PEARSON TEACHING STRATEGIES SERIES

# 50 Social Studies Strategies for K-8 Classrooms

Fourth Edition

Kathryn M. Obenchain and Ronald V. Morris

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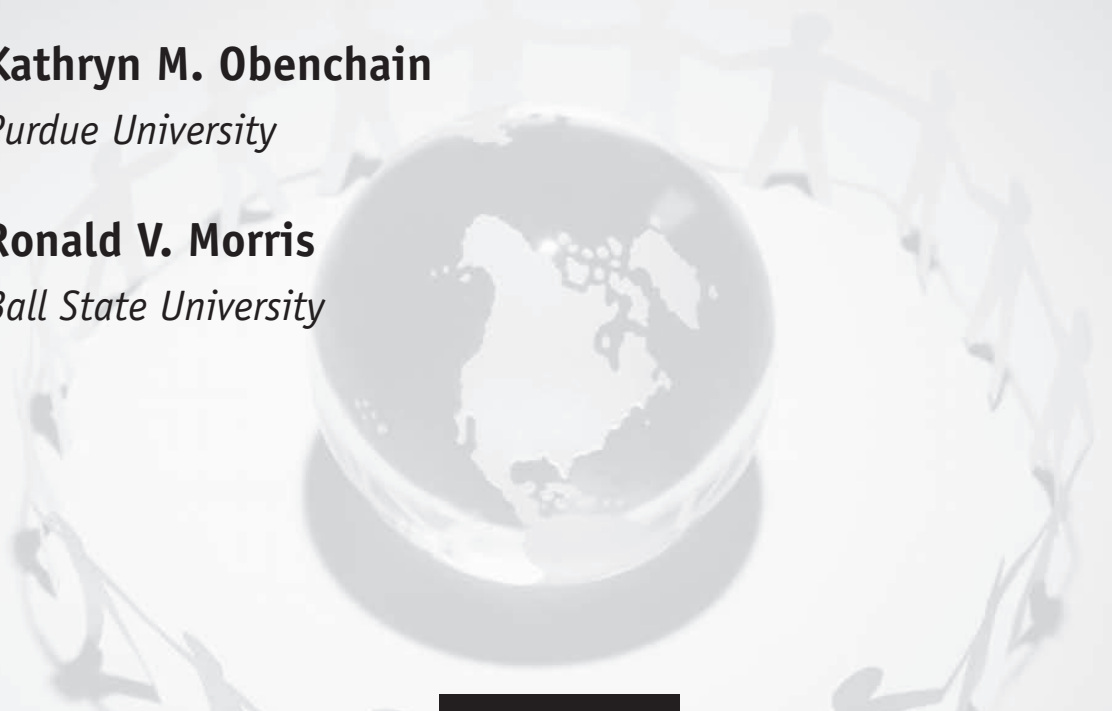

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This edition honors my sixteen grandnieces and grandnephews: Christopher, Michelle, Brendan, Benjamin, Aubry, Sam, Thomas, Noah, Grayson, Mary, Michael, Max, Elizabeth, Asher, Annamarie, and Dalton. My wish is that their lives are rich with the joys of learning and living compassionately.

Kathryn M. Obenchain

This book is in honor of my father, Peyton R. Morris:

- Who introduced me to the wonders of northern Michigan
- My longtime skiing companion
- A friend who makes the long drives with me
- Who introduced me to Greenbriar Mountain

Ronald V. Morris

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# Contents

# Preface

We considered multiple audiences while writing this text. We wanted to fill it with ideas—well-explained, useful, and meaningful ideas that teachers could use to engage their students in learning social studies. This book is of interest to undergraduate elementary and middle school teacher education students as an additional source and reference in their methods class and in their first years of planning social studies instruction in their classroom. It is also helpful to experienced elementary and middle school teachers in the social studies field or in graduate classes looking for teaching ideas. We hope teacher educators find this book useful as a companion to a more standard methods textbook because of the number and variety of strategies provided.

This book contains ten general and forty specific teaching and learning strategies. These materials were designed for use in the K–8 classroom, and we encourage readers to adapt these strategies to fit their particular classroom configuration and needs. Included in the strategies are multiple types of assessment tools so that readers have options in assessing their students. Further, the commitment to pragmatic instructional practices and multiple examples complements our commitment to research in the social studies field.

Each strategy includes an "Introduction," which provides a brief description of the strategy and a rationale as to why it is particularly beneficial. Where appropriate, we have included historical, practitioner, theoretical, and/or research support for the use of the strategy in social studies. "Procedural Recommendations" provide a simple outline of how to prepare for, facilitate, and direct the strategy. In some strategies, these recommendations are a chronological process, while in other strategies, the recommendations list ideas or issues to consider when considering the strategy. The "Applications and Ideas" section includes a classroom example and implementation ideas. "Differentiation" is the next section and includes ideas and/or examples for how to modify the strategy to make it easier for struggling learners and more difficult for higher-achieving learners. The "Assessment" section for each strategy has a rubric that is aligned with a benchmark from either the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) curriculum standards or the Common Core State Standards for English/Language Arts (CCSSELA). Each strategy also includes "References and Resources," a final section that lists scholarly support, additional readings and information, and helpful organizations. This list helps teachers examine how others have successfully used similar strategies in their classrooms to expand and deeply understand the strategy beyond what is presented in this text.

The assessment examples included in the book have been inspired and modified from the NCSS Powerful and Authentic Social Studies (PASS) professional development program. The PASS program emphasizes active and intellectually engaging experiences for students and is guided by principles of constructivist learning. PASS-inspired assessment tasks encourage teachers to use social studies-specific thinking and skills, along with social studies content. More information on the PASS program is available on the NCSS website. Each rubric in the text is similarly structured in a familiar rubric structure, but we provide two different styles. For all of the rubrics, the target benchmark is listed in the left column. This is the standards-based content and/or skill that the teacher is looking to evaluate and is drawn from either one of the strands of the NCSS curriculum standards or a benchmark from the CCSSELA. Across the top of all of the rubric are column headings indicating a level of achievement. "Unsatisfactory" through "Excellent" are the column titles for the rubrics utilizing the NCSS standards and "No Pass" through "High Pass" titles are used for the rubrics utilizing the CCSSELA standards. Under each column title, the measurable criteria are stated. As a basis for evaluation, the student is expected to produce several indicators of excellence that are based on the PASS principles. These are Organize Information, Consideration of Alternatives, Disciplinary Content, Disciplinary Process, Elaborative Communication, Problem Connected to the World beyond the Classroom, and Audience beyond the Classroom. Organization of Information requires that students use information to support their ideas. In Consideration of Alternatives, students are asked to look at multiple sides of the issue, not just compare it to one other issue or alternative. For example, they might be asked to look at both the positive and negative parts of a controversial issue. In Disciplinary Content the students provide evidence that they are talking about social studies concepts. In Disciplinary Process the students provide evidence that they are using social studies skills to examine the issue. In the Elaborative Communication component, students make a decision based on looking at two or more sides of an issue and considering social studies content and process so that they communicate an informed opinion based on evidence. They communicate their opinion through an oral report or a complex written response. The Problem Connected to the World beyond the Classroom component asks students to relate content and processes to a current event or persistent issue so that the students' knowledge is relevant and something they will encounter today or in their immediate future. Finally, students are asked to present their work to an Audience beyond the Classroom. When they do this, they are reporting a more authentic product to the community at large. The rubric template below includes the criteria we use throughout the text and illustrates additional options for teachers to modify for their own classroom use.

**Rubric**

| Benchmarks | High Pass<br>Excellent<br>4 Points | Pass<br>Good<br>3 Points | Low Pass<br>Satisfactory<br>2 Points | No Pass<br>Unsatisfactory<br>1 Point |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| In this space, select NCSS standards, state social studies standards, history or social science standards, or CCSSELA standards. It is all right to develop benchmarks customized to the classroom if they align to state and national social studies standards. | In this space, define the behaviors that the students exhibit to prove they have exceeded this competency. Use language that is measurable. Many times numbers help define this in percentages, ratios, or raw counts. | In this space, define the behaviors that the average students exhibit to prove they have mastered this competency. Use language that is measurable. Many times numbers help define this in percentages, ratios, or raw counts. | In this space, define the behaviors that students exhibit to prove they have marginal acquaintance with this competency. Use language that is measurable. Many times numbers help define this in percentages, ratios, or raw counts. | In this space, define the behaviors that students exhibit that prove they have not mastered this competency. Use language that is measurable. Many times numbers help define this in percentages, ratios, or raw counts. |

In addition to the strategy organization explained above, the 40 specific strategies discussed in Part II of the text begin with a list of three indicators. One indicator highlights the grade level targets of the strategy. While many of the strategies are pertinent across grade levels, each strategy includes notations of K–2 (primary), 3–5 (intermediate), and/or 6–8 (middle level) as a suggested best fit. The second indicator highlights the link to appropriate NCSS national curriculum strands. This indicator uses roman numerals I through X, directly referencing the ten NCSS curriculum strands. A brief overview of these strands may be found on the NCSS website. The third indicator highlights 21st Century Skills, a framework designed to build on traditional school content with the inclusion of higher-order and technologically oriented skills. More information on the 21st Century Skills may be found on the Partnernership for 21st Century Skills website.

**Grade, Content, and Skills Indicators for Strategies 11–40**

| Grade Levels | NCSS Curriculum Strands | 21st Century Skills |
|---|---|---|
| ✔ K–2 | I Culture | • Civic Literacy |
| ✔ 4–5 | V Time, Continuity, and Change | • Flexibility and Adaptability |
| ✔ 6–8 | IV Individual Development and Identity | |

The strategies explained in this text should help teachers plan effective social studies lessons using multiple types of student groups, as well as the diversity of learners in our classrooms. We believe students enjoy social studies more when they experience a variety of instructional strategies. With individuals, small groups, or large groups, the students and teacher should have plenty of ideas for enriching the social studies curriculum. We are interested in hearing from the readers about additions they would like to see in future editions of this text. Finally, we hope these strategies will encourage teachers to continue to create intellectual and enjoyable social studies experiences for their students.

## New to Fourth Edition

Revisions to the fourth edition are substantial. They are guided by three major factors. First, the accountability demands on teachers and the accompanying testing requirements on students continue to increase. Specifically, test preparation in English/Language Arts and Math consume a substantial amount of daily class time, substantially limiting or even eliminating time for other content areas, such as social studies. When social studies is included, it is necessary to provide standards-based assessments to indicate that students are learning something meaningful and applicable to life beyond the classroom in preparation for college or career—even at the elementary level. Further, to make room for social studies, it is often integrated with other content areas; frequently, that is English/Language Arts. Second, differentiated learning is becoming more important as teachers, as always, work to meet the needs of each student in the classroom. But, teachers are now also focused on preparing each student to succeed in the increased testing environment. Finally, technology integration is booming. Many classrooms utilize interactive whiteboards; schools are replacing textbooks with laptop or tablet computers; students are technologically savvy; and there is an explosion of Web 2.0 tools, software applications, and content easily available through the Internet. These factors, our continuing experiences as teacher educators and education researchers, and the feedback from our peer reviewers guided our major and minor revisions for this fourth edition. The major revisions are:

- The text has been reorganized to include ten overarching strategies that cross content areas and grade levels, followed by 40 specific strategies. This reorganization is beneficial, as the

overarching strategies are incorporated into many of the following specific strategies. By placing them together at the front of the text, they are more easily accessible.

