2003 IMPACT II

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The purpose of IMPACT II is to spread excellent teaching ideas throughout Ventura County.

IMPACT II does this by partnering with local businesses and organizations to provide $500 individual and $750 team grants to educators for unique, original and innovative curriculum that has been classroom tested.

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 through both grants and an annual awards dinner where we celebrate the true heroes and heroines in our communities.

Over the years Ventura County IMPACT II has matured into the program that we envisioned at its inception in 1993. Business leaders, teachers, and administrators are becoming aware of the program and are participating in unprecedented numbers.

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

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

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*The Unit and Its Value:*

Amiguitos is a cross-age writing project in which Spanish-speaking middle school students write books and present them to first graders. For the older students the objective is to understand the literary elements of fiction and to apply them in an original story. The project takes place throughout the year when the two classes visit each other, and as the 6-8th graders work to publish their stories.

The visits are easy to arrange because the middle school and the elementary school are within walking distance. Early in the year the 6-8th grade Spanish language arts class makes an initial visit to the first graders. The students are paired off by the teachers. The older students have a prepared booklet, Mi libra de mi, (My book about me) to fill in for their young buddies with information about the first graders' appearance, families and likes or dislikes. The authors get to know their future readers through this process. Returning to the middle school, the students are informed that the story they will write must include PAPAS (potatoes). This acronym shows them that the story needs personajes (characters), ambiente (setting), problema (conflict), argumento (plot), and solucion (resolution of the conflict). After deciding on each specific element for their story, the students are well on their way to completing the first draft. The stories are edited, typed in the computer lab, illustrated and bound. On the next visit to the first graders the students read the stories to their amiguitos, who take the books home. The older students are encouraged to talk with their amiguitos about the illustrations and help them read some words if they are able. Because the student authors know their readers, they are motivated to produce a high quality piece of literature with attractive illustrations. Student efforts surpass what a simple classroom assignment might elicit.

The success of the project lies not only in the literature which is produced, but in the relationships which are formed. The older students' self-esteem is bolstered when they realize that they are role models for the younger children, and that they can help these emerging readers learn. Over the years the project has evolved to include exchanges of holiday cards or simple craft items. We have included ELD activities such as songs and reader's theater presentations. The students enjoy the visits and often ask when we can see our amiguitos again. Plans for the future include a joint field trip or a cooking or art lesson.

From the first grade perspective, my students have benefited from this program by developing a strong connection with older students who are their role models, while developing oral language skills, literacy
skills and self esteem.

Eagerly anticipating visits from their Amigos, the first graders greeted their amigos with smiles and hugs. Each buddy took a personal interest in the other. When they talked they discussed what their hobbies were, what they were learning in school and the given topic of each meeting. Topics involved readers theatre, book making, children's literature, holidays, community based projects, dance and art. Our students took turns visiting each campus. First graders enjoyed visiting the middle school because everything was big.

The middle school campus became a familiar sight that radiated warmth, due to the positive interaction between the first grade and the middle school students. This tended to ease the transitions of the students once they left the elementary campus for the middle school. Many past students commented about how the Amiguitos Program helped ease any fears of the middle school that they had and that they still treasure the books that were made for them.

The first grade students tended to be shy during the first meeting with their amigo. However, as the Amiguitos Program progressed students became more at ease. The middle school students became more sensitive of the first graders' timidity, yet managed to encourage their little buddies to interact, helping them to speak in coherent sentences and to incorporated conversational techniques modeled by their big buddy.

The first graders ended up initiating conversations and asking questions of their amigo. As both groups of students gained proficiency in English, they began to exchange phrases and greetings in English.

The first grade students looked forward to meeting their big buddy because their big buddy took a personal interest in them. Their amigo read to them, listened to them and talked to them. Many of our students came from big families. Sometimes it is hard for these students to have opportunities to be addressed on a one to one basis. The interaction between both grade levels instilled compassion in the older students and confidence in the younger students. Each group taught the other about their world and about who they are.

Many Latino students drop out in the middle school, so perhaps this program gave these students a focus and a purpose on their educational journey. The elementary children needed positive role models and a relationship with someone who had already traveled on the road that they are on. The first graders also needed to believe that they could succeed and have someone in their life guide them on a path that will one day lead them to a bright future.

State Standards

The Amiguitos Program consisted of activities that addressed the California standards in reading, writing and social studies, incorporating various learning modalities in order to meet the learning needs of all the participants.

Students
We have implemented this unit for five years. There are generally 20 first graders. Class size varies in the middle school group. The unit could easily be adapted to other grade levels and for English-only groups.

Materials

The resources required for this unit include crayons, construction paper and children's books to use as models. Access to computers is not essential, but does give a professional appearance to the published stories.
Ancestors Are Family
Wendi Best, Patrice McKenna – Mesa School
Business Partner: Grether Farming
For grade level 2
Curriculum Areas: Social Sciences, Language Arts

The Unit and Its Value
In this unit, students discover their own ancestry, focusing on family history, immigration to this country, and a brief study of one country of native origin, producing a written report or poster to present orally. The specific instructional value includes meeting Social Studies standards for second grade, meeting Language Arts requirements for speaking and writing conventions, and discovering, on an individual level, how history has been shaped by families of yesterday and today. These lessons were stimulated by a relative lack of available sources to meet the standards in a creative way. Students will learn the family story of immigration, what life was like in their family's country of origin, to compare and contrast with others in the class, as well as historical figures, reinforce map skills and world geography.

What sets this unit apart from others is the way it addresses the needs of all learners and learning styles by incorporating integration of subject areas and using technology as a research tool. We begin in October or November, teaching students the seven continents and major oceans of the world for geographic perspective by labeling, coloring, exploring maps, and singing a Continents/Oceans chant. A mini-literature unit on Barbara Cohen's Molly's Pilgrim introduces students to immigration and tolerance. Right before Thanksgiving, Family Homework is assigned with a form to be completed over the break outlining student's personal family history of immigration and countries of origin. One country is selected to study. Map activities include students announcing their chosen country of study (origin) by stringing a photo of themselves from that country to their home now. These are prominently displayed until the unit ends.

In Language Arts, children are introduced to research, given country report fact sheets to guide them, taught to cull information, and take notes, and a rubric for the final project is explained. Next, research is begun in the computer lab, utilizing the program First Amazing World Explorer to search for geographic information, interesting facts, and take notes. Later this is followed up with research from country books, and other sources. The writing process is followed through the appropriate stages; country flags, maps, pictures or drawings of ancestors are added, and some teacher/parent supervised web research for "extras" may be included. Eager beavers are encouraged to type their reports. English Language Learners may be
creating posters as a final project rather than a written report, all to be presented orally in class. Family artifacts may be displayed during Open House on individual student desks, along with final projects.

Other extensions that have been used in various classes include making paper-mache globes, studying a composer or musical style of the chosen country, famous artists and their works, children's folksongs and native dances, and children's literature or folktales from each country of study. This year we are adding a new technological component - kids are creating their own Power Point presentations on their family's history and immigration to this country.

This unit encourages positive student attitudes because it has real-world meaning, they use technology, and all learners are successful because of the range of options for final projects (at teacher discretion), including small groups with the same heritage working together. The lessons may be spread out over a period of several months, or compressed into about four weeks if necessary. Success is measured with the appropriate rubric, project completion, and the beaming smiles on kids' faces as they "instruct" and share what they learned about their country.

**Students**

During 2001-2002, approximately sixty students participated, with high student achievement. Overall, perhaps two hundred eighty children have completed this unit, with various adaptations over the years.

**Materials**

Other than the general classroom, a computer lab or a bank of computers in class, as well as grade level appropriate books on individual countries are needed. Country tourist web sites can be visited whole class if the capability exists in the classroom.

**Outside Resources**

Guest speakers were invited to present their own immigration stories, and many students provided foods from their country of study to be enjoyed during their presentations.
The Biggest, Boldest, Smartest Service-Learning Project Ever!

Stephanie Martinez, Linda Pierce – Moorpark High School

Business Partner: Aera Energy, LLC

4th grade students paired with 9th grade students

Curriculum Areas: English and Social Studies

The Unit and Its Value:

This service-learning based unit is designed to enrich students at two opposing ends of the educational spectrum: elementary students and high school students. The tall-tale genre creates the link across the ages because the ninth grade students have a short story writing unit and fourth grade students are tested on writing proficiency. This partnership hinges upon ninth grade students tutoring fourth grade students in writing a tall tale. The premise was that both the ninth and fourth grade student would benefit from working with each other. The high school student has to understand the steps in writing in order to properly instruct a young pupil, whereas, the elementary student benefits from one on one writing instruction. As a side benefit, teachers enjoy the collaboration across grade-levels.

The writing prompt asks students to describe how a super-human character created a unique California land feature or attraction. The prompt taps into fourth grade students' prior knowledge, since they all study California geography and history. The unit takes a month to complete. High school students are bussed to the local elementary school and spend three Monday mornings with their fourth grade "buddy." The first lesson consists of reading two models of the tall tale genre, Pecos Bill and Paul Bunyan, identifying the main elements of tall tales. This activity is followed by brainstorming California land features and attractions that could be used in the student created tales. Some ideas offered were Death Valley, the Golden Gate Bridge, Yosemite National Park, and Lake Tahoe. On the second visit, students create their own outrageous character that accomplishes a tremendous feat. The adventure initially appears in storyboard form, and then is transferred to a rough-draft. On the final visit, students produce a grammar-checked final draft complete with illustrations. A culminating celebration ensues, as high school students join their buddies on the play yard for recess, cake and punch.

The following week, back on their own campus, high school students extend on the learning opportunity. With the writing complete, it is now time for evaluation. Ninth grade students take their buddy's tall tale and grade it on a rubric. They then write a letter, using proper form, to their pupil. The letter provides constructive criticism and return of the tall tale with the scored rubric. Many of these letters turn out to be motivational in nature, with high school students praising the elementary students' imagination and diligence. They also express how much they liked working with their "buddy" for the last several weeks. It was clear that students formed a personal bond.

