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Regis University
School for Professional Studies Graduate Programs
Final Project/Thesis

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ALOHA TO SOCIAL STUDIES:
AN INTEGRATED CURRICULAR UNIT

by
Olivia E. DeJana

A Research Project Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

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July, 2006

ALOHA TO SOCIAL STUDIES:
AN INTEGRATED CURRICULAR UNIT

by

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ABSTRACT

Aloha to Social Studies: An Integrated Curricular Unit

In recent years teachers have struggled to find the time to dedicate to teaching social studies concepts. However, social studies instruction is an integral part of a balanced educational program. In addition to imparting factual information, social studies curricula encourage critical thinking skills and help to prepare students to become responsible members of society. This research project was intended to provide educators with a model of how to integrate social studies with other academic areas to maximize instructional time and the amount of content covered. The unit was reviewed by master teachers to ensure that the project goals were attained. Limitations to the project and suggestions for further study were included in Chapter Five.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Social studies instruction is an important component of a comprehensive education. However, an educational shift has taken place, which has caused an increased emphasis to be placed on literacy and mathematical skills. State officials and school district administrators have placed a high value on student achievement in reading, writing, and mathematics. As a result, the majority of instructional time is geared toward those academic areas, and many teachers find it difficult to make the time for social studies instruction. However, there are various methods and materials available to educators to incorporate social studies with the other curricula that is taught. Additionally, there are a wide range of assessment tools that can be used to evaluate student learning.

Statement of the Problem

Teachers find it increasingly difficult to find time in the school day to teach all the material that they should. The emphasis on standards has led school district administrators and staff to place a greater emphasis on proficiency in the three basics: reading, writing, and mathematics. In some districts, this emphasis has caused teachers to all but abandon instruction in social studies and science instruction. Frequently, a lack of time in the school day is cited as the reason that academic areas beyond literacy and mathematics are not being addressed. However, education in the area of social studies is

an integral component of any comprehensive curriculum. In social studies, students learn skills in critical thinking and citizenship in addition to new knowledge about the world.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project will be to explore the use of various methods to integrate social studies with other academic curricula. The author will develop a complete curricular unit for second grade students that will serve as a model for ways that teachers may integrate social studies throughout the day and use a variety of methods and materials for instruction and assessment. The focus of this unit will be on the history, geography, culture, and people of the state of Hawaii. The goal of the lessons that comprise the unit will be to integrate the outcomes for social studies with the outcomes in the areas of reading, writing, mathematics, science, and technology.

Chapter Summary

Through conscientious planning and preparation, it is possible for teachers to integrate social studies with other academic subject areas. In Chapter 2, the Review of Literature, this researcher will present background information regarding how teachers can utilize various methods and materials for social studies instruction. In Chapter 3, Methods, the procedures to develop an integrated curricular unit will be detailed. This researcher will present a curricular unit in Chapter 4 which will utilize the methods and materials discussed in Chapter 2. This unit will serve as a model for how teachers may integrate social studies instruction with literacy, mathematics, science, and technology.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The testing movement has had a substantial impact on the amount of time dedicated to social studies instruction (Pang, 1998, as cited in Jones, Pang, & Rodriguez, 2001). The instructional agenda has been pushed toward reading and mathematics skills, which leaves little time for other content. As a result of this pressure to focus on reading and mathematics, it is difficult for many teachers to find time in the day for social studies instruction. The result is that, although teachers agree they should spend more instructional time on it, social studies is taught only when it can be “fit in” (p. 35). However, there are many strategies that educators can use to integrate the social studies curriculum with other academic areas. The purpose of this project will be to identify a wide range of methods and materials that teachers can use for instruction and assessment of student learning.

Definition of Social Studies

The field of social studies is interdisciplinary, and it integrates the study of the humanities and the social sciences (National Council, 1994, as cited in Jones et al., 2001). According to Young (1994), social studies consists of six strands: (a) history, (b) geography, (c) government, (d) economics, (e) sociology, and (f) anthropology. All six of the strands should be incorporated into social studies instruction in the elementary classroom (Farris & Cooper, 1994).

History is an examination of how people lived in the past (Farris & Cooper, 1994). The Bradley Commission (1988, as cited in Farris & Cooper) identified the six organizational themes for history at the elementary level. The first theme is conflict and cooperation, which details the causes of war, approaches to peace, and relations within and between countries. The second theme is the comparative history of major developments in which characteristics of revolutionary, reactionary, and reform eras are included. In the third theme, patterns of social and political interaction, changes in gender, ethnic, racial, and class structures are examined. Next is the theme of civilization, cultural diffusion, and innovation, which includes the development of major civilizations and the evolution of human skills. In the fifth theme, human interaction with the environment, relationships among culture, geography, and technology and their effects on social, economic, and political developments are examined. The final theme consists of values, beliefs, political ideas, and institutions, and it explores the origins of social, political, and religious institutions. History includes the examination of the causes of events in addition to the effects of those events (Kellough et al., 1996).

The study of geography extends beyond physical location on maps (Suen, 2004). It is the study of how people move from one place to another. “Like the middle of a Venn diagram, geography is where physical science and social studies overlap” (Suen, p. 44). Farris and Cooper (1994) defined geography as “the study of land, sea, and air and the distribution of animal and plant life, including human beings and their industries” (p. 13). The study of geography is based on five themes: (a) location, (b) place, (c) relationships

within places, (d) movement, and (e) regions (Joint Committee on Geographic Education, 1984, as cited in Farris & Cooper).

The primary focus of civics, also known as government or political science, is the governance and organization of nations and other social units (Kellough et al., 1996). It involves an analysis of power and the means by which groups and individuals interact with one another. This area of study includes an examination of the structure of government, the duties and responsibilities of appointed and elected government officials, and the analysis of processes and laws (Farris & Cooper, 1994). The inclusion of civics in the curriculum is important so that students may gain an understanding of how government, in general, and the democratic process, in particular, work.

According to Farris and Cooper (1994), economics is “the study of the production, distribution, exchange, and consumption of goods and services” (p. 13). Economists study these four concepts and suggest ways in which production or distribution of various products may be improved. Production encompasses the goods and services provided by businesses, while distribution details how those goods and services are made available to consumers, usually through the exchange of money. Consumption is determined by the wants and needs of the buyer. Economic issues are examined on all scales, including the macro and micro levels, according to the scope of their impact (Kellough et al., 1996).

According to Kellough et al. (1996), sociology is “the study of human interactions within groups” (p. 303). Sociologists examine how various types of institutions (i.e., religious, political, social, or economic) affect individuals’ daily lives. They study groups

of people that range in size from a nuclear family to large groups such as the Catholic church, in order to identify common beliefs and values (Farris & Cooper, 1994).

Anthropology is a discipline closely related to sociology (Kellough et al., 1996). In its broadest sense, it is the study of humankind. Farris and Cooper (1994) defined it more specifically as “the study of human beings in terms of race, culture, physical characteristics, and environmental and social relations” (p. 13). Anthropologists are concerned with what people of various cultures were like from their earliest existence, and how and why people change over time. Anthropologists analyze cultural artifacts to construct an understanding of a people’s culture and their contributions in terms of literature, music, art, religion, law, and language. Cultures from the same era or throughout the ages are compared with one another.

Social Studies Standards

Standards based education has become a reality in the academic world today, and social studies instruction has been heavily influenced by the shift toward a centralized curriculum (Mathison, Ross, & Vinson, 2001). Perhaps one of the most challenging aspects to the national standards that have been set forth is that none of the standards developed by one educational group are congruent with the standards developed by the others. There are separate, and sometimes competing, standards for each of the strands that make up social studies. There are standards at the national level, in addition to state and district level standards. To complicate matters further, there are at least seven

sponsors of curricular standards documents in the area of social studies. Each of these sponsors competes to influence the pedagogy and content of the national social studies curriculum.

The members of The National Council for the Social Studies (1994, as cited in Mathison et al., 2001) developed the most generic curriculum standards. These standards consist of thematic strands that are meant to “create a broad framework of themes within which local decisions can be made about specific content” (p. 92). The 10 thematic strands are: (a) culture, (b) time, continuity, and change, (c) people, places, and environment, (d) individual development and identity, (e) individuals, groups, and institutions, (f) power, authority, and governance, (g) production, distribution, and consumption, (h) science, technology, and society, (i) global connections, and (j) civic ideals and practices.