- Each strategy now includes a "Differentiation" section that includes examples for modifying a strategy to both make it less complex for struggling learners and more complex for higher-achieving learners. This revision supports teachers' needs, as their learners are increasingly diverse in their educational needs.
- Each strategy includes an "Assessment" section with an assessment task description and a scoring rubric that is now aligned with either the NCSS curriculum standards or the CCSSELA. These additions provide examples of standards-based assessments, crucial in the current accountability environment.
- Further, the performance indicators for each new rubric in the "Assessment" section are built on the principles of the NCSS Powerful and Authentic Social Studies (PASS) program. Given the focus of the PASS program on strong social studies content and skills, as well as applicability beyond the classroom, this addition supports teachers in preparing students to engage with their community outside of school.
- Several strategies now have a high technology integration component. Those strategies are easily identifiable by an icon. These strategies now make use of various technology tools, the majority of which are already or easily available to teachers and students. In addition, even those strategies that do not have a high technology integration have been revised to reflect currently available technology applications for the elementary classrooms. This revision increases the technology skills development for teachers and students, important for the development of 21st century skills.

- The majority of strategies have been revised to more clearly articulate integration with literacy. In addition, those strategies with a CCSSELA assessment rubric provide a very clear socials studies-compatible and literacy-based assessment. This supports teachers' desire to include social studies, combined with their need to devote additional time to their literacy curriculum.
- Graphic Novels is a new strategy that combines the rich stories found in social studies with students' interests in technology and the graphic novel medium. In addition, this strategy supports literacy learning.
- Historical Fiction is also a new strategy that specifically addresses how to prioritize social studies learning through a traditional literacy genre. This strategy supports meaningful curricular integration.
- Informal Learning is a new strategy that supports teachers in building social studies curricular experiences outside of the classroom, in both novel and ordinary settings. This benefits students by preparing them to see learning opportunities beyond the classroom walls.
- Maps and Globes Using Google Earth is a new strategy that introduces teachers to using Google Earth technology in the classroom while still attending to key ideas in the geography curriculum.
- Virtual Field Trips is a completely new strategy. It acknowledges the tightening of school budgets and the inability of many schools to arrange in-person field trips, and it builds on the increasing availability of historically and culturally important sites that may now be visited virtually. Virtual Field Trips allow students to visit places that many will never actually get to visit, exposing them to other places and people and building their capacity as global citizens.
- Wikis is a completely new strategy, building upon students' interests in technology and their need to develop more technological skills while applying them to the academic curriculum.

In sum, in addition to the new strategies we have added, every strategy that we kept from the third edition has been substantially revised to reflect current classroom needs.

## Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Mrs. Nadine Roush and her fifth-grade class at Amelia Earhart Elementary school in Lafayette, Indiana. Experiences in Mrs. Roush's classroom provided the examples for the Creating Classroom Rules, Concepts: Development and Attainment, Mini-Society, and Traveling Ambassador strategies. Mrs. Roush exemplifies a master social studies teacher. It is always a treat and honor to spend time in her classroom. Also, thanks to Erin Vaughn, a Purdue doctoral student and former elementary teacher, for her assistance with the Maps and Globes Using Google Earth, Media Literacy, and WebQuests strategies.

We also gratefully acknowledge the feedback offered by colleagues and students and by the reviewers who provided much insight for this fourth edition. In particular, the reviewers provided detailed feedback and guidance for us, and we sincerely thank them: Stephanie Serriere, Penn State University; Scott Beck, Georgia Southern University; Francie Shafer, Southern Illinois University; and Yali Zhao, Georgia State University.

# Introduction

*What is social studies, and why is it important for our students to learn social studies?* Social studies is "that part of the general and liberal education that specializes in the education of an effective democratic citizen" (Engle & Ochoa, 1988, p. 3). This general and liberal education is typically interpreted as history and the social sciences and often includes the behavioral sciences. As a distinct discipline, one hallmark of social studies is the integration of history and the social sciences. The debate continues as to whether that integration deepens content understanding or is too broad for meaningful understanding. Some strategies in this book reflect a substantial integration; others stand alone on their historical, geographical, or economic foundations. However, we have kept the purpose of social studies in mind as we describe the strategies throughout the book. The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), a professional organization for social studies educators, offers a comprehensive definition on their website. Of note is the explicitly stated purpose of social studies contained within the definition:

> The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world. (National Council for the Social Studies, 2010)

This definition and statement of purpose has guided our decisions on what strategies to include, how we explain them, and the examples we provide throughout the book. Further, we recognize that social studies and citizenship education contain a balance among knowledge, skills, and dispositions or values. Our focus on knowledge, or content, is directly linked to the ten NCSS curriculum strands; it has also had a direct bearing on the discipline-specific history and social science examples we have chosen to include. Several strategies specifically highlight the development of social studies skills, including research skills, interpersonal skills, communication skills, and democratic-participation skills. Finally, the inclusion of democratic dispositions and values is more implicit than explicit, with attention to values such as justice (how we live justly within our classroom), diversity (how we work to understand the diversity of opinion of others similar to and different from us), and individual rights (how we protect our rights as learners as well as the rights of our classmates).

To complement the purpose and content of social studies in the included strategies, we also introduce each strategy with a brief overview of relevant academic literature to support the inclusion of the strategy and, in many cases, the instructional methods described. This literature includes

best practices in social studies, in elementary and middle school education, and in the teaching and learning of the specific social science, history, and humanities disciplines. In addition, these strategies reflect a long practitioner base of classroom implementation across the country and over time.

In summary, students who experience a social studies education that promotes a deep understanding of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of social studies, as well as explicit attention to the civic purpose of social studies, should be poised to uphold and promote democratic traditions in the twenty-first century.

## References

Engle, S. H., & Ochoa, A. (1988). *Education for democratic citizenship: Decision making in the social studies.* New York: Teachers College Press.

National Council for the Social Studies. (2010). *National curriculum standards for the social studies: A framework for teaching, learning, and assessment*. Silver Spring, MD: Author.

# PART I

## Overarching Social Studies Instructional Strategies

There are ten overarching strategies for social studies teaching and learning introduced in this first section of the book; these strategies reflect specific principles that undergird social studies education. Notably, John Dewey's ideas of experiential (1938/1997) and democratic (1916) education that view the classroom as a "mode of associated living" (1916, p. 101) attend to the overarching goals of a social studies education focused on providing students with the necessary knowledge, skills, and dispositions required of citizens in a democratic society (Engle & Ochoa, 1988). These strategies span grade levels and the separate academic disciplines that are a part of social studies. They also provide a broad conceptual curricular and instructional framework for K–8 social studies teachers. The first three—Community Building, Creating Classroom Rules, and Developing Multiple Perspectives—are much more than individual strategies. Rather, they provide a process for creating a certain kind of social studies classroom where students are active participants and where the democratic ideals of justice, diversity, rights, and responsibilities are valued. The strategies of Concepts: Development and Attainment and Questioning each provide the opportunity to promote abstract thinking in our students. Media Literacy provides a technology-rich strategy to explore students' abstract and higher-level thinking, often in combination with the student-centered broad strategies of Discovery Learning and Inquiry Learning. Students have multiple opportunities in these eight strategies to include their specific interests and questions. In addition, teachers have numerous opportunities to incorporate these strategies in most social studies units. Graphic Organizers may also be utilized in many social studies lessons to help students organize their thinking and scaffold their learning. Finally, the strategy of Historical Source Work is familiar to most social studies teachers who attend to history methodology, and it is an acknowledgment of the central role that history learning plays in many K–8 social studies classroom. Historical sources are

used by historians to interpret the past and are common in social studies materials at all levels. Taken together, these ten overarching strategies provide opportunities to gain knowledge (Historical Source Work and Inquiry Learning), enhance skills (Discovery Learning, Questioning, Inquiry Learning, Media Literacy, Graphic Organizers, and Creating Classroom Rules), and develop democratic dispositions (Inquiry Learning, Developing Multiple Perspectives, Creating Classroom Rules, and Community Building).

## References and Resources

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Dewey, J. (1938/1997). *Experience and education*. New York: Touchstone.

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# 1

# Community Building

## Introduction

A community is often thought of as a town or city; however, physical proximity is not an essential component. A community can be a classroom or a school; it can be global or even virtual. In essence, communities are defined by the commitments of their members or citizens. Having a connection to others and being able to work cooperatively and productively for the betterment of all are requirements for public democratic participation. In a healthy classroom or school community, students and teachers respect each other, are able to work together, and are comfortable in disagreeing with one another. Unfortunately, by the time they enter school, very young students have already developed stereotypes that can be a barrier to developing positive relationships with others. While students are social beings, developing, nurturing, and maintaining a sense of community require skills unfamiliar to some students. As the United States becomes more diverse, our schools reflect this diversity in multiple ways (language, ethnicity, and exceptionality). It becomes even more important to create a classroom in which the individual and collective talents brought by students are recognized and appreciated.

Here, we introduce a few different ideas for building a sense of community, specifically in the classroom. It should be noted that community building is somewhat cyclical. Students may move back and forth between community-building phases as they tackle different classroom experiences or as they build different, smaller communities (e.g., through cooperative group work). Shaw (1992) identifies four main phases in community building: inclusion, influence, openness or trust, and community. It is helpful to split inclusion, the first phase, into two phases—introduction and inclusion, allowing for distinct attention to each. Healthy communities rarely evolve through happenstance. Rather, they develop through explicit learning experiences designed by the teacher.

*See also:* Decision Making, Wikis.

## Procedural Recommendations

- Introductions are an important first step and should be done early in the school year. Find creative ways to help students first learn and use each other's names and then learn something about one another. This becomes even more important when all students have moved to a new school (e.g., from elementary to middle school). It is also important when there are just a few new faces within a sea of familiar ones.
- Inclusion addresses that feeling many have when entering a class or a party. Will they be like me? Will someone talk to me? Activities that nurture group spirit and help students better

know the lives and experiences of their classmates are appropriate in this phase. Knowing classmates' names is a part of this, but additional work is required to get to know individuals and make them feel "included." The term *inclusion* is typically associated with special education and refers to the practice of including children with special needs in the general classroom. As described in this strategy, the term *inclusion* refers to the broader perspective of involving each and every student in the life of the classroom through collaborative social and academic work. The YouthLearn website provides some great suggestions for helping students learn to collaborate and share ideas.