As a culminating activity, the high school student has to peruse the buddy's writing portfolio and reflect in
writing about the service-learning project experience. A common theme of initial reluctance to sheer exhilaration emerged as students write their reflection essays. All students said that they would like to do a project like this again! As an unexpected benefit, many students commented that they gained greater empathy towards the teaching profession.

Initially, we were reluctant to try service-learning. We thought that it might take away time from the rest of the curriculum. However, after attending a school in-service about the value of service-learning, we were committed to making an attempt. Upon completion, we are now true believers in the service-learning model, a program that demands "rigor, relevance and relationships."

**State Standards**

This unit supports the Language Arts Framework in providing meaningful and relevant activities, integrating reading, writing and art as a natural process of learning across grade levels.

**Students**

Teachers paired up one hundred ninth grade students with one hundred fourth grade students. Both grade-levels had a wide continuum of achievement levels from special needs to highly proficient. The unit easily adapts to a wide-variety of learners.

**Materials**

Teachers need to coordinate elementary and high school schedules allowing a large enough block of time for effective grade school visits. We found that some students liked to work at desks, while others preferred to work on the floor. Both methods were equally successful. To prepare for this unit, high school teachers visited their elementary counterparts to ascertain the learning abilities of fourth graders. We jointly selected the reading materials to use to introduce the tall tale genre. To facilitate instruction during visits, the high school teachers created graphic organizers, storyboards, and rubrics. All instructional material is available upon request.

**Outside Resources**

Ideally, funding should exist to bus the high school students to the elementary school. This allows teachers to maximize instructional time and have better control of the students to and from the elementary school campus.
Buttons, Buttons, We Have the Buttons!
(Exploring the processes of science using buttons)
Kathie Ferkin, Cypress Elementary
Business Partner: Thousand Oaks Rotary Club
For grade level 1
Curriculum Areas: Science, math

The Unit and Its Value

This unit was designed to help First Graders explore the processes of science using materials with a high degree of interest. Some of these were supplied by the students themselves. A lesson was designed to explore each one of the processes. Higher level thinking skills were promoted by asking how some of these processes could be applied in other areas of the children's lives. By keeping a journal, the children practiced their organizational and writing skills. Because the children are at many different levels in writing, each child was able to perform at his or her own level.

This unit is innovative and creative because only a basic guideline was available. I spoke with colleagues to get ideas, added my own, and made a plan.

The unit began the second week of September. We did one lesson a week. The journals were prepared ahead of time by parent volunteers and each child was asked to bring 20 buttons from home.

Here is an overview of each lesson:

Lesson 1: Observing

Read a book about buttons. Teacher shares own boxes of buttons. Free explore classroom boxes of buttons. Free explore the collections they brought in. Count, sort, order, etc. In journal, draw several of the buttons.

Lesson 2: Communicating

Look at their buttons again. Brainstorm adjectives. In journal, write 3 sentences about a button.

Lesson 3: Estimating

Put buttons in 2 different size small jars. In journal, draw and estimate number of buttons in smallest jar. Count together and write the number. Draw and estimate number of buttons in larger jar. Count together and write the number.

Lesson 4: Measuring
Kids cut out their button ruler. Show how to use. Do worksheet. Cut and glue into journal. Tape ruler into journal.

Lesson 5: Collecting Data

Graph the actual children according to the number of buttons they are wearing. Give each child a small piece of paper to draw a button and write the number of buttons they are wearing. Graph these. Color small graph. Cut and glue into journal.

Lesson 6: Classifying

Do some sorting together. Use yarn to make Venn diagrams. List possible categories. Have children do the Venn diagram page with their buttons. Color, cut, and glue into journal.

Lesson 7: Inferring and Predicting

Demonstrate using the Math Their Way button pattern cards. Give one to each group and have the children each make the pattern with their buttons. After a few minutes, rotate the cards. Do this until each group has tried every pattern. Have them create a pattern and draw it in their journal.

Lesson 8: Making Models

Make the small button books. Try spinning some of the buttons with shanks like tops. Make zoomers. Write in journal.

Lesson 9: Review and Finale

Glue song and zoomer directions in back. Glue real buttons on cover. Put zoomer, button collection, and small button book in pouch. The next day, send journal home in a 1 gallon baggie with the letter of explanation.

State Standards

All processes of science were covered in this unit.

Students

In 2002, 18 First Grade children participated.

Materials

All activities took place in the classroom. Materials included books, journals, boxes of buttons, yarn, estimating jars, and worksheets. Children brought their own collections of 20 buttons.

Outside Resources

Books were read to the children. Colleagues and parents gave suggestions. I wrote "The Button Song."
Fascinating Fossil Fuels - Fact, Fiction, and Fantasy

Patricia McLoughlin, Dos Caminos
Business Partner: American Petroleum Institute
For grade levels 3-6
Curriculum Areas: Science, Geology, Math, Current Events, Art

The Unit and Its Value.

Timely concerns of current environmental issues are at the crux of this 6-8 week unit which encourages students to "think environmentally" not only within the confines of the classroom, but at home, in their communities, and throughout their lives. Designed to impact young attitudes of our future leaders and decision makers, we initially delve into the unit by drilling for oil using cupcakes to simulate the earth (marble cake) and oceans (blue frosting), and chocolate chips to simulate oil. Students "slant drill" with straws and take "core samples." Fossil Fuels and geologic vocabulary are defined doing hands-on experiments. The difference between renewable and nonrenewable resources is made, and therein lies the focus - we all must exercise the "Power of One" to protect and preserve natural resources. Alternative energy sources are discussed, and students start to wonder, design, and dream about the cars of the future. Interest and higher level thinking peak when oil spills are explored experimentally. Students watch a drop of motor oil spread on water. Math is integrated by measuring the drop in centimeters, multiplying by the number of drops in a quart of oil, and predicting how far it would spread if dumped down a storm drain. Integration to oceanography follows as students realize what happens to marine life when used motor oil is dumped into trash or down drains. When a single-hulled oil tanker off the coast of Spain breaks in two, spilling millions of barrels of oil, students' understandings are heightened.

Junior chemistry is introduced as students color code and design a simple hydrocarbon molecule of petroleum (methane) using colored sticky dots. "Recycle," "Reduce," "Reuse," and "Close the Loop" become bywords as students realize that plastics are petroleum products. They are excited to meet "Recycle Rex," and amazed to find out that fleece clothing and even carpets are made from recycled plastic soda bottles. Excess packaging becomes a source of inspiration as students find themselves not only becoming critical consumers, but also inventing ways to turn throwaways into clever gadgets, inventions, and mobiles to hang. A scavenger hunt ensues at home, in the classroom, and at lunch tables as kids search for numbers and letters encoded on plastics. Students learn to distinguish between recyclables (PETE & HDPE) and ones most cities don't recycle yet. Besides loving the scientific sounds of fancy words like high-density polyethylene, polypropylene, and polystyrene, students also learn that our landfill problems are ones they
may be solving in their futures.

"Fossil Fuels in the News" keeps students abreast of current events. Because they know what it takes to be kind to mother earth, students are shocked to learn of the 250 million dollar cleanup of dumped oil, fuel, etc. the Navy is now engaged in, impacting Mugu Lagoon, Calleguas Creek, and Hueneme beaches.

Political cartoons depicting single hulled oil tankers as "ticking time bombs" are discussed, and San Diego's Qualcomm Stadium, home to this year's Super Bowl, found itself in a precarious spot. Students were aghast to learn of 29 fuel tanks adjacent to the stadium. The tanks hold 700,000 barrels of combustible petroleum products-an easy target for terrorists. While discussing the impending necessity of making that area a "no fly zone," a student remarked that he now understood why the Fuji blimp hadn't left yet. Students find articles on an almost daily basis, and education flies out of the classroom into the real world. A methane gas explosion killed three miners in a coal mine, students learned how dangerous it is to fill a car's gas tank while talking on the phone, and they are rewarded with bonus points for bringing trash bill inserts with information on proper disposal of used motor oil, plastics, and hazardous wastes.

Literature is integrated as students exercise the right to free speech, writing to the Oscar Mayer Company expressing concern over excess plastic packaging. The hands-on nature of petroleum related experiments and recycling activities engages all students in meaningful experiences as well as providing peer interaction with lab partners. The "scientific method" insures that students demonstrate, articulate, and evaluate what they learn by recording lab results. These are truly authentic assessments. Videos from Venoco Oil Co. and the Calif. Dept. of Conservation, as well as petroleum geologists and "haz mats" guest speakers are devices that further engage all students. Experiments won't work if partners or groups don't cooperate, so positive attitudes and behavior become goals in order to produce successful lab reports.

Teachers can adapt material into numerous areas (oceanography, plate tectonics, ecology, geology), and students can benefit by addressing controversial issues such as the Alaskan oil fields, preservation of natural resources, and the relationship between fossil fuels, the ozone, and global warming.

**State Standards**

This unit supports the science framework, which encourages hands-on experiments for students. Children learn best by doing, and this is a very busy, mind-engaging unit. Scientific processes are frequently applied to the learning of concepts inherent to this material. Motivating, meaningful, and integrated learning goes beyond the textbook. Technology can be used as a research and presentation tool as students design power point presentations about their learning. Applications to real life are embedded in the content as students realize the extent of our daily dependence on petroleum products.

**Students**
Approximately 320 GATE students in grades 3-5 were instructed with this unit for the first time this year. Presentation and expectations can be modified as necessary to accommodate the regular classroom or students with special needs.

**Materials**

Platform Gail (Venoco Oil Company's teacher workshop to the oil rig and accompanying curriculum), Minerals Management Service, California Department of Conservation, The Jason Project.

**Outside Resources**

Petroleum geologists (parents and grandparent of GATE students)
Geometry, Candy and the Army!

Debbie Moore, Camarillo Heights Elementary

Business Partner: The Gas Company

For grade levels K-5

Curriculum Areas: Mathematics, Writing and Geography

The Unit and Its Value:

Geometry, Candy and the Army! entices student learning of vocabulary in geometry, measurement and problem solving as they articulate mathematical properties in explanations of individual projects to be sent to United States soldiers overseas.

