Opening the mind to possibilities
IMPACT II
THE TEACHERS’ NETWORK

2000
Disseminator Grants
Ventura County Teacher-Developed Curriculum Ideas

co-sponsored by

Partners in Education
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What is IMPACT II?

IMPACT II is starting its seventh 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), the Ventura County Superintendent of Schools Office, and the Ventura County Star.

Important Events - 2001

February
Teachers send in Grant applications.

March
Disseminator Grants announced.

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 $500 Disseminator individual grants for classroom-tested curriculum ideas which they have developed. Collaborative grants for 2 or more teachers are $750. 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, www.vcss.k12.ca.us.

Why IMPACT II?

IMPACT II is cost effective. The County Education Office funds the day-to-day operation of IMPACT II, so 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 purpose of IMPACT II is to spread excellent teaching ideas throughout our county. Recognizing innovative teachers at the awards dinner is an opportunity to celebrate the true heroes and heroines in our communities. In its eighth year of existence in Ventura County, IMPACT II has matured into the program that we envisioned at its inception. Business leaders, teachers, and administrators are becoming aware of the program and participated in unprecedented numbers in 1999-2000. Since 1993, over 450 applications have been received from teachers; and 212 were selected and awarded a portion of the approximately $104,000 received in donations from local businesses.

In 2000, 23 projects were selected for awards. Twenty-nine teachers were recognized for their innovative teaching ideas at our IMPACT II Awards Reception and Dinner held in May. Teachers were awarded $15,250 that night. This year’s 29 grant recipients represent 10 public schools districts, 16 public schools and our first private school. Lisa Mann and Tammi Spencer of Frank Intermediate were awarded the Ed Lyon Excellence in Education Award for their “most useful and replicable” project entitled “Sports: Create for the Future and Play in the Past.” Their names have been added to the perpetual trophy that hangs in the lobby of the Ventura County Superintendent of Schools Administrative Services Center in Camarillo. Their names join those of the last year’s Ed Lyon Award recipient, Ginger Brandenburg, the 1998 recipients, Marta Wilson and Mark Wilson, 1997 recipient, Bonnie Wascher, and 1996 recipient, Jane Sweetland. Additionally, Lisa and Tammi shared a $500 scholarship provided by Aera Energy LLC for their own professional development.

This year marked the third presentation of the Annual Superintendent’s Award. This award was established to stimulate the submission of IMPACT II projects in a specific discipline and carries with it an additional $750 overall award. In 2000, Mathematics projects were sought. Lisa Krause, Oliveland School and Jeanine Henke, Grace Christian Day School were selected as the recipients of this award for their project entitled “Adding Up Learning Along the Math Trail”. Their names have been added to the perpetual trophy that hangs in the lobby of the Ventura County Superintendent of Schools Administrative Services Center in Camarillo. Their names join those of last year’s recipient, Tara Hewitt and the 1998 recipient, Bonnie Wascher. Pacific Bell generously provided the supplemental funding for this award.

The discipline selected for the 2001 Superintendent’s Award is Science. IMPACT II projects that develop scientific thinking in students or encourage participation in school-to-career experiences that develop and support scientific knowledge will be considered. We hope to receive several outstanding applications for this coveted award.

IMPACT II is one example of the outstanding business-education partnerships that exist in Ventura County as a direct result of our multi-year relationship with the Ventura County Economic Development Association (VCEDA) and their participating businesses. The Ventura County Star’s title sponsorship continues to enhance the media coverage and underwrites the dinner expenses for award recipients. Our business partners in IMPACT II grew from six companies in 1993 to 23 companies donating approximately $13,250 in 2000. Last year, Exxon made a very generous donation that funded the cost of placing all past year’s projects on the worldwide web (www.ImpactII.org) for enhanced access by teachers. The close connection between business and education, such as that facilitated by IMPACT II, will provide long-term mutual benefit.

I want to express my appreciation to the business leaders, school administrators, and teachers who have helped IMPACT II grow. The 2000 steering committee leadership by Rudy Gonzales of Southern California Edison, Judy Pashley of the Ventura County Star, Ed Lyon, most recently of School-to-Career, Zoe Taylor of Ventura Chamber of Commerce and the administrative support by Kerry Roscoe were invaluable to the success of the program.

I encourage all teachers in Ventura County to borrow from the great ideas in IMPACT II recognized projects and to submit your successful innovative instructional ideas next year. IMPACT II is one way that we encourage teachers throughout Ventura County to demonstrate their “Commitment to Quality Education for All.”

Sincerely,
Charles Weis, Ph.D.
Ventura County Superintendent of Schools
October 2000
Welcome business partners, teachers, administrators and fans to the eighth annual Impact II Awards dinner.

Over 100 people attended the 2000 Impact II awards dinner.

Impact II gets a service award from the Gas Company.

Rudy Gonzales and Donna Fulgham kept the program moving.
Awards Dinner

A few samples of the Impact II projects on display.
IMPACT II
Superintendent’s Award

"Commitment to Quality Education for All"

Each year the County Superintendent will designate one academic discipline in which the competition for the Superintendent’s Award will be conducted. The area chosen will generally reflect an area of study which is in need of new teaching ideas. Eligible teachers will be notified of the chosen discipline in the fall of the school year. Projects that are submitted in the designated discipline will be automatically entered in the competition. The author(s) of the winning project will receive an additional $500.00 honorarium, a wall plaque for their school, and the name(s) of the honoree(s) will be added to the perpetual wall plaque in the Administrative Services Center of the County Superintendent of Schools Office.

For more information on the Impact II Grants Program please contact:
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www.vcss.k12.ca.us & www.impactil.org
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 was founder and Chairman of the Board 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 over 21 years, he 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, School-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. Now he is director of the Ventura County School-to-Career Network (a partnership of students, educators, parents and business using a new approach to teaching and learning that links education to career interests).

So it is with great pride that we dedicate this award to Ed Lyon, a true advocate of Excellence in Education.
2000 Impact II Partners

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IMPACT II

2000
Grant Recipients
A Taste of Heritage

The Idea and Its Value

A Taste of Heritage introduces students to an appreciation and understanding of the important role immigration and ancestry play in their lives today.

A Taste of Heritage begins with students gaining an understanding of immigration. The first step in this hands-on, student-centered activity is to select a country of origin or region. This involves the student's family exploring their family tree and deciding which country best represents their heritage. Next, an immigrant clothespin doll is fashioned. When all the 'week' immigrants are finished, each student receives a passport and a Ship's Log, or journal, for the immigrant as it boards a shoebox boat for America. Over the next few months, problems arise on the immigrant boat, e.g., language barriers, lost belongings, mutiny of the crew, storms, pirates, illness, lack of food, etc. The students address each new problem in their Ship's Log daily.

Meanwhile, students are exploring their own heritage by corresponding with grandparents or relatives. Students write letters and send surveys to gather data and information on life in the "old days." This information is used in class to graph, compare, contrast, and chart. Maps and geography are introduced as students relate where relatives lived when they were young. We have a "grandparent play day" and play some of the same games they played as children.

Students prepare an oral presentation about their grandparents' lives. Then, the immigrant boat lands in America and the little dolls go through immigration. We prepare a party for their arrival in America called "The Cultural Food Fair." Students bring a food from their country of origin. Immigrant dolls are displayed with their passports and Ship's Logs. Parents and grandparents are invited, and students give their oral presentations. Each doll goes through immigration and gets a passport stamp.

The specific instructional purpose of this program is to understand that each heritage is unique and a part of American culture and cuisine. How we live, our values and traditions, even the food we like, can be traced to our ancestors or other immigrants. The lesson focus is to encourage an understanding and appreciation of ethnic diversity by celebrating everyone's contribution.

We promote higher-level thinking skills by allowing the students to role-play the parts of immigrants and grandparents. We also had a daily problem relating to our immigrants, which the students discussed and solved in their Ship's Log.

Being a part of this 3-month project allows children to share and be proud of their family heritage. Students are all in the same "boat," so to speak, and they learn to appreciate what other heritages have shared.

The benefit of this program for teachers is that the children learn beyond what we could have taught them. They learn about cultures and tolerance from real families and through first-hand experiences. We are all enriched by allowing others to teach us. A student doesn't have to be good in all areas of the curriculum to complete a successful project. In reality, the students who give and ask for help learn the most, and I consider them successful.

State Frameworks

This project is an extension of the second grade history/social science standards and curriculum. Students assist each other and share problem-solving techniques as well as suggestions. Every child can be successful, since this unit addresses the very fabric of their lives: the family.

This unit incorporates social studies, culture, history, geography, mathematics, problem-solving, art, physical education, science, graphing, surveys, reading and writing. It also lends itself to district standards in that it is flexible enough to insert the lessons that need to be taught, such as letter writing, reading for information, mathematical graphing, and problem solving.

Students

Used with 2nd-grade students, A Taste of Heritage is a multi-faceted unit which can be modified to suit the needs of any teacher or grade level. The essence of the project is to allow student-based instruction to take place. It can be adapted to any type of learner, as it can be cooperative or individually based.

Facilities/Materials

Craft clothespins, construction paper, yarn, scissors, marking pens.

An auditorium for the Food Fair.

Outside Resources

Parents, grandparents, and relatives.
Adding up the Learning Along the Math Trail

Grades K-12

Mathematics, Problem-solving, Language Arts

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Business Partner

Rockwell Science Center
Limonka Company

The Idea and Its Value

This Math Trail unit requires collaboration among teachers from different grade levels to work with students in designing an adventurous trail of mathematical problems and situations around the school campus, which other students are then given the opportunity to trek along. The Math Trail designers will be able to practice writing clear directions, apply mathematical operations to their everyday surroundings, and visually represent their written and mathematical ideas. The children going on the Math Trail will be able to practice following directions, practice and apply basic mathematical skills to their everyday world, and discuss their opinions of the mathematical problems and activity.