- When students have influence, they believe that what they say is heard and respected by others. For example, when the class or a small group is making a decision, students who contribute to the conversation should believe that their opinions are heard and valued. This does not mean that each student should believe he or she will get his or her way in every decision, but rather that each voice is heard, respected, and considered. Using the decision-making grid in the strategy on Decision Making is one way to help students learn about thoughtful decision making.
- The phase of openness/trust occurs almost simultaneously with influence. For a student to believe his or her opinion is valued, he or she must trust the group and feel comfortable in sharing expertise, opinions, and questions. This involves risk, particularly with middle grade students because of the emotional turmoil of early adolescence. Experiences in this phase include those that teach students concrete ways to acknowledge the contributions of others, such as summarizing, eye contact, and other nonverbal reinforcement.
- We move toward a sense of community when students within a group know one another, include one another, and consider and acknowledge one another. Again, this is a cyclical process that teachers return to throughout the year as the need arises to introduce new members, to include and value new ideas, and to trust one another in novel situations.

## Applications and Ideas

*Leadership Bingo:* In a middle school enrichment class on leadership, coauthor Kathryn Obenchain wanted her students to become acquainted. The students had come from different schools, and most had never met. One of the first activities Obenchain conducted was Leadership Bingo, a simple variation of the traditional bingo game in which students must approach one another and obtain signatures in order to cover all of the squares on the bingo sheet. Each person could sign another's bingo sheet only once. This was a small class, so only nine squares were needed. In a larger class, the bingo sheets might have twelve or fifteen squares. On this bingo sheet, the squares included items or characteristics of democratic participation and leadership that the students would study over the next two weeks. Introducing these characteristics helped to begin academic conversations; it also got the students talking to one another by providing a topic for conversation. Figure 1.1 is a sample Leadership Bingo sheet that students could use to obtain the signatures of other students who can fulfill the requirements of the different squares.

*New School-Year Interviews:* A second example builds on introductions and promotes inclusion. Conducting school interviews at the beginning of a school year or as part of the transition to middle school is one way to promote cooperation among students within the classroom as well as connections to the school community. Further, school interviews integrate literacy by encouraging students to participate in the writing process as they draft and revise interview questions and build an oral and/or written narrative based on the results of their interview. Begin by taking a class inventory of particular talents that each student has, such as technology skills like video editing and keyboarding, easily approaching people, and writing well. This inventory may be used for a number of projects throughout the year, with students adding to their own talents or suggesting talents of others.

**FIGURE 1.1** Sample Leadership Bingo Sheet

**Leadership Bingo: Leaders for the Twenty-First Century**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Name a historical figure who displayed courage.<br>name _____ | Find someone who says she/he is a good listener.<br>name _____ | Name a current public figure who is civil to those who believe differently.<br>name _____ |
| Find someone who believes he or she is a good compromiser.<br>name _____ | Name a leadership characteristic that the President of the United States displays.<br>name _____ | Find someone who can name a U.S. senator from his or her state. Give the state.<br>name _____ |
| Find someone who displays leadership in his or her school and tells you about it.<br>name _____ | Find someone who displays leadership in his or her community and tells you about it.<br>name _____ | Find someone who can name a person in his or her community who is a leader and can describe how that person leads.<br>name _____ |

Set the inventory aside, and hold a discussion about what students want to know about their school and the people who are there. This discussion will be different in every setting. What students want to know in a newly constructed school will be different from what new middle school students want to know. Once students have determined what they want to know, the class works to group the topics according to who in the school might know the answer. It is appropriate and advisable to approach more than one person for some topics. For example, if students want to know how to get involved in school clubs, they could approach different club sponsors as well as older students already in clubs. This phase serves the purpose of categorizing the topics while also determining whom the students wish to interview.

The next phase requires the teacher to put heterogeneous interview teams together, using the talent inventory to build diverse, multitalented teams. Each team of five students, maximum, is assigned one or two people to interview and cooperatively works to develop interview questions, decide on the interview format (audio or video), schedule and conduct the interviews, and synthesize the interview data. Each team then presents the results of their interviews to the entire class and/or other classrooms. For a school with an in-house video system or Web page, this could become a project to introduce all students to the possibilities of their new school community.

## Differentiation

The interview activity is easily modified for much younger children, still building on introductions and promoting inclusion. Young children interview one another, asking very basic questions about their new classroom or school community. Questions such as "What is your favorite thing to do at home?" and "What is your favorite thing to do at school?" provide information for a teacher to

facilitate the creation of a classroom list of talents and skills. As with the example in the previous section, this can be used as springboard to a discussion of what the students want to know about the school and how some of their talents and skills could help them to find answers to their questions. If a few students report that their favorite thing to do is play soccer or another sport and if the students want to know what they will be doing in school in addition to their classroom work, the teacher can invite the physical education teacher to explain upcoming activities. In this instance, students get to know one another and another teacher.

Developing a class website or a class wiki is another way to build community. While many of these are built and maintained by teachers, technologically savvy students could also build and maintain one. The site could document the development and evolution of the classroom community throughout the year, highlight academic and social activities, and be used to communicate with parents or other classrooms in other schools.

## Assessment

The goal of this strategy is to promote a sense of classroom community. Academic assessment and evaluation of students, particularly for the examples provided, is inappropriate for a few reasons. One, building community is an ongoing process that occurs throughout the school year. Two, while individual students can be evaluated on criteria such as "plays well with others," building a classroom community is a collective, not an individual goal.

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# 2

# Creating Classroom Rules

## Introduction

Most elementary school classrooms contain a posted list of rules and policies that guide and govern activity in that classroom. One way to link the social studies curriculum to this list of rules and to develop student ownership of the rules and the classroom community is to include the students in the process of rule making. This is an opportunity to link the process of classroom rule making to the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democratic society. Citizens or their representatives deliberate over important issues. The classroom version of this process addresses an essential role for schools and the primary responsibility of social studies—democratic citizenship education. Reflecting Dewey's (1916/1944) philosophical belief that classrooms are embryonic communities or societies, classroom life should simulate life in the broader and adult community. From a learning perspective, students better understand and then commit to the rules when they participate in the process—they develop a deeper understanding as well as ownership of the process and outcome. When carried out early in the year, this process helps to build a sense of community as students share with the teacher and one another their needs as learners. Rule making also serves as an informal assessment in citizenship education for the teacher, as he or she learns what civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions students are bringing into the classroom.

*See also:* Community Building.

## Procedural Recommendations

- Arrange for rule making to occur very early in the year, preferably the first week of school, to set the tone. Plan to spend fifteen to thirty minutes a day over several days to encourage students' intellectual engagement and reflection.
- Begin by leading a brainstorming session on what kind of classroom environment is necessary for you to teach and students to learn in the best way possible. Possible questions include "What is it like for you to work when the room is quiet?" and "Do you learn more when you work out a difficult problem by yourself, or does it help you to talk with someone?" By focusing on establishing a learning environment at the beginning of the process, students may not realize that they are making the rules. However, if students recognize this process as rule making, they may proceed straight to likes and dislikes from previous classroom rules, bypassing the crucial objective of understanding that rules in a democratic society should exist for the common good and that they should be written based upon a need to promote

the common good, while respecting individual rights. Create a lengthy list, asking for the contributions of all students.

- After developing the initial brainstormed list, post it somewhere in the classroom and encourage students to add to it over a few days as they go through their classroom day and reflect upon the characteristics of a good learning environment. It is also helpful to periodically ask questions like "What is helping you work well today?" and "Could we have done something different in the class today that would have helped you work better?" Answers to these questions may be added to the list the class has brainstormed.
- Referring to the brainstormed list, ask students "What does a classroom that includes these characteristics look and sound like?" Facilitate a discussion about the physical and emotional space. This includes the behaviors, practices, and attitudes you and your students display. For example, if quiet study time is listed as an important characteristic for students to succeed, then a classroom in which classmates do not disturb others' study time is a desired goal.
- When this list is complete, ask students how they can ensure that these behaviors and attitudes are present. Through questions such as "What should we all agree to do?" introduce the idea of setting some ground rules that will lead to a learning environment that will benefit everyone.
- Ask students to summarize, categorize, and convert the list of needs into rules. For example, "need to be heard when asking a question," "room shouldn't be too noisy when we're doing individual or group work," and "the teacher should be available to help us" could become "Quietly raise your hand." This step takes time, dialogue, and effective questioning.
- Encourage students to use positive statements in creating rules and to avoid *don't, can't,* and other prohibitions. As one fifth grader put it, "'The rules tell us what we can do, not what we can't do. This way we know how we should behave'" (Obenchain, 1997).
- Develop no more than five to seven general rules, which will require substantial synthesis of student comments. It is easier for the teacher and students to remember fewer, yet meaningful, rules.
- Post the rules in clear view of the students. Beginning early in the year, consistently refer to the rules when students are behaving in ways that promote a quality learning environment. A second option for reinforcing the rules is to have a group of students write and perform brief skits about each rule, illustrating the rule and associated behaviors. The preparation of a written script involves the writing process as students pre-write, draft, and revise their work.
- Another aspect to this is to be very clear with students about the consequences of violating the rules, and there should be consequences. For the teacher and students to invest so much time in the process, and then not honor the process, is disrespectful to those involved. The development and posting of consequences can also involve the students in much the same way as the creation of the rules.

## Applications and Ideas

Rule making in Mrs. Roush's class is an important annual ritual. One year, during the first week of school, she asked her students to list what each of them individually needed from her and from their classmates in order to succeed in fifth grade. Mrs. Roush also included what she needed from the class in order to successfully teach all of them. With twenty-two students and one teacher contributing, this was a long list. It included specific items such as "I need a few minutes every morning to talk with my friends before I can concentrate on school" and general items such as "I need to be respected." Mrs. Roush then asked students to describe what a classroom would be like if all of these needs were met. She asked them to think about the physical arrangement of teacher's and students' desks and student actions and activities, such as how they treat people and property as well as the noise level in the classroom. Students created a narrative of what a great day in their classroom would be like. They wrote about where they would sit, when and with whom they

would talk, how they would do their work, how Mrs. Roush would teach, and what they would do to help one another learn.

With the list and narrative complete, Mrs. Roush linked the process they had just gone through with democratic citizenship and the rights and responsibilities of citizens. She asked them to compare their classroom to a city or country. She also introduced the democratic values of individual rights and the common good, noting that every community must find a balance between protecting each individual and promoting the good of the whole. She brought up a few issues from the student list. One person said she studied best with her favorite music playing. Several other students, however, said they needed a fairly quiet place to study. Mrs. Roush asked the students to think about how they would protect the rights of all when wishes or needs of individuals were different.

From this conversation, Mrs. Roush and her students developed a list of positively stated rules. It was quite a challenge to combine the many specific wishes and needs of students into a general list that each student understood. Their list of rules follows:

1. Show respect for others and for yourself.
2. Be helpful.
3. Take care of our community.
4. Be prepared for class.
5. Behave appropriately in class.
6. Listen, follow directions, and do your best.