Geometry, Candy and the Army! goes beyond the text definitions and vocabulary of geometry, engaging the students with real-life shapes (candy). This three week hands-on, student-centered activity begins with sorting candy by attributes. What better way to encourage student learning than making it about something they enjoy? Each child begins with a bag of assorted candy. The students' vocabulary and knowledge is increased as they learn and use words such as cylinder, cube, rectangular prism, cone, pyramid, etc. Students sort, classify, count, add, subtract, multiply, divide with remainders, express fractions, draw Venn diagrams, use non-standard and standard measurement techniques, and graph attributes of their projects.

The goal is to create a booklet explaining how candies were manipulated in mathematical terms, using proper vocabulary while also sharing the mathematical calculations and problem solving skills used throughout the project. Students write friendly letters to U.S. Army soldiers serving overseas to accompany the projects. An unintended benefit was receiving letters from the GIs stating how they use similar math and geometry in their lives and jobs.

All students participate at their level of learning. Some may be challenged by sorting and counting, while still others are engaging higher level thinking skills as they expand their abilities to classify, calculate and use complex mathematics to measure, add and divide. Students assist each other and share problem-solving techniques as well as suggestions. Each child is allowed to work at their own academic level and make decisions that work for them. Success is measured by progress made in terms of understanding and using vocabulary appropriately and applying mathematical principles.

The benefit of this program is threefold. For teachers, this is an independent practice and a chance for authentic assessment of student learning. For the students, they have a chance to put what they have been studying into practice in a real-life project. They practice friendly letter writing and concise clarification in
explaining their individual projects. Students also learn about geography and the world as we send our projects to Germany and Korea. For the soldiers, it's a reminder that they are appreciated by school children back home. We were very lucky in that we now have classroom pen-pals from all over the world!

**State Standards**

This unit bridges the curriculum by incorporating mathematics and writing. It is flexible enough to insert lessons that need to be taught, such as mathematical vocabulary, rules of measurement, calculations, informational writing, as well as friendly letters. This project covers geometry, number sense and writing curriculum standards for all grade levels.

**Students**

I presented this unit at a District Inservice for educators K-3 and Special Education. To date, over 200 students have participated in this project. It can be modified for any grade level, any time of year, for any recipient. It adapts to the learner, as it can be cooperative or individually based. The essence is giving students the opportunity to use mathematical vocabulary and functions in real life. This can be modified to meet specific grade level standards.

**Materials**

Each student needs candies of different shapes, a bag to house the project, math booklet for recording and a ruler and with standard measurement and centimeters.
Geometry Everywhere - Connecting Geometry to the World

Mary-Jane Bernstein, Jan Thornton, Marilyn Wells – Santa Rosa Technology

Business Partner: VCEDA

For grade levels 1 – 3

Curriculum Areas: Math, Language Arts

The Unit and Its Value:

This unit makes geometry concepts meaningful through hands on manipulation of plane and solid geometric shapes and their attributes. This is done through repetition of vocabulary in all curriculum areas especially problem solving, language arts, technology and fine arts. This high interest approach reinforces children's natural curiosity about their world and gives them vocabulary to attach to geometry concepts.

This year long project is done right in the classroom. The process begins each year with simple definitions in geometry books but leads to better understanding of concepts as the classes expand their thoughts, problem solve, and create. Children are wowed with opportunities to learn as they add to their books, illustrate, write, or use technology. Multiple activities with problem solving and cooperative groupings are taught in conjunction with all geometry activities.

Using paper, pencil, scissors, glue, and paint, we apply vocabulary and concepts to art by bathing students in the language of geometry. Students have had comprehensible input to sort geometrical shapes to make mosaics in cool and warm colors. Teacher talk, modeling, and graphic organizers help students learn line, rays, parallel, diagonal, and line attributes such as thick and thin, curvy and wavy. For example: informed students take their new knowledge to create individual designs that express their style in a line collage.

Another simple way we teach geometry is in our everyday teacher talk; when placing or folding paper we use "horizontal" or "vertical" to reinforce these words. In applying glue, we always use "perimeter" so that even before measuring perimeter, students are familiar with the word. When looking at fine art, we discuss how artists use geometric elements like symmetry, repetition of shape, and line to create masterpieces. It is no wonder that our students, by the use of language bath, realia, graphic organizers, and modeling, have ownership of the world of geometry.

Using Kid Works 2 and Shapes, learners use computers to flip, slide, and turn, as well as make symmetrical designs. The joy is apparent as they discuss their computer generated art and add it to their books along with their written reflections.

Language Arts is everywhere. We speak, read, write, create captions to go with pictures and make riddles about geometry. When covering boxes, learners use words like faces and vertices, but also write about the
process using correct vocabulary.

For all students, geometric vocabulary is difficult, but it is even more difficult for the ELL student. When geometry vocabulary is a year long process, students learn. It is reinforced with math lessons, art lessons, and each additional page added to their books. Students use math vocabulary with ease because it has been taught with joy and consistency.

Having ELL students at our school, we have found that this is a perfect way to teach geometry. We have used this method for four years with excellent results. The state adopted textbook devotes only a chapter at the end of the year to geometry. To be successful, children need comprehensible input throughout the year; through integration we have found, we feel, a better way.

**State Standards**

Through the project, all California standards are met and extended.

**Students**

Three primary classrooms totaling sixty students have been engrossed in this unit for several years. We have seen, over time, direct positive results in our standardized test scores in geometry.
Hero Hunt: Lighting a Candle
Maureen Carey, Las Colinas
Business Partner: Rockwell Scientific
For grade levels 7-8
Curriculum Areas: Language Arts, History, Technology, Character Development

When students are asked to name a hero, immediately hands frantically wave. "Michael Jordan, Wayne Gretzky, Kobe Bryant, Tiger Woods," are enthusiastically shouted in response. Indeed, these very talented sportsmen have performed heroic deeds in their arenas, but a real hero's performance is quite different. In this unit, Hero Hunt, students study an authentic heroine, Eleanor Roosevelt and ultimately come to identify their ability to be heroes. A biography, famous quotes, poetry, the study of current events, and, central to the project, a variety of writing genres are critical to their understanding of a hero.

The first phase of the unit involves the study of the biography in our McDougal Littell literature book, "Eleanor Roosevelt" by Jay Jacobs. Students study a timeline of her life, understanding the sadness of her childhood, her difficult marriage to Franklin, and finally her call to be of service to so many in need.

With the facts of Mrs. Roosevelt's life firmly in their minds, the class analyzes the famous quote "She would rather light a candle than curse the darkness" spoken by Adlai Stevenson of Eleanor Roosevelt. In groups the students work through the possible meanings of the two central images, candle and darkness. Eventually, through class discussion and brainstorming, the class is able to understand that darkness represents human suffering and injustice, while the light of the candle symbolizes hope and help. The students then write an expository paragraph explaining why this quote is true of the life of Eleanor Roosevelt. Practice in critical thinking and citing support from the biography are provided in this writing. The use of complex sentences is a required writing strategy.

Next the students study two poems, "Choices" by Nikki Giavonni and "Into the Sun" by Hannah Kahn, and determine which of these would have more meaning to Eleanor. "Choices" is free verse and requires multiple readings and analysis due to its unfamiliar form. "Into the Sun" is a more traditional poem employing rhyme, rhythm, and imagery. The resulting discussion is quite lively. Eventually the task is to write a persuasive paragraph, defending their opinion using evidence from the biography and tying that proof to specific lines in their chosen poem. Complex sentences and a strong thesis statement are critical components of this writing.

At the beginning of this unit, the students were asked to find a news article that reported an issue that the
students felt Mrs. Roosevelt would champion. I also have collected many of these social justice and human rights articles. The students write an essay explaining, based on the actions of the First Lady, the reasons she would most likely be an advocate of this issue. Again a considerable amount of analysis through discussion was necessary as the students shared the chosen issues. In most of the articles, there were heroes who were finding a solution or in some way providing help to those in need. The students were amazed to discover that so many of those helping were ordinary folks, just like them. A Thousand Oaks high school student who collected and distributed tennis shoes to the homeless was one of the heroes they read about. After brainstorming an outline, the students crafted a five-paragraph essay, using summary to communicate the facts of the article and to share Eleanor's life of service. The final body paragraph required a synthesis of the current event issue and Eleanor's reasons for campaigning for it.

As the students revise their writings to final draft form in order to assemble a Tribute to Eleanor Roosevelt poster, they are asked to use the thesaurus, to brainstorm, and to list as many positive adjectives that describe the character of Mrs. Roosevelt. Once our class list of fifty words was compiled, students selected ten. Employing an art component on their computers, they created poster ready words using a variety of fonts, colors and designs to give meaning to each individual adjective.

As the project nears an end, the students write one more paragraph. They identify an injustice or suffering in their world, at school, in their neighborhood, or in the local community. After describing this "darkness," they decide what they could realistically do to help or "light a candle." This personal reflection paragraph helps students become aware that they, too, can be heroes and perform heroic acts, making a difference in their world.

This unit could last approximately three weeks for seventh and eight graders. The writing assignments can vary in length from single paragraphs for less proficient students to essays for more advanced or, a combination. An ongoing study of heroes found in the news would be a wonderful extension. A goal would be to have the students do serious Internet research into some of the organizations the heroes have started, and through contacting them, students could become involved in hero work.
My Hero Is Not a Sandwich
Monica Beck, Colina Middle School
Business Partner: Procter & Gamble
For grade levels 6-12
Curriculum Areas: Language Arts

The Unit and its Value:

My Hero is not a Sandwich is a six-week unit designed to heighten students' awareness of the role heroes, past and present, play in today's society. The unit looks at heroes on four different levels: the historical hero, the local hero, the personal hero, and the hero within. Incorporating literature, art, music, history, science, sports, and the media, the unit focuses on students' understanding of the impact of heroes in our lives.

