry in the library or at home in order to find just the right poem to present to their classmates.

They talked about Poem In Your Pocket Week so much that it piqued the curiosity of the other students on campus and several teachers asked if they might use the idea. Can you imagine a junior high school with groups of students reading their poems to each other? It was a hoorah!

The best part was "catching" them on campus. I would pop into their math class or their science class (with teacher permission, of course) and ask if they had their poem in their pocket. I "tagged" them at lunch, at Nutrition Break, and between classes. I even went out to P.E. to ask students if they were carrying. Those ratatat had them tucked in their shoes! Of course, the poems had a lingering aroma of Sauvignon or Athlete's Foot, but that's just one of the joys of being a teacher! If I caught someone without a poem (only two out of sixty-five) I tried a second time. The second time around they had them! The poems were just wonderful! Some were short, some were long, some were funny, some were sad or odd, some were silly and some were intense. Some made me laugh and others made me cry. A few were so special that I added them to my teaching repertoire.

This idea could be adapted in many ways. Students could have a math riddle in their pockets. Or a famous historical quotation. Or a current event. The possibilities are endless!

What made it fun is that the students never knew when they were going to be "tagged." Every single one was proud of his/her poem.

State Frameworks
English-Language Arts Framework: Poem In Your Pocket Week supports the state framework which includes the study of poetry and encourages reading and library skills.

...Teachers must (1) be able to excite students about learning to listen, speak, read, and write... (Section 3)
An effective English-language arts program introduces students to literature representing many perspectives, diverse styles and cultures and points of view, classic and contemporary attitudes, and a range of modes from fiction and drama through poetry... (Section 3)

Students
Students are in the eighth grade and are thirteen and fourteen years old.

Over 65 students participated, including one honors class and one core class where the ability level ranges from very low to quite high.

Facilities/Materials
No special facilities or materials are needed.

Outside Resources
Students were encouraged to visit the library and to use America Online or the Internet to find poems that appealed to them. At the end of the week each student typed up his/her poem on a new (and non-odorous) piece of paper and we compiled a book to share with parents at Open House. It was one of the most successful, fun projects I've ever done. The students loved it!

Staff
Skip Wild Harrington has spent most of her career teaching English and history to eighth and ninth graders. Author, student, world traveler, and lover of poetry, she is currently a mentor teacher in literature for the Pleasant Valley School District.
**Alakazam...It's a Museum**

**The Idea and Its Value**

Alakazam...It's a Museum! is a culminating activity for the study of sixth grade ancient history. Generated from a hands-on curriculum, the students transform the classroom into a museum of ancient cultures displaying the "artifacts" they have created throughout the year. Student teams are formed to create individual exhibit rooms of each ancient civilization studied, from Early Humankind to Rome. In cooperative groups, students work to review the civilization they are responsible for and to assess and organize the artifacts available for their exhibit. Once the tables and chairs of the classroom are arranged to form the framework of the museum room walls, teams use the large world maps they created in September to skirt the tables. Intense discussion, continuous decision making, and explosive brainstorming are the order of the day as the student curators design their particular exhibit. Once the general plan is defined, the teams' writing skills are challenged to write an explanation for each artifact, giving credit to the archaeologist who "discovered" it. Technology skills are utilized to produce a detailed brochure of each exhibit room to assist and enhance the visitors' museum tour.

Creativity breeds creativity as ideas are expressed, refined, and implemented in the days prior to the grand opening of the museum. Students are transformed into expert exhibit builders, skillful archaeologists, and true authorities on the ancient history that had previously only been a required subject in school. High energy and an accelerated working noise level, coupled with a pressing deadline, magically metamorphose the classroom into a museum.

From striking Greek temples and the glittering Egyptian sarcophagi to the chiton-robed student docents, the Museum opens its doors to the many visitors attending Open House Night. Students proudly lead parents, grandparents, sisters, brothers, and peers through the artifact packed rooms of the museum, indicating and professionally explaining noted pieces of work. Rave reviews from everyone fill the students with pride in themselves as they realize how much they have learned and accomplished, how capable they are, and what effective teamwork can produce.

**State Framework**

The History/Social Study framework requires the sixth grade study of ancient history, and encourages hands-on, interactive curriculum. It also emphasizes the integration of listening, speaking, language arts, and critical thinking skills. The use of cooperative groups allows for students of all skill levels to be successful, in addition to practicing the life skills necessary for success in the adult world.

**Students**

The Museum is built by 65 students from the 9 core classes I teach. Students from all levels of academic achievement including GATE were involved in this project. This is an adaptable project. Fourth graders could create a California history museum, as easily as seventh graders could create a Civil War museum.

**Facilities/Materials**

All work was done in the classroom. The majority of the materials were the artifacts that were created and collected throughout the year. Technology software used to create the brochure was Fagemaker, although I can see that Print Shop Delux would work well also.

**Outside Resources**

It is always beneficial for the students to have visited an actual museum to have a first-hand museum experience. In Ventura County, the Albinger Museum has an on-site archeological program that supports the beginning history units, and the Malibu Getty is a must at the end of the year, if you can get a docent reservation. Both museums give the students much needed museum experience and background training for this project.

**Staff**

I have taught 15 years, the last 9 in sixth grade. The last six years I have team taught in a core program, always teaching history, other times teaching science, Quest, and language arts.

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**Grade 4-7**

History
Language Arts

**More Information**

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Dr. Robert Donahue,
Principle
Pleasant Valley Elementary

Business Partner
American Commercial Bank
Oceans of Fun for Everyone
A Living Museum for Buddies

Grades 1-3/7-8

Language Arts
Science
Math
Self-esteem
Business Skills
Art
Performing Arts

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Marta Serna, Principal
Rio School District

Business Partners
American Commercial
Bank
Weyerhauser Company
Foundation

The Idea and Its Value
Oceans of Fun pairs junior high and primary grade students in an interactive approach where the two groups using the Storyline model cooperatively create a living museum which involves: writing, researching, role-playing, developing job descriptions, calculating costs and space requirements, preparing museum items and sharing the final product with an audience. A great value derived from this activity is the building of self-esteem via the interaction within the class and between the buddy classes. As each student assumes a part within this process, the unit fosters responsibility and resourcefulness. Furthermore, Oceans of Fun promotes a continued, growing enthusiasm which sustains the learning environment throughout the unit.

The impetus for this unit was to combine the Storyline approach with the need for role-models. By connecting with an upper grade teacher who was looking for a motivating tool to use with junior high students, this program is a successful way to involve older and younger students in a meaningful learning experience.

Students start the process by brainstorming the junior high students brainstorm ideas for creating an oceanographic museum, which entails establishing departments and jobs within the museum. In this student-driven unit, the students generate their own ideas through biographies, research and role-playing to produce this unique museum. Throughout the unit, both grade levels record their ideas on chart paper and post them around the room to review and revise as needed. The primary grades write questions they have about the ocean and forward these to the "staff members" of the museum. In response, each department of the museum thoroughly researches the questions, replies in writing to the inquiry and creates exhibits for display in the museum.

While the museum is being readied, the primary students are working on a multi-sized bulletin board containing the different ocean levels and the marine life within each level. After-wards, the primary students list the people whose jobs and lives are related to the ocean, such as marine biologists, oceanographers, veterinarians, scuba divers, the Coast Guard, lifeguards and even sunbathers. Once the students choose their role, they create mini-biographies and design a life-size paper version of their character. Simultaneously, the junior high students select their museum roles, such as: advertising agents, museum store employees, researchers, docents and architects/interior designers. They write their job descriptions, record their daily schedules and prepare paper busts of their characters.

The students are responsible for developing materials related to their role. For example, the advertising agents make signs, brochures, posters, etc. to market their museum. As another example, the museum store employees prepare stationary and other ocean-related gift items. In order to integrate a real-life element into this ongoing process, the teacher can connect with a scenario which requires the students to utilize higher level thinking skills. For example, the junior high teacher proposes that the power has failed and how would the museum staff cope with the potential disaster. The students, as a class, brainstorm their responses. The department members within the museum staff then work together to deal with the problem and record their plans in writing. Finally, each individual responds in journals to the crisis. By providing a real-life situation, the students are exposed to an incident which requires creative thinking, problem solving and group cooperation.