Once the list was complete, the class reviewed it several times; Mrs. Roush also encouraged students to provide concrete examples of each rule. Behaviors related to the third rule included picking up trash from the floor; not writing on desks; treating games, books, and school equipment respectfully; and making sure the water faucet was shut tightly to conserve water. As a result of the time Mrs. Roush took to create classroom rules and the meaningful involvement of the students, the rules became a part of her classroom culture. Mrs. Roush and the students gently reminded one another when they were not living up to the rules. Comments such as “Please respect my right to study,” “I’m doing my best, and that is what I’m supposed to do,” and “Can I offer you some help?” were made frequently and with great courtesy (Obenchain, 1997).

## Differentiation

For students struggling with written or oral language, incorporate the use of drawings and photographs that provide examples of the rules in action. Another option for introducing the need for rules is to utilize a piece of children’s literature, combined with effective questioning. The International Reading Association/National Council for the Teachers of English website offers specific suggestions for literature and questions.

Linking the creation of classroom rules with the larger society’s navigation of balancing individual rights with the public or common good allows students to see the challenge of developing just rules in the world beyond the classroom. In addition, an analysis of each rule (e.g., taking care of our community) as applied to a broader community (e.g., environmental policy) reinforces the connection to the world beyond the classroom.

## Assessment

There are many ways to assess the knowledge, skills, and dispositions associated with democratic citizenship. A traditional multiple-choice examination can assess specific knowledge. A performance checklist used at various times throughout the day or week can assess students’ use of democratic citizenship skills (e.g., negotiation, mediation, deliberation) and dispositions (e.g., valuing another’s rights, valuing multiple perspectives, speaking against injustice). However, assessing individuals in

the process of establishing a democratic classroom through the strategy described above would be difficult to do, as this is a collective process. The assessment is the set of rules; the evaluation is the usefulness and appropriateness of the rules.

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# 3

# Developing Multiple Perspectives

## Introduction

Social studies is the study of human beings throughout time and around the world (Martin, Smolen, Oswald, & Milam, 2012). It is the study of what people believe, how they feel, and what they do. As adults, it is obvious that people believe, feel, and do things differently, but it is not so obvious for elementary and middle school students. Their worlds are often defined by what they see and how they see it. If a perspective is introduced that is not a part of their experience or prior learning, they may dismiss it as wrong or as not being real. The ability to recognize the existence of multiple or diverse perspectives, as well as the ability to develop multiple perspectives, is an essential component of social studies in a democracy.

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS, 2010) defines social studies as

> the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. Within the school program, social studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences. The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world.

This definition is important because it acknowledges the need for students to have a global perspective and emphasizes the importance of global interactions that embrace differing and diverse points of view. Diversity includes racial, ethnic, gender, and religious diversity. It also includes diversity of opinion. In other words, different people, who have studied and thought a great deal about an issue, may believe very differently about that issue. They believe differently for numerous reasons. Perhaps their prior life experiences have differed, they may have examined different evidence, or perhaps they value different things.

The last three U.S. presidential elections illustrate that different Americans view the same situations or issues (such as the economy or marriage) from very different perspectives; they therefore make decisions based on those differing perspectives. Democratic societies are diverse in many ways, and that diversity is a strength and an essential component of a strong, multicultural democracy. It is essential for students to develop an awareness of and a respect for the right of others to have diverse opinions. Students may not agree with those diverse opinions, but it is important for them to know that they exist.

*See also:* Maps and Globes Using Google Earth, Pen Pals.

## Procedural Recommendations

Developing multiple perspectives in a lesson does not follow a lockstep procedure. Rather, it is a conscious decision by the teacher to teach students both the existence of multiple or diverse perspectives as well as how to develop multiple perspectives. The list below includes important points for the teacher to consider.

- Determine the objective for the lesson. The objective may be to develop an awareness of multiple perspectives or the ability to construct multiple perspectives. In an extended lesson, it could be both. In most instances, the examination of or the development of multiple perspectives will be situated within some other social studies content. The following three activities could provide an opportunity for the teacher to explicitly address multiple perspectives: A lesson on Revolutionary America could include the perspectives of both Loyalists and Patriots on independence and war. A pen pal exchange with a class from another state or nation could give students the opportunity to explore and compare ideas about the environment. A classroom vote on which book to read next would allow students to express their own preferences.
- A key component of examining controversial issues is to make the awareness of or the development of multiple perspectives an explicit objective. Being explicit is a reminder to the teacher to introduce and reinforce the ideas and associated vocabulary.
- For younger students, choose something concrete that they can personally experience, such as the example found below in Applications and Ideas. Older students can also benefit from a personal experience, but they will be able to explore multiple perspectives in a more abstract manner.
- Be cautious that students do not see the freedom to share their opinions as approval for an anything-goes attitude. Not all opinions are weighted equally. Informed opinions and diverse informed opinions are given more weight than uninformed opinions.
- Informed opinion leads to the need to reinforce the need for resources and evidence to support opinions.

## Applications and Ideas

Websites devoted to history and social studies often provide useful approaches to teaching multiple perspectives. The official site of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation details the storytelling teaching strategy and notes that storytelling is one way to incorporate multiple perspectives into the social studies curriculum. Udner (2002) provides one great example of a middle school lesson exploring and developing multiple perspectives.

For young students, multiple or diverse perspectives may be introduced with a mapping activity. Typical maps are seen from a bird's-eye view. That is, the kinds of maps that students often use are as if we were above the setting. We look down onto the landscape and see the tops of buildings, trees, bodies of water, or whatever other setting the map represents. Young students experience this by standing on a chair and looking down at the items on their desk or by standing and looking down at various items on the floor.

One group of second-grade students began exploring multiple perspectives by arranging a variety of common school items on their desks, including books, paper, crayons, markers, a juice box, and a ruler. While working with a partner, one student acted as a spotter for the second student, who stood on the chair with a pencil, paper, and clipboard. The paper had the cardinal directions and the outline of the desk on it. The student standing on the chair looked down onto the desk and sketched the items onto the paper. All of the items had well-defined edges, so they were relatively easy to sketch and put in the correct position. Once the items were sketched, each pair of students reviewed the items to make sure all of the items were accounted for and were drawn on the map. The students were reminded that they needed to only draw what they could see from where they stood.

For example, a juice box would look like a small rectangle when observed from above. From the bird's-eye position, the student could not see the name of the juice box because it was not on the top. Once each pair of students was satisfied with their work, they got a new piece of paper. The student who served as the spotter for the first map then drew the second perspective. However, instead of drawing from a bird's-eye view, this student got on her knees so that her eyes were level with the desk and the entire width of the desk was observable. She began to sketch only what was observable from this very different perspective. Once this student finished her sketch and the pair of students reviewed it for completeness, they were given another reminder that the sketch should only contain what was observable from where the student doing the sketch was kneeling or squatting. In this sketch, the juice box looked completely different from the prior map and was partially obscured by a book that was lying on the desk in front of it. Each pair of students was then asked to compare their sketches for similarities and differences. During the class discussion, different students pointed out that each pair drew a representation of what was on the same desk and that nothing on the desk was moved, removed, or added. They also pointed out that even though the same things were on the desk, their sketches did not always show the same items. The bird's-eye-view map showed everything that was visible from above, but it missed items that were under other items. One group pointed out that when two books of the same size were stacked on top of one another, the student drawing from the bird's-eye view only observed one book. Yet when the second student drew from the perspective of a kneeling position, she was able to see the spines of both books. A second group pointed out the different views of the juice box. Throughout the discussion, the teacher used the terms *perspective* and *different views* to familiarize students with appropriate vocabulary. This was just an opening activity; in a future lesson, students would explore different perspectives by looking at how characters in a story might view the same event differently.

## Differentiation

To make a lesson on multiple perspectives easier, teachers can have students compare their values by voting with their feet as they stand on either side of a line to illustrate where they stand in relation to others in the classroom on the same issue. Students can vote on a variety of issues, such as whether the Electoral College should be abolished and, if so, who should vote and who should not vote. Students thus learn more about how their peers view democracy, participation, and equality.

For added complexity, students explore and compare multiple perspective in both historical and current events examples. When studying a historical event, students examine different primary and secondary sources in order to see how the same event was viewed differently by various groups, providing an opportunity to also promote historical thinking. When studying current events, students might compare how different media sources report the same event. For example, a teacher might ask students to look at the media's historical coverage of elections in South Vietnam, examining the specific and different perspectives that different media sources provided; some supported the elections, while other media sources did not. During the Vietnam War, there was a promise of *free and open* elections in South Vietnam, but those elections did not occur until after unification. Students question the pros and cons of the idea of free and open elections. Students discern what the phrase *free and open* means in relation to elections around the world now and how it pertains to ideals of truth, participation, and democracy. This examination, while reinforcing multiple perspectives, also reinforces the need to be aware of and critically question the perspective of all media sources.

## Assessment

American foreign policy toward Mexico needs to be considered from multiple perspectives. Mexico is a huge trading partner, provides guest workers in the agricultural industry, and is a source of illegal immigration, but the war on drugs has cast a long shadow that has defined the relationship between

the two countries for a score of years. When comparing the United States and Mexico, what are the positive elements for the United States, such as trade and immigration, and what are the negative elements? Also consider the positives and the negatives for Mexico in its relationship with the United States. For this assessment, students look at one-line news sources to find evidence for each of the positions. Students develop an informed opinion based on the positives and the negatives and then write about it in report to be given at the local chamber of commerce.

**Rubric**

| Benchmarks | High Pass 4 Points | Pass 3 Points | Low Pass 2 Points | No Pass 1 Point |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RH.6-8.2:** *Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.* | • Student compares the United States and Mexico: What are the positive elements and the negative elements for each?<br>• Student finds evidence for each of the positions.<br>• Student gives his/her opinions in an oral report. | • Student compares the United States and Mexico: What are the positive elements and the negative elements for each?<br>• Student finds evidence for each of the positions. | • Student compares the United States and Mexico: What are the positive elements and the negative elements for each?<br>• Student finds evidence for some of the positions. | • Student compares the United States and Mexico: What are the positive elements and the negative elements for each? |

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# 4

# Concepts: Development and Attainment

## Introduction

One key in moving social studies learning from the memorization of disconnected names, dates, and facts to a meaningful understanding of important issues in the human experience is to organize social studies around concepts. Concepts are typically single words, like *democracy, interdependence, justice, power, pioneer, movement, change,* and *map*. Cultural universals such as the human needs for food, shelter, and clothing, as well as other shared ideas such as families, communities, and transportation (Brophy & Alleman, 2002), also serve as concepts. Another source of concepts is the National Council for the Social Studies' *National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies* (NCSS, 2010). These standards are organized around ten strands that include social studies concepts such as culture, power, and technology. These words all describe a larger category of meaning. Concepts are typically very easy for students to find examples of; however, they are much more difficult to define because of their abstractness.