After hearing about the idea of a math treasure hunt through members of the Ventura County Math Council, we discussed and adapted the idea to meet our needs and situation. We set our unit up to be a cross grade effort between our kindergarten and second grade classes. With guidance from both teachers, the second graders created a Math Trail in the schoolyard that the kindergartners completed by solving specific problems. The older children chose beginning and ending locations, and then had to decide how to move the kindergartners through the trail. Second grade was required to write down at least six steps and then create a map of their trail. Meanwhile, the kindergartners prepared for the event by reviewing many of the math concepts that they had learned during the school year such as shapes, patterns, counting, simple addition and subtraction, and right, left, forward and other terms of direction. The younger children also participated in several mini teacher led math trails in order to help prepare them for listening and following directions on the playground. This whole process required about three weeks of work and classroom preparation.

On the actual day of the trail, the older students accompanied the kindergartners through their trails in order to read the directions to their partner, thus providing one-on-one interaction between the students. We partnered up children according to their needs and working ability and were able to accommodate all learners. The trail was considered a success by all when the students reached the end of their mathematical journey and discovered a small treat awaiting them.

To assess our student's learning, we relied on the quality of the written trials themselves and teacher observation. As the children finished their individual trails we had them discuss with their "buddy" their favorite parts, as well as tell us about their experience. In addition, because the students have to figure out one part of the Trail in order to go on, the project itself has a built-in assessment tool. Second graders were also instructed about how to give help, and then later questioned as to which steps of the Math Trail were most difficult for their kindergartner partner.

We were both very pleased that event went so well. The kindergartners were impressed and flattered that the "Big Kids" had taken the time to make a "special game" for them. It was also a wonderful cumulative activity in which a whole year's worth of learning was integrated and practiced in a realistic, practical, and fun situation. The second graders were able to learn how to write simple mathematical word problems and to synthesize a learning activity for other children. The older students also commented on how much progress they themselves had made since Kindergarten. Each and every one felt very positive about their own learning. In addition, the children were able to interact with one another and have their own kindergartner or second grade buddy. Although it required much advance planning and collaboration for the teachers involved, this activity was very beneficial to our students because it used important skills in a creative and interesting way that helped foster self-confidence and relationships between students.
State Frameworks
This unit requires basic skills to be understood and performed as required by the State Frameworks. It also provides for higher level thinking skills and the application and synthesis of these skills into a project.

Students
This activity was performed towards the end of the 1998-1999 school year. However, both teachers are looking forward to expanding on and continuing with Math Trails for many years to come.

Facilities/Materials
Any campus or interesting location that the students have access to on a regular basis during school hours is appropriate for this activity. Prior to the creation of their own project, students should be guided through an example math trail in order to increase their understanding. We chose to use primarily regular classroom materials, but having maps of your school site and other locations is very helpful to the students. As an extension to our unit, we chose to video tape our event in order to better assess our students and serve as an example for future classes.

Outside Resources
We relied heavily on the ideas and support of the Ventura County Math Council and NCTM standards. However, depending on the curriculum area that an individual teacher chooses to focus on, this activity could be easily enriched with literature, lessons on cartography, and speakers about how we use math in our daily lives.
Grades 9-12
English, Performing Arts, Technology

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Business Partner
Procter & Gamble

The Idea and Its Value
This unit teamed two disparate classes on the mutual project of creating radio dramas: Honors English 10 class and Digital Audio class. The English students provided some of the scripts and performed all of the acting voices, while the Digital Audio class provided the sound engineering and performed the editing, including background music and sound effects. Students whose paths seldom crossed united to complete the work and both groups benefited from the project.

The English class first read several scripts written especially for radio performance. They noted how the action must be discussed or heard though sound effects, how the characters must be described and use distinct character voices or accents, and how changes of time and place must be established though narration or dialogue. Then they selected classic or well-known, widely anthologized short stories to turn into radio drama scripts. They were careful to choose stories that did not rely too heavily on descriptive elements and did contain a large portion of dialogue. They also made notes regarding suggestions of sound effects and background music.

The Digital Audio class, in the meantime, made several practice tapes and learned editing techniques. While the English class was perfecting their dialogue, the Digital Audio class was working on creating sound effects using Foley method and searching sound libraries. As these assets were collected and/or created, the Digital audio students, notes were made on their scripts as to placement, timing, and the duration of the sound effects.

Once both groups were ready the Digital Audio students created a studio atmosphere for the English students with microphone placements and seating arrangements. As the English students vocally acted the drama, the Digital Audio students recorded it to portable Digital Audio Workstation. The audio was then transferred to the computer for post-production work. Dialogue was edited and replaced as needed and sound effects were added to create the finished drama.

This unit can be adapted to a lower tech profile. While the technology used in producing our project tapes is highly sophisticated, advanced, and expensive, students can experience similar teamwork and benefits by using sound effect and music CDs, taping a "live" performance of vocal acting adding the "technology."

State Frameworks
Cooperation, a component of all state frameworks, is at the heart of this project that supports conventional and technological instruction. The curriculum reinforces English goals of applying high level thinking strategies, developing voice and style, speaking and listening, and emphasizes alternative assessment methods. In addition, it provides a technological arena in which to demonstrate students' proficiency at using Digital Audio sound recording and editing equipment.

Students
An Honors English class and the Digital Audio class of approximately 65 total students (ranging from Special Education to GATE), experienced this activity.

Facilities/Materials
The basic requirements are a multimedia computer with a good microphone, and sound editing software. Our project was completed on a Roland 1680 Digital workstation and a Pentium III computer for editing using soundforge and a HP CD-ROM burner. Scripts can be found on the Internet or literature anthologies as well as having students write their own as described above.

Outside Resources
Helpful Books
"Getting into Digital Recording: Digital Audio Basics, Operations, and Applications" by Paul D. Lehman
"Recording School 101 Video and Handbook, papejohn@recording school.com"
An Introduction to Digital Audio by John Walkinson

Internet Sites
http://www.radiotheatre.org
http://www.netertainment.com
http://www.scifi.com/set
http://www.dcruecas.com/radio/whispers
http://www.playwrightsworkshop.org/resource.html
http://playwrights.webster.edu
http://www.dramex.org
http://kellymusic.mbl.ca/audio/audio.html
Becoming American

The Idea and Its Value

Becoming American is a five-week unit showing how artists, writers, government leaders, heroes, national symbols, and the opinions of ordinary people in the newly formed United States contributed to a growing sense of American identity.

Before 1776, many colonial citizens regarded themselves as British citizens. This unit studies the years between 1775 and 1830 when a spirit of fierce independence took place during the American Revolution. Our identity as Americans was born. It was important for Americans to develop an identity and unite if America was to succeed.

The unit is balanced by: a) teacher directed lessons and activities and b) student group work. Each will take approximately one hour daily. Teacher directed lessons and activities will be listed below by week. Student group work is as follows:

Students work in groups of two and choose a report topic from a long list of people (i.e., presidents, women, artists, writers, scientists, folk heroes, etc.), symbols (the great seal, bald eagle etc.), and government (i.e., Congress, presidency, Supreme Court etc.). Reference materials have been collected for each topic, but students are also given time during computer lab to use the Internet for additional information. Students take notes and write reports from which they formulate plans and build floats for our school parade.

Teacher-directed lessons (assessment takes a variety of approaches, i.e., evaluating the students' ability to relate ideas and concepts, and to think critically):

Weeks 1 and 2: The Forming of the Constitution

A. Balancing a Strong Government with Individual Rights
   - Debate: "Representation in Congress"
   - Debate: "The Counting of Slaves"
B. Compromising
   - Role-playing: "Changing the Rules in the Middle of the Game"
C. Three Branches of Government
   - Make a new law: What are the duties of each branch?

Weeks 3 and 4: American Identity and Patriotism

A. Your Identity: Write a personal narrative discussing your identity; personal and family
B. Patriotism: Examples of events or ideas that stimulated development: 1) Ask each group to share examples from their research so far. 2) Movies of national heroes i.e. Washington, Jefferson, Franklin. 3) Develop a group symbol to represent American allegiance.

Weeks 5 and 6: Importance of Patriotism and National Identity Today

A. New Heroes or symbols since 1830.
   - Discussions, movies, portraits i.e., Lincoln, Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., Maya Angelou, Ellis Island, Statue of Liberty, national monuments, The Erie Canal, etc.
B. A field trip to the Ronald Reagan Presidential Museum
C. Speakers on colonial life and the development of the American Flag
D. The singing of patriotic music
E. The school-wide "Becoming American" parade!

Spectators line the sidewalk in front of their classrooms as our parade passes classrooms. There are floats on wagons, characters in costume, music, and flag waving. Students portraying heroes may be announcing their great accomplishments.

Students gain an appreciation for the efforts of our country "Becoming American." They also will recognize the necessity of preserving our American identity today in order to remain a strong nation.

State Frameworks

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

Students

Students from all academic levels can participate. Every student (64) was involved with success.

Facilities/Materials

An extensive bibliography is available for research books, activity books, Internet sites, and videos

Outside Resources

The Idea and Its Value
To meet our goal in preparing our students for future careers in the business world, it is a corollary objective that we design lesson plans that reflect real life situations and have meaningful career applications.

The advanced art students eagerly boarded the bus for their trip to Patagonia's Great Pacific Iron Works in downtown Ventura, each carrying their original textile designs with them, excited to see how their work would fare in the real business world.

Our students need to explore career choices and to know what will be expected of them in the business world. It is to this end that projects can be designed that will make such connections.

For me this idea began while we were on a family trip to Hawaii and I saw greeting cards cut in the form of gaily patterned aloha shirts. The idea adapted quickly to my art students who love to design and perhaps even to design their own clothes. Since we have an internationally famous clothing design firm right here in our own county, the potential business connection was an exciting possibility.