In contrast, the standards developed by members of organizations geared toward a specific component in the social studies (e.g., history) are more specific in regard to curriculum and grade level (Mathison et al., 2001). For example, the National Center for History in Schools (1996, as cited in Mathison et al.) developed standards that include topics to be covered at specific grade levels, as well as ways that students should be able to think in a historical sense. Also, specific standards have been developed by the Center for Civic Education (1994, as cited in Mathison et al.), the National Council for Geographic Education (1994, as cited in Mathison et al.), the National Council on Economic Education (1997, as cited in Mathison et al.), and the American Psychological Association (1999, as cited in Mathison et al.).

Although there are differences across the standards, the commonalities of concepts, themes, perspectives, and intellectual skills that are addressed in the various social studies standards could be useful for curricular integration (Schneider, 1993). Also, links between social studies standards and other academic standards (e.g., English and science) could be developed. However, failure to recognize and act upon the connections between the standards could lead to curricular fragmentation. In addition, the narrowing of social studies curricular experiences could occur if one discipline became dominant or if individual disciplines were to vie for positions within the curriculum.

Objectives of Social Studies Instruction

Beyond its academic value, the purpose of social studies curricula is to nurture the emotional, cognitive, and social development of students (Jones et al., 2001). According to Jones et al., “the goal of social studies is to develop responsible citizens who understand their interdependence with others and can make reasoned and informed decisions for the good of a diverse public” (p. 35). Ross (2001) stated that there are three primary purposes for social studies education: “1) socialization into society’s norms; 2) transmission of facts, concepts, and generalizations from the academic disciplines; and 3) the promotion of critical or reflective thinking” (p. 24).

In social studies education, there is a central goal that underlies the specific objectives in each of the six strands. According to Ross (2001), “there is a widespread agreement that the proper aim of social studies is ‘citizenship education,’ or the

preparation of young people so that they possess the knowledge, skills and values necessary for active participation in society” (p. 23). The goal of citizenship is of utmost importance in education, in general, but particularly in the field of social studies (Dunfee, 1970). Almost every statement of social studies objectives contains citizenship as a component.

In social studies instruction, there should be an emphasis on the important facts, concepts, and generalizations that students should attain (Ediger, 1998, 2000). Facts are objective, and, generally, are not disputed. The facts that teachers ask students to learn should be important, not merely trivia. Concepts are as true as facts, but are made up of one word or a phrase (e.g., king, meridians, equator), which contain a number of vital facts. Generalizations are broadly stated, declarative sentences, and the emphasis should be on a relationship of concepts.

In addition to learner objectives that are focused on facts, concepts, and generalizations, educators should also select skills for learner acquisition (Ediger, 1998, 2000). Ediger (1998) stated that “pupils need to go beyond mastery of facts and do something with factual items learned and that is to think about them and make use of what has been learned” (p. 9). The skills that a teacher decides to focus on should assist students to apply what has been learned and emphasize the use of their knowledge.

According to Ediger (1998, 2000), there are three skills that should be at the heart of social studies instruction: (a) problem solving, (b) creative thinking, and (c) critical thinking. Ediger (1998) defined problem solving as “choosing a vital problem, gathering information from a variety of sources in answer to the problem, developing an hypothesis

or tentative answer to the problem, checking the hypothesis in a lifelike situation if possible, and revising the hypothesis if necessary” (p. 8). The focus of creative thinking should be on the student’s ability to develop unique content and originality in thinking. For critical thinking, the emphasis is on the student’s ability to separate: (a) fact from opinion, (b) accurate from inaccurate statements, and (c) be able to detect bias.

Attitudinal goals are a third type of objective that should be included in social studies instruction (Ediger, 2000). These goals are more long term in their achievement, but are an important factor in order to help students do better in school and in society in general. Quality attitudes about self and others are important for students to achieve skill and knowledge goals more thoroughly. Some examples of attitudinal objectives that should be emphasized are: “becoming involved in learning in ongoing lessons and units of study, wanting to achieve at a more optimal level, being accepting of others in a caring environment, and feelings of wanting to complete assigned work successfully” (p. 4).

Methods for Teaching Social Studies

Determining Learner Outcomes

According to Ediger (2000), learner outcomes should be chosen carefully. The learner should be the focal point of instruction, and the goals should be neither too challenging nor easy but, instead, appropriately attainable. The objectives should be clearly stated so that both the students and the teacher have a firm understanding of what is to be learned. Before beginning instruction, it is imperative that the teacher is certain that the students hold the previous experience and background knowledge necessary to

successfully achieve vital learning objectives. According to Dunfee (1970), “of particular interest to the teacher of social studies is the knowledge which pupils have prior to instruction, since such information is invaluable in planning for instruction to meet individual interests and needs” (p. 25).

In the development of lessons and their individual objectives within the unit, teachers should ensure that the lessons are arranged so that students experience an appropriate sequence in learning (Ediger, 2000). The relevance and importance of each objective should be inherent. Learning opportunities should be selected to align with the stated learning objectives. However, there should be ample opportunity for students to raise questions during lessons over the course of the unit of study. To evaluate students’ achievement of the objectives, teachers need to use diverse procedures.

Since a goal of social studies curricula is to produce “citizen actors” (Farris & Cooper, 1994, p. 12), students need practice in decision making skills, especially because students are not often afforded opportunities to make decisions for themselves. Instead, adults and, sometimes peers, make choices that the child should be allowed to make. Banks (1985, as cited in Farris & Cooper) states that “making decisions can be one of the most interesting and important components of the social studies curriculum. It adds vitality to the curriculum and helps make it significant to both students and teachers p. 187” (p. 17). Allowing students to have options is an essential part of the development of a learning environment that offers meaningful and relevant material.

As with all learning, experiences in social studies should be meaningful to students (Jadallah, 2000). Prior to the construction of an instructional unit, it is important

for the teacher to consider how the learning experience can be made relevant and meaningful for the students. The use of original materials and sources, such as artifacts, documents, and maps, can enhance a child's social studies experience with the addition of relevance and meaning (Farris & Cooper, 1994).

Integration of Social Studies

Although, often, teachers feel that it is difficult to find time for social studies instruction, there are many who believe that there are ways to integrate the social studies curriculum with other subject areas (Ediger, 1998; Farris & Cooper, 1994; Young, 1994). According to Young, "integration refers to combining two or more disciplines into a single curriculum" (p. 20). According to the members of The National Commission on the Social Studies, the "integration of other subject matter with social studies should be encouraged whenever possible" (1990, p. 3, as cited in Farris & Cooper). Integration among subject areas presents learning as a meaningful whole and assists students to see the interrelationships among the different branches of knowledge. In addition, it allows teachers to cover more subject area in a limited amount of time.

The topic of social studies is ideal for integration (Young, 1994). Each of its six strands interact in a natural way. Also, "it can serve as a focus for nearly every other subject taught in the elementary/middle school" (p. 20). While social studies should remain the dominant focus, other academic disciplines can be used to enrich the social studies curriculum (Ediger, 1998). Even such subjects as science and mathematics can be incorporated into social studies lessons.

Use of a Constructivist Approach

Many believe that a constructivist approach is most desirable for social studies instruction (Brooks & Brooks, 1999; Jadallah, 2000; Rice & Wilson, 1999).

Constructivism is based on the belief that individuals construct knowledge as they interpret their own experiences (Rice & Wilson). While there are differing perspectives about the meaning of constructivism, in most constructivist theories, the emphasis is on learning through exploration.

Wills, Stephens, and Matthew (1996, as cited in Rice & Wilson, 1999) identified four principles that can be integrated into classrooms to incorporate the theory of social constructivism. The first is that development and learning are considered social collaborative activities. Second, the zone of proximal development, as theorized by Vygotsky (1986, as cited in Rice & Wilson, 1999), can be a guide to plan the overall curriculum and individual lessons. The third principle is that learning should occur in meaningful contexts. Lastly, the learning should be related to the students' own experiences.