Although the theoretical work on concept development and concept attainment in social studies is over forty years old, Hilda Taba's (1967) work remains seminal. Concept development is an inductive approach in which the concept is not initially named. Rather, through a facilitated process students identify characteristics of something concrete they have observed or experienced, group similar characteristics together, and then create a descriptive name. Concept attainment, on the other hand, is a deductive approach. Students are given the name of the concept and then examine a variety of examples and nonexamples of the concept in order to better understand the nuances of the concept. Lessons utilizing both the concept development and concept attainment models assist in student understanding.

## Procedural Recommendations

- Determine what social studies concepts are to be developed and examined and for what purpose. In making this decision, consider the age and experience of your students as well as the social studies curriculum for their particular grade level. Knowing the students' developmental levels and their background experience will guide your selection of materials. Recall that the traditional social studies curriculum works on the expanding horizons model, as earlier grades focus on more local and current issues. As students progress, their social studies horizon broadens to include issues more distant in both time and location. Also consider whether the concepts will be developed for one particular unit of study in social studies or will provide a framework for the entire year's curriculum. Cultural universals or the

NCSS (2010) curriculum standards are good sources for choosing year long concepts that can be explored through multiple lessons and units.

- Once the concepts have been chosen, identify resources that will assist you in examining your own understanding of the concepts so that you can confirm your comprehension of them as well as identify any misconceptions you may have.
- Consider all of the resources available to students in their study. If they are to look for historical examples, they should examine historical documents, including primary sources. If they are to find more recent examples, news archives available through the Internet will be helpful. If they are looking for current examples, resources are limitless. To meet the needs and match the abilities of a variety of learners, consider multiple kinds of text, including photographs, posters, and audio and video recordings in addition to the more traditional language-based text resources. Choose a wide variety of language-based text resources, addressing the varied reading levels of students in the classroom.
- The steps below describe a traditional concept development lesson. The example in Applications and Ideas describes a concept attainment lesson.
- Begin with a whole-group introduction to the concept under study. Typically, concept lessons explore one concept at a time. The introduction can be a simple brainstorm, beginning with the prompt of "Tell me everything that comes to mind when you hear the word *patriotism*." Record all of this information on the board or on chart paper so that students have easy access to the information. This step is often called *List*.
- Place students in groups of four or five.
- Ask each group to copy the results of the brainstorming session and categorize or group all of the similar items from the brainstorm. The number of categories and how the categories are created are the decision of each small group of students. This step is often called *Group*.
- Once each group finishes categorizing all of its terms, ask it to create a name for each category. For example, the patriotism group may have the categories of symbols and individual actions. Every item from the brainstorm should fit into a category, and no category should be labeled miscellaneous. This step is often called *Label*.
- Introduce additional information to each group. This information should expand and challenge students' understanding of the concept under study—for example, a newspaper story about an individual who violates the law because it is unjust or persons who supported the Underground Railroad, helping enslaved persons escape to the North. The materials should encourage in-depth reading and discussion of the information under examination. Detail the resources and reference materials available for group use. Make all of the resources available to students so that time is spent in discussion rather than searching for materials. It is appropriate for students to continue their search in a focused manner, but provide enough materials for students to develop that focus. Depending on the learning objectives, each group can be given all of the same materials to examine, some of the same and some different materials, or each group may have its own unique set of materials.
- After the discussion of the new material, have each group return to its list of categories and examples under each category. Should additional categories and/or information be added? Should the name of the category (the label) be changed? The groups should make adjustments as needed.
- There is an additional option at this stage. Bring the entire class back together to revisit the original brainstorm. Allow each group to suggest new words or terms that it believes are appropriate based on its examination of evidence. Once this is done, the small groups can decide how much of the new whole-group information to incorporate into their own categories.
- Have the groups review the categories and determine which ones are essential to the concept or ideal and which ones are not essential. That is, patriotism includes all of these categories (essential); patriotism may include these categories (nonessential). For example, justice

includes fairness (essential), but justice does not always mean treating people exactly the same (nonessential).

- The groups take the terms that are essential to the concepts under study and write a definition of the concept using those terms.
- The groups then reexamine their materials to determine if their definitions are comprehensive but not overly broad. This is an appropriate time for students to compare their definition to the definitions written by other experts.
- Finally, the groups share and compare the results of their learning to those of their classmates. This may be done in a variety of ways, including orally with the use of reports or songs, written with the use of an essay or graphic organizer, or visually through the use of posters or videos.

## Applications and Ideas

In one kindergarten classroom, students were introduced early in the school year to the cultural universals of food, shelter, and clothing, as well as families and communities. The students had been exploring these universals in the past and present, as well as in their local and global community. Their teacher decided to expand the idea and have students examine the concept of toys. Although not a typical social studies concept, toys are a concept with which students have experience. Toys are also a concept that the teacher can link to other concepts, including technology, as toys change with technological developments; continuity, as children played with toys in the past and continue to play with them in the present; and finally, global connections, as children around the world play with toys.

After a concept development lesson in which students examined their most valuable toys and compared them with the toys of other students in the class, the students determined that the essential characteristic of toys was that all toys were things that children played with. They also determined that some toys were made of plastic while others were made of cloth. Some toys could only be played with outside, and others could be played with indoors and outdoors. Some toys needed batteries to work, but others did not. Their teacher decided to have the students further explore the concept by examining examples and nonexamples from around the world. Using a website called Feature Shoot and a series of photos entitled *Photos of Children from around the World with Their Most Prized Possessions,* the class went through each photograph, looking at the toys and pondering how someone would play with each toy, what they were made of, and finally, what were the essential characteristics of a toy. After looking at children from around the world, the students explored the same idea with at least two older members of their family, asking a parent or grandparent to describe their favorite toy when they were younger and how they played with it. In some cases, the family member still had the toy or a photograph of the toy, and in other instances, the student and family member drew a picture of the toy.

In order to assess students' understanding of the concept of toys, and just as importantly to understand how toys were similar and different around the world and in the past and present, the teacher asked students to draw a picture of three toys (one of their own, one from the website, and one from a family member). While all of the toys met the essential characteristic of being something that children played with, the students chose three toys that were played with in similar ways.

## Differentiation

As mentioned in Procedural Recommendations, the use of various visual and auditory examples of concepts assists a variety of struggling learners as they work to understand abstract concepts via concrete examples. In addition, the same concept can be taught for differing levels of deep conceptual understanding. For example, while some students can provide concrete examples of what is fair in their own lives and classroom, they are not always able to define and understand

fairness or to apply the concept across multiple situations and academic disciplines. Focusing on the concept development model of list, group, and label and examining examples of the concept through familiar children's literature assists young students.

Higher-achieving students may explore the same concept of fairness through a more formal social studies term: justice. As they determine what is just and unjust, students examine historical examples including Jim Crow laws, Supreme Court cases, and constitutional amendments, as well as current examples including capital punishment. They can also continue to examine familiar examples that contain more nuanced dimensions of fairness. For example, is legal the same thing as just?

## Assessment

The specific social studies standard may differ with different disciplinary content, but the emphasis on conceptual learning remains consistent. The standard below relates to the activity described above. Appropriate assessment tasks require that students logically organize their understanding and clearly communicate it.

### Rubric

| | Unsatisfactory | Satisfactory | Good | Excellent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **NCSS—Global Connections, Early Grades:**<br>*Ask and find answers to questions about the connections we have to other people and places around the globe.* | • Student cannot identity the concept or its essential characteristics.<br>• Student is unable to distinguish between examples and nonexamples of the concept. | • Student identifies concept and some of its essential characteristics.<br>• Student is unable to distinguish between examples and nonexamples of the concept. | • Student identifies concept and all of its essential characteristics are clearly identified.<br>• Student is able to distinguish between some examples and nonexamples of the concept. | • Student identifies concept and all of its essential characteristics are clearly identified.<br>• Student is able to distinguish between all provided examples and non examples of the concept. |

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# 5

# Questioning

## Introduction

Benjamin Bloom (1956) identified six levels of questioning, including knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The six levels of questioning build on one another in that students must have knowledge before they have comprehension and comprehension prior to analysis. The top three levels—analysis, synthesis, and evaluation—provide the origins for higher-level questioning or higher-level thinking. This is not to denigrate the importance of the lower levels of questioning, as these are foundational and provide the armature for building the higher-level questions. It is important for the teacher to move beyond the so-called lower-level questions and model for students a variety of questions. Gallagher (Aschner et al., 1961) has built upon the work of Bloom to identify five types of questions, including cognitive-memory, convergent-thinking, divergent-thinking, evaluative-thinking, and guiding questions. As important as questioning skills are for teachers to model, it is even more important for students to demonstrate proficiencies in questioning at a variety of levels (Dull & Murrow, 2008).

Teachers use questions for a variety of purposes in the elementary school classroom. Teachers use questions to arouse curiosity and to prompt students to improve. Teachers use questions for assessment, to encourage participation, and to facilitate discussion. Teachers use questions to focus the attention of the students, to guide student efforts in acquiring cognitive or social skills, and to promote thinking.

*See also:* Discovery Learning, Inquiry Learning, Graphic Organizers, Guest Speakers.

## Procedural Recommendations

- Students should be provided with a significant educational experience such as a field trip or a guest speaker.
- As a result of this experience, students should feel some uncertainty and doubt as new information may conflict with prior understandings; the students should then identify a topic or issue that they wish to explore further based on this uncertainty.
- Students place their topic or issue in the center of the classroom Smart Board within a circle.
- From there they create a web on the Smart Board by adding a list of ideas surrounding the circle that indicate what they would like to explore.
- The students place a circle around the idea and connect it to the center circle with a line.
- The students rework the idea into one of the levels of questioning until all of the ideas represent all six types of questions.

- The students draw a circle around the question and connect it to the idea with a line.
- The students can use other space on the Smart Board to take notes on possible answers to their questions.

## Applications and Ideas

Many additional resources for understanding Bloom's taxonomy may be found on the Web. The Center for Teaching Excellence has examples of questioning on its website. Newer Views of Learning also provides multiple examples of questioning skills on its website. In addition, multiple examples of document-based questions may be found online.

The students in Ms. Moon's classroom decide to find out about the Vietnam War. She asks a question to arouse curiosity: "Who has heard about the war in Vietnam?" To pursue this topic, they invite a reporter who did network TV broadcasts from Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War. He has recently retired to the community to be close to his grandchildren. The students work with a partner to write questions for their guest to answer during their interview with him.

- *Knowledge:* When did you arrive in Southeast Asia, and when did you depart from there?
- *Comprehension:* So you served in Southeast Asia for ___ years?
- *Application:* Who or what did you consider to be the enemy?
- *Analysis:* What were the biggest differences between the urban and rural areas of Vietnam?
- *Synthesis:* How would you have used troops in Vietnam if you had been in charge?
- *Evaluation:* What was the worst thing to happen to the people of Vietnam?