The six-week unit begins with students identifying the qualities of a hero. Students examine such characteristics as obstacles overcome, the hero's goal, and the steps used to reach the goal. This, along with any other part of the unit, easily connects to the school district's character education program, as it emphasizes respect, kindness, integrity, and perseverance. Students decide whether or not those terms are part of how they identify themselves (the hero within) and, if so, how. Students continue on in the unit by reading "Harriet Tubman: A Guide to Freedom," "Paul Revere's Ride" and "Casey at the Bat," in order to deepen their understanding of historical heroes. Students not only compare and contrast the motivations and reactions of heroes confronting their conflicts, but also identify significant literary devices (e.g., metaphor, irony, symbol) that define a writer's style. Students are also able to demonstrate mastery of the various elements of a story, such as plot, character, and theme. Using information from the literature, students choose from one of the following projects: Storyboards, I Am poems, News Reports, Scripts, and Hot Seat. Students are assessed not only by the projects, but also via journal writing, class discussion, and quizzes.

From here, students, working in cooperative groups, choose a historical hero from literature, art, music, history, science, or sports, to research by focusing on the following: contribution to society, obstacles overcome, goal (and how it was achieved). The group presents their findings to the class in the form of a poem, song, tableau, powerpoint, or some form of artwork. Students are also required individually to create a resume for their historical hero with information about strengths, type of job desired, relevant experience, education, achievements, community activities, and references.

Next, students turn to local heroes. To introduce the concept, we bring in Bruce Springsteen's song "Local Hero" and provide students with a copy of the lyrics. After analyzing similes, metaphors, and personification used in the song, we discuss the importance of having heroes. We then present them with information about the Carnegie Award, which is a $2,500 award granted to a person within one's
community who has performed a courageous, selfless act. Students then read “A Girl Named Reta Rena,” about a twelve-year old girl who receives the award posthumously for giving up her life to rescue a boy trapped beneath the ice in the town's lake. The search for a local hero begins as students search the newspaper for one to share with the class. Naturally, our discussion turns towards September 11th and the courageous acts, performed by many who sacrificed their lives. At this point the class writes a letter to the soldiers in Afghanistan, paying homage to our local heroes.

The unit continues as students examine a personal hero, someone they know. For this, students bring in an item that represents their hero. Students have brought in such things as a baseball, a jack-in-the-box, and a miniature lighthouse. After pairing off, one student tells a story of his/her personal hero while the other student records the adjectives (heroic qualities) mentioned about the student's hero. When students are done, we write a student's name on the board and ask that student's partner to read off the words listed during the storytelling that were used to describe that student's hero. We write those words next to the student's name on the board and explain the concept of "mirroring." That is, the qualities listed are actually heroic characteristics we already possess: we admire those things in others that reflect or mirror part or ourselves. Thus, students discover the hero within.

To fit grammar into the unit (without students knowing), students create a poem to honor their personal hero. The format has the hero's name at the top, followed by line two, which reads "The ordinary (noun)." Line three asks for three adjectives. Lines four through six ask for a verb, followed by an adverb. The last line reads “The extraordinary (noun).” Students then give their dedication to their personal hero.

Before ending the unit, students engage in a fishbowl debate. Three possible topics our classes have debated are: Can a mythical figure be a hero?; Are athletes heroes?; and Can animals be considered heroes? The unit could continue, time permitted, with I Searches that the students present, wherein they have analyzed, evaluated, created, defended, composed, or constructed their thoughts/definitions of a hero. Lastly, the unit culminates with a test covering all pieces of literature and their various literary techniques, along with a persuasive essay in which students nominate their historical, local, or personal hero for the Carnegie Award.

The unit promotes the use of higher level of thinking skills as students are identifying, defining, analyzing, and utilizing literary elements. They are also reading, interpreting, and discussing various pieces of literature as well as creating poems, essays, and projects. The unit addresses the needs of all learners by tapping into creative thinking, as well as objective analysis of information. We are able to measure the success of this unit via discussion, tests, completed projects, and essays.

All in all, this unit is instructional, fun, and one we will continue to use. My Hero is not a Sandwich encourages positive student attitudes and behavior, as students are paying particular attention to the
motivations, values, and sacrifices portrayed in individuals across time. We feel an overwhelming need to do this unit, since students are at an age where they are discovering who they are, their values, their dreams, and their aspirations.

State Standards

This unit supports many aspects of the Language Arts framework: reading, writing, group discussion, interdisciplinary connections, and higher order thinking activities. It is aligned with state standards and also supports the Social Studies Framework by encouraging critical-thinking skills.

Students

Students were in the eighth grade and at various academic levels. A total of 180 students participated in 2002-2003.

Materials

Various pieces of literature, CD player, song lyrics, Newspapers, and overhead transparencies.
The Kindergarten Mascot
Judith L. Gold, St. Paul’s Parish Day School
Business Partner: Ventura County Star
For grade level Kindergarten
Curriculum Areas: Transition to school

The Unit and Its Value:

The Kindergarten Mascot unit is designed to help assist children with the transition from home to school, making it a more natural and exciting experience. Many children are apprehensive about starting Kindergarten, as it is usually their first formal school experience. Making this transition a positive one can have an indelible effect on establishing a foundation for their perception of education during the rest of their lives. This unit introduces them to the school, the teacher and the curriculum before they even step foot in the door and thus creates excitement and anticipation about the upcoming school and learning experience.

This unit is ongoing throughout the entire school year. In August, before the children begin school, the "animal" and I send a welcoming letter to every incoming student. In this way, the child and family know that I am looking forward to meeting them and to the start of school. It also creates curiosity and establishes a fun focus for the children. This year the animal is the Polar Bear, so I will use it as an example. As soon as the children enter the classroom there are Polar Bears everywhere. The animal logo/shape is carried throughout the classroom on bulletin boards, desks, cabinets displays etc.

Throughout the year, the mascot logo appears on notes, letters home, homework papers, awards, etc. A stuffed Polar Bear appears on the child's cubby to designate the line leader and other rotating leadership positions. This becomes a magical experience because the children never know who changes the Mascot's location.

Our animal encourages writing and drawing, well as journalizing and art activities. Our Mascot has its own post office box and the children are motivated to write letters to it and thus receive a reply. They, in turn, learn about the postal system and letter writing.

Outside of the classroom, the children discover how books, magazines, videos and literature are learning tools every time they see something with the mascot on it. Obviously the focus is different for each animal. This makes each year unique and special for the children and the teacher also. Each winter the Penguin becomes a co-mascot for two months. A Penguin Encounter is set up complete with snowflakes and other Penguin related items. This annual event is the result of the mascot of 25 years ago
and the enthusiasm it generated.

Children relate so naturally to animals and it is a natural transition in teaching diversity to young ones. They can see how, although animals are different and have differing habits, they can still learn to peacefully coexist with each other. We investigate how our mascot survives in his environment and how he relates to other animals. We talk about family and responsibility. Math, including measuring, weighing and graphing is incorporated. For example, this year we measured how a polar bear is ten feet tall and could not stand up in our classroom, we measured his feet and then compared our feet to this. Worksheets for counting and alphabet learning are designed to relate to the mascot. Science and geography are explored. For example, with the Polar Bear we have explored the Arctic regions of the world.

**State Standards**

This unit complies with the state framework in almost all areas including social studies, science, math and reading, and incorporates science and geography.

**Students**

Close to 600 students have been exposed to this unit over the past 30 years. Each year at Christmas time I make a stuffed animal mascot for each child.

**Materials**

Books, related charts, stickers, literature, stationary etc.

**Outside Resources**

The mascot has stimulated amazing field trips throughout the years and many animals have visited the classroom. Once a real cow showed up at our end of year party and one year a turtle literally hibernated underneath a bench in our classroom for three months!
The Lights Are Beckoning!
Bonnie Wascher, Mesa School
Business Partner: Southern California Edison
For grade levels 3-5
Curricular Areas: Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, Art, ELD and SDAIE strategies

The Unit and Its Value

The Lights Are Beckoning is a four-week, half-day unit exploring the history, architecture, purpose, and folklore of American lighthouses. Students will discover the unique permanent place lighthouses have in American history as lighthouses stand as a beacon that guides the lonely mariner from the dark empty quarters of the sea.

Information is presented in as many ways possible as to clarify the subject matter for those students needing extra support because of language difficulties. The classroom is rich in visuals and regalia such as posters, word walls, books, graphic organizers, and movies. The teacher provides teacher talk and scaffolding as the information is expanded. Students are seated in groups creating a safe environment for the ELD student and lowering his/her affective filter while providing opportunities for interactive talk both with a partner and in a small group.

Week one consists of an introduction to lighthouses. The teacher presents the history of lighthouses from ancient times, to George Washington's formation of the United States Lighthouse Service, to the building and eventual automation of lighthouses, and to the present government's giving away of these precious landmarks. The junior high science teacher is recruited to aid in the teaching of the science of the lighthouse light from oil burning to the study of the Fresnel lens. The showing of a series of movies, the making of a word wall, and the formation of a KWL graphic organizer in the shape of a lighthouse, aid the students' understanding. (Students add new questions and facts throughout the study.) After discussing the skills and personal qualities of a lighthouse keeper, students write and illustrate a want ad seeking the perfect lighthouse keeper. Students write letters to parents persuading them to accept or reject an offer to become a lighthouse keeper.