I called Patagonia and they were excited to share their knowledge with students and they take their valuable business time to give us input and feedback. They explained the concepts of repetitive patterns, loaned me books to share with my students, and agreed to receive us at Patagonia for a tour of the facilities and an explanation of employee job responsibilities. They even offered to critique our student designs.

In the classroom we spent the next two weeks discussing the concepts we learned, and drawing and painting both our own designs and an application to an article of clothing. The students knew that their work duplicated the way textile designs are created, and they knew that an important company would be looking at their work. With great pride, students mounted their designs on display boards, taking care to make their presentations as professional as possible.

While on the bus to visit Patagonia, I prepared the students with background on the company. Upon arrival we were divided into two groups and alternated the tours. One tour provided us with an overview of the company, explaining the different job roles and responsibilities. Then in the textile design department, employees selected a few of our students' designs, programmed them into their computers, and demonstrated how colors could be altered and repetitive patterns established to show the "run" of the fabric. The students were fascinated to have a preview of the business world and to see how ideas they created might someday have an impact.

As a follow up we framed the designs and hung them in our school office. In conclusion we realized that the designs we had created continued to be works of art.

This is but one of many examples of ways that classroom work can connect with future careers and build bridges within our community and business world. Local businesses know that they depend on today's students for tomorrow's work force, and they are interested in helping us to build those connections wherever possible. The possibilities are limitless and ultimately rewarding.

State Frameworks
Develops and expands aesthetic perception in students to increase aesthetic awareness, perceiving the world in terms of visual and tactile images and symbols which are unique to the visual arts.

Creative expression-artistic knowledge and skills
Visual arts heritage.
Aesthetic analysis, interpretation, and judgment.

Students
Students were from one class (approximately 30) of heterogeneously grouped 11th and 12th grade advanced art students.

Facilities/Materials
Materials for this project were paper and tempera paint.

Outside Resources
The individual business may be able to help in providing outside resources such as books, guest speakers or tours of the company.
From Eggs to Chicks

The Idea and Its Value

In this unit, the students observe and track the life cycle of a chicken through a hands-on experience of incubating eggs brought from the farm into the classroom. Our six-week Eggs to Chicks activities integrate into our existing Farm Unit.

Through our Farm Unit, we strive to develop our students' understanding of the significance of agriculture in Ventura County, the role of the farmer in our community, the life cycle processes present on a farm, and food sources. We attended a "Round Table" presentation at the Agriculture in the Classroom Conference in San Diego.

The hands-on activities, high interest level, and direct connection to the community made Eggs to Chicks a unique and worthwhile addition to our curriculum. Several agriculture students from the local high school brought some of the chickens they were raising to our classroom to discuss various types of chickens, their eggs, and how they cared for them. When we took our students on a field trip to the high school "farm," they were able to see the different types of chickens in a natural farm-like setting. We brought the farm into the classroom by purchasing our eggs from a local student who raises chickens for her 4-H project. The eggs were incubated in incubators. Chicken and Egg was read which showed photos of the stages of the developing egg. Pictures of the developing egg were placed daily on our class calendar. Humidity and temperature were monitored and its importance was discussed with the children. A local preschool/daycare employee visited our class and candled our eggs with small groups of children. The non-fertile eggs were removed from the incubator.

Enthusiasm was evident as children raced to the incubator each morning and begged parents in after school. After the eggs hatched, the baby chicks were placed in a cage. Children learned how to care for and hold chicks. At the end of the unit the chicks were returned to the 4-H child, much to the students' dismay.

The unit was culminated with a "Red Hen" musical performance for parents, friends, and other classes which integrated the visual and Performing Arts. Each child had a singing and/or narrating part in the play. Self-confidence was evident and everyone was able to shine!

In math, we used our calendar time for activities such as counting how many days until hatching day. We read Mrs. Satō's Hen and the children used problem-solving techniques to determine how many eggs did not hatch in the story. We weighed hand-boiled eggs and determined how many unifix cubes, crayons and plastic farm animals it took to balance a scale. The results were recorded on a graph. With a partner, we created symmetrical egg designs. In Music and Language Arts, we learned the song "Ten Yellow Chicks," made individual books to accompany the song and learned the "Chicken Dance." We also created a Hen Phonics Wheel and wrote about our chicks. We watched "All About Eggs," read The Little Red Hen, discussed the food value of eggs, and made bread using eggs which integrated language arts, health and science.

Student learning was evaluated through observation during activities and class discussion. Learning and enthusiasm were evident through student and parent/student dialogue when they observed the chicks.

State Frameworks

The Farm is part of our Social Studies kindergarten curriculum. The Language Arts Framework is supported through the opportunities to read, write, sing and perform and the Mathematics and Science Frameworks through hands-on and problem-solving activities.

Students

About 160 kindergartners including full inclusion and bilingual were participants. All learning modalities are incorporated throughout the unit.

Facilities/Materials

Incubator with automatic turner, fertile eggs, cage, shavings, lamp and chicken food. (Optional: celanding equipment). Recommended books: Chicken in Your Own Backyard by Rick Luttmann, Chicken and Egg by Christine Back and Jens Olsen, Stopwatch Books; The Little Red Hen by Paul Galdone, Mrs. Satō's Hen by Laura Ming; The Egg, by Scholastic, First Discovery Book; Video: "All About Eggs" from the California Egg Commission, "Chicken Dance" from All Time Favorite Dances (CD) by Dennis Buck, Kimbo Educational; "Red Hen" Musical Play by Milkien Publishing.

Outside Resources

4-H as a source for fertile eggs and information; Hansen Trust grants for incubator contributions from parents and community (cage, shavings, feed), California Egg Commission (video), FFA (Future Farmers of America) from the local high school and field trip to their "farm".

Grades K-6
Science, Social Studies, Math, Health, Language Arts/Literature, Music, Art

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Grammar Rocks

Grades 6-8

Language Arts

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The Idea and Its Value
Grammar Rocks is a three to four week language arts unit which builds to a culminating activity where students present their own personal song or poem which incorporates specific predetermined parts of speech. The study of grammar (the systematic rules of a language, its forms, inflections and syntax) contains the critical building blocks to good writing and speaking. Individuals or small groups in heterogeneous grouped eighth grade language arts classes listen to each other's presentations and are exposed to ongoing analyses of language in a unique, entertaining way through "their" contemporary music. This series of lessons creates an avenue through which increasingly difficult levels of grammar can be introduced several times throughout the year.

Students begin with a cursory review of basic grammar by picking out particular parts of speech in song lyrics that are handed out by the teacher while the students listen to the song. This is repeated a second day. On the third day the students are asked to bring in their own "appropriate" C.D.s. They search to find a song which contains at least 10 out of 20 listed grammatical parts. (This is a great opportunity for building cooperation between groups since music seems to supercede set roles in the class.) Less capable learners may choose more basic elements, while the gifted may challenge themselves to find more difficult ones. They are given a day to prepare for the following presentations:

1. Each group or individual begins the presentation by passing out typed copies of the lyrics with the specific 10 grammar elements they have found printed at the top.

2. The class is challenged to find these within the lyrics before the presentation.

3. After a few minutes, the presenter shows the class the prepared poster where the lyrics are clearly charted and the grammatical parts are indicated by a code. (For example, N. above noun, C. above conjunction, etc.) The presenters explain what they have found while the song is played simultaneously. The class self-corrects their own copy while listening to the demonstration.

4. The posters are hung in the room for continuing reinforcement. Presentations are arranged by degree of difficulty so that the basics are shown first. The presentations are shown at the rate of about three a day. Then students, working alone or with others, create their own poem or song which must include 10 out of 20 predetermined grammatical parts. These are presented to the class in the same manner as before. Students are given the option of working alone or with others. This personal creation acts as an assessment tool for measuring learning.

Easily adapted from lower elementary to high school level, this unit reinforces and introduces crucial information upon which good oral and written language can be built. This lesson actually originated in my daughter's senior language arts class at Rio Mesa High School, where she was instructed to find examples of "metaphysical conceit," similes, metaphors, and personification. I geared my lessons toward grammar because language is a science and it must be analyzed constantly in its simplest parts before it can be built upon. Grammar must be understood before a student can effectively use more sophisticated sentence structure, punctuation, paragraph structure, essay structure, and vocabulary. For a student to place a comma after an introductory subordinate clause, or to incorporate more sophisticated adverbs, or to edit for consistent use of verb tense is impossible without a thorough understanding of grammar which is the systematic rules of a language, its forms, inflections and syntax.

State Frameworks
Grammar and its application to the English language is required by the State frameworks.

Students
Seven classes of eighth graders, totaling 130 students, enjoyed this unit in 1999. It was a welcome break from diagramming and The Writer's Craft textbook.

Facilities/Materials
It is helpful to borrow extra C.D. players for preparation. Also extra C.D.s from the school library may be needed for those who do not have them.
Let’s Get Spatial!
A Program Designed to Develop Spatial Reasoning Skills While Spanning the Gender Gap

The Idea and Its Value
Classroom engineering competitions, such as building toothpick bridges, paper towers, wind driven vehicles and the like, are entered into with great enthusiasm by both boys and girls. Yet there is a disturbing trend. In groups that are carefully balanced for gender and intellectual ability, the boys tend to take over. When children are allowed to choose their own groups, which are often gender exclusive, the teams of boys are almost always more successful. Individuals who seem to have a natural flair for such tasks are usually male. In daily classroom math and science activities the girls do just as well as the boys, so why was I finding such a discrepancy in this type of task?

Curiosity and a desire to level the playing field led me to do some task analysis. The engineering tasks are all heavily reliant on applied spatial reasoning. Related careers like engineer, architect, mechanic, construction worker, electrician, etc., are dominated by men. More and more women are entering these fields, but the stereotypes and numbers remain mostly male.