As a culminating event, the students participate in the grand opening of the museum. The primary students are invited to visit the museum site and meet the "experts." During the tour of the museum, the docents and other staff members give information and answer the little buddies. Following the tour, the primary grade students have an opportunity to "shop" at the museum store and utilize their money skills. As a special treat, the little buddies perform an ocean play. How do the students feel about this month-long unit? The bright smiles and excited voices when the students finally meet each other is evidence that museums, buddies and oceans of fun form a tide of learning and sharing.

State Framework
Oceans of Fun supports California State Frameworks in Language Arts, Visual and Performing Arts, Science, Math and Art. Besides relating to skills in these specific frameworks, this real-life unit provides an opportunity for students to form lasting friendships while promoting self-esteem.

Students
About 62 students representing grades 1st-9th and 7th-8th participated in this unit. This unit meets the needs of all students, including special needs, GATE and bilingual. Oceans of Fun can be adapted to any grade level.

Facilities/Materials
The museum requires a location where items can be displayed and viewed easily. For example, the school library was used for this particular project. Teacher created resources include a face template, a biography form and marine animal patterns. The main materials, however, are student generated and student created.

Staff
For the past three years, these two teachers have been learning, and as a result, a lasting commitment to cross-age involvement has been formed.
Physical Fitness Carnival

The Idea and Its Value

A Fitness Carnival is a unit of study that can be developed by students in grades 4-12 for students in the Special Day Class: Severely Handicapped program (S.D.C. - S.H.), that can be correlated across the curriculum.

The purpose of this unit is to strengthen the physical, emotional, and social well being of students from the S.D.C. - S.H. classroom.

This program is based on providing students in the S.D.C. - S.H. classroom with the opportunity to participate in a creative, fun, and exciting physical education experience. The activities for the program are created, constructed, and implemented by students from the regular 5th grade classroom in a carnival-like atmosphere.

The P.E. carnival is a collection of X different physical education activities developed specifically for students in the S.D.C. - S.H. class. The students from the S.D.C. - S.H. class rotate through a series of carnival booths that are geared to make the students work on kinesthetic body movements. The activities are created, constructed, and operated by students from the regular classroom. Each carnival takes place once a month and is built around a central theme.

The idea for the carnival begins in the regular classroom as a group project. Students are paired off into groups of 4. Each group is responsible for creating a carnival booth based on a monthly theme (e.g., Halloween) that requires the participants to use physical movements (jumping, throwing, pulling, pushing, etc.). The group must then develop a write-up of their idea explaining how it will work. They diagram and label their plan, and make a comprehensive list of all materials needed to construct it. The booths are made in the classroom by the students working in cooperative groups. Each group is required to create a poster that tells what the activity is. Specific requirements are that the booth be colorful, sturdy, safe, and constructed in such a way that they can be adapted to meet the needs of students with various ability levels (e.g., wheelchair, bound, or walker).

Once the booths are constructed, the students from each group give their activity a test run in order to correct any faults. On the day of the carnival the students erect their booths (good weather-outdoors, inclement weather-in auditorium). Each group designates a team captain whose responsibility, once the carnival starts, is to walk their students from the S.D.C. - S.H. class over to the next activity. Participants then rotate through each activity until they have finished the carnival loop. They receive a prize (e.g., a rubber band on their hand) for each activity completed. At the end of the carnival, teachers from the S.D.C. - S.H. class select any activities or materials they wish to take back to reuse in their classrooms.

This unit provides the opportunity for students in the regular classroom to work hand in hand with students from the S.D.C. - S.H. classroom. This interaction promotes unity, mutual respect, and friendships between the students. At the same time students from both classes are rewarded with a positive feeling of success, high self-esteem, and greater understanding of one another. The program is very flexible and can be adapted for students of all ages. My 4th and 5th grade classes have held carnivals for students ranging from Pre-K to Jr. High.

State Frameworks

The program covers all strands of the state framework for physical education.

Students

We have used this program for over 5 years with students in grades 4 & 5. The program provides students (creators and participants) with the opportunity to interact in a fun and creative environment that builds both physical and social skills.

Facilities/Materials

All directions are provided by the teacher in a 3 step process. Materials are ordinary classroom materials such as construction paper, paint, glue, markers, and tag board.

Outside Resources

Outside resources may include everyday household items, or donated items such as cardboard boxes or sheets.

Staff

Mrs. Endres has taught Special Education for the last 19 years at Moorpark and 4 years in Physical Education at L.A.U.D. Mr. Yancey has taught both 4th and 5th grades in the M.U.S.D. for the past 8 years.
Toucan Tango, One Can Not: An Integrated, Interdisciplinary Unit on the Rain Forest

The Idea and Its Value
Toucan Tango, One Can Not is an integrated interdisciplinary unit on the rain forest with a culminating "Radical Rain Forest Fair" that includes a student made slide show and research project display.

The rain forest unit that is created uses an exciting hands on approach to learning. This unit addresses the plight of rain forests, their richness, diversity, and the need to preserve them due to their global value. Students will work together in cooperative groups for twelve sessions during a six week period. The students increase their scientific knowledge of the rain forest while working towards the goal of completing their research projects to be shared with their families and friends and the "Radical Rain Forest Fair," creating a rain forest slide show to educate the public about the importance of rain forests, and participate in a mock U.N. meeting to debate the four reaching effects of tropical deforestation.

The idea of the unit, Toucan Tango, One Can Not, came from a trip I took to Costa Rica seeing first hand the truly inspirational beauty of rain forests. I visited the "Bosque Bierno de los Ninos" Children's International Rainforest, owned and protected by children all over the world. When I saw how hard children worked and how much they cared about saving the rain forest, I knew my students would also want to get involved and take the future into their own hands. I was right; the students couldn't wait to study the rain forest when I shared with them things I had brought back.

"The effectiveness related to motivation, and retention increased as students responded to the personalization and the fact that their teacher was there and brought back things to share with them." - Glenn Delfes

We studied about the Bosque Bierno de los Ninos through reading a bilingual monthly publication, Tachir Trails sent to us from Costa Rica. The more the students learned, the more they realized that learning about rain forests was not enough. They decided to educate the public through posters, student made commercials, a large size mural of the different layers and animals that live in the rain forest. The students raised money to send to the Bosque Bierno de los Ninos to adopt an area of the rain forest. The students surveyed the community about the pets they use in Santa Paula that come directly from the rain forests. The students learned about the medicine that comes from the plants in the rainforest and the potential cures that are not discovered yet. The students wrote heartfelt letters to the president explaining why it is important for the United States to help save the rain forest. The students were thrilled to get a real response to their letter, not a form letter, from the White House.

The students participated in many critical thinking activities. After learning about plant adaptation in the rain forest, the students designed three plants that would survive in the different layers of the rain forest. After watching a video on scientists working in the rain forest, the students designed transportation and scientific gear to help scientists overcome the obstacles of conducting experiments in the rain forest. The students participated in a mock U.N. meeting discussing the global effects of deforestation.

The students were teacher evaluated on their research projects that were completed at home. The students also self-evaluated their projects with a grade and rationale to support it. The students were also encouraged to pick a topic within the rain forest that interested them. The students knew what was expected of them, but also knew they had the freedom to be creative.

"I worked very hard on my project because it was fun and interesting. It took me four weeks to complete my model of the macaw and to write my report and speech." - John Nash, fourth grade student.

The students learned many things from each other and gained respect for their work. The projects were diverse and highlighted the student's individual talents.

"The Radical Rain Forest Fair was a huge success! The students were proud to show off their work to family and friends. The students also used the fair as another way to educate the public on the importance of the rain forest. The students created a rain forest slide show based on scientific facts.

"Students were motivated at the idea of creating their own slide show to be used at the CATE fair. Students participated willingly and were enthusiastic. I was able to direct this enthusiasm and energy into a positive outcome." - Glenn Delfes

I think teachers of any grade interested in teaching the rain forest should be able to adopt this unit for their level. The younger students can learn about animals and plants while the older students can study about the interdependence of the ecosystem and the political and economic motivations for deforestation that have a global effect. I encourage teachers to make the rain forest real for their students. The students truly learn to love and appreciate the rain forest and the interrelationship of the world. The new knowledge will be used to influence their future actions, which will in turn affect the future.

State Frameworks
Science framework investigates the animals and plants of the rain forest, examines the weather patterns in the rain forest, and looks at the physical characteristics of the rain forest habitat. Social Studies: discover the interdependence of the tribal communities on the rain forest, creating laws to help protect the rain forest, engage in debates about the economics of deforestation.