Week two and three begin with language arts lessons for the first half of the morning. A spelling and vocabulary list is compiled. This list of words and definitions is posted with pictures to promote understanding. Students are tested on vocabulary on Friday and spelling on the following Wednesday. Eight booklets have been compiled by the teacher with introductory information and maps on each of the eight regions of lighthouses to be studied. (New England, Mid-Atlantic, Southeastern, Gulf, Eastern Great Lakes, Western Great Lakes, California, and Pacific Northwest) These booklets are the reading lessons for the next eight days. Various reading activities and assessments will be implemented each day. (i.e. discovering the main idea, comparing and contrasting the regions, stating fact and opinion, sequencing, summarizing, reading for information. etc.) The teacher always goes over the test questions ahead of time and may have to read the quizzes or tests for the ELD
The last half of the morning for week two and three is spent in group work with students assigned to one of the lighthouse regions named above. Students are given descriptions of the lighthouses in their region from books and the Internet for research. They are to compile 5x7 note cards noting the region, lighthouse, location, year built, and three or more bulleted pieces of information about the lighthouses in their region. They will also illustrate the lighthouse on the backside of each card. Each group shall draw a map showing each lighthouse studied. Challenge each group to arrange a timeline with their lighthouse cards according to their construction dates. With this information they will compare and contrast their lighthouses with each other by means of a Venn diagram. Each group will write a biopoem about the lighthouses in their region.

The last two days of week two and three provide time for the teacher to read aloud folklore/ghost stories, after which students will write their own short story using a lighthouse from their region. This may be done with a partner, in a group, or individually.

During week four it is now time for each group to present their findings. Groups hurry to organize all that they have learned into an interesting presentation. The map is shared with commentary by each group member on the characteristics of the lighthouses in their region and with the reading of their biopoem and story/stories. Should the ELD students be unsure of themselves, give them extra help and assurance and some prompting during the presentations. Often the other students in the group naturally do this without the teacher having to intervene. This presentation will be presented to the entire fifth grade class.

In addition, two lighthouse "snippet" quilts are created this week by students as they finish their work. Students choose which lighthouse to feature, and this quilt takes shape by students cutting and ironing on small pieces of fabric called "snippets." To complete the project, the students help to quilt and add borders and bindings to the quilt, which becomes a wall hanging. This is done with help and guidance from the teacher and parents. This year students have decided to donate the quilts to an area nursing home.

After this study we find students gaining more than just facts regarding the great size and variety of shapes and colors of lighthouses from our The Lights are Beckoning unit. Throughout the unit students have realized the meaning of responsibility and duty by studying the absolute commitment of lighthouse keepers and their families. They know that lighthouses speak to vigilance, lighthouses speak to sacrifices, lighthouses speak to caring, and lighthouses speak to helping human beings. "The Lighthouse is Beckoning!" Come bask in the spirit of the lighthouses of America, a welcoming bridge between land and sea.

State Standards

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

Students from all academic levels can participate. Special consideration was noted for those ELD students with limited English proficiency. Every student (60+) was involved with success.

Materials

An extensive bibliography is available including books, videos, student packets and Internet sites.

Outside Resources

Our school librarian, our junior high science teacher, and parents.
"Poetic Souls Delight In Prose Insane" - *Lord Byron*

Catherine Flaum, Jon Loring – Mesa Verde Middle School  
Business Partner: Ventura County Star  
For grade levels 8-12  
Curriculum Areas: Language Art, History, Oral Interpretation, and Drama

*The Unit And Its Value:*

Middle school students are often confounded and delighted when they realize that reading and writing poetry can be both intellectually and emotionally provocative - shedding light on the grand themes of love, war and oppression in much the same way as classic fiction. We tapped into an earlier generation of poets - the Beat Poets from the 1950's - as a teaching tool to get our students thinking about the idea that poets from some earlier eras were actually the rock stars of their generation. We talked about the stodginess of the homogenized post-World War II decade and how the Beat Generation poets and artists were reacting to the strict conformity of their time. Free verse/stream of consciousness poetry was a popular form of artistic outlet and was, in fact, the precursor to today's rap music. We told rapt eighth grade audiences about young men and women, clad in dramatic black garb, venturing up to an "open mike" in dim, candle-lit coffee houses in Greenwich Village and San Francisco to speak their mind in verse about sexism, racism and the dehumanizing government of the staid 1950's. Naturally, the students related heavily. Heated discussions ensued as students took in the heady words of Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, John Clellon Holmes, William Burroughs and Lawrence Ferlinghetti, inspired by these young rebels who spoke eloquently and passionately about what was going on in the country, from the government to the streets.

After we captured their attention, we concentrated on "freeing" their own uncertain voices. All fourteen-year-olds have known their share of disappointment, heartbreak and inadequacy, and so we asked them to tap into their own private, interior experiences and experiment with the freedom afforded by writing in Free Verse. An amazing amount of incredible energy and bubbling thought percolated in our concrete bunker-like classrooms. But writing poetry was only part of the experience we wanted our students to have, and so we recreated our own lunchtime Coffee House. We encouraged students to share their own personal "ranting and ravings" at an open mike set up in one of our classrooms. We served decaffeinated coffee (heavily spiked with sugar), encouraged saxophones, tambourines, berets and a safe haven for teenage angst. Word spread quickly and suddenly poetry was cool. Not only were naturally vocal and outspoken young poets taking the lunchtime mike, but highly sensitive, withdrawn aching souls were also finding sanctuary for their thoughts and feelings. Public speaking found a following among the eighth graders last spring, and so many young lives were touched by learning to appreciate how writing poetry can free the voice pounding
Within each of us.

Because the reception for poetry was so vivid and alive on our campus we wanted to commemorate the young writers who would be graduating in June. With funds secured by begging and borrowing we printed over eighty of the poems submitted by students and then bound them in a paper edition entitled *Mesa Verde, Mesa Oro - Poetry and Other Writings* and lovingly handed them out to the graduating class, while a few of the poems were being recited at the commencement ceremony. The modest paper bound editions were (and are) highly coveted among the eighth grade class, because finally students were REALLY published. Their words etched with restless exuberance will stand forever for who they once were. This first edition of *Mesa Verde, Mesa Oro* represents a true commitment to the truth and spirit of middle school writers everywhere and we trust that you will hear their voices resonating in these pages.

**State Standards**

This activity supports the following State Framework Areas: Reading and Writing - Literary Criticism, Narrative Analysis, and Structural Features of Literature. Speaking Applications Recitation and Dramatic Performance. History - Interfacing cultural, literary, and historical eras.

**Students**

Two hundred seventy-five eighth grade students participated in the unit over a six-week time frame. Writing and reciting poetry encourages multi-level learners because it allows all students to utilize personal thoughts and feeling while practicing writing an assortment of literary devices. Writing Free Verse is particularly encouraging and liberating for English Language learners, because formal grammatical sentence structure is not a requirement! The writing process culminates with an opportunity to celebrate the author's achievement in published print and by oral presentation.

**Materials**

No special facilities or supplies are needed to complete this unit, although we did have to fundraise $1000 to provide for the printing of enough copies of the poetry journal, *Mesa Verde, Mesa Gold*, to allow for one copy for each graduating eighth grade student.
The Power of Pigs and Literacy: Assessing the American Dream in Animal Farm

Donna Fulgham, Moorpark High School

Business Partner: Santa Barbara Bank & Trust

For grade levels 6 - 12

Curriculum Areas: Language Arts, Social Studies

The Unit and Its Value:

The Power of Pigs and Literacy comes through loud and clear in this unit on Animal Farm where ELD students indelibly note the importance of literacy and education in accessing the American Dream. Students examine the dangers of blind allegiance and apathy while focusing on the importance of personal freedoms and the need to protect these liberties. The ability of ELD students to link literary theme ideas to the real world is crucial in understanding the deeper lessons of literature so they will practice critical thinking and active citizenship in our world today. To practice active citizenship and recognize the importance of education in helping them achieve their dreams, as a culminating activity for the unit, ELD students write individual letters to the Principal identifying obstacles to their education while making suggestions for changes that most impact literacy growth. (This activity yielded individual notes from the Principal to each student as well as several class visits to effect academic support for their dreams, one of which was" access to an after school study hall with bus passes to home provided free of charge.) Unit activities access a wide range of student modalities for expression of a variety of projects. Technology, research skills, and computer use are integral aspects of the unit as students access information through internet research of allegorical connections to Russian history.

Students begin this six week unit by accessing a webquest to begin background information on allegorical connections. Students work in pairs to research such items as totalitarianism, Lenin, Trotsky, Czar Nicholas II, utopia, Pravda, the Bolshevik Revolution, etc. This research yields persuasive speeches (where the more bold role-play different characters as they speak), annotated bibliographies, and identification and incorporation of propaganda techniques in their own speeches. The propaganda study is especially impacting as they learn to recognize techniques used in the world today. Through the reading of Animal Farm, they learn from the pigs that power can corrupt and literacy is essential to their survival, as they see illiterate animals perish at the hands of tyrants. They also learn the power of literacy to achieve their dreams as they examine the opportunities provided to the most literate in this society. One of the challenges of teaching this unit to ELD students is that they must be active readers or they fall prey to the same propaganda techniques that are successful in manipulating the less literate characters in the novel.
Once they catch on to this danger, they are more observant in identifying parallels in society today. As the unit progresses and students identify propaganda techniques and create their own, they also select from a list of theme projects that includes art, cartooning, map making, identification of rituals with illustrations, quotations work, and construction of a model of *Animal Farm* with quotes attached.

A far-reaching goal of this lesson is for students to recognize the power of literacy through real world examples in the United States and other countries. To help them make connections we examine an L.A. Times article, dated December 2,2002 titled "Beijing Theater Marks Orwell's Year of the Pigs." ELD students are amazed that a Chinese version of *Animal Farm* is being staged as a play in Beijing. We discuss how the playwright changed the allegorical connections to China and even changed some characters to openly portray real world Chinese individuals such as Mao Tse-tung. We also discover that the Chinese playwright, Shang, changes Orwell's central message of the corrupting effect of absolute power to the dangers of apathy. Since some students' relatives have escaped harsh regimes to come to America, these lessons are powerful to them; they are shocked that many Chinese have not read *Animal Farm* and appear to be falling for the very propaganda techniques that these ELD students now recognize. Through the pigs they learn that literacy enables individuals to have many opportunities for success and they brainstorm and identify ways to make their education more effective. This is when they write their letters to the Principal for assistance in achieving higher levels of literacy. One student wrote, "In my ELD-4 class I read the novel *Animal Farm*… it talks about the realities we have in our countries such as government, freedom, and education. I [would] like to tell you it is important to improve our quality of life. Education helps us to reach our dreams without any border… my parents do not know how to help me. A study hall would help me and I will thank you for all my life if you put it on." She has one now.