A look at children’s play shows glaring discrepancies in the skills fostered by traditional boys’ and girls’ activities. Boys’ play tends to be much more spatial in nature while girls’ tends to be far more social. No wonder boys continue to score higher on tests of spatial reasoning than girls. The role play has on choosing a future career becomes obvious in retrospect. The child who enjoys taking things apart to see how they work would logically feel drawn to the field of mechanics. Getting more young women into math and science related careers means getting spatial in the classroom.

The math textbooks have a paucity of spatial activities. A single lesson on congruence cannot begin to compensate for hours of building and knocking down towers. A systematic and comprehensive program, one that is free of cultural and gender bias, is preferable. Based on play, is required to enhance spatial reasoning skills.

What has emerged is a three part program. First is the activity center for students who have completed their assignments. Wooden Chinese cube and barrel puzzles, remove the ring and jigsaw puzzles, gyroscope, a chess set, optical illusions, etc. have found their way into this center, piquing students’ interest and building synapses.

Math, science, and art lessons have taken on a spatial focus. We begin by designing sculptures from geometric nets, matching the 3D shapes they will make and finding perimeters, areas and volumes. Scale comes next, enlarging the Sunday funnies, drawing blueprints for houses and parks, and making scale models. Engineering challenges, like those mentioned above, are scattered throughout the year. Sponge activities are the third component of my program. Tangrams, coin, and toothpick logic puzzles help to cement these skills on a weekly basis.

Higher level thinking skills are inherent in spatial reasoning activities. Analysis, synthesis, creativity and planning are major aspects of this process. Many of the activities require persistence, patience, making modifications, and working through frustrations and set backs. Cooperative learning and the ability to work together are essential to the successful completion of many of these tasks.

The program’s effectiveness is demonstrated by the high quality of work produced on the various projects, along with the enthusiasm of the students regardless of gender or ethnic group.

State Frameworks
Let’s Get Spatial fits well with the California State Mathematics Framework in its effort to enhance real life mathematics in an environment free of gender or cultural bias.

Students
Hundreds of students in grades 4-8 have enjoyed and completed the many activities in the program since I first began a concentrated focus on spatial reasoning. The activities are continually refined, pruned, added to and refurbished in order to challenge this year’s particular mix of students. Children from a large range of intellectual abilities, socio-economic and cultural backgrounds have successfully enjoyed the many activities.

Facilities/Materials
A single piece of paper and a strip of tape are all that’s needed to get started, though soon all sorts of intriguing gizmos, activities and toys begin to catch your eye. Students begin bringing in contributions, some as show and tell, others as donations. The next thing you know, you’re totally spatial!

Grades 4-8

Mathematics

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Never Again: The Legacy of World War II

Grades 9-12
History/Social Science,
Language Arts,
Performing Arts,
Cultural Literacy

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The Idea and Its Value
How did this happen? That was the question we used to guide our five-week unit on World War II. The goal of the unit was to impress upon students the causes and effects of World War II, so that they would see how such a catastrophe happened and how to avoid one in the future. The unit had a profound effect on the students as they met veterans and a Holocaust survivor, learned how Hitler came to power, read a World War II novel, simulated concentration camp conditions, watched U.S. Army footage of the camps, listened to radio addresses, and re-enacted the Nuremberg Trials. Through a wide variety of teaching and learning techniques, the students learned, as one student said, "that history isn't black and white."

We began this interdisciplinary unit with a problem-solving simulation aimed at familiarizing the students with the concept of appeasement. Students then analyzed Hitler's appeals to German youths. To see other perspectives on the war, students chose a World War II novel, created reading schedules, kept a reading log, and put on a book fair at the end of the unit during which a parent said that her daughter "had never been so excited about school." We were thrilled by the students' creativity and enthusiasm for their projects. Titles included: Night, King Rat, Catch-22, Stories from the River, Hiroshima, and A Separate Peace. Students analyzed the literary elements of their novels and used their historical knowledge to synthesize themes in the reading. The students also used events in the novels to ask questions of the guest speakers.

The veteran POWs and the Holocaust survivor who spoke to the students had an enormous impact on them. A few were brought to tears by their stories of POW and concentration camp life. Their stories, as well as other activities, inspired the students to donate $218 to the World War II Memorial Campaign.

The Holocaust activities made a deep impression on the students. We showed army footage of liberating the camps while the students listened to the music from Schindler's List; we saw tears there too. Students were guards, sonderkommando, doctors, and Jews during the simulation. The pile of shoes symbolizing the dead made an impact on the students.

To emphasize the complexity of the war, we ended the unit with a simulation of the Nuremberg trials. By portraying the lawyers, the accused, judges and witnesses, the students better understood that there are not always absolute answers to difficult problems. Students also analyzed the U.S. decision to drop the atomic bomb on Japan.

State Frameworks
The framework emphasizes the European theater of war for tenth grade (we emphasized major battles and the importance of air power), and the literature we used expands on works suggested as extended reading.

Students
We had 138 tenth-grade college-preparatory and resource students who participated in the unit. Much of it could be adapted for non-college bound students with the use of the shorter novels. The Holocaust and veterans' visits are of interest to all.

Facilities/Materials
We have adjoining rooms, with a collapsible divider. Supplies included: several videos, a CD-ROM, the novels mentioned, Interact's Nuremberg simulation, and supplies for the Holocaust simulation.

Outside Resources
Our guest speakers, whom we contacted through Seasons, were essential to the success of this unit, as were parents who helped with the book fair and donations to the memorial fund.
Paper Power
(Getting Mathematical About Homemade Paper)

The Idea and Its Value
A spark of imagination coupled with the magic of papermaking motivates students to acquire academic skills and empowers them to solve environmental issues on campus. This year-long unit began with introducing students to the concept of our disposable society by means of recording different types of trash produced in their homes and completing a six-week labor cycle of decomposition. In addition, students did research in supply and demand of limited resources, the cycles and growth rates of trees, deforestation, and responsible land use management. Once students gained a basic understanding of the decomposition process and the need to more effectively manage our trash flow they decided to create a system for renewing waste paper on campus. Students conducted an in-depth study of campus waste by sampling the trash thrown out at each grade level, graphed data and computed averages to determine the amount of paper discarded per class on a daily basis. Experiments in evaporation, dehydration, and directing airflow promoted the desire to create a structure for drying large amounts of paper. Students then applied concepts in geometry and measurement to the construction of four paper dehydrators, each capable of yielding sixty sheets of paper. Students were required to create scale drawings and models of proposed dehydrator designs, demonstrate a working knowledge of parallel lines and angles, as well as determine the quantity and cost of materials needed to complete the project. Through team contests, experimentation and record keeping, students employed the scientific process to determine the most effective means to recycle paper and to calculate how much paper they could process. Investigations included finding relationships between volume and yield, determining optimum size and quality, and calculating dehydration rates based on paper weight and thickness. The result was a class run paper-milling system that produced eight pounds of handmade paper daily. Students also began to experiment with creating novelty items such as scented paper, herbal stationery, greeting cards, and gift boxes. To promote school-wide participation, students created instructional posters, wrote articles for the school newspaper, and taught classes on paper collection procedures. Students also created flyers to advertise paper products to be sold at the school’s garden store. As students gained confidence in their ability to produce quality paper, they began accepting invitations from teachers to conduct papermaking workshops.

State Frameworks
This unit involves integrated curriculum, however, its foundation is based in mathematics. Strands contained in this unit are geometry and measurement, statistics and probability, logic and problem solving, and number sense. Significant concepts covered from the California State Framework for Earth and Biological Science include: cycles, decomposition, limited resources, and recycling. This unit also creates formal and informal opportunities for oral and written communication as stated in the State Language Arts Content and Performance Standards.

Students
The paper mill was created by two classes of fourth through sixth grade students. The students included Resource, Title I, Limited English, and GATE.

Facilities/Materials
Household blenders, buckets, measuring cups, shallow dish tubs, felt or absorbent cloth squares, simple frames, with screen mesh, dehydrator racks, and waste paper from your classroom or collected from the entire school.

Outside Resources

Common crafting magazines, such as Crafts and Country Living.

We have patterns and measurements for paper dehydration racks, frame medals, and deckles.

Grades 4-8
Mathematics, Science, and Global Awareness

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The Idea and Its Value

Rockin’ With Grammar is a unit incorporating art, poetry, grammar and what every teenager couldn’t live without... music. The unit not only has instructional value but it also allows an opportunity for students to express themselves creatively and build up their self-esteem. I always get positive feedback from both students and parents. I hear comments like, “I never knew learning the parts of speech could be so fun,” or “Hey, look what word I invented!”

The four-week unit begins with a pretest of the eight parts of speech to assess students’ prior knowledge. From there, students create flashcards with definitions and examples of the parts of speech. Students then read “ Jabberwocky” by Lewis Carroll and identify Carroll’s invented words as a particular part of speech. They are surprised to find that although they don’t know what a word in the poem means that they are able to label it. This brings up the discussion of how we were able to identify words as a particular part of speech. For example, a noun usually follows an article and if there is a word that ends in “y” between the article and the noun that it is probably an adjective. At this point students pair off and create their own dictionary of invented words replete with pronunciation keys, use in sentences, and pictures. This forces students to not merely memorize the parts of speech but to actually apply their knowledge to create something.

The Rockin’ With Grammar unit continues with madlips. Students volunteer words as I call out for various parts of speech. I then put students in groups of four and give each group leader a madlip to complete with the rest of the group. Each leader then reads the group’s efforts aloud. Afterwards, students write a very short story that could be turned into their own madlip. When they finish their story, they identify all the parts of speech and then take out the adjectives, adverbs, nouns, and remaining parts of speech that would make for a good madlip. Students pair off and fill out each other’s madlips. I ask for volunteers to read to the class their original story along with the new one.