Language Arts: Reading literature books relating to rain forests, keeping a "Jungle Journal", writing a letter to the President, holding a mock U.N. meeting.

Math: Survey and chart jungle products used in our community

Visual and Performing Arts: Creating a wall sized mural of the layers of the rain forest, creating a slide show, role playing tribal experiences in the rain forest, filming commercials to educate the public.

Students
134 Gifted and Talented students in grades 2 through 5 participated in the fall of 1994. It is easily applicable to all learners. It fits easily in grades 3 through 6.

Facilities/Materials
Work is done in a classroom setting. The materials that are needed are: books about rain forests, VCR, camera, slide projector, rain forest slides, art materials, information about the Bosque Bierno de los Ninos. I have developed a twenty-eight page neglected rain forest unit, including bibliography, that can be shared with other teachers.

Outside Resources
Addresses of rain forest protection organizations, so students can write and receive information for their research.
The Idea and Its Value
As a high school teacher of Spanish, I felt that a great motivator to learn the language and to be culturally appreciative would be to link my students with bilingual pen pals at an elementary school. Each of my five periods of Spanish at Ventura High School was grouped with a classroom at Will Rogers Elementary School, where more than half the population speaks Spanish. The elementary students range in grade from 2nd to 5th, and my students are 1st and 2nd year Spanish learners. There were no postage fees because we used district mail delivery. Envelopes were donated by a company. The first round of letters were written by my students using Spanish to make introductions, describe themselves, and then to ask questions of their pen pals. Many were inspired to use Spanish dictionaries, seek help from Spanish speaking friends, and asked me for help. To teach letter writing format to their young pen pals, they used salutations, closures, and even addressed the envelope correctly with a hand drawn stamp. All types of learners enjoyed this correspondence program. The letters showed wonderful insight and peer teaching as they wrote about their classes, hobbies, and personal stories. The elementary students were delighted to hear that their primary language, Spanish, was being mastered by the high school students and would lead to college entry and a good job. Their self-esteem was boosted by the appreciation of their culture and language. My students learned to be compassionate, caring and nurturing. They finally met at a Christmas party in my classroom. Each period enjoyed meeting and celebrating their friendships. The total number of students who participated was 360. The day of parties was covered by the LA Times and a wonderful story with photo appeared the next day. This pen pal program is low cost, supports the state framework and has such wonderful impact. It also teaches the joy of letter writing to all who participated. I could see the growth in personal development and Spanish skills.

State Framework
The California Language Arts Framework calls for meaningful, relevant learning strategies that inspire writing and reading at all grade levels. Cross-curriculum activities that integrate learning areas are crucial for the higher level thinking skills of Bloom’s Taxonomy such as application and evaluation. This pen pal program was a “beyond the textbook” adventure for all.

Students
As each round of letters arrived, the success of the program was evidenced by comments from students, parents, and teachers. They included, “I can’t wait to meet my pen pal,” “My 5th grader realizes his pen pal,” and “My pen pal is bilingual. How cool!” As my students improved their skills, they wrote longer and more complex letters. This type of program can be implemented in almost any subject area. Having students of different ages write each other is a valuable learning experience.

Facilities/Materials
Teacher-made directions and cooperation between participating instructors are the most important elements. The District mail provides free mail delivery. I integrated art and writing to the work, and included discussion of Latino holidays such as Dia de los Muertos and Las Posadas.

Staff
Aline Yee Grossman has taught for six years. In 1994, she was selected Ventura District Teacher of the Year, Ventura County Teacher of the Year, and one of five California Teachers of the Year. Her background is in languages and professional dance, having taught and performed in Europe. She received a B.A. from UCLA in English and Italian literature, and her teaching credential is from California State University at Northridge. Special thanks to participating teachers at Will Rogers School and coordinator, Twyla Finn.

Grades 2-12
Spanish
Language Arts
Art

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Henry Robertson,
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Business Partners
Ventura Chamber of Commerce
Sand Castles

Grades 6-10
English/Language Arts
History
Fine Arts

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Business Partner
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The Idea and Its Value
Sand Castles — built in the ancient realms of our imaginations, nurtured by Gregorian chants, and brought to fruition on California beaches — is a unit that breathes life into the study of the Middle Ages. Blending language arts skills with the exploration of European history from the year 500 A.D. to 1500 A.D., this unit centers on the reading of the novel, The Door in the Wall by Marguerite de Angeli. It culminates with a beach celebration, the annual Sand Castle Competition, that lets students create, display, and explain all aspects of medieval castle building.

I want my students to "feel" the Middle Ages so I use a multi-sensory approach — music, food, art, and drama — to enrich their acquisition of historical facts. Sand Castles can be completed in four to six weeks depending on how or if the elements are integrated with the social studies text. To build confidence in approaching the novel and the study of medieval history, we focus on vocabulary building so the necessary language becomes familiar to the students. We read and listen to folk tales and legends that center on King Arthur, Robin Hood, or castles in distress. Journal entries compare modern life with medieval society. We include maps to acquire a basic knowledge of European geography. These assignments are woven around the reading of the novel where characters add personal interest to historical events. Worksheets guide students through the novel and call on a blend of language arts and social studies skills. Teacher-made tests and written assignments help evaluate their academic progress.

Upon completion of the novel, students design their own castles and family crests. We form "castle teams" and plan our beach field trip where each team is allotted their manor and has to build their castle. Judges evaluate not only the quality of the construction but also how well each team explains the various parts of their castle. Actually, I was amazed at how well the students planned, built, and could evaluate their castle creators. As you can imagine, this type of hands-on field trip fueled student enthusiasm and pictures of the event were a great hit. This trip reinforces and encourages positive behavior and academic effort. Cost is minimal.

This unit develops higher level thinking skills by having the students use a variety of learned facts to plan, design, and build their own castles. The unit grew out of frustration with a rather dry social studies text and a sense that history is more meaningful if it can be brought to life. The idea of the field trip came from watching my son's efforts at the beach.

Because there is such a variety of activities, it seems that all but the most unreachable students can find something that will spark their interest. Other teachers can use this unit with a small investment for books, music, and art supplies to broaden their approach to history and to provide hands-on activities that require real-life skills from their students.

Related Projects: Book Cover, Castle Project (Design), Family Coat/Of Arms, Maps, Battle Maps, Medieval Dress, Writing Activities (i.e. A Day In the Life of a Monk, Serf, Noble, Queen, King, Knight, Marquis, Troubadour)

State Framework
Both the English/Language Arts Framework and the History/Social Studies Framework promote learning across the curriculum from hands-on activities. This unit strengthens reading, writing, art and visual skills, oral presentation, and the understanding of a different historical period.

Students
There were two groups of students organized in language arts/social studies cores. Each core numbered 8 and included a heterogeneous blend of middle school students gifted and talented, resource, and transitional English. This unit could be used in a straight social studies class or a straight English class with a stronger emphasis in either area.

Facilities/Resources
Original handouts concerning the novel, colored pencils, markers, poster paper, a class set of the novel, and recorded music were used in the classroom. The field trip to the beach includes transportation, extra supervision and sand tools. Video equipment and computers can be used if available.

Music: Gregorian Chants
Field Trip: The Beach
Computer Games: Castles - Siege & Conquest
Videos: Castles/Macaulay, Robin Hood, Sword in the Stone
Books: Door in the Wall by Angeli, Castles by Macaulay, Admiration of the Road by Greavett, King Arthur by Johnston, Catherine Called Birdy by Cushman, Chronicles by Macaulay, Castles of the Middle Ages by Brodhead, Eyewitness Books - Castle by Greavett, Castles Cut Out by Anderson & Taylor, Castles of the World Coloring Book by Smith

Staff
Aimed with a masters degree from the University of California, I have taught a variety of subjects since my first year in 1972-73. These include math, English, social studies, reading, ESL, and even physical education. My emphasis is in the language arts area at the middle school level. In 1994, I started combining the two disciplines of language arts and social studies.
The Idea & Its Value

I Love Your Outfit introduces the Spanish vocabulary for items of clothing and creates several varied opportunities over a week's lessons to use that vocabulary in real life, natural situations. Because the vocabulary is introduced and repeated through listening, writing, realia, role-play presentations and artwork, students have repeated opportunities for success. This week long unit is part of the 7th grade required Spanish exploration which all 160 students, GATE, as well as special needs students, rotate through for one quarter.