According to Brooks and Brooks (1999), the use of constructivist teaching helps students to internalize and transform new information rather than merely memorization and repetition of information. The ability for one to rethink prior ideas in the presence of new information results in a deeper understanding of concepts. In classrooms where active construction of meaning is fostered, there are several characteristics. First, the focus is on large ideas, not fact driven instruction. Second, students are allowed the freedom to make connections, rethink ideas, reach unique conclusions, and follow trails

of interest. Last, the teacher conveys the idea that the world is a complex place with many different perspectives. In a constructivist classroom, the learner should be the primary focus of the teacher.

An integral part of constructivist social studies instruction should be the opportunity for interaction between students, as well as between the teacher and the students (Rice & Wilson, 1999; Jadallah, 2000). Jadallah suggested that there should be a balance between cognitive constructivism, in which the emphasis is on the individual's ability to construct knowledge independently, and social constructivism, in which learning occurs within a social context. Jadallah asserted that "without some form of social interaction that allows for a check of perceptions and ideas, meaning and knowledge construction is limited to the individual's frame of reference and past experience" (p. 3).

The use of cooperative learning provides opportunities for interaction with peers. According to Karnes and Collins (1997), "cooperative learning provides the perfect vehicle for helping children understand and experience many of the essential concepts and values embedded in the social studies curriculum" (p. 1). Cooperative learning is a teaching practice in which three to six students work together in a small group to earn rewards based on their collective performance (Greenwood, Carta, & Kamps, 1990, as cited in Karnes & Collins). There are a variety of approaches to cooperative learning, but each utilizes small, heterogeneous learning groups. As in life in a democratic society, students in a cooperative learning system must effectively work together in order for the group to succeed. The use of cooperative learning provides an instructional structure that

allows students to experience and practice many of the skills and values contained within the social studies curriculum. In addition, it allows teachers to develop students' academic and interpersonal competence simultaneously.

Beyond Textbooks

A broad range of techniques and material should be used in social studies instruction. According to Farris and Cooper (1994), the study of social studies should not be limited to the use of text books alone. Children's literature, including picture books, poetry, historical and contemporary fiction, and nonfiction books, should be utilized. Additionally, newspapers, technology, and artifacts can be used to enhance the social studies curriculum.

Traditionally, textbooks have been the primary source for social studies education (Berson, Ouzts, & Walsh, 1999). The problem is that these texts tend to present concepts from a single perspective and in an impersonal manner. In contrast, the use of literature provides students with multiple perspectives (Tunnell & Ammon, 1996, as cited in Berson et al.). This broader perspective aids students to formulate more expansive generalizations about places and people and in understanding concepts (Kim & Garcia, 1996, as cited in Berson et al.).

The use of literature can enhance social studies curriculum in various ways (Berson et al., 1999). "Literature bridges the gap between geographically distant worlds and gives students a better understanding of how and where people have lived in the past and present and how they might live in the future" (Berson et al., p. 1). Curriculum that

is enhanced by literature makes students aware of cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity and , thereby, multiculturalism is promoted. The combination of detailed descriptions and unique characters in books help to maintain students' interest and nurture their imaginations while educational reading is provided. Furthermore, the use of literature encourages the generation of alternative explanations, the evaluation of differences and similarities, and the integration of other subject areas (Lombard, 1996, as cited in Berson et al.).

McGowan and Guzzetti (1991) cited five reasons for the use of literature to promote the learning of social studies. They argued that the use of tradebooks (e.g., quality, non textbook works) “enhance five conditions that influence the degree to which a social studies program fosters conceptual understanding” (p. 2). The five conditions are: (a) variety, (b) interest, (c) comprehensibility, (d) relevance, and (e) citizenship. With tradebooks, materials are offered at a variety of reading abilities, and students are allowed to read social studies materials at a level that is consistent with their reading abilities. As Martorella (1990) stated, “given the range of reading abilities in a classroom, teachers often discover that many of their students have some problems in effectively comprehending social studies textbooks allegedly designed for the average student” (p. 2). Tradebooks are more enjoyable and intriguing than textbooks and, thereby student interest is enhanced.

According to McGowan and Guzzetti (1991), student comprehension of concepts can be increased by the use of tradebooks. Several researchers (Beck & McKeown, 1988; Calfee, 1987; Hurd, 1970; all cited in McGowan & Guzzetti) have shown that textbooks

include too many concepts, cover those concepts too briefly, and fail to include pertinent background information. In contrast, the use of tradebooks help students to grasp concepts because they provide casual relationships between concepts (Wong & Calfee, 1988, as cited in McGowan & Guzzetti). Also, they enhance relevance and provide real world examples of concepts. Then, students are able to connect the concept to their own experiences and prior knowledge. Additionally, the use of tradebooks can aid in citizenship preparation by the promotion of reflective inquiry and critical thinking. These higher level skills are necessary for citizenship tasks such as being able to decide for which candidate to vote.

Picture books are another form of tradebooks that can be utilized at many different grade levels. While typically used with younger school children, the use of picture books can be effective teaching tools for intermediate and upper level teachers as well (Farris & Fuhler, 1994). Picture books can be particularly useful in teaching social studies concepts to elementary school students (Farris, 1993, as cited in Farris & Fuhler). According to Levstik (1980, as cited in Farris & Fuhler), “picture books present memorable social data about people’s actions, influence student acquisition of the specific language used to communicate that information, and promote a suppleness of mind needed to assimilate content area knowledge” (p. 381). In addition, the use of picture books can bring joy and excitement to the social studies curriculum.

In many picture books, there is detailed information that is not present in textbooks and, thereby, depth is added to a particular topic (Benedict & Carlisle, 1992, as cited in Farris & Fuhler, 1994). Frequently, the authors are able to present sensitive or

difficult issues in a manner that is palatable for children. As new units are introduced, picture books can be used to pique students' interest. According to Sebesta (1989, as cited in Farris & Fuhler), this curiosity is the essential ingredient that allows teachers to draw learners beyond the social studies text.

In the selection of picture books, teachers should follow certain criteria (Farris & Fuhler, 1994). Educators should consider whether the story and illustrations will appeal to the students and if the content of the book will extend the social studies topic being taught. The text should contain rich language that is free of stereotypical language. Also, the information should be current and clearly written. Facts contained in the text should be authentic and clearly differentiated from opinions. Lastly, the illustrations should be accurate reflections of the text.

McGowan and Guzzetti (1991) suggested various ways that literature can be integrated into social studies curriculum. Teachers can select tradebooks that pertain to the unit being studied, or that simply reinforce concepts and skills taught as part of the unit. A tradebook could be used following a direct instruction lesson to introduce an extension activity or to develop a skill that was just taught. Small groups of students can read a book that relates to the social studies unit that the whole class is studying. A traditionally taught unit can be followed by a mini unit in which literary works are used to enhance skills and concepts previously taught. Quality tradebooks can be used for read alouds to enrich a unit. Additionally, a variety of related books can be made available for students to explore their interests or extend their knowledge related to the unit.

In addition to the use of tradebooks, newspapers can be a valuable component of social studies instruction (Street, 2002). While textbooks can become quickly outdated, newspapers can serve as *living textbooks* with current and relevant information. Also, use of the newspaper as an instructional tool can serve to boost students' reading. Several researchers (Ivey & Broaddus, 2000; Krashen, 1992; Schiefele, 1991; Worthy, 1996; all cited in Street) have found that the most effective strategies to improve reading are those that emphasize student interest and choice. Students are able to choose the sections and articles that are of most interest to them. Additionally, the reading of newspapers can assist students in the development of their critical thinking and problem solving skills, two important objectives of the social studies curriculum.

The incorporation of technology into the social studies curriculum can provide further opportunities for students to use critical thinking skills (Rice & Wilson, 1999). Technology can be integrated into a constructivist classroom to allow students to: (a) construct knowledge, (b) use collaboration in problem solving, (c) provide meaningful contexts for learning, and (d) relate learning to the students' own prior life experiences. Technology that can be used to enhance the social studies curriculum includes the use of: (a) software/CD-ROMs, (b) multimedia/hypermedia, (c) videodiscs, (d) email, and (e) the Internet. There are computer simulations available that allow students to examine a concept or an issue from various viewpoints and allow the user to assume a variety of roles. Laney (1990, as cited in Rice & Wilson) found that the use of computers was effective in the development of higher order thinking skills.