We also spend a small portion of time diagramming sentences, beginning on a rudimentary level and then progressing to more complex sentences. This is especially helpful for the left-brain thinking individuals as it provides structure to the English language.

The grand finale is a song students create in cooperative groups. The project is introduced at the beginning so students have approximately four weeks to work on it. Students take a song that they know, omit the lyrics but keep the tune, and put in their own lyrics that define and give examples of a particular part of speech. They have the option of videotaping, tape recording, or presenting it live in front of the class. They are graded on their copy of the lyrics, creativity, and clarity (I tell students the background music shouldn’t be so loud that we can’t understand the lyrics). I have always had one hundred percent participation and lots of positive feedback. Students love this assignment and come back after they’ve graduated to tell me that it was their favorite project of the year.

The unit closes with a post-test. Students are amazed at how different their scores are compared to the pre-test, providing me with validation for doing the unit.

The unit promotes the use of higher level thinking skills as students are identifying, defining, and utilizing grammar. The activities result in increased awareness of the parts of speech and when a student is reminded that every sentence needs a verb, most of them will understand. I am able to measure the success of the unit by assessing student achievement via discussion, tests, and completed projects. The unit also addresses the needs of all learners by tapping into creative thinking as well as objective analysis of information.

State Frameworks

The unit supports many aspects of the Language Arts Framework: reading, writing, speaking, and listening, group discussion, interdisciplinary connection, and high level thinking activities.

Students

Students were in the eighth grade and at various academic levels from low to high, all successful. A total of 180 students participated in 1999-2000.

Facilities/Materials

Poem, madlips, construction paper, markers, VCR, tape player.
Still Life to Reel Life

The Idea and Its Value

In this story-to-movie activity, students explore the real life scenario of creating a story from a visual idea. They encounter the same mental challenge that faces screenwriters: how to bring an idea to life through dialogue and image while making it memorable and worthwhile. They also address the issue of commercial viability by identifying target audience groups and various marketing strategies. This two-week activity addresses creating visual images, creating verbal responses inspired by the image, and evaluating products they create in terms of marketability.

Students view a gallery of ten pictures, mostly illustrations from children's literature. They select one and write a story treatment for a movie that includes the picture as one image on the storyboard. Their story must contain all the necessary information for the potential producer to understand how the characters are developed, why the conflict and complications keep the story moving, and what the resolution is. The story must include dialogue, action, and character development. Students also write a brief synopsis with cast list.

Students write a two-page sample of a dialogue between two or three characters. The dialogue sample should show how the writer can carry the plot forward without sounding forced, and how each character has a distinctive vocal pattern that helps capture the essence of the character's personality.

Next, the students write lyrics to the theme song for the movie. The tone should match the overall mood of the storyline or the main character at a crucial moment in the plot. They may be a rhymed ballad with a repeated refrain or a lyric poem that captures a moment of the character's mood using a repeated, meaningful, memorable phrase.

Marketing a movie has much to do with its success, so as a follow-up to a previous unit on propaganda, loaded words and advertising use, students develop a marketing plan which includes the following items:

- Analysis of the target audience: age group, gender, socio-economic strata
- Statement of the film's genre and why this film would appeal to the target audience
- An explanation of the optimal release date for the movie
- Memorable slogan or image that separates this movie from others of its genre
- Suggestions for corporate and product tie-ins to broaden the film's economic base
- Promotional activities, marketing hype, giveaways, and contests
- Black and white print ad suitable for newspaper with memorable image, slogan, and 'hook' phrase

This whole "package" is then presented in a five minute oral presentation that resembles a sales pitch. Students show their ad, discuss their marketing plan, give a brief synopsis of the story, give a feel for the dialogue, and read some of the theme song lyrics. They are encouraged to make their presentations stand out: some use multi-media presentations, including video clips of scenes from their movie proposal; some compose music for their lyrics; some stage sample contests; and some have created PowerPoint presentations to show via computer and TV. Etc.

The assignment is assessed on several items: a creative and high-quality oral presentation, a story that includes all required elements, lyrics for the theme song that are appropriate to the tone of the story, a well-thought-out, realistic marketing plan and appropriate printed media.

State Frameworks

This activity supports State Framework goals: to write clear, cogent, and concise prose which develops voice and style, to strive for high-level oral presentations, to apply higher-level thinking in selecting propaganda use, and to use alternative assessment techniques.

Students

 Portions of this activity were carried out by 300+ 8th grade students over three years. The full activity was completed in 1997-99 by 200 10th grade students.

Facilities/Materials

Pictures. (I use 4 x 6" greeting card illustrations from children's books that seem to inspire stories.)

Presentation media. (My students use several media and technological methods in their presentations, but this are not crucial to the completion of a successful project.)
Sports: Create for the Future and Play in the Past

Grades 4-12

Physical Education

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The Idea and Its Value

Learn sports history, create your own athletic game, and enhance writing skills through this multi-faceted physical education unit. The 2-week unit began with a 100 year history of sports. A hands-on museum, with old sports equipment borrowed from 'Play It Again Sports' (a used sport equipment store) and items dug out of closets and garages, kicked off the millennium sports unit. Students were able to touch and try on items such as old baseball gloves with 6 inch fingers and no webbing, leather football helmets with no face masks, and catcher's masks with only 3 wires for protection. Large cloth footballs, oak golf clubs, 1950 and 1970 tennis rackets and flat baseball training bats were some of the many exhibits. Pictures were displayed to further emphasize the dramatic changes in uniforms and safety. A history of soccer balls made from pig's bladders, basketball nets from peach baskets, and cleat shoes weighing 2 pounds versus today's 8 ounces sparked students' curiosity and learning.

Besides hearing and reading about games from our past, students played 1950's basketball. There was no dribbling, only passing was allowed, and after each basket a jump ball was executed in the center of the court. Students were quick to comment about the slow pace of the game.

Students conducted research on three different sports of their choice. For each sport students wrote 4 changes that have taken place over the past 100 years. The final question caused students to write a very persuasive paragraph: Choose one sport - is it safer now or in the past? Students used their critical thinking skills to defend their argument. The papers were graded and included as part of their PE report card grade. Students were allowed to write in Spanish or English, special education assignments were modified. Through a variety of modalities (kinesthetic, reading, hands-on, lecture) students learned the history of several sports. The hands on museum re-enforced new vocabulary and gave focus and stimulation to the writing.

Design and create a new athletic game was the next assignment. Students were inspired because their game had the same goal as all new games, "trying to play something different". Cooperative groups of 4 to 8 players were formed. Special education, bilingual, Spanish speaking, and English only students were distributed in groups. Hula hoops, soccer balls, basketballs, tennis balls, plastic whiffle balls, and cones were available. Any combination of equipment was acceptable in their game. A worksheet was completed which asked for rules, scorekeeping, equipment needed, boundaries, and a game name. A picture was diagrammed on the back of the worksheet. Two 50 minute class periods were spent designing the game. Creativity abounded as students experimented with different equipment and rules to finally arrive at their new game. Designing a new game promoted cooperative learning and higher level thinking skills.

On the "grading day" all groups were required to play their game for the entire class period. The teacher rotated randomly, grading each group with a check sheet. The check sheet included: are the written rules clear, are you keeping score, is everyone participating, does the game make sense. Each question was graded A, B, C, D, F and the average of the scores determined the final grade.

Games were video taped and reviewed by each class. Students used a check list to self evaluate their game. Questions were similar to the grading check list. Using the check list as a guide, students wrote a
final evaluation, including improvements and favorite portions of the unit.

In conclusion, the hands-on sports museum, playing 1920 basketball, researching sports' history, and creating a new sports game ignited students' interest, promoting enhanced writing skills and increasing knowledge of sports history for all students.

State Frameworks
The PE framework states "Risk taking involves new challenges and learning opportunities-trying out new equipment and new ways to use old equipment... This is also a time when students develop confidence to overcome anxieties associated with attempting something new, making new friends, and beginning to accept their own limitations... Team sports units should include the history, rules..." All these goals are met in this unit.

Students
Two hundred seventh and eighth grade students have participated in this unit, including special education students, English language learners, Spanish speaking and English only students. This unit could easily be adapted for grades four through high school.

Facilities/Materials
Materials needed are: library books for student research, a variety of PE and old sports equipment. The facilities can be outdoors on the grass or blacktop for the game development.

Outside Resources
Public library for research books. Parents and used sports stores can supply old equipment.
The Front Comes Home
Sophomore English and World Civilizations Curriculum Unit

Grades 9-12
History/Social Science, Language Arts

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The Idea and Its Value
In this month long unit students dig trenches, write their last in a series of letters and poems, fight a mock battle, and relive the moments they had studied while reading and writing texts that reflected the turbulent moments when a World War wreaked mayhem on Europe and forever changed the scope of warfare in the modern era. While learning English, studying the history and tenor of the time and the backgrounds of the writers gives context to the works we read. While learning history, the artistic endeavors of painters, photographers, sculptors, and writers add depth and texture to world events.

Our English and World Civilizations students write from a context of historical knowledge: they learn of the struggle of the European countries (and America); and of the individuals who fought in the horrific battles of the World War I. Through reading their history textbooks, watching excerpts from The Great War (a PBS documentary), viewing still photographs and slides of the trenches and the home front, poring over diary entries and poems written by soldiers and civilians, and reading chapters from All Quiet on the Western Front (and watching excerpts from the film) these sophomores start to grasp the complexity and tumult of this time in history.

in the World Civilizations class students craft a person and write a biography. Each day the students journal, prompted by film clips, photographs, music, or art from the time period. Concurrently, the students (in the guise of their fictional persons) then write a series of nine letters detailing their lives as the war progresses.