Day 1 - The teacher describes her own clothes. "Yo llovo una camisa hoy." Pointing to another student, the teacher states, "Ella lleva una camisa." "¿Qué es una camisa?" The teacher holds up a shirt. "Está es una camisa." This method is used to introduce several basic pieces of clothing. The students are given a 16-square sheet of basic vocabulary pictures of clothing (attached) to label in Spanish. They cut the pictures apart and play "memory" with a partner, orally naming each item.

Day 2 - The teacher pulls clothes items from a box. The student names each item in Spanish, puts it on, and writes the word on the chalkboard. The students describe in writing the clothing of four friends in the room. They list four items for each blend, including the colors of the item. Afterwards the students read their best description to the class, ending with, "¡Me gusta tu ropa!"

Day 3 - Students work in groups to create four small collages of clothing appropriate for four different seasons. These collages are mounted in class for the students to check for appropriate pictures, correct vocabulary and correct spelling.

Day 4 - Students work in groups to create a role-play about what they should wear to a certain event. The group members argue about what would be the most appropriate outfit. They end each with, "¡Me gusta tu ropa!" They are encouraged to bring clothing in for props.

Day 5 - Students are videotaped as they present their plays. Students watch each play twice, assessing their peers on correct vocabulary, pronunciation, and poise.

State Framework

This series of lessons is easily adaptable to other vocabulary sets such as food, animals, family members, household items, etc. Ultimate mastery of basic vocabulary can be easily accomplished through these games, art, oral presentations and other activities. Parents remark that their child uses their Spanish at home appropriately. They are amazed at how quickly their child "masters" the vocabulary and skills. This unit is consistent with the State framework for the teaching of foreign language.

Staff

I developed this unit in response to research by Segal, Johnson and Kaden as well as my own graduate thesis, "Fostering Fluency the Natural Way." Group work, repetition, and the creation of a low-anxiety atmosphere where natural language is practiced in a non-threatening manner are the key elements for any language development.

Grades 4-12
Spanish
Foreign Language
Bilingual Education

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Walking Moons In Their Moccasins

The Idea and its Value
Walking Moons In Their Moccasins is an in-depth study of Native American culture reaching all areas of the curriculum through group research, a week-long classroom sharing, and a school-wide presentation. Native American history is essential to understanding the development of early American history. Since the current fifth grade textbook limits the background information of Native American culture and yet mentions Native Americans in almost every lesson throughout the text, I feel students need the foundation to appreciate this culture's life so relevant to today's living.

The first step in the unit is group research. Students are divided into five groups: Northeast, Southeast, Plains, Southwest, Northwest, and Inuit Native American groups. Each group is given a set of fifteen to thirty reference materials from our school and local library. Here they read and locate relevant information as listed in their research outlines. Students elect a leader and decide how to distribute the information and the responsibility. When the research is complete they create a large colorful poster which contains all the information such as location, environment, dwellings, clothing, work, arts and crafts, spiritual life, games, etc.

The next step is classroom sharing between groups. A map is taped to each desk and the appropriate group area colored by students as we move daily from group to group. One full day is spent on each group, and it is on these days that the project touches on every aspect of the curriculum. Native American literature focusing on science and nature (creation, earth, fire, water, sun, animals and plants) and coinciding with the group studied that day, is studied by the entire classroom. Creative writing projects, role-playing and colorful illustrations are just a few projects completed after stories read by the teacher. The poster made by the group is presented followed by a question and answer session. A video is shown which focuses on the group being featured that day. The musical theme from this video set is so endearing it becomes infectious and we learn it simply by listening, humming, and finally singing along.

A craft from each group studied is learned each day such as natural dyeing and sewing of fabric, designing, weaving, pottery, mask making and totem building. We even have a Native American game from the various tribes in the group. Foot races and games which involve probability are popular. By the end of the day, classroom excitement is at an all time high. Each day is closed by students summarizing their day by writing poetry about the featured group.

Now that our students have become so knowledgeable about Native American culture, it is time to present what we have learned to others at our campus. Our desks and chairs are moved outdoors for the day as we decorated our room. Students, dressed the part, display their posters and art in groups, and the presentation moves from group to group through a present day news cast format. A news person interviews members of each group using an interview form we developed. A favorite question is, "If you could say something to children of the future, what would that be?" Students and teachers from all grade levels were amazed at the colorful displays and creative personalities of our Native American actors gone back in time. Teachers were impressed with our accomplishments which, when done step by step, were easily executed.

Now, as we continue our daily study of American history, we encounter the effects on the Native American culture and can identify with empathy, with those Native American tribes. So much, said so long ago, takes on new meaning today. We ask ourselves, "Did they not have the real understanding of this earth and life around them?" Only after "Walking Moons In Their Moccasins" can we most certainly know!

State Framework
This unit supports all areas of the State Framework and engages student activity in the learning process.

Students
Students from all academic levels can participate. By pairing more limited students with strong students all were able to be successful. This is truly a cooperative learning project.

Facilities/Materials
For research, information for each group must be collected. An extensive bibliography has been developed. A research outline for students has also been developed for use with each reference. Many supplies need to be provided for the art projects, although none are costly. Instructions are available for all crafts. The video set, Native Americans, from PBS is especially valuable.

Grade 5
Social Studies
Literature
Art
PE
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Ethnic Garden of the Chumash Native Americans

The Idea and Its Value
Ethnic gardening is a unit that integrates science, art, history and literature. It involves all students in the classroom to understand the importance of plant life to the Native Americans. It fulfills the natural desire of children to watch things grow, learn the names, and the value of plant life in our environment. This garden lets the students observe the characteristics, use, and importance of California Native Plants from yesterday and today.

A small area of the school was used to plant a variety of plants native to Ventura County. Students planted, watered, tended and enjoyed the garden. Instead of just reading about the plants used by Native Americans in our literature selection, we go out and observe, touch, smell, and discuss the actual plant.

When the class reads about the Native Americans of Ventura County using accents from the Coast Live Oak, we go out and find the accents. We collect, grind, and leach them the same way it was done thousands of years ago. We also use sage, rose hips, and manzanita plants to obtain a "hands-on experience." We try our hand at the Native American way of grinding, cutting, and using the plant. Students create a native plant notebook to hold all their drawings and information about the various plants. We discuss the different textures and colors those native plants seem to have in common. At the end of the unit/year students make observations about the native plants using the characteristics of these plants.

The students learn to understand that the Chumash Indians were dependent on the native flora and fauna and that dependence on plant life has not changed even though our life styles have changed. It gives a first hand impression of how we should value the wild lands, open areas, and parks. The students enjoy being outdoors and getting dirty. They learn while working in the garden and become stimulated to become more appreciative of nature. Everyone on campus enjoys the plants for their flowers, beauty, and a touch of our valley near the school campus.

The students leave their year in third grade with a Native Plant Booklet, experience in gardening, and maybe a desire to grow plants at home.

State Frameworks
This project supports the English/Language Arts Framework and the History/Social Science Framework, which emphasize an integrated and correlated approach. It engages students actively in the learning process. It supports the Science Framework by focusing on hands-on activities for science instruction and use of higher level thinking skills.

Students
All students can be successful in this program. I have measured the success from this program by the appreciation and enjoyment the students have expressed about gardening. This unit is ready to use by any third or fourth grade teacher with an area to garden.

Materials/Facilities/Resources
This project does require some space on the school campus to plant, tend, and cultivate plants. The garden needs about ten different varieties of native plants. Worksheets and forms specific to this unit are also used. There are various speakers, books, and experts in Ventura County from which more information can be added.

Staff
Sue Walden is a 3rd grade teacher at Red Oak Elementary School and a mentor teacher in the Oak Park Unified School District in Oak Park, CA. She is a fellow in the Tri-County Math Project.

Grades 3-6
Science
History
Literature

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The Idea and Its Value
This 3-4 week unit is designed to creatively heighten student awareness that we in Ventura County are truly "rooted in the soil." Students will develop an understanding and appreciation of California's (Ventura County's) spectacular agricultural industry. The unit will familiarize students with the cornucopia of fruits and vegetables that are produced right here in their own backyard, and which end up in kitchens nation-and worldwide (ex. Oxnard strawberries marketed in Paris). Students will also grow in appreciation and respect for our precious but dwindling natural resources—water, soil, sunshine.

To make the historical connection between past and present, students will investigate the inception of our agricultural beginnings from Gold Rush Days, to the development of the Central Valley, to present day agriculture in Ventura County. Community involvement will include guest speakers from local farms who will address current issues such as migrant workers and technology, bringing a real world focus to the unit.