To assess the knowledge of the students, Ms. Moon asks for an example of each type of question by saying, "Who can share a knowledge question that you wrote?" When the students are finished working, she asks a question to guide student efforts in acquiring a social skill: "How many of you think that each student did an equal amount of work with your partner?" Most of the students raise their hands. To promote thinking, she asks, "Which of your questions is your strongest thinking question?" After the students share their questions, she asks students to improve on their first attempts: "Okay, you have heard some of the best questions from other people. Are there any questions you wish to add to your list?" After students amend their lists, Ms. Moon facilitates discussion by asking one student, "Karen, what is one idea your group had?" After Karen responds, Ms. Moon turns the direction of the discussion to focus attention on a particular subject by asking, "How did the nature of the land of Vietnam shape the war effort?" The students respond by describing the physical features of Vietnam and its climate. She then encourages participation by telling her students, "With a partner, list three things the United States did to adapt to fighting in Vietnam."

## Differentiation

Students examine an easier question when they explore running in the election for student council.

- *Knowledge:* How often does the student council meet?
- *Comprehension:* So the term of office is for one year?
- *Application:* What are the responsibilities of a student council representative?
- *Analysis:* What are the important differences between the candidates running for student council?
- *Synthesis:* How should the student council determine its agenda for this year?
- *Evaluation:* What is the most important change the school can make this year?

Students explore a more difficult question when they examine tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

- *Knowledge:* When was the Korean Peninsula partitioned?
- *Comprehension:* Who profited from dividing Korea?
- *Application:* Who or what keeps the two Koreas from uniting?

- *Analysis:* What are the biggest differences between North and South Korea?
- *Synthesis:* How would you attempt to unify the Korean Peninsula?
- *Evaluation:* Who has the most to lose if Korea united?

## Assessment

This assessment is for students examining Palestine through question webbing.

- *Knowledge:* Where is Palestine?
- *Comprehension:* So Palestine is presently located within what modern nation?
- *Application:* Who or what do the Palestinians consider to be their enemies?
- *Analysis:* What are the biggest differences between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank?
- *Synthesis:* How would you unify the Palestinians?
- *Evaluation:* What is the worst thing that could happen to the people of Palestine?

Students complete this web before turning the information into a blog entry to be posted on the class website.

### Rubric

| Benchmarks | High Pass<br>4 Points | Pass<br>3 Points | Low Pass<br>2 Points | No Pass<br>1 Point |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.2:**<br>*Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.* | • Student identifies a topic.<br>• Student generates ideas about the topic to explore.<br>• Student generates a question in each of the six levels of questioning.<br>• Student considers the positives and the negatives of establishing a Palestinian state.<br>• Student includes information about Palestinian and Israeli culture, economy, geography, and history.<br>• Student evaluates the questions to determine if they are appropriate for each level of questioning.<br>• Student writes a blog entry and posts it to class website. | • Student identifies a topic.<br>• Student generates ideas about the topic to explore.<br>• Student generates a question in each of the six levels of questioning.<br>• Student considers the positives or the negatives of establishing a Palestinian state.<br>• Student includes information about Palestinian and Israeli culture, economy, geography, and history.<br>• Student evaluates the questions to determine if they are appropriate for each level of questioning.<br>• Student writes a blog entry and posts it to class website. | • Student identifies a topic.<br>• Student generates ideas about the topic to explore.<br>• Student generates a question in each of the six levels of questioning.<br>• Student considers the positives or the negatives of establishing a Palestinian state.<br>• Student includes information about Palestinian and Israeli culture, economy, geography, or history.<br>• Student evaluates the questions to determine if they are appropriate for each level of questioning.<br>• Student writes a blog entry and posts it to class website. | • Student identifies a topic.<br>• Student generates ideas about the topic to explore.<br>• Student generates a question in each of the six levels of questioning.<br>• Student includes information about Palestinian and Israeli culture, economy, geography, or history.<br>• Student evaluates the questions to determine if they are appropriate for each level of questioning.<br>• Student writes a blog entry and posts it to class website. |

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# 6

# Media Literacy

## Introduction

On any given day, citizens are bombarded with information from hundreds of media sources, such as textbooks, newspapers, radio, and websites—even YouTube. Children, who do not have the experience or expertise to separate fact from fiction and are unfamiliar with the idea that someone, somewhere, created everything they access, are particularly susceptible to the influences of media. Media literacy encompasses the ability to understand the influence of advertisements, print and visual media, the Internet, and entertainment. When students are media literate, they are able to collaborate with their peers to demonstrate discernment of propaganda and evaluate sources for audience, author positionality, and perspective, skills directly linked to democratic citizenship (Mason & Metzger, 2012) and the purpose of social studies. Because of the tremendous presence and potential influence of the media, it is important for students to be able to examine and evaluate the information presented as well as search for new information prior to making decisions. In additions, students should also be given opportunities to engage in projects that allow them to practice making effective decisions in the construction of multimedia (Ostenson, 2012; Redmond, 2012).

It is certainly appropriate to take the idea of media literacy into other current applications such as political campaigns and policy initiatives or into historical applications such as the purchase of Alaska or the establishment of Israel. For these applications, students examine a variety of media sources such as newspaper articles and editorials, political cartoons, blogs, or television news in search of understanding.

*See also:* Graphic Organizers, WebQuests.

## Procedural Recommendations

The following approach describes how to use media literacy to help students build essential social studies skills that enable them to gather, analyze, and evaluate sources of media for different purposes. Through media literacy, students come to understand cultural and institutional factors that play a role in media construction and to recognize their influence on production and consumerism at both national and global levels (National Council for the Social Studies, 2010). In addition, students learn how to evaluate the reliability of media sources when acquiring information about social studies topics. This strategy is organized in a sequence of three essential steps that allow students to become media literate (Redmond, 2012). Ideally, the teacher would teach each component of the sequence in three separate lessons. As always, begin by establishing clear social studies goals and objectives. It may be appropriate initially to explore media literacy in a series of shorter lessons devoted to stand-alone

skills. Once students have developed some familiarity and expertise with media literacy, incorporate these skills into relevant social studies content-dense lessons. The process below focuses on the initial building of media literacy skills.

### *Media Is Constructed by People (Lesson One)*

In lessons on media literacy, students must first come to the understanding that people create media. They must realize that people make decisions about how to construct these media sources and what information to include in them, even before they are created (Choudhury & Share, 2012). This understanding is crucial to the ability of students both to recognize authors' motives for creating media sources and to evaluate the reliability of sources based on these conclusions.

- In small groups, have the students look and listen to a variety of media sources, including newspapers, the radio, textbooks, blogs, and YouTube videos. Include media sources that present conflicting information on the same topic. For example, the famous "I Can Do It" image promoting women's rights could be used, as well as a media source presenting women as subservient to others. Have the students discuss the media sources with one another guided by the following questions: (1) Who created the media source? (2) What information can you research about the author or authors of the source? (3) How do you think the background of the author affects the way the media source is created or the message that it sends? (4) How are the sources alike? (5) How are they different? Provide each student with two graphic organizers: one data retrieval chart and one Venn diagram. Organize the data retrieval chart with the first three guiding questions, and tell students to choose two media sources and then use the data retrieval chart to record any data they collect about the authors of the sources. Always have students support their answers with evidence from the media sources.
- Ask the students to discuss guiding questions 4 and 5, again considering the same two conflicting media sources from the previous step. Tell the students in each group to record their ideas for the discussion questions on the Venn diagram. When they have completed this task, ask them to discuss the following questions in their small groups in preparation to share with the whole class: (1) Why do you think the information in both media sources presents some conflicting information? (2) Do you think one source might be more accurate than the other, and why? (3) What do you know about the authors of both sources that might influence the information they include?
- Conclude the lesson by asking the groups to take turns sharing information with the whole class. Emphasize the point that the authors, who had different backgrounds, made decisions about what information to include and how to construct their media sources.

### *Media Is Constructed for a Purpose (Lesson Two)*

During the second portion of the lesson, students will develop the understanding that people construct media sources for a purpose. This connection is vital for students to become critical viewers of media and, in turn, critical consumers (Redmond, 2012).

- In the same small groups, the students analyze the same media sources from the previous activity. However, this time they focus on the author's purpose for creating the media source. Have the small groups discuss both media sources guided by the following questions: (1) What do you see in the media source? What images or pictures are included? (2) What words and sentences are included in the media source? (3) What colors or music are used in the media source? (4) What message do you think it is trying to send? (5) What can be learned from this media source? Provide students with a web graphic organizer to record their ideas. After every group has finished, ask the groups to take turns sharing one element or item from their media sources and related discussion ideas with the class. As each group finishes sharing, ask the rest of the class if they think the media item was created for a different

purpose. If students offer different opinions, pose the following questions: (1) Why do you think some students are drawing different messages from the media item? (2) Is it okay that the media item is looked at differently by different people, and why? After each group has shared, reiterate that a media source is constructed to achieve a purpose, or send a message, and people can interpret it differently.

### *Evaluating Media Sources (Lesson Three)*

In the final portion of this strategy, students learn to evaluate sources for reliability when viewing or gathering information from the media. Through evaluation, they learn to critique, challenge, and question media sources, rather than accepting knowledge from the media as given.

- Using the same social studies topic (women's rights) from the previous activities, assign the same small groups of students a variety of media sources to evaluate, including websites of official organizations and other groups interested in the topic (e.g., universities and corporations), social media sites, and YouTube and other video websites. Teacher- or student-created websites and videos are also great sources. Direct the groups to analyze each media source, guided by the following questions: (1) What do we want to know about the author of the source? (2) How might the author's background influence the information included in the source? (3) What can be learned about the social studies topic from this media source? (4) What do we know about the background information that was used to create this media source? (5) What questions do we still have? Provide the students with a compare-and-contrast matrix graphic organizer in which they can record their ideas and observe similarities/differences across the media sources. After the groups have finished, engage the students in a whole-class debrief discussion, asking the following questions: (1) Which media sources did you find to be the most helpful for understanding the topic, and why? (2) Which sources did you find to be the least helpful, and why? (3) Which media sources seem to be more accurate than others, and why? (4) Did any of the sources lack important information? (5) Why do you believe that this information was not included? (6) Why might you choose to use one source over another?
- Conclude this portion of the lesson by emphasizing that we must learn to evaluate different types of media rather than accepting every media source we encounter as objective and truthful. Reiterate the important points from all of the lessons: People construct media for a purpose, and we must have the skills to evaluate those media sources for reliability of information.

## Applications and Ideas

In the following example, Mr. Patel's students learn decision-making skills through examining media sources advertising a popular toy; they can then apply the same evaluation techniques when making important decisions, such as making larger purchases or choosing candidates for public office. This strategy, as described with a specific example, is one way to educate students to become critical viewers of the media, wise consumers, and citizens capable of discerning propaganda. The following example focuses on a current application of analysis to items that children see advertised and want to possess.