Another way to engage learners is the use of artifacts. Social studies can be abstract, particularly for younger learners (Morris, 2000). However, the use of artifacts can convey social studies concepts in ways that are concrete and relevant for students. Artifacts can be used to provide students with an object that they can see and touch, which helps to illustrate social studies concepts in a concrete manner. With artifacts, students' curiosity is stimulated and they can link the object with their own experiences. The use of artifacts "creates a setting for social education and moves students from passive listeners to active investigators who analyze the past and connect it to their lives" (Morris, 2000, p. 1).

Assessment of Student Learning

According to Pahl (2003), the goal of assessments is to improve the education and achievement of students. The summative assessments that are currently being utilized in states and school districts provide information on how well, overall, districts, schools, and students perform in regard to a fixed instrument (e.g., standardized tests). However, these types of assessments do not provide direct feedback in regard to the student's specific strengths and weaknesses to teachers and parents. Therefore, the use of these tests is less effective to support better, more in-depth learning.

In an effort to develop standardized tests that are reliable, test writers eliminate items that involve interpretation or complexity (Pahl, 2003). The test items that remain are simple, factually-based, and trivial. Such fixed-result testing does not show what students can do with their knowledge (Nickell, 1993). Nickell stated that "such testing

enables students to demonstrate recall, comprehension, or interpretation of knowledge, but not to demonstrate ability to USE knowledge” (p. 2). Additionally, there is concern because many social studies topics are ignored as teachers attempt to prepare their students for upcoming standardized state exams (Pahl).

Pahl (2003) identified certain factors that should be incorporated into statewide testing to help improve instruction and student achievement. The formative assessments that are utilized in states and school districts should provide feedback, both to students on how they can improve their learning, and to teachers on how they can improve their instruction. Assessments should not be isolated programs, but should be integrated with the curriculum and include long term examination of classroom work. Student and school success should involve a collaborative team of teachers, parents, and members of the community. Lastly, a single test should not be the sole measure of the academic success of a school or student. A variety of assessment methods should be utilized, in order to incorporate higher level thinking skills.

As previously discussed, a primary purpose of social studies is to prepare students for active participation in society (Ross, 2001). In light of this outcomes based approach, Nickell (1993) asserted that testing of knowledge, values, skills, and attitudes should be assessed in alternative ways. As social studies education shifts from memorization of isolated pieces of information to a more integrated model, different methods of assessing student learning are necessary (Austen, Kuhs, & Ryan, 1993). Traditional tests cannot reflect students’ moral and social cognition. Alternative forms of assessment should be

collected on an ongoing basis in order to accurately determine the learner's performance and understanding of objectives.

There are a variety of alternative methods for student assessment available to teachers (Austen et al., 1993). The use of performance based assessments, such as oral reports, debates, or simulations of historical events, allow teachers to evaluate students' level of knowledge and their thinking process simultaneously. Also, systematic observations can be used to give teachers insight into the thought process of students, as well as other valuable information. According to Austen et al., "these records provide rich sources of information when teachers are checking a student's progress over time, when reflecting on whether a particular instructional approach or unit was effective, and when reporting to parents the student's progress" (p. 9).

One of the most effective methods of alternative assessment is a portfolio assessment (Austen et al., 1993). Students and teachers work together to collect samples of the student's work over the course of the unit. The selected pieces represent the learner's ability to meet the objectives of the curriculum. This method of assessment is particularly advantageous because of the level of student involvement. The student is aware of the criteria for evaluation and, therefore, can monitor his or her own progress in light of the curricular goals. Additionally, the students' process of self-evaluation helps to prepare them for roles and responsibilities they will encounter outside of a school setting.

Chapter Summary

The definition of social studies and the various standards that influence the social studies curriculum were outlined in this chapter. An overview of the objectives of social studies instruction was included, as well as guidelines to determine learner outcomes. The advantages of teaching with materials such as tradebooks, newspapers, artifacts, and technology were presented. Lastly, standardized testing and alternative methods for assessing student learning were addressed. Detailed in Chapter 3 are the procedures to develop an integrated social studies curricular unit.

Chapter 3

METHOD

The purpose of this project was to develop an integrated social studies unit that utilized a variety of teaching methods, materials, and vehicles to assess student learning. Social studies instruction can assist students in developing critical and creative thinking skills in addition to imparting academic knowledge. Through integration of the social studies curriculum with other academic areas such as literacy and mathematics, the student is able to view learning as a united whole, rather than in fragmented pieces. Educators can make social studies more appealing to students by incorporating the use of literature, newspapers, artifacts, and technology. Student learning should be evaluated using authentic, meaningful assessments.

Target Population

The groups or individuals that would be interested in using this project and its applications would be teachers at the elementary level. Educators would use this curricular unit as a model to integrate social studies with other academic areas in order to maximize the material that can be covered in the classroom. The unit presented in this project was intended for use in a second grade classroom. The content and activities were planned with the age group and ability level of the students in mind.

Goals

There were three main goals of the curricular unit. The first goal was to integrate social studies with other academic areas. When curricular integration takes place, teachers are able to cover more material in a limited amount of time. Through the integration of social studies with subjects such as literacy, mathematics, science, and technology, students were able to view their learning as an integrated whole and were able to recognize relationships between branches of knowledge.

The second goal of the unit was to utilize a variety of materials and methods of teaching. Using materials other than textbooks helps to pique students' interest and make learning more enjoyable. Also, these materials can offer a more complete, well rounded, and user friendly means by which to acquire knowledge. Using various methods of instruction ensured that student learning was optimized by meeting the needs of each student.

The final goal of the unit was to assess student learning in authentic, meaningful ways. Standardized tests that are currently used by state officials and school district administrators to measure students' academic success require students to demonstrate recall and comprehension skills. However, these instruments are unable to test students' ability to use their knowledge. Alternative assessments allow students to demonstrate a mastery of the material and the ability to use creative and critical thinking skills.

Procedures

The lessons contained in the unit addressed, whenever possible, learning objectives in multiple academic areas in the same lesson. Lessons addressed the six strands of social studies: (a) history, (b) geography, (c) government, (d) economics, (e) sociology, and (f) anthropology. Additionally, the academic areas of reading, writing, mathematics, science, and technology were incorporated into lessons.

A variety of materials were used in the lessons comprising the curricular unit. Various tradebooks were utilized to teach social studies concepts, including fiction and nonfiction texts. Newspapers, in hard copy form and via the Internet, were used. Artifacts were used to provide students with concrete objects to connect with the concepts being presented. Additionally, the use of technology was incorporated into lessons whenever possible.

The individual lessons of the unit were taught utilizing a variety of teaching methods. A constructivist approach was used to allow students to learn concepts through exploration and to connect the learning with their own life experiences. Cooperative learning groups provided vital interaction with peers. Lessons addressed auditory, visual, and kinesthetic learning styles by incorporating activities that were geared toward different learning styles.

The unit incorporated a variety of assessment tools to evaluate student learning. Assessment were integrated into lessons and student assignments. Student mastery of concepts was assessed at various points during the unit using alternative

assessments, including performance assessments and systematic observations. To assess student learning as a whole over the course of the unit, a portfolio assessment was used.

Assessment

The curricular unit was evaluated by several master teachers. These individuals provided informal feedback to the author in regard to how well the goals of the unit were accomplished and how practical the unit would be to implement in a classroom. They provided comments about specific components of the unit that are effective, as well as suggestions for areas for improvement.

Chapter Summary

The goals, procedures, and assessment of the curricular unit were presented. In Chapter 4, Results, the author will present the individual lesson plans that will make up the integrated social studies unit about Hawaii. Discussion of the results and assessment of the unit will be detailed in Chapter 5, along with recommendations for future applications of the project.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

Social studies is an essential part of a balanced curriculum. Exposure to social studies, and more specifically the six strands that comprise it (history, geography, government, economics, sociology, and anthropology) helps students to not only gain academic knowledge, but to develop into responsible members of society. With limited instructional time and increasing demands of what is to be taught, lessons that integrate multiple subject areas and learning objectives are necessary in today's classrooms. This unit will model ways in which social studies concepts can be integrated with other academic areas, such as writing and mathematics. It will also utilize a variety of teaching materials, learning activities, and assessment tools.