In the English class students read the poems of Siegfried Sassoon, Wilfred Owen, other British contemporaries, and some selected but lesser known Italian and German soldiers who have written about the trauma of their wartime experiences. We use discussion and process analysis to explicate the poems as a class, then students group and present their findings to the class as a whole. We study the writing styles that aid in writing vivid letters and poems: stream of consciousness, internal and external dialogue and monologue; and use of imagery.

After journaling for three weeks, watching films, creating a biography and a set of first person letters, and studying the World War One poets, our students watch Gallipooli to get the feel for “going over the top” and leaving their most prized possessions behind. The following day, these students bring a backpack filled with the items they would take to war, and we march them to the agriculture fields and have them dig trenches on opposing sides of the field. After four hours of labor and the writing of their last, letter to a loved one, we send them “over the top” for a frenzied game of “capture the flag” where artillery men lob water laden sponges into the crowd of charging “soldiers.”

Students learn the causes and effects for World War I and the suffering of the civilian populations that result from the changing style of modern warfare, and they understand the ultimate loss of romance with warfare that came as a direct result of the wholesale slaughter in trench warfare. They experiment with writing the more defined genres of poetry and the freer styles of writing found in letters and diaries.

Students ultimately have to analyze the causes and synthesize the events in order to write in well-grounded ways. These sophomores come away much more sensitive to the horrors of war than if they read a few pages in their textbooks.

State Frameworks
This unit fits the State Frameworks for World Civilizations: Unit V for World War I and its Consequences. The State Frameworks for English encourage writing, reading, and speaking. We employ test texts for World War I, cause and effects for the war, and the students explicate poems for their classes, besides extensive writing and speaking assignments.

Students
This unit allows students of all abilities to participate from those whose strengths are more artistic to those who respond to physical activity and leadership challenges. Approximately two hundred college prep sophomores have participated. Depending on the difficulty of the poetry and the length and type of writing assignments, this unit can find success at almost any level.

Facilities/Materials
We employ a slide projector, a VCR and monitor, computers for research, and copying facilities. A handy dirt field has helped immensely. We’ve mentioned the films above. We use board adopted and supplementary texts that we can provide.
The Great Debates

The Idea and Its Value

After reading the play, "Inherit the Wind" which emphasizes the great debating styles and techniques of two legendary Americans, Clarence Darrow and William Jennings Bryan, we embarked on a month long history/language arts/speech unit focusing on debate. Debate provides an excellent opportunity for students to practice logic, research, role-playing, speech, drama, and most importantly for teenagers - organized, rational argument. Students are presented with a difficult case in medical ethics (adapted from one taught as part of a course in medical ethics at Harvard Medical School). They are required to decide the proper course of action and to write an essay in support of their decision. The medical ethics case turns on the issue of conflicting individual rights. One identical twin will die within months without a transplant, but the other twin wants to deny her sister one of her own healthy kidneys. The facts of the case are such that the students' decisions are difficult, but they must make a choice either pro or con, and then support their decision with medical and ethical facts.

We present the case in class and encourage group discussion. The teacher remains strictly neutral. If discussion lags, or the group decision seems to be unanimous, the teacher advances the minority viewpoint. Students take notes during the discussion on the main points of both sides of the issue. The students' essays include all arguments in favor of the point of view chosen, and rebuttals for all arguments contrary to that point of view. The assignment offers an excellent opportunity to reinforce in-depth research, outlining, and persuasive writing techniques. Next, the pro and con debate teams are assigned and the actual debate format is taught.

Then each pro and con team must determine a resolution (debatable issue) stated in the positive. Ex: "Resolved, the school day needs to be shorter." A moderator then introduces the resolution and the speakers for each side and sets the same time limit for each speaker. The debaters speak in the following order: Pro #1, then Con #1, Pro #2, Con #2, Pro #3, Con #3. Each participant is taking notes for the rebuttal while opposing side is speaking. One minute is given for each team to regroup and assign rebuttal arguments. Finally, the moderator sets a time limit for each speaker to refute the other team's arguments; debaters follow the previous speaking order.

Ideas are presented in logical sequence in an argument containing an introduction, body and closing, and including decision clearly given, substantial reasons for decision, reasons clearly stated, and opposing arguments addressed. These components are the basis for grading. After the initial debate format was learned we then debated topical issues relevant for secondary students, such as: drug testing in schools, required school uniforms, and the merits of standardized testing.

For a culminating event we debated historical issues such as: Should we observe Columbus Day or Leif Erickson Day in America? Or, should we refer to the Protestant Reformation, or the Protestant Revolution? Or, should Michelangelo or Leonardo da Vinci be given credits for making the greatest impact on the Renaissance? We have found the teacher's strict neutrality keeps the students from deciding that there is only one "right" answer and produces more innovative student performances. The value of this unit is that students are both attaining and reinforcing higher-level thinking, valuable in-depth research skills, heightened analytical abilities, persuasive oratory performances. This unit is very salable to students because they just naturally love to argue!

State Frameworks

This activity supports the State Framework goals of applying high-level thinking to research, analysis, persuasive writing, and public speaking as students actively debate social, political, and historical issues from the 15th century through the year 2000.

Students

150 seventh and eighth grade students participated in this unit, but by selecting the moral and ethical issues in history this unit could be easily adapted to elementary students as well. The debate unit addresses the needs of all learners because it encourages multi-level learners to become a team which allows for students to select from a myriad of debate roles such as: team researcher, Internet ad-hoc/researcher, speech writer, debate participant, moderator, timekeeper, and note taker for rebuttal arguments.

Facilities/Materials

Library resources, Internet access and guest speakers on topical issues.

Grades 7-12

Language Arts, History, Technology, Speech

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The Magnificence of Multitudinous Multigenre Papers

Grades 9-12
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Students write a multi-genre paper that presents a subject's life through poetry, prose of all types, documents, and images—all of their work shows differing and sometimes conflicting views of a person's life from many points of view.

The Idea and Its Value
"I am large, I contain multitudes."—Walt Whitman
Creativity and scholarly endeavor at first glance seem to exist at polar opposites. As teachers, we encourage the necessary skills and behaviors that produce good research presented in a readable and understandable way. We also push students to write creatively and vividly. We encourage individual style and point of view as singularly important for developing the most intrinsically valuable tool a writer can possess: voice.

The Multi-Genre Research Paper does require both of these skills.

Students choose an individual and read an autobiography or biography. Students keep a research notebook where they initially note facts and observations about the person's life. What prevents this research notebook from merely acting as a storehouse of information lies in this one factor: students are required to ruminative, question, and speculate about the person and their life. Imbedded in this process of inquiry and reflection lies the seeds of vivid and provocative writing.

While students research, I teach prose forms in class: journalism, letter writing, personal narrative, memoir, and short story. The students read professional and student examples of these forms and write their own in class, making certain to include their drafts in their research notebook.

After a month, I introduce the notion of Grammar B, a term coined by Winston Weather in his book, An Alternative Style Options in Composition. For the first time, students see vindication for the types of prose they currently read. The students read and practice interior and exterior monologue, stream of consciousness, modern poetry types, and the stylistic methods of the fragment sentence, the laconic line, the sentence, orthographic variation, and the use of dual voice in both poetry and prose.

Then they select and review four other sources: magazines, newspapers, documentaries, journalism of all types, collections of letters, and any source of information that further fills in the lives person. During the third and fourth month, students have to write at least three genres per week in their notebook so that they can fail and succeed enough times to have the fifteen genres required to flesh out their project.

Several themes remain constant: writers produce a lot and fail in their attempts, writers reflect on their writing constantly and incorporate what they have learned into their newest endeavors, experimentation and reflection (metacognition) lead to growth. Students present their source information and their own thinking in four ways: they write a works cited page at the end of the paper, they write the source's titles at the bottom of each genre, they bold face any direct quotations they use in the body, and they write an afterword that contains four domains: 1) From Where in the research texts did the idea come? 2) What was it about this notion compelled them to write? 3) Why did they choose this particular genre? 4) What techniques did they employ for this genre and why? Without fail, my students tell me that the Afterwards are harder to write then the genres because this forces the students to examine themselves and their motivations for writing.

They bind their work, add photographs or graphics, and place the Afterwards at the end.

This research paper gives rare insight into the minds of writers. While students read and write and then write metacognitively, they learn by doing.

Impetus: Tom Romano's Writing with Passion presented this idea in chapter seven.

State Frameworks
The process lasts from three to four months. The reading, writing, and discussion all meet the State Frameworks. I grade the WGRP using a rubric that the students have from the beginning of the project, I also read their research notebook at two week intervals.

Students
Perhaps three hundred students from freshman to senior level, from standard to honors level have written this report.

Facilities/Materials
The above-mentioned books, as well as many student and professional examples gleaned from years of teaching.
The Odyssey: Life's Journey from Ancient Greece to Modern Times

The Hero's Adventure as an Archetype for Students' Lives

The Idea and Its Value

With Homer's Odyssey as inspiration, students take their own personal epic journey as they follow the heroic tale of Odysseus in his quest to return to his homeland while exploring their own quest to achieve their ultimate "Ithaca." Homer was more than just a great storyteller. He looked with keen insight into human souls, exposing the frailties and strengths of mankind, creating a mirror for modern readers to reflect on their own lives. Metaphorically, life is an odyssey, a series of wanderings. Students use Odysseus' journey as a modern paradigm for exploring and understanding the meaning of life's experiences.