Prior to the winter holiday, Mr. Patel's students generate a list of the most popular new toys and games available that none of the students already own or have played with. From this list, the students chose three or four items to examine. The students chose similar items; in previous years, his students examined a variety of dolls one year and video games a different year. Another year they chose several different items including a doll, a board game, and a piece of sporting equipment. Mr. Patel has his students vote on the most popular items and examine the items that receive the most votes. (He usually does this with fewer items as a whole-class activity, but the first year he needed more items when the students worked in small, cooperative groups.) His students gather print advertisements from news flyers, television advertisements, and store and manufacturer

websites; the students examine all of the information presented about each item. Mr. Patel moves from group to group, asking questions such as "What can you find out about the company advertising the toy?" and "What information are they presenting about the toy to try to achieve a purpose?"

The students create a descriptive profile of each toy advertisement that includes four columns: information about the company that created the advertisement, the claims made in the advertisement about the toy, and characteristics of the toy that support or do not support the advertisement's claims (see Figure 6.1). The students are instructed to leave the final column, labeled for reliability and truth in advertisement claims, blank until after the class discussion.

Mr. Patel encourages the students to conduct extra research by doing Internet searches to gather more information about the manufacturer and about the toy. Mr. Patel tells his students to be as specific as possible in their profiles. One student takes the advertisement's claim that "the doll is like a real baby" and breaks it down into specifics as to how the doll is like a real baby, specifically noting:

- The doll feels like a real baby.
- The doll cries like a real baby.
- The doll moves like a real baby.

Mr. Patel finds this assignment particularly challenging for young learners because many advertisements make vague promises and because statements such as "Zip is an awesome video game" and "Zap will become your favorite doll" require more critical evaluation. Students decide which advertising media sources are vague or unfounded and explain on their charts which specific claims cannot be supported. Students are encouraged to compare their conclusions with one or two classmates because different interpretations of an advertisement can help students to identify vague or unsupportable claims. Students also work to deconstruct these vague statements. Mr. Patel asks, "What makes an 'awesome' video game?" If there are certain characteristics that the students agree make a video game "awesome," those statements are listed in the profile. Through discussion, students also discover that what makes something "awesome" differs among students. After the discussion, Mr. Patel tells his students to draw conclusions based on their research about the reliability, or truth, of the advertisements and to record an explanation of their evaluations in the final column of their profiles.

When the students finish evaluating all of the advertisements, the teacher leads them in a discussion of what they found:

- How does the background of the company influence the information in the advertisement?
- How did the advertisement try to convince children to buy the toy?
- How truthful was the advertising?
- Do certain kinds of advertising tend to be more or less misleading?
- Are television advertisements more or less misleading than newspaper advertisements?
- Are there certain kinds of statements in advertising that students and parents should be more cautious of than others?

Mr. Patel links the evaluation and discussion of products with a reinforcing lesson on the types of propaganda, such as glittering generalities, on the bandwagon, common man, testimonial, or an

**FIGURE 6.1** Savvy Shopper: Becoming Media Literate

| Information about the Company | Advertisement Claims | Characteristics That Support Claims | Reliability/Truth in Advertisement Claims |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

endorsement by a celebrity. Using quotations from advertisement language and pictures from a toy motorcycle advertisement as examples, he creates the following discussion questions:

- Why is playing with this motorcycle track an experience "just like what real motorcycle racers have"? (transfer)
- How is this motorcycle track "technologically engineered" and "aerodynamic"? (glittering generality)
- How do you know that this motorcycle track is the "racetrack that 'serious' motorcyclists want"? (bandwagon)

## Differentiation

Teachers can scaffold the activities for students who need additional support by providing those students with more structure during the inquiry process. A list of websites can be offered to students to use when collecting data, rather than searching for websites on their own. The teacher can also list guiding questions on the graphic organizers to help focus students' thinking. For example, when students are researching the author of a media source, the graphic organizer might provide an "Author Background" column, while the guiding questions would ask: (1) Where is the author from? (2) What do we know about the author's cultural experiences?

The activities can also be adapted to meet the needs of learners who exceed the expectations of the lessons. In pairs, have these students research a social studies concept from the class curriculum and create two media sources that present opposing perspectives of the concept. The media sources can then be analyzed in class lessons on media literacy.

## Assessment

As a concluding activity, students are asked to evaluate an advertisement for a game the teacher would like to buy for his child. Students should use the same three components of media literacy described in the preceding Application and Ideas section. Each group presents their research to the class with a concluding statement as to whether or not the teacher should buy the toy.

### Rubric

| | Unsatisfactory | Satisfactory | Good | Excellent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **NCSS—Production, Distribution, and Consumption, Middle Grades:** *Compare their own economic decisions with those of others, and consider the wider consequences of those decisions for groups, communities, the nation, and beyond.* | • Student is unable to determine the author's purpose for a media source and does not use additional information such as author background to draw conclusions. | • Student is able to critique and evaluate media sources in small-group collaboration by determining how the author's background, inclusion of specific information, and use of language achieves a purpose. | • Student is able to critique and evaluate media sources independently by determining how the author's background, inclusion of specific information, and use of language achieves a purpose. | • Student critiques and evaluates media sources independently by determining how the author's background, inclusion of specific information, and use of language achieves a purpose.<br>• Student uses this knowledge of media literacy to create his/her own media sources for specific purposes. |

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# 7

# Discovery Learning

## Introduction

Discovery learning occurs when the teacher structures a classroom experience to help the students find answers through problem solving. The teacher is knowledgeable about a person, place, or event designated by the state standards for this grade. Students need to understand the requirements for learning and using technology; they then need to have a structure that allows them guidance in discovering knowledge (Waring, 2010). Rather than giving students information in text or lecture format, the teacher allows students to discover the importance of the person, place, or event through research, analysis, and interpretation. Students use the methods of the social science disciplines to determine the answers to the questions they pursue. Teachers ask students to act as historians by determining the perspective and bias of the authors of their sources.

*See also:* Historical Source Work.

## Procedural Recommendations

- Find a collection of the papers from a group or an individual who is being studied, such as Thomas Jefferson (http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/jefferson_papers/). Many universities and historical societies produce documentary editions of papers; most libraries also house them. The content and type of these papers vary. Typically, they include personal and professional correspondence, wills, business records, and public documents related to the person's life.
- Scan the index to find topics that relate to the objectives of future classroom study.
- Copy the relevant files and chronologically arrange them for students to search. Libraries have papers filed in this manner. Give each student a copy of all the documents used. Librarians have converted a substantial number of archival documents to electronic format.
- When the primary sources are prepared, the teacher poses problems for students to explore. These problems or issues should link with social studies concepts or themes; encourage each student to choose a different problem to research based on the documents copied. The students are not to search all the papers of the person as they would in a library, but they do need to search through many topics to address their assigned person or group.
- While reminding students to focus on their chosen problem or issue, direct them to review the files to determine what they think the position of the person or group was on the specific issue under study. Students must cite information that they find in the documents as evidence.

- While the students work, ask them how they found their information and if there are ways they could find additional information. Also make sure they have found evidence to document their statements.

## Applications and Ideas

When looking for a specific person such as Martha Ballard or when looking for places to find primary sources, the Library of Congress, the National Archives and Records Administration and the University of Idaho all contain many resources to explore.

Elementary students can use photocopies of World War II ration cards to create tickets for a series of transactions. (Refer to Procedural Recommendations above for guidelines on how to work with documents.) For example, students might use the ration cards when they make a purchase at the class store. To encourage problem solving, the teacher asks, "How should rationing cards be apportioned?" Students discuss who, if anyone, should be allowed more gas rationing stamps. In a related activity, students examine pictures from World War II to find other ways the war changed lifestyles. Students tell what they learned about life during the war from the pictures; they also describe shopping at that time and how it differs from shopping today. Students respond to questions about why we do not have rationing now, issues of war and peace today, and how modern nations can preserve peace.

Elementary students can use the documents of Lewis Von Schweinitz (1927) to learn about his trip to visit pioneers. They design a mural of his trip using the descriptions of what he saw: trees, dense forests, and the smoke caused by burning the forest to clear the land for farming. The teacher helps students find other travel accounts from this time in history, and students check to see if any of the other accounts mention clearing the land. They then present their mural to the class, showing the land at the time Von Schweinitz came and wrote about what he saw. Students also are encouraged to respond to questions about how it would be possible to remove such large trees.

To study race relations, elementary grade students can use the documents of English members of the Society of Friends who came to the United States to do abolitionist missionary work. Students develop a T-chart titled "The State of Race Relations in 1853," labeling one side "Positive Characteristics" and the other side "Negative Characteristics." While the students read the members' letters, they record evidence in the appropriate column. As the students work, the teacher asks them which pieces of evidence are informal and created by popular understanding of societal conventions or which are formal and institutionalized by organizations. The teacher also helps the students find a copy of their state constitution, histories of race relations in their state, and journal articles as well recent news on the topic. Students then present a PowerPoint slide displaying their completed T-chart. Students also discuss present race relationships, why the U.S. Constitution changed, how the state constitution changed, whether prejudice was first formal or informal, and who works to stop racism.

## Differentiation

The teacher creates files of primary sources about a local figure for students to use to create a biography of the figure similar to the document packets created by the Harry S. Truman Library and Museum.

Older students can create their own collection of primary source information, while younger students can examine picture packets to determine particulars about their figure, similar to what the Jackdaw website provides.

## Assessment

Fourth-grade students use the documents of the Harmony Society to determine both how the community members traded and how they supported themselves. Students debate the merits of the community at the local shopping mall.

**Rubric**

| Benchmarks | High Pass<br>4 Points | Pass<br>3 Points | Low Pass<br>2 Points | No Pass<br>1 Point |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.3:**<br>*Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.* | • Student gave three reasons for his/her opinion on the question "Did the period of time or a specific culture make utopian settlements popular?"<br>• Student listed what he/she could learn about utopias and gave an example of the application of the principles of living in a community today.<br>• Student determined what was good about utopian settlements and what needed improvement.<br>• Student cited more than four specific examples from the sources. | • Student gave two reasons for his/her opinion on the question "Did the period of time or a specific culture make utopian settlements popular?"<br>• Student listed what he/she could learn about utopias.<br>• Student determined what was good about utopian settlements or what needed improvement.<br>• Student cited three specific examples from the sources. | • Student gave one reason for his/her opinion on the question "Did the period of time or a specific culture make utopian settlements popular?"<br>• Student determined neither what was good about utopian settlements nor what needed improvement.<br>• Student cited two specific examples from the sources. | • No opinion given on the question.<br>• Student cited one specific example from the sources. |

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# 8

# Inquiry Learning

## Introduction

Inquiry projects are those learning experiences in which neither the teacher nor the students know how the learning activity will end or what answers they will find. Inquiry projects in which the students select the topics to be studied remain distinct from discovery projects, where the teacher selects the topics to be studied and has specific or correct answers targeted. Students examine issues or content of their choosing; often the questions that drive students to choose a particular issue contain some element of controversy. This strategy engages and excites students because they answer questions of their own design and selection. Students at all achievement levels successfully create research questions and test their hypotheses about historic events (Hammond, 2011). Inquiry empowers students to direct their own learning; they work with their teacher to develop academically rigorous projects that promote ownership of their social studies education.