Unit Lessons

Lesson 1

Introduction to Hawaii

Lesson Objectives

Students will

1. Think about their prior knowledge about the Hawaiian islands; and
2. Produce their own questions about Hawaii.

Materials

Chart paper, markers, sticky notes (three colors), pencils

Behavior Set

1. Gather students in the group meeting area to begin the lesson;
2. Instruct students to return to their desks and get out a pencil to complete their sticky notes;
3. Communicate to students that the sticky notes are only to be used for recording their thoughts and that they may begin as soon as they receive their sticky notes;
4. Instruct students to return to the group meeting area after they have completed their sticky notes.

Anticipatory Set

“Today we are going to begin learning about Hawaii. When we first start studying something new, it is a good idea to think about what we already know and what we would like to learn. So, I would like you to begin thinking about what you already know about

Hawaii. You may want to close your eyes and try to visualize what it would be like to be in Hawaii. What are some things that you might see? What kinds of food would you eat? What would the weather be like?”

Procedures

1. Draw three vertical columns on a piece of chart paper. Label the columns as follows: Know, Want to Know, and Learned. Designate one color sticky note for what students already know, one color sticky note for what students would like to know, and the third color sticky note for what they learned. Place a sticky note of each color in the corresponding column to serve as a visual aid for students;
2. Distribute two sticky notes to each student (one for each of the first two columns);
3. Instruct students to write one thing that they know about Hawaii and one thing that they would like to know about Hawaii on the appropriate colored sticky notes;
4. Have students place their sticky notes in the coordinating columns on the chart paper and gather in the class meeting area;
5. Read the sticky notes on the chart together as a class. Discuss them as appropriate;
6. Inform students that they will be learning a lot about Hawaii over the next weeks. Tell students that all of the work that they do as part of the unit will be put together in a portfolio which will be used to give them a grade;

7. At the end of the unit, give students the third color sticky note and have them write down one thing that they learned;
8. Have students place their sticky notes in the 'Learned' column; and
9. Discuss notes as a class.

Closure

“Today we have talked about many things that we already know about Hawaii, and we discussed some of the questions that we have about the islands. Throughout the unit I want to you be thinking about these questions and trying to see if you can find some answers.”

*Lesson 2**Edible Map of the Islands*

Lesson Objectives

Students will:

1. Name the eight primary Hawaiian islands; and
2. Identify the general size, shape, and location of the islands in relation to one another.

Materials

Overhead, individual transparencies of each of the eight islands, a transparency of a map of the islands (which can be taken from an atlas), blue construction paper, glue, graham crackers (nine squares per student), and markers.

Behavior Set

1. Students should be seated at their desks;
2. Explain that you will be passing out graham crackers. Ask students to place their hands in their laps and keep them there. Tell the students that they should not touch the graham crackers until you tell them to do so; and
3. When it is time for the students to start nibbling explain to them that, while this is a fun activity, they are not to play with their graham crackers.

Anticipatory Set

“Yesterday we talked about some of the things that we already know about Hawaii. We talked about the fact that there are many islands that make up the Hawaiian island chain. Today we are going to make a map of the eight islands that we are going to be studying.

This is going to be a very special kind of map because it is one that we are going to have to use our teeth to make! Does anyone have an idea about what islands we might include on our map?"

Procedures

1. Distribute materials. Each student should get a piece of construction paper, glue, and nine graham cracker squares;
2. Instruct students to put their names on the back of the construction paper;
3. Explain that the students will nibble the shape of each island out of a graham cracker square. Tell them that each island will be shown on the overhead. Let them know that getting the exact shape is not what is important. The important thing is to look at how big each island is and where it is located compared to the others.
4. Allow students to eat one of their graham cracker squares so that they will not be tempted to do so with the other squares that are intended to be made into islands.
5. One at a time, beginning with Kauai and working southward, show the transparencies of the islands and model how to nibble the graham cracker into the shape of the islands. Draw the students' attention to the approximate size of each island in relation to the others;
6. As each island is constructed, have students place it in its approximate locate on the construction paper;

7. After all the islands are constructed and placed, circulate around students desks to check their work. Once islands are placed correctly, instruct students to glue them down;
8. After gluing, instruct students to get out a black marker to label each island.
Using the transparency of the map of Hawaii, model how to label the islands.
Label them together one at a time; and
9. Display graham cracker maps around the room.

Closure

“Today we made a map of eight of the Hawaiian islands. Who can name the islands that we nibbled? Which island is the biggest? Which one is the smallest?”

Extension

Have students write a fact about each island on a note card and glue it on the map, connecting it with the corresponding island.

Evaluation

1. Check students’ maps for the correct number of islands;
2. Check maps for general accuracy of island name, size, and location.

Lesson 3

Hawaii Fun Facts Books

Lesson Objectives

Students will:

1. Identify the eight Hawaiian islands that will be the focus of our unit;
2. Identify at least one fact associated with each of the eight Hawaiian islands; and
3. Identify and record important information.

Materials

Fun Facts books (one per student) consisting of one page for each island for a total of eight pages (see Appendix A for master copy of pages), crayons or colored pencils, pencils, and *Peter Panini's Children's Guide to the Hawaiian Islands* by Stacey Kaopuiki (ISBN # 1878498010).

Behavior Set

1. Ask students to come to the class meeting area with a pencil. Remind them to choose a seat where they will be able to listen and not be distracted; and
2. After the lesson, ask students to put their books away. Let them know that they will be using these books for the next couple of weeks and that they will need to put them in their desk in a spot that they will be easy to find;

Anticipatory Set

“The other day we talked about things that we already know about the Hawaiian islands and some things that we would like to learn. We have made maps of eight of the islands. Starting today, we are going to learn some interesting facts about each of those islands.

You will keep track of your favorite facts in your own 'Fun Facts' book. Each day for the next eight days we will focus on one of the islands.”

Procedures

1. Distribute 'Fun Facts' books to students and have them put their name on the front;
2. Instruct students to listen for two facts that they find interesting and record them on the appropriate page in their 'Fun Facts' book. Let students know that the pages will be read twice - the first time they can just listen and the second they can record their facts;
3. Read the appropriate pages from *Peter Panini's Children's Guide to the Hawaiian Islands* according to the following schedule: Day one - Ni'ihau, Day two - Kaua'i, Day three - O'ahu, Day four - Moloka'i, Day five - Lana'i, Day six - Kaho'olawe, Day seven - Maui, Day eight - Hawai'i;
4. After reading the section twice, give the students a few minutes to finish recording their facts and to draw a picture to go with one of the facts;
5. Ask several students to share the facts that they chose for the island of the day;
and
6. Instruct students to place their 'Fun Facts' book in their desk until the next lesson.

Closure

“What are the islands that we have learned about so far? What is the coolest thing that you've learned so far about Hawaii?”

Modification

For students unable to write two facts, ask them to choose and record one fact.

Extension

Students may use free time and independent reading time to find additional facts about the island of the day. Those facts would be written on index cards and posted around the room for other students to read.

Evaluation

1. Observe the students' ability to identify important information; and
2. Evaluate the accuracy of the facts.

Lesson 4

Newspapers: Here and There

This lesson is based on an assumption that students have a prior exposure and basic knowledge of computers and using the Internet. Basic familiarity with a newspaper is also assumed to be background knowledge.

Lesson Objectives

Students will:

1. Practice Internet navigation and information retrieval skills;
2. Practice making and checking predictions;
3. Compare and contrast two sources of information; and
4. Recognize similarities and differences between events in their own community and those in a Hawaiian community.

Materials

Local newspapers (one per pair of students), computers with Internet access, Venn Diagram worksheet (see Appendix A), pencils.