**State Standards**
This unit supports high level thinking activities, drama, interdisciplinary activities, technology, group activities, integration of listening, speaking, reading and writing. The Framework also encourages collaboration as well as writing tasks that include presentation

**Students**
The Power of Pigs and Literacy has been implemented in ELD-4 classes that consisted of sixty 9th through 12th graders. Students met with success because this project appeals to the varied talents of students.

**Materials**
Novels where society is a key aspect (*The Giver, Animal Farm*, etc.), newspaper articles, paper, markers, and poster board.

**Outside Resources**
CD Rom, Internet for research.
Renaissance Revival

Ginger Brandenburg, Moorpark High School
Business Partner: Venoco, Inc.
For grade level 12
Curriculum Area: British Literature

*The Unit and Its Value:*
This integrated unit engages students in various aspects of the Renaissance, a time of great change and exploration with significant breakthroughs in science, vast accomplishments in the arts, and the emergence of many great literary masterpieces. Seniors around the world struggle with the poetry of Shakespeare, Donne, Spenser, Milton, and other Renaissance poets. To prepare for this great time in our history, I begin with the two famous paired poems: Christopher Marlowe's *The Passionate Shepherd* and Sir Walter Raleigh's *The Nymph's Reply.* An in-depth study of these poems prepares students for more challenging works.

Marlowe's poem is a part of two literary traditions: *carpe diem* philosophy and a pastoral setting, an idealized countryside with a shepherd imploring, "Come live with me and be my love." Raleigh's reply features a strong young woman, a nymph. Day one, students individually paraphrase and interpret the stanzas, noting the rhyme pattern, highlighting the figurative language, and listing the imagery. Then, they comment regarding the author's tone, idealistic or realistic appeal, and the persuasion of the speaker's arguments. Day two, students compare the two poems focusing on the impact of figurative language and imagery on the persuasiveness of the speakers and the tone of each poem. The comparison chart is filled out individually, again requiring the students to develop the poetry interpretation skills. With this foundation in place, groups are formed to discuss the passion and pitfalls of love, certainly an engaging topic for seniors. Also, within their mixed gender groups, they discuss male and female stereotypes particularly as it relates to expectations of the opposite sex within a relationship and their definitions of an ideal relationship. Then they plan a presentation to the class that includes the following: (a) a list of male and female stereotypes and how this helps them understand the opposite sex, (b) significant biographical author information, (c) an analysis of the impact of the imagery and figurative language on the author's message and attitude, and (d) a color analysis of the speaker in the poem. They assign the following roles: A-Artist (prepare a visual of the stereotypes), B-Biographer (prepare a list of four significant author facts), C-Critic (analyze the impact of the literary devices), and D-Determiner (determine the character of the speaker and assign a color). Two groups focus on *The Passionate Shepherd,* and two groups focus on *The Nymph's Reply.* Group discussions are lively as students see the contemporary application of the shepherd's entreaty. For example, one young lady derides the persuasiveness of the speaker in Marlowe's poem when she says, "He was just sweet-talkin'.'"
"Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man" (Sir Francis Bacon). Just as this quote describes the three important aspects of learning, likewise, we apply this formula to our poetry lesson: Step 1, the reading portion; Step 2, group conversations; and Step 3, a literary analysis essay and sonnet writing. This in-depth poetry interpretation lesson instills self-confidence and a more positive outlook on poetry as we move from Renaissance to the Romantic and Victorian periods.

Prior this activity and as a foundation for the entire year, students placed themselves in color categories based on an introspective survey taken the first week of school. Survey scores place the students in the following color categories: RED, the Power Wielders; GREEN, Analytical; HUB, Well Rounded; and BLUE, the Do-Gooders. Understanding themselves—their personal strengths and weaknesses—helps them set goals for improvement based on an awareness of successful character traits. It is also the key to understanding each other and getting along in groups as well as the workplace. Throughout the year, we apply this analysis to literary characters as we do with the speakers in the paired poems. We often balance teams with the colors so that we can have the taskmaster, the organizer, the innovator, and the peacemaker.

Other activities that bring the Renaissance wonderment to life are (1) a personal "I Wonder..." poem, (2) a functional resume based on the "Renaissance Man" Sir Francis Bacon, (3) an Axiom Essay entitled "Of ____________" based on Bacon's "Of Studies" using a student-created axiom written in parallel structure as the thesis statement, (4) a semester culmination project using items such as a paper plate, paper bag, spoon, string, etc. to create an innovative and functional invention that relates to one of the works of literature studied during the semester, and (5) a Renaissance Faire where groups choose from the topics of music, art and/or architecture, dance, food, costumes, nursery rhymes, and sports to present interactive demonstrations to the class—an especially memorable activity just before semester final exams.

**Students**
Thirty senior students, an integrated academy class ranging from those with limited English skills to high academic competency, participated in this unit. It could be adapted to any Language Arts program seeking to apply the literature to relevant, stimulating learning.

**State Standards**
State Content Standards include: Lit Anal. 3.3 Analyze the ways in which tone and the "sound" of the language achieve specific purposes and 3.4 Analyze ways in which poets use imagery, etc. to evoke readers' emotions.

**Outside Resources**
Contributions from business representatives regarding admirable traits and skills desired in the workplace.
Being Romantic Is Not Just for Valentine's Day Any More

Kara Bettencourt, Moorpark High School
Business Partner: PSI Bearings
For grade levels 11-12
Curriculum Area: English/Language Arts, Fine Arts

The Unit and Its Value:

The Romantic Portfolio Unit is designed to help students explore the themes of Romanticism in literature, art, themselves and the world around them. Students create, collect and reflect on their own work while setting a foundation for the study of 19th and 20th century literature. Although portfolios and the assignments found in this unit are familiar to most English teachers, this project is centered around applying the themes and theories of the early 19th century to the 20th and 21st centuries. The unit is well suited for teenagers who instinctively understand the themes of learning through experience, rebellion against authority, finding truth through emotions, and the love of nature. This project bridges what can be dry academia with what they are most interested in, their own experiences.

The creation of this portfolio validates the students' own experience by connecting it to some of the greatest writers, philosophers and artists of the past two hundred years. Students who complete the Romantic unit find it easier to follow the threads of Romanticism into the Victorian, Modern and Post-Modern units of literature. The portfolio utilizes all learning styles so that all students can be successful. Students are encouraged to be creative and artistic, and are expected to demonstrate higher critical thinking skills of analysis and synthesis. It is interdisciplinary, yet it incorporates many elements found in most English classrooms: analysis, responding to literature and creative writing.

After a two-week unit on the Neoclassical Age, students are asked to bring in a picture of an object which they feel is aesthetically pleasing. They write about why they feel their picture is beautiful and creates a positive emotional response in them. By the end of the week, they are able to see how their selection reveals their own Romantic or Classical leanings. Several class periods are devoted to studying famous and not so famous works of art. As the class discusses art, they learn how Romanticism affected changes in politics, history and social history. We also listen to various music selections exploring another interpretation of Romanticism. The week ends with a personal survey of Romantic elements and a lively debate usually follows. By now they know being romantic isn't hearts and cupids, and they are ready to write the first chapter of their portfolio, a self-evaluation essay and to study the poetry of the Romantic Era. Instead of the teacher having to point out the themes of Romanticism to them as the poems are read, students are quick to
point out to the teacher which poem explores the need for social change or a love of the exotic and unknown.

After the first week, students are given a handout with unit requirements and have three weeks to put together the various chapters of their portfolio. The chapters include the self-evaluation essay, original poetry, descriptions of objects and places (real and imaginary), and finding a 20th century "romantic" poem. Each chapter includes both description and analysis of how the subject of the chapter fits the requirements of Romanticism. They are told to create a work of art, a work of sight, sound and sense. Students are given opportunities over the next three weeks to do several creative writing assignments so that they can choose one of their own poems or prose pieces for the project. Most chapters are done outside of class, but it is rewarding to have students share the 20th century poems they selected. It is exciting to see students explore the modern side of Romanticism as they learn about the world of Coleridge, Keats and Shelley. The discovery that the historical study of literature is connected to their everyday experience has a positive effect of the rest of the semester's curriculum as well. The success of the unit is clearly evident when the projects are turned in and shared. A formal rubric returned with the graded portfolio provides feedback for the student and a place to put teacher comments.

Because Romanticism is also an important part of American Literature, it could easily be adapted for eleventh grade classes and would work well at all levels of instruction from remedial to honors. Students are amazed to learn that they, too, are capable of writing poetry that is often profound and which explores the human condition as much as any poet's work in the text book anthology.

**State Standards**

The Romantic portfolio meets the 11th and 12th grade standards for reading and writing. It includes analytical writing, creative writing and personal responses to literature.

**Students**

The project has been completed by approximately one hundred college prep high school seniors each year for the past ten years; however, it could be adapted to any level.

**Materials**

Artwork for the first week is taken from various art textbooks from the library, slides from museums, and overhead transparencies that are found in most teacher support materials for textbooks.
Silkworm Life Cycle: Spinning Along!
Maureen Marsalek, Our Lady of Assumption School
Business Partner: Hansen Trust
For grade levels K-4
Curriculum Areas: Science

The Unit and Its Value

Silkworm Life Cycle is a unit of study in science that integrates math, language arts, writing, social studies and art. It is of extremely high interest because the students are provided with real silkworms to observe, care for and study while the life cycle progresses through the various stages. Hands on activities and experiments enable the students to see firsthand the development of each stage while utilizing tools of discovery through scientific methods, math and language arts.

Our journey begins in mid-March when the eggs are removed from refrigeration and allowed to hatch into larva. Students construct their own, silkworm boxes. These boxes remain on their desks and are taken home on weekends. Students observe, record, and compare the hatching times to tables that indicate time intervals for each stage. When the eggs hatch, the observation and learning intensify. The students learn the history of the silkworm, discovering they originated in China, and that through years of cultivation they are no longer wild but "domesticated."