Every aspect of the curriculum is included in this easily expandable and adaptable unit. Children’s "fertile" imaginations will be "cultivated" across the curriculum as integration occurs. The theme will be woven through Social Studies, English (alliteration), Spelling, Literature (poetry and creative writing), Science (Life Lab, AWAS, Music, Art, and Math (measurement)).

Students are introduced to Veggie Vocabulary and spelling words by listening to the poem "The Goodness Garden" from the book Father Gander Nursery Rhymes (see p.2). Children choose a fruit or vegetable from the list and, using alliteration and adjectives, create a name for their new fruity, nutty, or veggie self. They may use first or last name, (ex. Perley Potato Patty, Red Robin Radish, Silly Sally Strawberry, Merry Michelle Mushroom). Using construction paper and glue, students will design delectable edibles (approx. 3" x 5") to represent their own personalities. The teacher will tear strips of green and brown tissue or construction paper to simulate garden rows on a class bulletin board titled "The Goodness Garden." Teacher and students "plant" themselves in the garden.

Children make their inanimate fruit or vegetable come to life in a creative writing activity. Students will write a two page story illustrating their life cycle from seedling, to early growth, to harvest and other adventures. Meanwhile, students will pick fruits and veggies from the Life Lab gardens or the local produce stand to contribute to a Friendship Garden Salad to share with classmates and guests, including local farmers from our area. Ramekins for this occasion can be student-created cornucopias using crayon resist designs on laminated construction paper (12" x 18").

Students study the history of the growth of agriculture using Oh, California as a springboard. Concepts to "harvest" include irrigation, crop rotation, resource management, aligning those with Life Lab, plant classification (AWAS) and the study of plant life. While working in the "dirt," children will sing "Dirt Made My Lunch" and "Six Plant Parts" from Earthy Tunes.

Children bring in magazine pictures of produce grown in CA to make a giant class collage with all these pictures. Each child glues down his own contribution and adds words cut from magazines, such as: healthy, fresh, and delicious.

State Frameworks
This unit supports the History/Social Science and the Language Arts Frameworks integrating reading, writing, and listening with art and music. It uses active learning principles, is equally accessible to all learners, and provides "real life applications," all of which support state recommendations.

Students
In 1992 this unit was introduced to 60 4th graders including RSP and GATE students. It has been expanded upon each year since, and this year will mark the inclusion of LIFE LAB for our current "crop" of farming fourth graders.

Facilities/Materials
Father Gander Nursery Rhymes by Doug Larch, Earthy Tunes tape by Mary Michie, construction paper, glue, scissors, crayons, water colors, Blue Willow by Dons Gates, James and the Giant Peach by Roald Dahl, The Once a Year Day from Haughton Millifin, The Plant Doctor (Ag Rx).

Outside Resources
Nishinomi Farm, Venorn Farm, Metropolitan Water District

Staff
Both Patty and Robin have taught for 6 years at Los Primeros and have been 4th grade partners for 5 years.
Saving Planet Earth
An Interdisciplinary Public Service Project

The Idea and Its Value
The purpose of this unit of study is to provide an in-depth look at the environmental problems currently facing the living creatures on Earth by creating a collection of cooperative group newsletters in a reference book format and a 30-60 second public service video commercial.

Each member of a four-person group researches and answers one of four questions about an assigned ecological problem and writes an article in newsletter format. The four questions are: (1) How does this problem affect the Earth and the organisms living here? (2) What are the causes of this ecological problem? (3) What are some possible solutions to the problem? (4) What can we, as individuals, do to help solve the problem?

One of the main components of the research is writing letters requesting information about the ecological problem from various sources around the country.

When all of the articles are in newsletter format, copies of each group’s newsletter are bound together in a manuscript format for each student. Everyone now has his/her own reference book of ecological problems and solutions. Students are to use the various newsletter articles in their Saving Planet Earth reference book to answer questions from an "open book" test.

Also, each group is to write, direct and produce a 30-60 second video commercial regarding the assigned ecological problem. All of the commercials are edited onto one master tape to be shown in the cafeteria at lunch time and/or on the local community cable channel (if they can). These commercials are to inform others of the causes and possible solutions to the problem in a powerful but simple way.

Saving Planet Earth is a short-term project about 4-6 weeks in duration. By doing this project, students of all abilities are learning and practicing important skills necessary in school and their future work world. Such things as negotiation, group dynamics, researching, summary letter writing, and use of available technology are components.

State Frameworks
Saving Planet Earth follows the recommendations of all California frameworks by using "active learning" principles combined with "higher-level thinking skills" in an "equally accessible" mode to create an "authentic assessment."

Students
Saving Planet Earth was done by 7th graders of various abilities from mainstreamed resource to GATE.

Facilities/Materials
No special facilities are necessary. Students need access to a video camera.

Outside Resources
The school and/or local library is necessary for research. Whatever agencies the students contact by letter often times send really good information that can be shared with all of the students.

Grades 5-12
Science
English
History
Video Technology

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Pumpkins — Much More Than Jack-O-Lanterns!

Grades K-1
Science
History/Soc. Studies
Lang. Arts/Literature
Music/Performing Arts
Math
Ad
Cooking

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The Idea and Its Value

When Life Lab gardening was added to our school curriculum, our ability to reach and demonstrate the life cycle of the growth of a pumpkin with real life experiences was made possible. In April we planted 4-6 seeds (which had been dried from our class pumpkin the previous October) per hill in our outdoor planting boxes. Students thinned each hill to three strong plants and shared the others by transplanting to another grades’ boxes. The students observed insects as they watered and weeded. By late May the students were able to follow the blossoms to fruit-setting process and record it via pictures and writing in their garden journals. This pumpkin garden is a gift to next year’s class so they will have experienced the growth process before they go on a Pumpkin Patch field trip.

Pumpkins have always been more than jack-o-lanterns in our classes. We use math to order our selections from smallest to largest, to estimate the circumference using string as the measuring tool, to estimate the number of seeds in a handful, and to sort by different attributes. In small groups, sharing and self esteem blossomed as we ate pumpkin bread, pancakes and muffins made ourselves from our own pumpkins. Pumpkins, gardening and Halloween literature selections are innumerable for rewriting and comparing and contrasting. Our children retell the life cycle of the pumpkin after making an art project which prompts them in the various steps.

Oral language and sequencing skills can be assessed by the teachers during this process. We have life size props for children to wear while performing various songs and poems and even the most shy students are motivated to participate because they can “hide” behind a prop. We scheduled times for our children to perform songs such as Inch by Inch, Dirt Made My Lunch, Three Little Pumpkins, etc., for our parents, other classrooms, and the school board. We celebrated their accomplishments!

Through their Life Lab experiences, children broadened their perspective of a pumpkin being only a jack-o-lantern. “I do and I remember” was evident. The real life connection was made when many students announced that they had started home gardens! Hands-on activities helped the children retain knowledge and expand a one day holiday experience into year-round learning involving higher level thinking skills. As the children’s interest in science soared, parents and the community eagerly became involved. Donations included soil, gravel, materials, expertise and volunteer time.

State Framework

While respecting the rights of others and taking responsibility for their own actions children learned how to work in a group appropriately, reflecting the philosophy of the Skills for Growing (Quest) program. Our unit supports the vision and goals of the Language Arts Framework through the opportunities to read, write and perform and the Mathematics Framework through hands-on problem solving situations.

Students

Over one hundred seventy-five kindergartners, including full inclusion and bilingual students, have been participants in this developmentally appropriate unit. All learning modalities are incorporated throughout the unit.

Facilities/Materials

A field trip to a local pumpkin patch, a sunny planting area, and pumpkin seeds will get you started. Books such as Pumpkin Patch by Elizabeth King, It’s Pumpkin Time by Zoe Hall, Pumpkin, Pumpkin by Jeannie Editor, and What About Ladybugs? by Cele Godkin are some of the many available. We use the musical tape by the Banana Slug Band from Life Lab, and Charlotte Diamond’s record album 10 Carrot Diamonds.

Outside Resources

Some suggestions for Pumpkin Patch field trips in Ventura County: Kerns Tom’s, Terra Agoda, Ayers, and McGrath Ranches. People with Life Lab, TAS (Teachers’ Agricultural Seminar), or Water Gardening backgrounds are multiplying rapidly and should be able to offer gardening assistance, if needed.