Students research mythology and present gods and goddesses and their myth tales through skits and creative oral presentations. This explains the active roles of the gods in The Odyssey and the etymology of words such as mentor, tragedy, and oracle. Modern day links are made to word origins through mythical allusions that yield company names such as "Nike" and "Janus." Students examine the recipe for writing their own myths, a story that relates to the gods, involves a conflict, contains superhuman character, explains a natural phenomenon, and has a moral or lesson learned. This rubric is extended to include the solving of an ecological problem. For example, one student addressed the problem of oil pollution by creating a giant clam that opened its gigantic mouth filtering the water in such a way as to cause waves to be created. Poseidon added to the mix by slamming his trident on the ocean floor creating earthquakes to teach man a lesson. The critical thinking skills and creativity demonstrated in this assignment spark the students' enthusiasm.

Before reading the epic, students select from The Odyssey characters to research and portray throughout the unit. Technology is used to access information and process the written reports. Students plan decorations, food, party favors, music, games, and individual hospitality gifts and create costumes for their characters in the Greek Festival welcoming Odysseus home.

Success is measured throughout the unit with rubrics for a variety of activities. Grammar and usage activities are tied to the literature, enhancing the Language Arts Content Standards. Literary terms and tools are applied to the unit through personification activities, alliteration, etc. Listening skills are targeted with sequencing activities of various books of the epic. Creativity and individuality are expressed in student-selected projects such as sculptures and paintings, newspaper articles, travel agent brochures, detective agencies, etc. enabling a wide range of student success. Themes and values are explored through group activities and in-depth discussion of positive attitudes and behavior. These group discussions lay the foundation for more intense comparison and contrast of attributes of the epic hero versus modern day fictional and real life heroes. The hero cycle is analyzed and applied to both ancient and modern heroes to further quantify common elements of uncommon people. Students realize that there is a hero lurking within each individual longing to achieve greatness, and the hero's adventure is an archetype for their lives.

With this in mind, students embark on their own personal narrative comparing their life journeys to that of Odysseus. They identify their "Ithaca"—the goal that they are striving toward. They compare the deterrents in their lives, both internal and external, to those faced by Odysseus. They also identify the mentors in their lives in relation to those in Odysseus' life. Within the essay they compare their value system with that of Odysseus and examine their own personal strengths and weaknesses. They close their essay with a clear picture of what it will take to achieve their goal and fulfill their quests. Their personal odyssey essays are accompanied by physical maps illustrating their odysseys using pictures and symbols to represent their mentors and barriers.

State Frameworks

This unit supports many elements of the Framework: high level thinking activities, interdisciplinary activities, drama, accessing technology, group activities, innovation of listening, speaking, reading, and writing that guides students through a range of thinking processes.

Students

Hundreds of freshman GATE to resource students as well as English Language Learners have participated.

Facilities/Materials

Mythology stories, cassette player, text of The Odyssey, paper and markers, CD-ROM/Internet for research, and student-created festival goods (e.g., costumes, props, etc.)
The idea and Its Value

Have you ever tried to learn terms you could hardly pronounce, let alone spell? It is a daunting task at best! As I have looked out into my sea of 4th grade faces in past years, I have often seen the frustration in their eyes as they have tried to grasp a concept in geometry, and pronounce and spell the unfamiliar term. Textbook curriculum generally calls for a "geometry unit" in which the students are to grasp and be tested on the concepts in a short amount of time. I decided a new approach was needed, and so things are shaping up in my classroom!

This origami math unit is incorporated throughout the year in all academic areas, sending the message to the students that math can be found anywhere. The first week of school the students brainstormed what "star qualities" (character qualities) they thought were important for our class. We then began work on an eight-point origami star, a challenging first project. Through folding and measurement the students learned the properties of scalene and isosceles triangles. When the star was finished it formed an octagonal center to which I attached the student's picture. After a health lesson on human traits, the students wrote their unique traits on the sections of the stars. The stars hung from the ceiling all year as a reminder to the students of their uniqueness. It is also evidence of how much they have progressed in their math knowledge and origami skills.

Regularly throughout the year, origami math lessons were interspersed in the various subjects. For their animal research folder they made an origami coyote, making a new discovery that a 7-sided figure is a heptagon. For the Thanksgiving Breakfast, in which the students invited people for whom they were thankful, they made complex 3-dimensional origami turkeys. A discussion of fractions developed as they made the "feathers." When the students designed their individual California Indian Tribe Museums, an origami piece of their choice was a required element. Another project included a writing piece: A rectangle folded into equilateral triangles formed a wonderful pop-up snake. The snake was then used as a story starter for a folk tale; the students wrote about "How Equi Became a Snake." It went along perfectly with the rainforest theme in the students' reading books! Incorporated into their scientific investigation of owls was the most challenging project, an origami owl. It not only tested the students' fine motor skills and their ability to follow directions, but it integrated all the geometric concepts they had learned and added some more. At each fold they stopped to measure and record the geometric property discovered. It was exciting to see one of my students who struggles with "pencil and paper math," light up as he exclaimed, "When we fold this square in half it is going to be an isosceles triangle!"

My students are inspired by the origami web sites they have viewed, with more complex projects than they could capably at this point, and want to try advancing their skills. As their skills increase, so will their mathematical power.

State Frameworks

Things are Shaping Up supports the California Frameworks emphasizing learning across the curriculum using a variety of teaching approaches, and is in alignment with the California Math Standards for 4th grade. The goal of the unit is to help students actively participate in geometry, setting a solid conceptual foundation.

Students

Two classes of 28 fourth graders each, including G.A.T.E., English Learners, and Resource students. While the origami projects I have described are designed for 4th graders, the unit is applicable to all grade levels, with modifications. If I were teaching origami to high school students I would have them design an origami piece, requiring specific geometric properties to be included. A high school student could extend the origami project by teaching the design to elementary students. The possibilities for origami and math are limitless!

Facilities/Materials

This unit uses basic classroom materials. Origami paper is not necessary, but it's a nice luxury.

Outside Resources

Various origami instruction books, Math in Motion (simple origami projects with math lessons included)
Timeless Traditions

The Idea and Its Value
This integrated unit looks at traditions and holidays passed on through the ages. The project, inspired by the grade level textbook and support materials, is the culminating activity for a three-week literature unit that envelopes the theme “From Generation to Generation” and is a perfect end of year celebration before winter recess. The unit requires that students analyze a variety of methods authors use for characterization, the use of idioms in writing, and the elements of literature, specifically theme and character analysis. Some of the activities assigned during this unit include an essay and presentation of their own family heirlooms, researching Native American Indian traditions and customs, and a reflection of students’ own strategic reading methods.

The culminating project, Timeless Traditions, is one that includes research and note taking on a tradition of the student’s own choosing, a 1-2 page essay describing the tradition, and an oral presentation to the class. Students must write using the proper conventions of the language, must use the library for research purposes to gain the required number of resources, and must include a bibliography with the essay. Students must use the Internet for research and cite one web page as a source. They also create a hand-made three-dimensional representation of their chosen tradition or holiday. Furthermore, students must present their projects and traditions to the class using their developing presentation skills.

Some ideas chosen by the students include researching the Easter bunny, Fourth of July activities, Kwanzaa, and a variety of Halloween traditions, and their origins. The final projects included traditional, home baked cookies and cakes in celebration of Christmas and Valentine’s Day, while others made displays and models out of clay. Models of Jack-o-Lanterns, Christmas trees and and Menorahs decorated the classroom, which became a holiday showcase for interested classes and families to view.

Students must compare and contrast their chosen holiday with that of another culture’s which is similar. They reflect on their own participation in such a holiday, thinking about how they might celebrate it if it were one of their own customs handed down by a family member. Additionally, the project encourages students to learn about, value and respect cultures different than their own as they make their comparisons. The students are evaluated on the originality of their project, its effectiveness at representing the desired tradition, and its description card containing vital information. The essay is judged on its content, proper grammar and usage, an explanation of the pertinent information, comparison of similar traditions, and clarity of thought. The presentation is evaluated on the use of the required time, eye contact with the audience, and listening attentively during other presentations. It is clear that all learners can be successful in completing this culminating activity as it reaches out to many different abilities and strengths.

This activity is easily adaptable. Requirements for the essays can be adjusted to include any variety of writing skills or techniques. This activity can also be used in the study of single cultures alongside cultural literature units or social studies units.

State Frameworks
Students are expected to develop their public speaking abilities their writing techniques, and further their understanding of other cultures.

Students
This activity was completed by 150 middle school students in grade 8; however, the project is easily adaptable to fit the needs and levels of most any student.

Facilities/Materials
The school library and computers (with Internet access). Basic classroom and art supplies.

Outside Resources
Students were welcome to interview family members and research at the public library.
We Are All Colonia

Grades 6-8
Social Science, Speech

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The Idea and Its Value

This unit is designed to educate the students of Oxnard about the history of the area they live in through researching, summarizing and presenting, and in so doing, teach others, as well as themselves, to respect each other because "We are all from Colonia."

While teaching students in Colonia I come across students who come from different areas of Oxnard. Many of the students "claim" different parts of the city as their "turf." The students are very intolerant of each other. The two biggest groups are the Lemonwood group and the Colonia gang. Many of these students are on the cusp of becoming full-fledged gang members. However, I have found that by educating the students about the history of the area, combining the philosophy of Martin Luther King and introducing a technological program like PowerPoint to present a final product, the students gain the knowledge to make a better decision about their social actions.

First I give a pretest paragraph asking the students what they know about the Oxnard area. Answers range from "it was stolen from Mexico," to "the pilgrims landed here." Very few students know anything about the history of the area where they live. Second, I give a PowerPoint slide show of 50 slides and graphics that pictorialize the history of the Oxnard Plain. Third, I hand out a four-page chapter on the Early History of California taken from The First Farmers of the Oxnard Plain. After summarizing the history of the Chumash, the Spanish Period and the Mexican years of California occupation, I have the students draw a picture depicting the three phases of California history. Then the students summarize the American period, which for this area begins with the immigration of many of the first families to this area. The students choose from a list of early pioneer families to research and write a one-page biography.