Chinese culture is introduced through literature, using such books as The Empress and the Silkworm by Lily Hong. The students work with Haiku poetry, tongue twisters and title down poetry as well as Rebus story activities, which go along with the book. Factual information describing the silkworm industry in China and the uses for silk and the by-products of the silk producing industry is presented, using Silkworms by Silvia A. Johnson. Authentic traditional Chinese silk garments are brought into the classroom for the children to try on and touch.

As the silkworms continue to grow, the students are responsible for helping to feed the worms a diet of mulberry leaves. Experiments are conducted to see if mulberry leaves from different trees make a difference in development. The growth stage provides an exciting way to introduce measurement in centimeters and inches, comparison, graphing and counting. Adult silkworms lay around 500 eggs each, so estimation and prediction activities are valuable tools to integrate math.

After several weeks, the silkworms are ready to spin their cocoons. Students observe the silkworms spinning in a figure eight pattern. While waiting for the silkworm moth to emerge, students conduct experiments to mark the stage of the development of the moth during metamorphosis. When the adult
emerges, sex is determined and the mating of male and female moths is observed. When new eggs are produced, the children see the adult moth in the final stages of life. At this point, the students have amassed enough information to write informative stories about silkworms.

Artwork can be produced using paint, watercolors, clay collage, and crayons as children express their perceptions of this remarkable phenomenon in nature.

Students

I have taught this unit for more than ten years to more than 350 second graders. It can easily be adapted for use with grades K through 4.

State Standards

This unit of study supports the California Science Content Standards in Life Sciences 2, by focusing on the predictable, sequential stages of animal life cycles, the many characteristics of an organism inherited from the parent, or caused or influenced by the environment, and the variation among individuals of one kind within a population.

Facilities and Materials

Materials include: Silkworm eggs, mulberry tree for leaves, posters, books (fiction and non-fiction), art materials to create silkworm boxes, videos, computers for story writing and web research. Classes are conducted within the classroom, computer lab and the outdoors.

Outside Resources

Museum field trip for butterfly exhibit, library, guest speakers.
Trading Generations – A Literary Service-Learning Project
Robbi LaLonde, Moorpark High School
Business Partner: VCEDA
For grade levels 9-12
Curriculum Areas: English Language Arts, Social Studies

The Unit and Its Value:
Trading Generations is a four-week unit that provides students with a glimpse of the past through the hearts, minds, and personal experiences of senior citizens with fascinating real-life stories to tell. Chronicling the lives of senior citizens offers students an authentic purpose for improving their writing skills through an engaging project in which they acquire a very personal interest. While working on the final drafts of these biographies, students exhibit a much higher level of concern about the quality of the final product because it will be presented to the senior they have interviewed. This project also provides students with an opportunity to complete documented service learning hours through a meaningful activity.

History takes on a new meaning when one senior citizen describes the joyful memories of buying his first car in 1948, and another reveals what she experienced as a fourteen year old girl, hiding under her home in the Philippines, in order to protect her grandmother from the Bataan Death March during World War II. With a little interaction, senior citizens and adolescents form positive attachments that are mutually supportive and life-enhancing. Seniors sometimes hear negative things about young people, and teens have many misconceptions about seniors and the aging process. Through this assignment, however, each generation gains new admiration for the other.

The primary objective of the assignment is to provide students with an authentic purpose for using their listening, speaking, and writing skills through a true literary service-learning project. The secondary goal is to offer students an opportunity to gain insight and wisdom from the senior citizens of their community. This oral history project is timed to correspond with a class reading of The Giver by Lois Lowry. The novel depicts a utopian community where knowledge of the past is forbidden to all citizens with the exception of the Giver, who holds all memories of the past, both pleasurable and painful. The community relies on this "receiver of memory" for the wisdom which only he can offer them in troubled times.

Based on their own unique life experiences, the senior citizens of our community also have much to offer. Through this project, ninth grade students honor their very own "Givers" by providing them with an opportunity to share their wisdom, and by documenting their biographies for generations to come. Students prepared themselves in advance by practicing appropriate introductions, active listening skills and
interview techniques in "fish bowl' role-playing activities in class. They also brainstormed a list of interview questions they would ask the seniors once they finished telling their life stories.

To begin the research portion of this activity, fifty-five freshmen students traveled by bus to the local Senior Recreational Center. After sharing doughnuts, bagels, and introductions, the students and seniors began their interviews. The students listened attentively, took copious notes and asked seniors for clarification on certain points.

Later, using information gathered from their senior partners through informal conversation, structured interviews and note taking, students worked together in class to construct a rough draft based on the oral history they recorded. The final drafts were edited and polished in the school's computer lab during two class periods. As higher ability students finished their biographies, they helped to revise and edit the biographies which other students were completing. Finally, students bound their biographies with a cover page featuring the name and photograph of "their senior," along with the names of the authors.

The final drafts were evaluated for sequencing of information and appropriate tone, along with the conventions of proper written English such as pagination, sentence structure, diction, grammar, and punctuation. At the conclusion of the project, students presented their senior participants with a finished biography at a culminating reception sponsored by the high school. Participating seniors were deeply moved as students read to them from the biographies they had written with such pride, and many said they hope we will do this project again next year.

**State Standards**

Students had an opportunity to practice active listening techniques and oral communication skills by interacting with their senior partners. They also gained confidence in their speaking and reading skills through the public presentation of the biographies, and through press interviews during which they discussed what the service learning project meant to them. Most importantly, students developed their writing skills while working together to transform raw material from interviews into a finished written work. Collaborative writing offers students at all levels of proficiency with new insight into the drafting, revising and editing process that will continue to be very useful to them in their academic writing.

**Students**

Fifty-five ninth grade students of varying ability levels participated in this unit during the 2001-2002 school year. Through a combination of human interaction and literacy activities, the aim of this project is to assist students in becoming competent writers and empathetic individuals who are capable of forming fulfilling connections to their community. Based upon student reflections on this assignment, and the comments of their senior partners, it is apparent these goals were met.
**Materials**

Necessary materials include copies of *The Giver* for students, a camera and film for photographing interviewees, a binding machine and card stock paper for completed biographies. Necessary facilities include a computer lab with printer for final drafts and a reception room for meeting with senior citizens.

**Outside Resources**

Outside resources include senior citizen participants, a senior recreation director to assist with coordinating the project, a district service learning coordinator, administrative support for a school visit from seniors, and bus transportation for students if they are to visit the local senior center.
United States Foreign Policy: Isolationist or The World's Policeman?

Wendy Dowler, Jennifer Duston – Foothill Technology High School
Business Partner: Ventura Chamber of Commerce
For grade level 11
Curriculum Areas: US History and English

The Unit and its Value:

The goal of this project is for students to understand how America, Ventura specifically, affects the world. Students examine 10 various foreign policy issues in depth to create a Doctrine for the 21st Century of how the President of the United States should handle these foreign policy issues. At the completion of the project, students have in-depth knowledge of a particular foreign policy issue and engage in a town hall meeting discussion at City Hall to persuade the mayor of Ventura to take their plan to the President to be included in the Doctrine for the 21st Century. Through this project students gain an understanding of how government works, an understanding of previous doctrines throughout US History, United States foreign policy both past and present, research skills and writing, how to create an action plan, presentation skills, and technology skills. This project encourages higher order thinking skills by making them apply the knowledge of previous American foreign policy and creating a plan as to how the current president should deal with the current situation.

Students were introduced to the project as an entire 11th grade class with mock protestors (parents) circulating around campus at lunch in October. All 11th graders were then brought to the multi-purpose room to view live protestors (teachers) making one-minute speeches about each of the foreign policy issues that will be addressed in the project. Once the speeches were complete, the still dumb-founded 11th graders were shown a video straight from the mayor of Ventura asking for their help in creating the Doctrine for the 21st century for the President of the United States based upon previous historical doctrines.

Throughout the course of the project, students prepare an annotated bibliography of at least 15 sources including books, Internet articles, primary sources including speeches and interviews, pamphlets from interest groups, and sources from outside the US. Students then create an outline of the research conducted for review by instructor. Once the research is approved students begin work on the actual research paper and create a political cartoon. Upon completion of the individual research paper students are then grouped based on their foreign policy issue to formulate an action plan as a group. In this action plan, students assert short and long-term goals for the US, and how these goals will affect other countries,
as well as justification for these actions based on historical precedent. Once the action plan is complete the
group then begins work on their presentation for the town hall meeting to be held and televised from
Ventura City Hall. Students use a variety of methods in their presentations including live video,
PowerPoint, charts, graphs, and the distribution of their original pamphlet. Various college professors and
students who are experts in the field of foreign policy from various 4 and 2-year institutions such as USC,
UCLA, UCSB, CAL State Northridge, and Ventura City College will assess students. The quality of the
individual research papers, as well as the depth of the discussion in the Town Hall meeting, measure the
success of the project. This project addresses the needs of all learners by encompassing a wide range of
aspects into the project: research, writing, presenting, working as a group, working with technology, etc.
No matter what the students' strength, there is a spot for them on the team.

This project is beneficial in that it is used throughout the entire year to constantly reference
historical precedent of American foreign policy. Understanding American foreign policy is so crucial to our
citizens that this project is extremely relevant and useful, especially in current times, to our students. Other
teachers if not able to adopt the whole program, should at least modify it to give their students a solid
understanding of American Foreign policy and the workings of our government, especially the effects we
have on other countries. That is the real value. Many times our students go through classes with a "tunnel-
vision" of the US and what we should do. This project forces them to look at the far reaching effects our
actions have on other citizens of the world.

**State Standards**

- This project completes California State Standards 11.2, 1.4-11.9, and 11.11 for grade 11 United
  States History and Geography.