*See also:* Discovery Learning, Historical Source Work, Decision Making, Oral Histories.

## Procedural Recommendations

Inquiry Steps: There are several steps in the inquiry process, including raising doubt/concern, identifying the problem, formulating hypotheses, collecting data, evaluating and analyzing data, testing hypotheses, and beginning inquiry anew.

- *Raising Doubt/Concern:* Students have one or more experiences that provide information, create a dilemma, or stimulate a concern for them. Students raise an issue; it may be generated by an event or an observation about current news or society. Inquiry projects can be of a historical or a current nature. Teachers make inquiry applicable to their students' grade level by knowing their state standards and assessments and then designing field trips, guest speakers, and other powerful experiences that capture the excitement of their students.
- *Identifying the Problem:* Students identify a problem based on their experience and state the problem. The problem must be precise and definable. Students formulate a question to be answered through further inquiry. Students come to their own conclusions about who discovered the New World or examine sources to decide if conflict between Europeans and indigenous people was inevitable.
- *Formulating Hypotheses:* Students speculate as to why the problem exists. They determine questions based on this information that are of interest to them. With teacher facilitation,

each student or group of students generates a guiding question for their exploration of the information, issue, or dilemma. It is important for students to determine a guiding question because it helps them focus their inquiry on a particular topic. After students become interested in a topic, determine what they want to explore, and decide how they want to do it, they establish a guiding question to help themselves focus and to set limits to keep the project from getting so large that it is unmanageable. To differentiate instruction for younger students, the teacher looks for illustrations, photographs, diagrams, drawings, tables, graphs, and charts that the students can use, for example, in exploring the beginning of the American Revolution. Older students use primary source documents to determine their own conclusions concerning who fired the first shots at Lexington.

- *Collecting Data:* Students identify sources and methods of gathering data such as interviews, surveys, document study, or news reports. Once there is agreement with regard to the questions generated, the students and the teacher search, access, and examine the necessary resources. Students use as many primary sources as possible, moving beyond traditional text resources. Information in inquiry projects comes from public and private records, interviews, surveys, news sources, field examinations, and a multitude of other sources. It is important to use a variety of resources. To make the collection of data manageable, the teacher collects the data and has it available in differential sets. Students with limited English or limited reading ability have one set of data that allows them easier access to information but still allows them to participate and think deeply about the questions.
- *Evaluating and Analyzing Data:* Students analyze, synthesize, and evaluate all data before proposing any potential solutions. Students working on group inquiry projects must share decision making with their peers; decision trees can assist with both group and individual decision making. Teachers streamline sharing when they use a blank template file of a decision tree in which students fill in the blanks.
- *Testing Hypotheses:* Students reflect on their findings and arrive at a meaningful product or answer that they share with a real audience. The product includes their initial guiding questions, the results of their research, and their proposed solutions. In creating a history of their school, younger students conduct oral history interviews with school personnel and create a book of quotations from the interviews, while older students write a school history by looking at primary sources.
- *Beginning Inquiry Anew:* Students identify new questions and issues arising from their findings.

## Applications and Ideas

The Ohio Department of Education has compiled a list of research sources that support the use of inquiry in social studies instruction. There is also information on how to teach using inquiry at TeAch-nology.

One group of students became interested in the gristmills located around their state after viewing a media program produced by a state historical organization. The students voiced their interest in comments about the mills that they knew about or had visited; they asked many questions about how the mills worked. The teacher arranged a visit to a nearby mill during which students took photographs and interviewed the mill's fourth-generation owner. They learned details of the mill's original construction and discovered how it operated. During the interview, students learned how a small community had grown around the mill and then vanished later. After speaking to the mill owner about restoration, the students contacted the Department of Natural Resources, learned how the state regulates dams and obstructions on rivers and streams, and learned what was needed to restore the mill to working order. Students returned to the classroom, where they wrote articles about the past, present, and future of the mill. They used computer word-processing software to set up their articles and create captions for their photographs. They illustrated their articles with their photographs and created a presentation with scripted narration so they could speak to groups about the past, the present, and the future of the mill.

## Differentiation

Younger students use surveys to ask their classmates which states they have visited, and they compile their information to determine the states with the highest visitation in the class. They display this information in bar graphs before analyzing why they think some states are more highly represented than others. They examine whether some states are highly visited even though they are not contiguous and what that indicates about travel patterns, either in terms of the significance of transportation corridors or in terms of the significance of specific destinations as tourist attractions. Students use maps and tourism websites to determine which interpretation is more likely: that people are using transportation corridors or that people are visiting tourism sites as destinations. Students continue their investigation by asking why people travel to certain states and whether family ties determine the flow of traffic in a specific direction.

Older and higher-ability students use questionnaires to determine more about a specific place by asking people who have traveled outside the nation to describe their experiences. The students create a questionnaire to use with people who have recently traveled. The students ask the respondents for the date when they traveled, how they traveled, what sounds they heard, how long the trip took, what they ate and how it tasted, how the destination looked, and what they smelled. Students might also ask questions about houses, farms, factories, and retail space. Students take the data from each individual respondent, cross-reference it with the answers from other people who have traveled to this county, and compile the data by country. They then write a report explaining the multiple perspectives travelers experience when they visit the country.

## Assessment

- In a unit about Southern antebellum life, students look at photos of free blacks. They look at plantation maps to determine spaces where enslaved persons lived and worked. Students might ask for more information about the enslaved people.
- Based on the experience of the students and their desire to learn more about enslaved persons, students ask what it was like to be enslaved, ask how it would feel, and wonder what it would be like to actually hear a former enslaved person speak.
- The following question might provide guidance for the students to pursue their study: "How did former enslaved persons describe their experiences in slavery through the Works Progress Administration (WPA) oral history project?" Students can return to the guiding question to determine if they are gathering information that is germane to their project or if the information is taking them in a different direction. If they choose to go in a different direction, that is acceptable as long as they make a deliberate choice to do so rather than arbitrarily picking up bits of information and wandering around their topic. The guiding question is a guideline for reflection rather than an inflexible assessment standard.
- Using the Internet, students can look at transcripts of interviews with former enslaved persons, read published slave accounts, and listen to reproduced WPA recordings. In evaluating the quality of information obtained from an Internet site, it is important to determine the credentials of the person or institution posting the website. Reputation is one of the best ways to determine if the site holds good information. Reputable historical societies, museums, and universities, such as the Iowa Historical Society, Old Sturbridge Village, and the University of Washington, have credibility due to their reputations in their respective fields. Institutions such as these are regularly reviewed by their peers. Peer review is another good way to determine if the information is reliable; rarely are items posted on the Internet peer reviewed. Perhaps a better way to determine the quality of the source is to see if there are other similar sources; while not foolproof, consensus is an excellent way to determine the quality of a website.
- Students sort accounts into positive memories that may include family, worship, and community. They further sort negative memories that may include the categories of violence,

fear, and hardship. Students examine the context of the data. Would there be any reason for the former enslaved persons not to disclose all of their memories? Would the fear of lynching, a white male interviewer, or the fact that this was a government project affect the content of the interviews?

- Students compile their research and create a readers' theater or a play to dramatize the interviews for members of the class and to present to the museum guild.
- Based on what the students find, they may become interested in exploring the relationship between slavery and the presidency or what a slave's experience on the Underground Railroad might be like.

### Rubric

| Benchmarks | High Pass<br>4 Points | Pass<br>3 Points | Low Pass<br>2 Points | No Pass<br>1 Point |
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| **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2d:**<br>*Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.* | • Student engages in a topic and identifies the positives and negatives of a concern he/she wishes to explore.<br>• Student develops and explores multiple guiding questions including whether slave reparations should be paid.<br>• Student gathers four or more sources of evidence that he/she considers in determining an answer to his/her problem.<br>• Student produces a product such as a readers' theater that communicates his/her findings to a real audience. | • Student engages in a topic and identifies the positives or negatives of a concern he/she wishes to explore.<br>• Student develops and explores multiple guiding questions.<br>• Student gather**s** three sources of evidence that he/she considers in determining an answer to his/her problem.<br>• Student produce**s** a product such as a readers' theater that communicates his/her findings to a real audience. | • Student engages in a topic and identifies the concern he/she wishes to explore.<br>• Student develops and explores guiding questions.<br>• Student gathers two sources of evidence that he/she considers in determining an answer to his/her problem.<br>• Student produces a product such as a readers' theater that communicates his/her findings to a real audience. | • Student engages in a topic he/she wishes to explore.<br>• Student explores guiding questions.<br>• Student gathers evidence that he/she considers in determining an answer to his/her problem.<br>• Student produces a product such as a readers' theater that communicates his/her findings to a real audience. |

## References and Resources

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# Graphic Organizers

## Introduction

Graphic organizers allow students of all ages to organize information in visual ways. For some students, this visual representation is a way to make meaning of what they are reading or hearing. It allows them to see connections not always evident in a traditional narrative and may prove beneficial to prewriting (Lorenz, Green, & Brown, 2009). Young students use graphic organizers to assist their understanding of categories and classification. Students moving into middle school experience developmental changes. Intellectually, they move from concrete thinking to abstract thinking (Van Hoose, Strahan, & L'Esperance, 2001). Students in these grades also interact with more complex historical, political, social, and economic information. Students facing these more challenging tasks use a variety of graphic organizers to assist in the organization of data for analysis and interpretation (Barbieri, 2011). Graphic organizers take on a variety of forms, including flow charts, graphs, tables, Venn diagrams, and concept maps.

## Procedural Recommendations

- Graphic organizers work well with many but not all topics. Begin by determining the key understandings desired in order to choose an appropriate graphic organizer. Is the goal for students to compare and contrast sets of data? Is the goal for students to look for and examine relationships among individuals, institutions, or systems? Perhaps the key understanding is for students to identify elements of cause and effect in a historical scenario. It is essential to choose an appropriate graphic organizer to facilitate students' interpretation of the data they will gather and organize.
- Once key understandings are identified, choose the desired graphic organizer. There are numerous places to access graphic organizer templates for use on interactive whiteboards and tablet computers, such as Inspiration®. Many other websites offer graphic organizer templates that can be reproduced and distributed for handwritten use. Further, most current word-processing programs provide various kinds of writable graphic organizers.

The following bullets explain different types of graphic organizers and their use in social studies:

- *Relationships:* If students are unfamiliar with or unaccustomed to using graphic organizers, provide an introduction by constructing a basic sample task that uses graphic organizers. If the assignment examines relationships among individuals, consider using the school, an institution with relationships that many students understand, as a first example. A flow chart