Staff

After substituting more than ten years while raising her family, Jean Stahl is in her tenth year of full-time kindergarten teaching. Sharon Harada has more than nineteen years experience teaching K-4, and they have been a team for six years. Their philosophy reflects developmentally appropriate teaching practices and integration across the curriculum.
The Idea and Its Value

The Mini Museum is an in-depth learning, cooperative group project designed for the ninth grade but can be adapted for any grade level. The first year, 94-95, was completed as a yearly interdisciplinary study with English and the final product was a museum with a magazine detailing the information for each room. This year, 95-96, is a one semester activity, history only, museum and magazine. The magazine idea was taken from a past IMPACT II grant of 1994, "The Inquiring Minds Want to Know." The specific instructional purpose and value of this project is the creation of a 14" x 14" square room displaying a specific era for the ninth grade text, The History of the World. The Modern Era. Each room is decorated and correctly labeled. The magazine complements each room by expanding on the items placed in each room.

The students are placed in cooperative groups which then pick a chapter from their course of study. The first step is to review and compile the chapter information into the time period, people, places and events. Once they know their direction, they are given the outline for the magazine. There are twelve sections, each requiring the students to step back into their historical era. Their articles must be written as seen through the eyes of that time period. For example, "EYE TO EYE" requires a primary source detailing a true-life experience. "REIGNING RULES" must document a ruler of the time, but must be written by someone such as a journalist at Napoleon's funeral recounting the life of this leader. Also included are advertisements displaying technologies of that day and several other articles.

Higher thinking skills are utilized as students examine and evaluate the events of their chapter. They select each event or person to be exhibited, showing both positive and negative forces. They help each student to develop a sense of responsibility and empathy for others and to develop a historical literacy through the concept of sequencing cause and effect. The knowledge then has to be synthesized for the room to be made and the magazine published.

As the students shared their thoughts and ideas with each other it became evident that a sense of success and excitement was sparked from one group to another. Everyone began to realize that this experience was equally accessible to all. Not only accessible but fun and enjoyable! Some made furniture in wood shop. Others went shopping for "ideas" like what kind of rug to use or what type of floor was needed. For example, World War I needed dirt trenches to show the miserable conditions of trench warfare. Many students from other classes begged to be able to make a room.

M&M's is a self-created cooperative group project which took about three to four weeks to accomplish. Other teachers, high school, middle or elementary, would enjoy watching their students create as well as develop valuable skills of cooperation, negotiation, responsibility and empathy. Sound like something we could use in today's world?

State Framework

This project supports the recommendations of the California State Framework for History by using active learning principles, cooperative learning techniques and making this experience equally and easily accessible to all learners.

Students

This project was accomplished by about 75 ninth grade students in 1994-1995 and currently, the same number. Achievement levels varied from high to mainstream resource abilities. However, the idea and techniques could be adapted to all grades and subjects.

Facilities/Materials

Most of the work was done in regular classroom with homework required for research, resources, and final drafts. Supplies needed: paper, graph and plain ruled sheets, scissors, glue stick and glue gun, stencils, markers, thin and bold, and several books on eye witness evidence, time line, technology, and historical information. Also enough foam board to create as many rooms as needed.

Outside Resources

Library, guest speakers, movies, slides, pictures and other visuals are helpful for reference purposes.

Staff

I have been a junior high art and history teacher (7th & 9th) for nine years, and prior to that a high school art teacher for 4 years. Next year, 96-97, I will be at Santa Susanna High, Simi's new magnet High School.
Happy Birthday, Ice Cream Cone

Grades K-1
Math
Science
Language Arts
Social Science

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Slmi Valley Chamber of Commerce

The Idea and Its Value
Happy Birthday, Ice Cream Cone is a child-centered unit based on life experiences. The basic concept behind this project is: Children learn from the world around them based on their prior knowledge. Therefore, children focus on their experiences as a source of learning rather than a textbook, video, lecture, or drill and practice. This unit provides activities across the curriculum which include: Math - graphing and the combinations related to the number of variables; Science - properties of matter; Language Arts - literature, sorting parts of speech, and generating class and small group books; Social Science - the comparison of "then and now", how refrigeration affects our lives, and using a map; Art - illustrating class books, collage, and a mural. Cooperative groups are used for some of the activities. Children develop a sense of self-worth and also skills which build unity in a classroom. The actual date of the original ice cream cone is September 29, but the unit may be used at any time of the year.

State Frameworks
The State Frameworks outline hands-on meaningful experiences that relate to the real world of the student. They also indicate that children develop an understanding of their world through experiences that relate to prior knowledge. By the age of two most children have experienced an ice cream cone with the cool melted drops running down an arm and dripping off the elbow, not to mention chin, hands and down their little tutus. The Frameworks also encourage the development of cooperative skills which are very necessary for the workplace, and building self-esteem to promote academic growth. Happy Birthday, Ice Cream Cone leads to student success.

Students
In the last ten years as many as 300 students have participated in this celebration. High school students who come to visit remember the ice cream cone celebration with a gleam in their eyes and excitement in their voices. I believe that many students choose math and science later in school because of their experiences in the primary grades and this one seems to stand out in older students' minds.

Facilities/Materials
No special facilities or materials are needed. Standard classroom supplies such as white drawing paper, butcher paper, crayons and markers are needed.

Staff
Ms. Brummett has taught Kindergarten and first grade since 1960. She serves on District Task Forces including Math, Science and Language Arts. She is a Fellow of Science and Math at U.C. Santa Barbara.
X Marks the Plot!

The Idea and Its Value
This unit reinforces students' understanding of plot development, sentence structure, and social studies content. By combining a short ABC format, it allows students to stretch creatively while simultaneously staying within a fairly rigorous format that requires problem solving skills. Through creating their own carefully formatted stories, students improve their ability to analyze the elements of all literature.

Prewriting: The lesson begins with traditional prewriting activities including vocabulary development taken from literature and the social studies text. Before going on to the next phase, be sure students are completely comfortable with talking about the setting. Students then imagine a character who may have lived in that time or place. Again, be sure they have imagined their characters completely, that the character is believable and s/he could have lived in that place and time.

Reinforcing the Basics: After they have a setting and character, proceed to teach or review elements of story (plot development: exposition, climax, resolution). Point out the importance of the climax occurring near the end. Lower ability students can understand this concept with a discussion of TV or movies. Review sentence structure, pointing out that good writers vary their sentence constructions so that not all sentences in the story are subject-verb.

Reteach, if necessary, the idea of beginning sentences with prepositional phrases, gerunds, or interjections.

The ABCs of Writing: Now comes the fun part. Students write stories about their characters using only 26 sentences. Each subsequent sentence begins with the next letter of the alphabet. The first letters - ABCDE are the setting and exposition for the story. By about the letter F, they should have the first conflict occur. That is, by letter F, something must happen to their protagonist! The protagonist continues to work his way through a variety of conflicts until arriving at the climactic moment in the story, the letter X!

These stories provide excellent plot manipulation and problem solving opportunities. In order to use all 26 letters of the alphabet, children quickly learn to vary sentence structure - inverting sentences, and beginning others with prepositional phrases. Usually I allow them to stall around a bit before I suggest that they might want to name the protagonist Quizabel or Xavier! The edited form of the story may take several forms including an African or Chinese scrolled text; an illuminated medieval manuscript, etc.

State Frameworks
This unit supports the language arts framework by making learning of literary concepts a meaningful child-based exercise. Tying it with social studies learning supports the cross-curriculum suggestions of both social studies and language arts frameworks.

Students
We have had success with the ABC format with six seventh grade classes of all abilities.

Facilities/Materials
Unless you are creating special publications, no extra supplies are required.

Staff
We are a team of two teachers who teach world history, English, and journalism at the junior high level.

Grades 5-8
English/Language Arts
Social Studies

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The First Americans

Grades 4/6
Social Studies
Language Arts
Math
Visual & Performing Arts

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The Idea and Its Value
The First Americans is a two-month project (Oct.-Nov.) to teach understanding and appreciation of Native Americans. The study is part of our year-long theme of survival. It was inspired by District framework workshops with mentor teachers, ideas gleaned from other 5th grade teachers, and needs of widely divergent ability groupings in our classrooms. We begin about 9000 BC with the Anceans and then concentrate on tribes and their life from about 1500 to 1800 AD. We examine their customs, values, similarities and differences. Though hands-on work the students gain some appreciation of the Native Americans’ way of life, learn to value their own survival skills, and become aware of some of the injustices perpetrated on Native Americans as white settlers took over the land. Consideration of the problem cells for higher level thinking skills, as does creating their own survival plan. Group work permits needs of all students in the classrooms to be met, while improving student attitudes and behavior because they must work together and appreciate each one’s unique ability to contribute to the final project.