- This project completes California State Standards for 11th grade Language Arts:
  
  2.1 Structural Feature of Informational Materials
  
  2.2-2.5 Comprehension and Analysis of Grade-Level Appropriate text
  
  2.6 Expository Critique
  
  1.0-1.5 Writing Strategies/Organization and Focus
  
  1.6-1.8 Writing Strategies/Research & Technology
  
  1.7 Writing Strategies/Evaluation and Revision
  
  2.0-2.4 Speaking Strategies

**Students**
• All 120 11th grade students are currently participating in the project.

• Students are enrolled in either college prep US History and English or AP American Experience (AP US History/English combined)

• Their achievement level at this point has far exceeded the expectations of the instructors and can be improved upon by better resources next year.

• This project could be adapted to include special needs students by pairing them up with a college prep student or by simplifying the research paper, providing the research for them and scaling down questioning level in the town hall discussion.

**Materials**

• Computers for research

• Invitations for authentic assessors & group pamphlets

• Technology-VHS Tapes, CD's, Digital Camera, video camera for taping, etc.

• Updated books on current foreign policy issues

• Disk copies of all handouts, instructions, and timelines used to implement project can be provided

**Outside Resources**

• Bus transportation from school to City Hall for students

• City Hall for Town Hall meeting

• Authentic assessors from various local colleges and universities (professors and foreign policy students)
Walk Across America
Lynn Barre, Kathie Ferkin – Cypress Elementary School
Business Partner: Procter & Gamble
1st grade students paired with 5th grade students
Curriculum Areas: Geography, Language Arts, Visual & Performing Arts

The Unit and Its Value:

Walk Across America culminates with a representation of America’s most famous monuments and points of interest and the opportunity to visit all of them in just 45 minutes. This unit was designed for use with Fifth and First Grade "Study Buddies" to cover the state standards for studying America's monuments as well as to foster the skills of learning and working together. We chose the title Walk Across America and discussed and worked toward this goal each session we held. This was very beneficial to all the children, not only in the special attention each received from his or her buddy, but in learning about the various monuments and points of interest in our great country. Each child's sense of accomplishment was enhanced with the practice and then performance the night of the presentation.

For our first session (each was 1 hour) the children were paired with their study buddies. They visited, and at the end of the hour, took turns telling the group about their study buddy. For the second session, we described to them what we would like to do. Monuments and points of interest were assigned. We passed out books for them to start their study. At the end of the session, some of the children shared what they had learned. A letter went home with each child, explaining to the parents what we were doing, and what they could do to help. For the third session, we began learning "Fifty Nifty United States," a song by Ray Charles in which the states are described and named in alphabetical order. It was the "finale" for our presentation. More children shared what they had learned. For the next session, the First Graders read to us the 3 facts they had brought from home. Fifth Graders were required to do more extensive research, involving the library and the internet. Research report writing was taught as per Language Arts standards. In mid-January a letter was sent home to parents explaining the program more fully. The next several sessions were spent with children working on their presentations and making a poster advertising their monument or point of interest which was then added as part of their 3’ x 6’ mural – which was the background for their "tour stop." Fifth Grade math standards of measurement and geometry were incorporated into the lesson on poster design. Two sessions were spent rehearsing what each group was going to say. A week before the program a letter was sent home with more details. The day before the program a final reminder letter was sent, and we rehearsed in the multipurpose room. The day of the presentation we set up all the displays. That evening parents brought more artifacts to add to their children's displays.
The results were more than we could have planned! All of the children and many parents really got "into" it. The parents helped the children collect, buy, and borrow souvenirs to display at their monument or point of interest. The children had wonderful costumes. Each hosted a place as tour guide and did a wonderful job, as our guests "walked across America" in our multi-purpose room. The presentations were given with back and forth interplay between each First and Fifth Grade Study Buddy team. "Visitors" were encouraged to ask questions of their tour guides. At the end of the evening, all children went onto the stage for the singing of "Fifty Nifty United States."

It was an overwhelming success. After that, we all shared red, white, and blue refreshments, creatively provided by the parents. The morning following the "Walk Across America" evening, the multipurpose room was open to allow visitation from various classes on campus.

Success was evident in seeing how proud the children were of themselves, and in listening to the amount of knowledge they gained by doing their reports. This was a very popular activity for the parents.

**State Standards**

State standards for both First and Fifth Grades were covered in this study.

**Students**

In 2002, 52 First and Fifth Grade students participated.

**Materials**

All activities took place in the classroom and multipurpose room. Materials included books, souvenir-type items, and costumes. Parents provided refreshments.

**Outside Resources**

Children got information from parents, friends and relatives. Teachers lent children items from our own personal collections. The school library, the community library, the internet, and information requested via mail from the sites was also accessed.
We Aren't the World: A Global Perspective for Ninth Grade Geography
Cherie Eulau, Buena High School
Business Partner: Ventura County Star
For grade level 9
Curriculum Areas: Geography
The Unit and Its Value:
The goal of this four-week unit is to make students aware that most people on the planet do not experience life as we do, and to have them understand the connections among population issues, health care, government, poverty and the environment, thereby creating a new, global perspective. The students in this multi-ability level, ninth grade class examined a variety of sources, including a compilation of articles, Internet research, population role playing activities and a student generated final project. An unexpected result of this unit was the students becoming so concerned about the plight of the world's poor that they donated enough money to send a goat to a needy family in Guatemala through Heifer International.

I began the unit by arranging the desks to reflect global population, so that most of the desks were jumbled in Asia; others represented Africa, Europe, North America and South America. The students were randomly assigned their location as they entered. After discussing the room arrangement, I used information from Poster Education to ask them questions about population and land mass size. Each group was then given a plastic bag with M&Ms in it proportionate to the amount of food people in those regions have access to. The students quickly realized that North America and Europe had an abundance of M&Ms, and that Europe and Africa had about the same number of desks, but Africa had only a few pieces of candy. To varying degrees, people in Asia, Africa and in South America went hungry. We then discussed the terms "over population" and "food distribution." This activity raised issues we continue to discuss in class, and all the students know that "overpopulation" is not based solely on population, but on whether or not a country can feed its people.

To reinforce these ideas and present new ones, I compiled a "We Aren't the World" reader using articles for the LA Times, National Geographic, The Economist and the Global Environment Outlook Report 2002 by the United Nations. I also used a class set of State of the World Atlases, which are filled with cartograms and maps about world societal, governmental, population and environmental issues. Because this is a multi-ability level class, we used a variety of reading comprehension strategies to understand the main points of these articles. Additionally, it is important to me that they read about and analyze one issue from several sources. The goal is to change many students' perception that poor countries deserve to be poor and that they are
overpopulated because they don’t know any better. As they read and participated in activities, they began to see the connections between poverty and education, health care and poor government, food shortages and poor government, as well as American policies and food distribution issues. I knew the unit had made an impact when, a month later, we were studying Africa and I asked what America might do to help the region. Jesse, who is not a strong student, raised his hand and said, "We could lower our farm subsidies so Africa could sell their crops to us."

We began discussing population doubling using a riddle from the book *Earthsearch*, which also was the genesis for the M&M activity. They then guessed how many times they could "double" before running out of students. Using chalk drawn squares on the concrete, two students stood in the first square, four in the next and so on. Many students were surprised to discover that they could only double four times, in my smaller class only three. We then went inside and, using the State of the World Atlas, examined the number of countries that will double in our lifetime. I also pointed out that the world population has doubled in my lifetime.

I also wanted them to understand the concept of an "ecological" footprint, which is how many resources a given family or country uses, usually expressed in acres or hectares. We went to the library and the students logged onto one of several sites that has a survey about your family, and then calculates your impact on the earth based on the information students input. The most popular site uses a graphic inspired by Gandhi, who commented, "If the whole world lived like the West, we would need six earths." They also read about this concept in their reader, and were shown the footprint of other countries. Many students were astonished to discover how big the United States' footprint is. We also acknowledged that our lifestyle of inexpensive food and fuel, while enviable, comes at a price for the planet. The question then became: How do we help other countries improve their education, health care and government without increasing their footprint to the size of America's?

That question led us to Heifer International, which sends animals to needy families throughout the world, so that the family can generate enough income to send their children to school and improve their lives. The students and their families surprised me with their concern, passion and generosity by donating $120 to buy a goat, which ended up in a village in Guatemala.

The culminating activity for the unit was an Extended Simile Poster. After getting in groups, and doing research in the library, the students brainstormed a simile, which reflected the world, its problems and its promise. This is a high level activity and I was impressed by the similes and the connections the students made. Each student was responsible for visually showing one topic's problem and promise: Food distribution, population, health and education and the ecological
footprint. The day the posters were due the students walked around answering questions about each poster and voting for Most Informative, Most Creative and Best Use of Simile. One of the memorable posters was "The World is like an Attic," with a locked trunk representing an ample food supply. The key to the trunk was good government and better food distribution. Cobwebs represented environmental problems and the stairs symbolized the world's promise to get a person to the trunk through education and health care.

Overall, I was pleased with the effectiveness of the student-centered activities and the new perspective gained by many students, from the Honors student to those who will take the course again in summer school.

**State Frameworks**

There are not specific standards for Geography. I used the Scope and Sequence in Geographic Education from the National Geographic Society grades 9-12 called Patterns, Issues, Problems, and Interdependence.

**Students**

75 ninth grade students from non-college prep to Honors participated. The unit could be adapted for younger students through altering the reading assignments, but many activities work with various grade levels.

**Materials**

The Reader I compiled and the *Earthsearch* book along with Internet sites were the primary materials used in the classroom.

www.earthday.net/footprint  www.readtofeed.org/  www.worlded.org/

**National Geographic:**

"Don't look at People Like An Ant Heap" October, 1998

"Can the Planet Produce Enough Food?" October 1998

"Challenges For Humanity" February 2002

"A Population Exploding" December 1988

"Back from the Brink" Dec 1988

**Los Angeles Times:**
"The World is Going Gray" March 1998

"World Must Act to End Hunger" June 2002

Global Environment Outlook 3 United Nations Report - regional sections

_Economist:

"Flying Blind" July 2002

"Stop Blaming the Weather" June 2002