Behavior Set

1. Have student pairs find a place in the classroom where they would like to work;
2. Discuss with students the expectations for working with a partner. Students should be on-task and working collaboratively;
3. After the newspaper portion of the lesson is complete, ask students to move to the computers; and

4. Review appropriate computer behavior (i.e. listening carefully to directions, going only to designated websites, and taking turns typing and operating the mouse).

Anticipatory Set

“If I wanted to find some information about what was going on in our community, where is one place that I could look?” Lead the discussion toward newspapers being a source of information. Discuss what kinds of information a person could expect to find in a newspaper. “If I were to read a newspaper from Hawaii, what do you think that it would tell me? Can you make some predictions about the kinds of stories that I might read? Do you think that the articles in the newspaper would be the same or different from the articles that we see in our newspaper? Today you are going to get a chance to see if your predictions are correct.”

Procedure

1. Place students in pairs. These pairs should be formed carefully, taking into consideration students’ academic strengths and challenges. Students who struggle with reading and/or technology should be placed with a partner who is strong in those areas;
2. Give each pair a local newspaper and ask them to spend some time exploring. Ask them to pay particular attention to the subject matter of different articles and sections of the newspaper;
3. Ask each pair to sit in front of a computer and access one of the following websites: www.kauaiworld.com, www.mauinews.com,

www.westhawaiiitoday.com, or www.honoluluadvertiser.com and explore the contents of the webpage;

4. Review the concept of a Venn Diagram and the placement of information within the circles. Have students complete the Venn Diagram worksheet comparing and contrasting the two newspapers; and
5. Meet as a class to discuss students' prior predictions and if those predictions were correct.

Closure

"Today we looked at the newspaper that we have in our community and we compared it to a Hawaiian newspaper on the Internet. We found things that were the same and we found some things that were different."

Modification

Ask students to list one thing that was the same in both papers and one thing that was different instead of completing the Venn Diagram worksheet.

Extension

Have students complete another Venn Diagram comparing two of the Internet papers from Hawaii.

Evaluation

1. Check that the students understood the concept of the Venn Diagram by looking at where they placed information within the diagram.
2. Evaluate the information in each section of the Venn Diagram for accuracy and level of sophistication.

*Lesson 5**Postcards from Paradise*

Lesson Objectives

Students will:

1. Learn and practice postcard-writing skills;
2. Recognize the difference between a letter and a postcard;
3. Identify the purpose of a postcard; and
4. Incorporate knowledge about Hawaii into their writing.

Materials

Real postcards to show as examples, chart paper, markers, ‘postcard’ paper (see Appendix A), an assortment of Hawaiian books as references (see Appendix B), crayons, pencils.

Behavior Set

1. Call students to the group meeting area, reminding them to make a good choice about where they sit;
2. After the shared writing portion of the lesson, instruct students to return to their desks and get out a pencil; and
3. Distribute the ‘postcard’ paper. Instruct students to use their best handwriting, as their work will be displayed for the entire class to see.

Anticipatory Set

“Raise your hand if you have ever received a postcard. What is something that makes a postcard different from a letter? What kinds of information do people put in postcards?”

If you were in Hawaii on vacation, what are some things that you might write about in a postcard?"

Procedure

1. Pass around some real postcards as you discuss the why someone might send a postcard and what makes a postcard different from a letter;
2. On a piece of chart paper draw an oversized version of the back of a postcard. Discuss the different parts including the opening, body, closing, and area for the address;
3. Together with the class, do a shared writing activity pretending to write someone a postcard from Colorado, emphasizing the parts that were previously discussed;
4. Brainstorm with students some of the things that they might want to write a postcard about if they were in Hawaii. Record their ideas on chart paper;
5. Give students 'postcard' paper and instruct them to write a postcard as if they were vacationing in Hawaii. The body of their postcard must contain at least three facts or activities associated with Hawaii. If a student is having trouble thinking of what to write, suggest that he or she may look in some Hawaiian books for ideas;
6. Once students have completed the writing portion of their postcard, have them complete the picture side with their crayons, drawing any Hawaiian scene; and
7. Display 'postcards' around the room hanging from the ceiling so that both sides are visible.

Closure

“Who can tell me the important parts of a postcard? What things did you include in the body of your postcard from Hawaii?”

Modification

Have students work in pairs to create a postcard.

Extension

Have students write their postcard from a specific island, incorporating facts from that island.

Evaluation

1. Check that the postcard contains each of the following: address, opening, body, closing;
2. Check that the postcard contains at least three facts that are associated with Hawaii.

Lesson 6

Class Hawaiian Counting Book

Lesson Objectives

Students will:

1. Connect a new text with their prior knowledge of objects associated with Hawaii to create new book for the classroom;
2. Learn how to count to ten in the Hawaiian language; and
3. Practice one-to-one number correspondence.

Materials

Bring Me What I Ask by Stacey Kaopuiki (ISBN # 1878498037), chart paper, markers, class book paper (see Appendix A), crayons, colored pencils, pencils.

Behavior Set

1. Ask students to sit in the group meeting area;
2. Tell students that they need to pay close attention to the story, as they will be learning to count in Hawaiian;
3. Before dividing students into cooperative learning groups, explain that each of them is expected to stay on task and contribute to the group;
4. Allow students to work in their groups in a location of their choice around the classroom; and
5. Explain that the page they will create will become part of a class book. Therefore, they should use their best handwriting and produce a page of which they will be proud.

Anticipatory Set

“How many of you know how to speak a language other than English? The Hawaiian people also have their own language, as we’ve seen in some of the books that we’ve been looking at. Can you think of any Hawaiian words that you already know? Today, we are going to learn to count to ten in Hawaiian and we are going to make a new class book to keep in our classroom library!”

Procedure

1. Read *Bring Me What I Ask*, stopping to record the Hawaiian word for each number on chart paper;
2. Chorally practice counting to ten in Hawaiian using the list previously made on chart paper as a reference;
3. Divide students into cooperative learning groups of three students, taking into consideration individual student’s strengths and challenges;
4. Instruct students that each group will be responsible for creating one page in the class book, which will be modeled after *Bring Me What I Ask*;
5. Brainstorm as a class some Hawaiian items that the Troll might request. Record suggestions on chart paper;
6. Assign each group a page for the book, telling them the number of items that they will be writing about (for example two items);
7. Allow groups time to brainstorm together what items they would like to use for their page. Emphasize that the number of items should be equal to the number that they were assigned;

8. Have groups write the text for their page and illustrate with crayon or colored pencil;
9. Ask groups to present their pages to the rest of the class; and
10. Compile pages to construct the class book. Place in the classroom library.

Closure

“Today we learned how to count to ten in Hawaiian. Let’s practice that one more time together.”

Evaluation

1. Informal observation of students’ ability to recite numbers up to ten in Hawaiian; and
2. Evaluation of group pages for inclusion of Hawaiian objects and correspondence between the number of objects and the number assigned.

*Lesson 7**Daily Weather Log*

Lesson Objectives

Students will:

1. Compare weather in Honolulu with the weather in Denver, Colorado;
2. Practice Internet navigation and information retrieval skills; and
3. Graph and interpret data.

Materials

Computer with Internet access, weather log sheet (see Appendix A), chart paper, markers

Behavior Set

1. Review appropriate behavior for working on the Internet, emphasizing that students are only to access the website associated with the lesson;
2. Show students where they can find the weather log in the classroom and instruct them to put it back in its place after they have recorded weather information on their designated day; and
3. When it is time to compile the data, ask students to come to the class meeting area. Remind them to make a good choice about where they sit.

Anticipatory Set

“One of the things that makes Hawaii such an appealing place to visit for many people is the weather that they enjoy there. If you were going to Hawaii on vacation, what kinds of clothes would you pack? Why? Over the next few weeks we will be tracking the weather in Honolulu, the capital of Hawaii, and comparing it to the weather that we have here in

Colorado. Each of you will get a chance to be a weather reporter by looking up Honolulu's weather on the Internet and recording it on our classroom weather log."