We follow the Social Studies Framework, combining it with language arts (reading, writing, listening, speaking), math, crafts, and visual performing arts. Literature includes Indian myths, Jim! Arrow to the Sun and Tiawampee Boy, to informal teacher anthologies. The class studies Sign of the Beaver by Elizabeth Speare, the teacher reads to the class Indian in the Cupboard and sequels, by Lynn Reid Banks, comparing historical fiction and fantasy. Sign of the Beaver leads to a week-long survival culmination project. Writing assignments include writing an Indian myth or tale, illustrating it on sandpaper (our version of sand painting or cliff drawing) and bonding them into a book. Other writing varies from photograph transitions and paintings to letters of advice addressed to Matt (Sign of the Beaver), a McDuffy reader style ABC book to teach Native Americans to read, journal entries relating literature events to their own experience, Indian chants on a beer hunt, etc. Groups do research together and individually, and prepare a postcard retrieval sheet including a paragraph on each topic with illustrations: region (with map), housing, clothing, food, tools and weapons, arts and crafts, important ceremonies or events, and famous people. Students also build a model resembling their tribe’s village in a box (roughly 3” by 3”) based on the retrieval sheet. They then present it orally to the class, including a short “dance” incorporating the “seven universal symbols” used by Native Americans. These projects are a major base for assessment. Crafts include making and decorating Native American-style pottery, simple weaving, and illustrating their visualization of descriptive paragraphs in the literature. Math is used to record time or matched sticks like early settlers, and then invent another way to do it (a modern clock). To estimate costs of their survival culmination project keep within budget, and to make a scale drawing of a log cabin complete with loft, punchen table, chimney and flour barrel.

State Frameworks

Students learn how Native Americans adjusted to their environment, developed government, and expressed their culture in mythology, art, music and dance. Historical empathy is encouraged through relating knowledge to their own experiences. Cultural literacy is developed through learning to respect the human dignity of another people and seeking to understand their different cultures and ways of life. Ethical literacy is addressed in seeking to balance Indian rights with wants and needs of settlers.

Students

Our school population is 75% Hispanic, many of our fifth graders are ESL, and over 50% of the students live below the poverty line. Their fourth-year English instruction is a daily part of our curriculum. Because many of our students have not had a rich experience, background, and almost half are Title I, scoring in the lowest third on standardized tests, hands-on and participatory activities are paramount. Achievement levels range from roughly 55% to 75% grade 91-95 as our two fifth grade classrooms of about 62 students, aged 10-12, participated.

Facilities/Materials

The project is carried on in our regular classrooms. The Framework textbook is used with books collected from the school and local libraries, and students’ family collections. The District Library has Spanish and English classroom sets of Sign of the Beaver and an English set of Indian in the Cupboard, plus some videos on Native Americans. Space is required for storing the Native American Village projects, but we cross-stack the boxes in a corner. Having four desks in a group makes work on projects easier, although assigned seats do not determine groupings. Students need poster paint and brushes, construction paper, boxes, modeling clay, yarn, string, and colored chalk paper. We provide all of these because our students simply cannot afford to provide their own.

Outside Resources

Parents and senior citizen aides are encouraged to share slides, books, videos, and collections on Native Americans. They may come themselves or invite other community members to talk to the class. We start the year with a walking field trip to the nearby public library so students can use that resource to supplement our school library.

Staff

Mrs. Ains is our fifth grade kindergarten through sixth for about twenty years, as well as graduate level classes in children’s literature. Worked in in about 50 countries to enrich her background. She has been a master teacher for 5 years.

Mrs. Hartford is in her eighth year of teaching bilingual classrooms. She has taught 3rd through 5th grades and has a master’s degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages.
The Idea and Its Value

Today's middle school student would probably rather "walk five miles to school in the snow" than pick up a book to read for pleasure. Reading, 'Riting, and Rock and Roll!!! might not turn them into avid readers, but it's sure to make them think and make book reports FUN!

These two innovative ideas can be used throughout the year, whenever book reports need to be assigned. I have found that the end of the year works best because the class has become more cohesive and supportive toward each other. The time frame is flexible depending on how much class time is devoted to each project. A week for each project, from beginning to handing in the final project would be adequate. THE CD CASE.

As the students are reading their book, the teacher begins asking them to associate songs with the plot, setting, conflict or characters in the book. The teacher may want to do some limit-setting with certain types of music, primarily rap due to its explicit lyrics. Once some appropriate examples are given, the students should have very little difficulty coming up with a plethora of song titles.

Remember, MUSIC is central in their lives. Let the students share their song titles and explain why they chose certain songs and how the song relates to the story they are reading. After the students have finished reading their book, the teacher brings in CDs and discusses how the recording artist uses the title of his CD as a focus for all the songs that are performed. Now it is up to the student to create a CD about the book he just completed. The student creates a title for the CD. This can be the same title as the book or one the student creates. The author and genre may also be included. Students then begin to use song titles to tell about their book. They use 6 songs and lyrics to help describe plot, characters, and setting. Once they've created the CD's "booklet", they put it inside one of their many CD jewel cases, create a CD by using tin foil or cover a CD with construction paper and Voila!, a book report that engages students in reading, writing and creating. As the students are working on their CD in class, all types of music can be played to help motivate and inspire the young "recording artists." It's also a great time for music appreciation! When the book report was completed, many of the students thanked me, and said it was the most "fun thing" they had ever done in reading!!! THE SINGING BOOK REPORT. After students have read the designated book, they begin to list all the songs that they can sing from memory. These songs can be as simple as Mary Had a Little Lamb, Jingle Bells or Skimbaw Shanks the Railway Cat from "CATS". Once they have decided on a song, they then must use the melody of the song and create lyrics that tells about their book. They have some choices that add interest to the assignment and take care of "stage fright."

They have these choices:
(1) Pre-record your song and bring it to class and let your classmates sing along with the tape. The student has also furnished the class with words on a decorated poster board or individual lyrics sheets. The student may have classmates assist him/her.

(2) Make puppets for the main characters and have the puppets "speak" about the book from behind a puppet stage. Words will also be provided for the class. The student may have classmates assist them.

(3) Use your instrumental music ability and write and perform your own song. Guitars and keyboards are welcomed! Song sheets or poster board are also required.

The students enjoyed this book report and it fulfills their ever present dream of being a Rock Star, complete with Groupies! The class enjoys singing along and EVERYONE is a STAR.

State Frameworks

The Language Arts framework focuses on reading, writing, listening and speaking. These book reports embrace all these components as well as comprehension, organization skills and time management. Music appreciation and cultural diversity are also stressed.

Students

I have assigned these book reports to 7th and 8th graders in 1994 and '95, a total of 180 students. The students felt successful regardless of their reading abilities because they were performing with their friends and there was total class participation. Their self-esteem soared and students realized that if they could sing in front of their classmates, they could do ANYTHING!!!

Facilities/Materials

These book reports can be used in ANY elementary or middle school language arts classroom where students are required to do library reading.

Grades 5-8

English/Language Arts

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The Idea and Its Value

This language arts/social studies lesson plan is designed to teach students the difference between fact and inference, the importance of understanding point of view, and how point of view inevitably results in bias. "Real life" and school intersect at the crossroads of understanding what it means to be a primary source, and specifically in this case a witness, to an event.

Setting the Scene: Arrange for a volunteer to rush into your classroom mid-lesson. She grabs something from a desk, moves it to another desk, trips over a backpack, whispers something to you which causes you to reach into the drawer and hand him/her something. After this flurry of activity, she exits the classroom. What happened?

Describing the Facts from First Person Point of View: Direct students to write down exactly what they saw happen. They are to be as specific as possible within the limits of their personal experience. They are to describe the volunteer in detail explaining exactly what the volunteer looked like and did without, however, moving from their seats.

Teacher Lead Discussion: After 5-10 minutes of silent writing, lead a discussion about what they saw. Write on the board all the observations in a way that clearly shows there is not agreement among all the eyewitnesses.

Using Inference and Imagination: Continue the discussion, this time allowing students to use their inference skills. What does the teacher usually keep in the drawer the volunteer opened? Why might she be in such a hurry? Write down these inferences in another color chalk on the board. Encourage them at this stage to be both reasonable and imaginative.