It's during the Pioneer portion of the lesson that the similarities are seen between the values of first families and today's immigrants. Many of the first families did not speak English and came here without money. They usually worked for someone else or leased land for several years, but after years they were able to show a profit for their efforts.

We conclude the lesson by rearranging Martin Luther King's I Have a Dream speech to include the statement: "I have a dream that all of my family, friends, peers and strangers will one day live in Oxnard, where they will not be judged by the color of their skin or the area they live in, but by the content of their character."

After completing the summaries and pictures, the students are then taught how to scan their pictures and then import them into a PowerPoint lesson that they design. After completing the slide show lesson, students make their presentation to the class.

I have found that after teaching this unit on Colonia history the students seem to have more respect not only for me, but also for their peers and for the area. I took it as a compliment when a student who had participated in the lesson had a friend that was "claiming" a certain part of Oxnard and my student announced to me that his friend needed the Colonia lesson because "We are all from Colonia."

State Frameworks

The history of Colonia unit meets several of the California State Framework standards for both history and public speaking. History standards covered in the unit include historical comprehension, analysis and historical decision making. The presentation of the lesson using the PowerPoint program satisfies one of the public speaking requirements.

Students

I teach this two-week lesson to junior high students, though it can be adapted to any level of education with teacher modifications that meet the student's ability.

Facilities/Materials

The First Farmers of the Oxnard Plain and Sol Sheridan's Biographical History of Ventura County—both available at the VCMH&A. Computer with scanner; PowerPoint software. Lined paper, drawing paper.
We Must Remember
A Wall of Understanding

The Idea and Its Value
This culminating project allows the students to reflect on a five-week study of totalitarianism in Nazi Germany by producing a brick expressing their thoughts so others can learn and remember the Holocaust. The students in World History study the rise of totalitarian leaders in the modern world during the second semester of 10th grade. The course of study covers the collapse of the Weimar Republic, Hitler’s rise to power, an introduction of Jewish culture in central Europe, and the stages of the Holocaust.

The students begin this unit in a traditional way by reading the text, supplemental information, and Night. Students are expected to read for understanding. After reading and viewing clips of the stages of the Holocaust, the students are divided into eight groups. Their assignment is to present a review of one stage of the Holocaust and show at least two acts of resistance. They write, make sets, costume and perform these plays in front of the class. Next all the classes go the Museum of Tolerance. This day is a moving experience for all.

At the conclusion of this unit the students design a brick that express their feelings about what has been learned. The bricks may be single or done in conjunction with several others. The students are asked to reflect on all they have read and seen and design a brick to share those feelings with others. These bricks are put together and displayed as a wall.

The inspiration for this project came from seeing pictures of the Wall of Remembrance at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (Tell Them We Remember, pages 96 and 99.)

This project brings a positive conclusion to a long, disturbing course of study. Students express their feelings in writing quotes or drawing pictures. This wall allows for visual and emotional responses to the Holocaust unit. It becomes a Wall of Remembrance. Students from the entire school view this wall. It promotes much discussion and thought.

State Frameworks
This unit meets the State Framework for teaching Unit 6 in World History at the 10th grade level.

Students
All levels of students can have success with this culminating activity. Over the last five years approximately 300 of my students have completed this unit. My sheltered as well as gifted students have produced thoughtful bricks. While the students are making the bricks they talk about what they have learned and what they remember.

Facilities/Materials
The students use pencil, colored pencils, markers, and construction paper. A paper brick is provided. One day tiles for a permanent wall would be a wonderful addition.

Outside Resources
Each year the students go to the Museum of Tolerance and either hear or view tapes of survivors.

Grades 7-10
Social Science, Performing Arts

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Where in the U.S. Is Our Mascot Owney?

Grades K-8
Social Studies, Math, Language Arts

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The Idea and Its Value
Students learn about our nation by mailing Owney the Traveling Dog and receiving postcards from other schools. The project was inspired by Owney the Traveling Dog, by Lynn Hall. This true story is about a puppy that was adopted by postal workers in Albany, NY in 1888. They named him Owney and gave him a mail sack to sleep in. One day Owney’s sick-bed was needed for the mail. Owney followed the scent when the sack was put on a train. Owney traveled to the next station where he was found and returned to Albany. That dog must have liked traveling because he continued to get on trains and traveled all over the US. Today there is a portion of the National Postal Museum dedicated to Owney.

Before the school year starts, I use the Internet to contact a teacher in each of the fifty states to participate in the project. I explain the project and ask that they help send a stuffed dog through the postal service to every state in the United States. I created a web page where a record of the entire journey can be accessed by all. I plan an itinerary for Owney, either by statehood or region, allowing four days from one state to the next and adjusting for weekends and school holidays: Four days is not long, but at that rate, it takes a full school year to complete the journey.

At the beginning of the school year, I mail Owney to the first state on the list. As each class receives Owney, they celebrate what makes their state special. Each class writes facts about their state on postcards and mails them to the other classes to let them know Owney arrived. A paragraph or two is also written and sent by e-mail to each teacher and added to Owney’s journal on a web page. We all learn the weather, local customs, regional foods and traditions, and geographical highlights from students who live in each state.

It is very exciting when postcards arrive. Students graph Owney’s progress. Using maps, they locate the capital city and the town Owney visited. They learn about the state capital, year of statehood, state symbols, and other highlights. They estimate the mileage from one state to the next, find the actual mileage, and then compute the total miles Owney traveled.

Each student records the information in a journal. We paste copies of the postcards into the journals. The postcards and a graph of the journey are kept on display. Last year, Owney made it to all fifty states and then to the president.

So much class work is done out of books where the math problems and other experiences are make-believe and the teacher knows all the right answers. This project is real life. The students would ask me when we would hear from Owney as if I knew the right answer. Their guess was as good as mine! It’s exciting learning about our nation and experiencing the adventure with Owney.

State Frameworks
This project supports the State Frameworks in many ways including writing, graphing, estimation, geography, map skills, and learning about cultural diversity within our nation. It is easily adaptable across the curriculum. Students write letters to Owney, to other classes involved in this project, or to family members about Owney. Patriotic music can be included. Students could write research papers on working dogs, transportation, mail service, or other related topics.

Students
This unit was created for 5th grade special day class students and is currently being taught with an equal number of students from a general education class at the same grade level. Sixty-six students have participated in my classes. Thousands of students around the nation ranging from Kindergarten through middle school, have joined the project in the past two years. Cultural diversity adds to the project.

Facilities/Materials
Some Internet access, classroom access is a plus. A stuffed toy dog, U.S. maps, basic classroom supplies.

Outside Resources
Where's the Library?
An ELD High School Project

The Idea and Its Value
12th graders at our school must complete a senior project that shows a learning stretch or is related to community service, a daunting task for second language learners. We decided to make this a learning experience for all English language learners and a service project for our school. Our project was to make a multi-lingual booklet that explains the materials and services available in our library.

In making this booklet, we focused on meeting the needs of second language learners in all areas of communication: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students would learn to use various types of technology to publish a finished product.

During the first two weeks we brainstormed what students knew about the library. We then clustered the ideas into groups such as reference materials, library rules, technology available, etc. The librarian came to class, reviewed our lists and clusters, and told us about overlooked areas. The class was then divided into groups, and each group chose a cluster. Their first job was to make sure they understood all of the items in their cluster. The groups visited the library to find out where the materials were located and their uses. Their second task was to create a storyboard that had to include all of the necessary information on the library via dialogues written in good English and drawings that accurately illustrated the dialogues. The classroom teacher and the librarian reviewed the finished storyboards. Students made corrections and revisions. Finally, the students had to decide who would be photographed in each of the storyboard frames.

During the third week the librarian trained the groups to use a digital camera. Students then used their storyboards to pose each other and take pictures. After school during the fourth and fifth week, the teacher and the librarian downloaded the pictures from the digital camera onto floppy disks. Then the class viewed the pictures via a TV Elite hookup to the classroom computer, which projected the photos onto our classroom television. They decided which pictures needed to be retaken, numbered the pictures, and entered these numbers into each of the storyboard frames.

The disks containing the photos were then given to the Advanced Graphics class as a "JOB" to develop a layout for the booklet. They had to produce a minimum of one complete page showing the correct sequence of photos and dialogue. They started out with sketches of their ideas and introduced other images and art. They developed their layout, emphasizing color, space, line and texture, while meeting both preliminary and final deadlines. After 8 weeks, samples were submitted and one student was chosen to develop the publication and format the booklet. The left-hand side of the booklet is in English and the right hand is in Vietnamese or Spanish.

The English page was set up first to help students identify photos and dialogue. The booklet is in cartoon format with dialogue balloons. There are two pictures on each half of 8 1/2 x 11-inch paper. Gutter and margin setup also had to be standardized.

The senior ELD students had the responsibility of writing the translations as their "learning stretch." The class typed the dialogues in Spanish, English, and Vietnamese. Students and teachers spent several additional weeks proofreading and editing the booklet.

The seniors successfully presented their booklets to the senior panels. Our school Site (School Improvement, Plan) council agreed to fund publication of this booklet after seeing our first draft.

State Frameworks
This project supports the State Framework's goals of integrating the performing arts and technology into the curriculum; developing aesthetic values; improving oral and aural language abilities; learning the writing process, developing voice and style, learning across the curriculum, and the development of critical thinking skills. Additionally, it improved the students' self-esteem and made them feel a part of the school environment.

Students
16 ELD students, Grades 9-12; 34 Advanced Graphics students, Grades 9-12.

Facilities/Materials
We used classroom art supplies, the library, a digital camera, a computer with a TV Elite, a television, a color printer, computer lab, Microsoft Word, Adobe Photoshop and PageMaker, and a Vietnamese font that was purchased specifically for this project.

Grades 9-12
Language Arts, Technology

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