Procedures

1. Model for students how to access the weather information on the Internet. They should use the website www.weather.msn.com to find information for both Honolulu and Denver. Demonstrate how to type the city names into the search area of the website and how to record the information on the weather log sheet;
2. Each day draw a student's name to gather weather data for the day. After a student has been chosen, their name should not be drawn again. Continue this process until all students have had the opportunity to collect weather data from the Internet;
3. Assist students as needed in accessing, gathering, and recording data on the weather log sheet (which should be kept in a central classroom location);
4. When all students have had a turn collecting data, gather the class together in the meeting area to compile the data;
5. On chart paper, construct a line plot graph for the daily high temperatures. Use one color marker for temperatures in Honolulu, and one for temperatures in Denver. Ask students to assist in this process by asking questions such as 'What would be our range of possible temperatures?' and 'How would I graph a temperature of 84 degrees?';

6. After both sets of data are graphed together (Honolulu temperatures and Denver temperatures), ask students to turn to a neighbor and discuss some things that they notice about the data; and
7. Discuss as a class how the high temperatures in Honolulu compare to those of Denver. Ask students to share other observations that they made about the graph.

Closure

“Over the past few weeks we have tracked the weather for Denver and for Honolulu. We used the data that we gathered to make a graph. What is one thing you learned by looking at our graph?”

Modification

Have students work together to find weather information on the Internet.

Extension

Ask students to track and compare high temperatures on two different islands.

*Lesson 8**Two Tales of Hawaii*

Lesson Objectives

Students will:

1. Recognize that the Hawaiian people have legends that explain events in history, including the existence of the volcanoes on the Hawaiian islands;
2. Learn about the volcanoes that formed the Hawaiian islands according to science and according to legend;
3. Construct ideas about why legends exist; and
4. Practice retelling skills.

Materials

Two Tales of Hawaii by Terry Pierce (ISBN # 0896109232), corresponding worksheet (see Appendix A), paper, pencils

Behavior Set

1. Ask students to come to the group meeting area, reminding them to choose a seat where they will be able to listen and follow directions;
2. Let students know that they will be acting out parts of the story. Explain that when they are acting they may not leave the meeting area and that they must be careful not to step on others. They must be in control of their bodies;
3. Before students are placed into pairs review the expectation that they are to be on-task and that each student will contribute; and
4. Allow students to work wherever they like in the classroom.

Anticipatory Set

“Did you know that the Hawaiian islands are the tips of the tallest mountains in the world? If you measured their height from the bottom of the ocean to the top of the highest point in Hawaii, it would be taller than Mt. Everest! Have you ever wondered how the islands got there? Does anyone have any ideas how they formed? Today we are going to learn about how the islands came to be. We are not going to learn just one story about the volcanoes that formed them, but we are going to learn two different stories. One is the scientific story about how the islands were formed. The other is a legend that the Hawaiian people have passed down about Pele, the Hawaiian goddess of fire. Has anyone ever heard the word ‘legend’ before? What is a legend?”

Procedure

1. Introduce the book *Two Tales of Hawaii* to the class. Show the students that the pages on the left side of the book describe how the islands formed from a scientific perspective, and that the pages on the right side tell the legend of Pele, the Hawaiian goddess of fire;
2. Divide the class into two groups. Assign one to be the scientific group and the other to be the legend group;
3. Tell the groups that as the story is read, they are to act out what is happening on their pages (i.e. the scientific group would act out the events occurring in the pages on the left, and the legend group would act out the events occurring in the pages on the right);
4. Read the story to the class at a slow pace so that they may act out the events;

5. When the book is finished, have students break into pairs - one student from the scientific group, one from the legend group;
6. Have students retell the story of the Hawaiian volcanoes to their partner from the perspective that they acted out;
7. Distribute worksheets to the pairs and have each pair complete one worksheet;
and
8. Reconvene as a large group and have each pair share their thoughts about the last question on the worksheet - Why do you think that the Hawaiian people have a legend that explains the islands' volcanoes?

Closure

“Today we learned two stories about Hawaii. We also learned about legends and why they are important.”

Extension

Ask students to write their own legend about something in their community.

Evaluation

1. Informal observation of pairs as they retell the two perspectives and discuss the worksheet questions;
2. Evaluate worksheets for accuracy regarding information from the book;
3. Informal evaluation of students' explanations for the existence of legends.

Lesson 9

The Legend of Lehua

Lesson Objectives

Students will:

1. Use their background knowledge about legends to understand a new story;
2. Practice sequencing skills;
3. Gain a better understanding of Hawaiian legends.

Materials

Lehua: A Legend of Old Hawaii by Dietrich Varez (ISBN # 0896104478), sequencing worksheet (see Appendix A), scissors, glue, pencils

Behavior Set

1. Instruct students to come to the class meeting area;
2. After reading the story have students return to their seats, take out their scissors and a glue stick, and place them at the top of their desk. Tell students not to touch their supplies until they get their worksheet; and
3. Ask students to complete the worksheet without talking to a neighbor.

Anticipatory Set

“Yesterday we learned about the legend of Pele and we talked about some reasons that legends exist. What were some of those reasons? Today we are going to read another legend. This one is about a woman named Lehua who goes on a journey to break a curse that is placed on her. Her journey takes her to many different places and she meets many different creatures.”

Procedure

1. Read *Lehua: A Legend of Old Hawaii* aloud, instructing students to pay attention to the steps that Lehua follows to break the curse;
2. Distribute sequencing worksheet and explain directions;
3. Have students complete the worksheet independently; and
4. Discuss as a class some of the morals that were woven throughout the story.

Closure

“Today we read another legend about Hawaii. How was it similar to the legend that we read yesterday?”

Modification

Allow students to use the book to assist them in sequencing the events of the story.

Extension

Have students take on the role of the author and continue the story by writing the next event or events that would occur.

Evaluation

1. Assess the accuracy of the students’ sequencing worksheet;
2. Evaluate students’ understanding of the morals associated with the story through informal discussion.

*Lesson 10**Saving the Honu*

Lesson Objectives

Students will:

1. Learn about the environmental hazards that affect the sea turtles, also known as honu;
2. Recognize citizens' ability to affect governmental policies through correspondence with government officials; and
3. Practice letter writing and persuasive writing techniques.

Materials

Video - *Red Turtle Rising* produced by the Honu Project (may be ordered through the World Turtle Trust website at www.world-turtle-trust.org/gifts), TV, VCR, chart paper, markers, lined paper, envelopes, stamps, pencils

Behavior Set

1. Ask students to gather in the class meeting area;
2. Discuss behavior expectations for watching a video. There should be no talking. Students should be looking for new information that they learn about sea turtles and the challenges that the sea turtles are facing;
3. Ask students to return to their desks to write the rough draft of their letters;
4. Conference with students at their desks; and
5. Reinforce the need for students to use their neatest handwriting when writing the final copy of their letter.

Anticipatory Set

“In *Lehua: A Legend of Old Hawaii* Lehua met many wonderful animals on her journey.

What were some of those animals? Hawaii is famous for the many species of birds and marine animals that live there. One of the most wondrous of those animals is the sea turtle. Unfortunately, people sometimes make choices that cause trouble for the turtles.

Can you think of any times that choices that people make affect animals? What are some things that can be done to try to fix the situation? Do you know that ordinary people just like you and me can do something to help fix the problem, and we don’t even have to leave our classroom?”

Procedure

1. Show the video *Red Turtle Rising*;
2. Discuss as a class the things that the students learned about the sea turtles and what they found most concerning. List those things on chart paper;
3. Ask the students to explain how they would like to see the situation with the turtles change;
4. Explain to the students that public officials are there to serve the people and that one of the ways that people can let their elected officials know what is important is by writing a letter. Tell them that they are going to let the President know how they feel about what is happening with turtles in Hawaii by writing him a letter;
5. Model the different parts of a letter, referring back to the parts of a postcard that the students are familiar with from a previous lesson. Emphasize that a letter must include the date, an opening, a body, and a closing;

6. Brainstorm about what the students might like to include in their letters, referring back to the list of things that they found troubling from the video;
7. Give students paper and have them write a rough draft of their letter;
8. As students complete rough drafts, conference with them individually to clarify thoughts and correct spelling as needed;
9. Have students write a final copy of their letter and put it in an envelope addressed as follows: President George W. Bush, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington DC, 20500; and
10. Read responses as a class if any are received.