Application to History and Life: In stage two of the lesson, demonstrate the effect of point of view by bringing in two news stories about the same event. Sensational trials and the tabloids are a good place to start. Draw a Venn diagram showing the differences and similarities between the two stories. Try this several times until the students understand that the same incident can be reported in completely different ways.

Bias in History: Take whatever subject you wish and either provide them with or have them research primary source documents about it. In my seventh grade, students research the Crusades from three different points of view: Christian, Muslim, and Jewish. Several class discussions follow in which you help them discover what the eyewitness said, his/her point of view, and resulting bias.

Final Product: The final product is two essays written individually by each student. The first is an essay written as objectively as possible about the event in history. The second is the same event, but this time it is written using only one eyewitness's account. Students are directed to highlight with marker elements of bias in both papers.

State Framework

Both the language arts and social studies frameworks encourage teaching students critical thinking skills in lessons that have real life applications.

Students

I have had success with this lesson for two years in three seventh grade classes including students of all abilities.

Facilities/Materials

Colored chalk, one willing volunteer.

Staff

I teach world history at the junior high level and have been known to stand on a desk to make it clear that my point of view is different from that of my students.
The Prairie Periodicals

The Idea and Its Value

In an eight-week project a team of teachers asked their students to imagine they were publishers in the West sometime between 1790-1890. We asked them in their Art, History, and English classes to create articles and illustrations for a western theme magazine. We insisted they use their imagination to create pieces of quality work that would appeal to their readers. We got what we asked for! We got articles like, "TWENTY USES FOR PRAIRIE COW CHIPS," "DREAM CATCHERS, FACT OR FICTION?" and a story about a legendary hero, "PAUL ONION." But on a more serious note we got researched articles like, "THE WAR OF 1812," "THE ALAMO," "FRONTIER WOMEN," and "THE DONNER PARTY." The magazine had a classified section where you could advertise for such things as BRIDES, or PRAIRIE SCHOOLERS. The organizer: Each subject was responsible for a particular area of the magazine but the specific focus, instruction, curriculum and assignment was left up to each teacher's preference and expertise. What resulted was students got a varied view of the WESTERN TIMES as some teachers focused more on the Indian experience, others the frontiersmen, etc. Art teachers were responsible for the magazine covers, illustrations, and advertisements. History teachers were responsible for providing researched articles. English teachers were to provide tall tales, Native-American style myths, poems, letters to the editor, and publish the magazines. But beyond the magazine the FRONTIER FEVER was catching on throughout the school! One class sewed a quilt by hand, one weaved baskets, another did Indian sand art; the PE classes held a PIONEER FIELD DAY with gummy sack and Indian stick/hoop races. Letters were written to historical sites and brochures and pictures were received. American Folk music was being sung. Homemade biscuits and pound cake were eaten. Assessment: The teacher of each subject area was responsible for the final product students submitted for the magazine. Only quality pieces were given to the English teachers for publication. Neatness, creativity, and mechanics were important. We required that all articles be type written. The magazines will be displayed at this year's District Authors' Book Fair.

State Frameworks

Using the magazine as an organizer and the rainbow of each teacher's content curriculum made it easier than ever before to help students develop the necessary depth of knowledge. With a little work and a lot less time with textbooks, students naturally acquired understanding and became personally involved in the topic of AMERICAN WESTERN EXPANSION.

Students

Our school taught American History to both 7th and 8th graders this year to allow for integration. Traditionally it is 5th or 8th grade curriculum. Materials: A copy of the Magazine Assignment is available. Also included: addresses of historical sites, a literature list, readers theaters, cooking/arts/crafts activities, and folk music.

Staff

What began as the "master minders" of four teachers soon became the excitement and involvement of the whole school.

Grades 6-8

Language Arts
History
Art

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Poetry in Motion

Grades 5-8
Language Arts
Technology

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The Idea and Its Value

Poetry in Motion is a week-long culminating activity that allows students to incorporate poetry appreciation and the technology of laserdisc images into a video production that reflects knowledge and appreciation gained, both in poetry and technology. Small groups of students in a language arts class with access to a television/VCR/laserdisc unit, either in the classroom or in the technology lab, pick a favorite poem, either from among those studied, or one of their own choosing. They are guided to choose poems that have strong visual imagery such as Robert Frost’s “Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening.” The group divides the poem into stanzas and brainstormsthe types of images that they “see” in their minds’ eye. Once they are thoroughly familiar with the poem and its images, the use of the laserdisc player is demonstrated. Students also learn to use accompanying multimedia software that allows text to be overlaid on images from the laserdisc.

Sparked by the wide variety of images, which can be accessed one frame at a time and through use of a printed barcode database, students eagerly search the laserdisc, jotting frame numbers and notes as they go. Students take turns looking for images, brainstorming with other groups, and learning the software. Once a final list is compiled, students turn to the computer, which drives the laserdisc player. Students type in the frame numbers of the images, which appear on the TV screen, and then type in the title, text, and credits for the chosen poem. When finished, a click of the mouse brings up a laserdisc image overlaid with text on the television. Final adjustments are made and a video tape in the VCR records the whole production. The last step is to choose accompanying music to fit the poem; some audio dubbing is done, and pleased students are ready to present their project to the class. Tapes are sent home for parents to appreciate, and a master tape is made to share at Open House.

State Frameworks

Language Arts: Section #3. An effective English language arts program introduces students to literature representing many perspectives, diverse styles and cultures and points of view, classic and contemporary attitudes, and a range of modes from fiction and drama through poetry. English-language arts programs take on exciting new dimensions by integrating technology into the study of language and literature.

Students

Four classes of eighth grade students participated in this project. Most students in grades five through eight have some experience with a computer, and are willing to “coach” each other through the project.

Facilities/Materials

At least one TV/VCR/laserdisc setup is needed, either in the classroom, media center, or technology lab.

Students bring video tapes from home to record their final projects. Lesson plans and demonstration projects will be available for other teachers.

Outside Resources

None.

Staff

Sandra Hayes has taught 16 years at all grade levels, K-8.
Who's on First?

The Idea and Its Value
This is a 6-week unit which can be used to integrate SPRING FEVER with Language Arts, History, and Math. What better way to end the year? During spring most students are naturally engaged in baseball through PE or after school sports. This theme ensures even the most restless students are on target and learning.

MATH: I used baseball cards to add some excitement to a unit on percentages. Not only did they catch my students' attention, but the variety of statistics on the cards provided countless opportunities for young collectors and fans to practice their skills. I extended the idea to include the Sports Page, which is a numerical gold mine!!

LANGUAGE ARTS: Students made book-share trading cards in place of book reports. I required students to read a book with a baseball theme. Then they designed a giant trading card based on it. Each card included a picture, photo, personal history, and statistics. I had students do Readers Theater using titles such as, Abbot and Costello's "Who's on First?", "Babe Ruth," and "His Name Was Jackie Robinson." I had students memorize and recite baseball poems from books like, At The Crack of A Bat, by Lillian Vernon. Then they created baseball poems of their own. We acquired baseball league addresses and we wrote for free fan packs, brochures, photos, and baseball cards. Finally, my students planned and assembled an illustrated dictionary of baseball idioms like, "The runner is in a pickle," and "He made a Homerun."

HISTORY: We studied the origins of baseball and the evolutionary changes the game had gone through, noting how it mirrored the changes in American society. For a geography lesson, I let students pick up players' cards or drew teams' emblems next to their home cities on a map. Then I had students choose from a list of cities we had studied that didn't have major league teams and let them come up with appropriate historical team names. Then they designed uniforms, caps and emblems for their "new" team.

State Frameworks
This unit motivates students to become active learners in the History, Math, and Language Arts Frameworks by making the subject matter more relevant. The integration of these content areas through the subject matter of baseball literally tricks them into learning important facts and skills.

Students
We used this unit with 7th and 8th grade students, but it could easily be adapted for the lower grades. In fact, it would be easier to integrate into other content areas if it were being taught in a self-contained classroom.

Facilities/Materials
Kids eagerly brought in the baseball cards and sports pages needed for the math work. Students were given a baseball booklet and expected to get their readers from the school or public library. Copies of the unit are available complete with a baseball literature list, Readers Theaters, sample poems, and a teacher resource and reference booklet.

Grades 4-12
Language Arts
History
Math

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