Closure

“Today we learned a lot about sea turtles and the things that harm them. We learned, too, that as citizens our voices matter. To let the President know what is important to us, we wrote letters to him asking for his help in protecting the turtles.”

Modification

Have students dictate a letter rather than write it.

Extension

Have students make a poster about the plight of the sea turtles to display in the hallway for other students to see.

Evaluation

1. Check that each letter has the necessary components;
2. Evaluate the students’ use of information from the video in their letter.

*Lesson 11**Travel Posters*

Lesson Objectives

Students will:

1. Incorporate knowledge gained over the course of the unit into a poster promoting Hawaii;
2. Work cooperatively in small groups to achieve a common goal;
3. Practice using research skills to gather information and/or pictures to include on their posters;
4. Demonstrate an appreciation for the activities and sites that Hawaii has to offer; and
5. Recognize tourism as a vital component of Hawaii's economy.

Materials

Poster board (one per group), computers with Internet access and the ability to print, markers, colored pencils, crayons, scissors, paper, pencils

Behavior Set

1. Gather the class in the meeting area;
2. Review behavior expectations for working in groups. Let students know that each of them is expected to work on the poster; and
3. Allow students to work anywhere they wish in the classroom.

Anticipatory Set

“Over the past weeks we have learned a lot about Hawaii. We have learned about where

it is, what the weather is like there, what makes each of the islands special, some of the animals that call Hawaii home, and much more. Raise your hand if you think that you would like to get on a plane and go there now! You are not alone. Did you know that many people in Hawaii depend on tourists to make a living? Tourism is so important to the people of Hawaii that the state spends money each year to try to convince people from other places to come and visit. Now that we know so much about Hawaii, I thought that we could make some posters to show everyone else all the wonderful things that Hawaii has to offer. Maybe our posters will even convince someone to go there on vacation!”

Procedure

1. Brainstorm as a class the information that one might expect to find on a travel poster. Record those ideas on chart paper;
2. Divide students into cooperative learning groups of three to four students taking into consideration areas of strength and challenges for each student;
3. Inform students that the group must decide together what their poster will showcase, and that each person will be responsible for a portion of the poster;
4. Allow groups time to brainstorm and assign jobs amongst themselves;
5. When a group has an outline of what they want their poster to contain, conference with them to solidify ideas;
6. Make books and the Internet available as resources for students;
7. Make various art supplies available for students to use on their posters, as well as the opportunity to print pictures off of the Internet;

8. When all groups are finished creating their posters, have students present their poster to the rest of the class; and
9. Display posters in the hallway for the entire school to see.

Closure

“We have learned a lot about Hawaii over the past weeks. You used many of the things that you learned to make beautiful travel posters. Do you think that our class posters will convince others to visit Hawaii?”

Evaluation

1. Informal observation of individual student contributions;
2. Group evaluation of final product including specific information included about Hawaii.

End of Unit Assessment

Student learning for the unit will be assessed through a portfolio of student work. All completed assignments should be placed together to create a body of evidence that indicates a student's level of learning for the unit. The portfolio should be evaluated for accuracy of information (including student understanding of specific concepts taught), demonstration of critical thinking skills, creativity, and neatness of work.

Chapter Summary

The six strands that comprise the social studies are easily incorporated into daily lessons that address other content areas such as literacy, mathematics, technology, and science. This unit utilized a variety of materials, such as tradebooks, newspapers, and the Internet, to increase student engagement in learning. Students were afforded many opportunities to interact with one another in addition to the typical interactions between the child and the educator. Assessment of student learning was incorporated into lessons, rather than occurring in isolation. Finally, students were presented with ample opportunities to develop and use critical thinking skills through a constructivist approach. In Chapter 5 the author will reflect upon the unit, as well as suggest areas for further study.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this project was to provide a model for teachers for how to incorporate social studies instruction into their daily teachings of reading, writing, mathematics, science, and technology. The unit was intended to utilize a variety of teaching materials, such as tradebooks and artifacts, as well as instructional methods. Additionally, a variety of assessment vehicles were used to determine student performance and acquisition of knowledge. Since the author was unable to teach the unit, a number of master teachers were asked to review the lessons and provide feedback to the author.

Objectives Achieved

The author was successful in integrating social studies with other academic areas such as literacy and mathematics. Each of the lessons in the unit integrated a social studies concept with at least one additional academic area. Master teachers who reviewed the unit commented on how masterfully the academic areas were woven together. Not only were the social studies concepts conveyed, but skills from other academic areas were taught in meaningful and realistic ways.

The unit incorporated a variety of materials and teaching methods to engage students and meet the needs of children with different learning styles. Master teachers remarked upon the experiential nature of the lessons and the inclusion of activities that

appealed to a variety of learning style preferences. They noted that the lessons would not only be academically valuable, but that they would be fun for students as well. Also, the assessment tools utilized in the unit were meaningful and authentic.

The master teachers who reviewed the unit noted that each lesson had well thought-out objectives and that the objectives were successfully met. The purpose for learning was also communicated to the students. In lessons that required students to listen to a story or watch a video, the class was clearly instructed about the information for which they should be watching or listening. The closure included with each lesson will help students to reconnect to the main concepts of the lessons. Master teachers noted that providing closure has been a powerful strategy that they have utilized in their classrooms. Additionally, there were strong connections between the lessons. The lesson in which students wrote a postcard meshed nicely with the letter-writing lesson, for instance.

Limitations to the Project

The largest limitation to the project was the author's inability to teach the lessons. The unit addresses the need for the integration of social studies with other academic areas and to engage learners in meaningful tasks and assessments. However, the reception and effectiveness of the lessons in the ordinary classroom are not known. It is safe to assume that there would be some modifications to the unit that would occur based on the experience of teaching the lessons to children. Similarly, the extensions and modifications included with the lessons may or may not work for individual students.

These areas would need to be adapted to meet the individual needs and abilities of students.

The unit was designed with the background knowledge of the author's students in mind. The unit assumes that students have a degree of familiarity with the Hawaiian islands. However, a master teacher pointed out that this is not the case with all students. The population of children that she serves, for example, would have very limited background knowledge about Hawaii. It would therefore be necessary for a teacher to assess students' background knowledge prior to beginning the unit and modify the content of the lessons as needed.

Suggestions for Future Study

There are many possibilities for further study related to this project. One of the most intriguing of these would be a look into the amount of classroom time that has been taken away from social studies instruction in recent years. As previously stated, the testing movement has had a substantial impact on the amount of time that teachers are able to devote exclusively to social studies instruction. However, the author was unable to find specific data relating to the number of minutes of social studies instruction that has been sacrificed as a result of the current testing climate. It would be interesting to view current data for social studies instructional time and compare it to data from the years before the testing movement took hold.

In light of the emphasis placed on academic standards, an area of future study that would have a great deal of importance would be that of the development of a set of

unified social studies standards. As detailed in Chapter Two, there are social studies standards at the national, state, and district levels. Additionally, there are separate standards outlined for the various strands that comprise the social studies. Frequently, those standards are not congruent with one another, and sometimes even compete against each other. The creation of one set of social studies standards would assist educators in ensuring that they are providing adequate social studies instruction.

Project Summary

Social studies instruction is an essential component to a well-rounded education. Instruction in each of the six strands that comprise the social studies accomplishes a number of goals. First, it imparts knowledge through the learning of facts, concepts, and generalizations. Second, it prepares individuals to become participating members of society by socializing people to the societal norms. Lastly, social studies instruction encourages critical and creative thinking skills.

Although most people agree that social studies instruction is an important part of the educational process, many teachers have trouble finding time for this content area due to the increased emphasis on literacy and mathematical skills. The purpose of this project was to create a unit that integrated social studies concepts with other academic areas in order to maximize instructional time. The social studies lessons incorporated a variety of additional academic areas such as writing, mathematics, and technology. Students were taught social studies concepts through the use of various materials, and their learning was assessed in purposeful ways. The unit was intended to serve as a model to encourage

teachers to include social studies in their daily teaching. Every child deserves to benefit from the knowledge and skills that an education rich in social studies instruction can provide.

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APPENDIX A

Worksheets

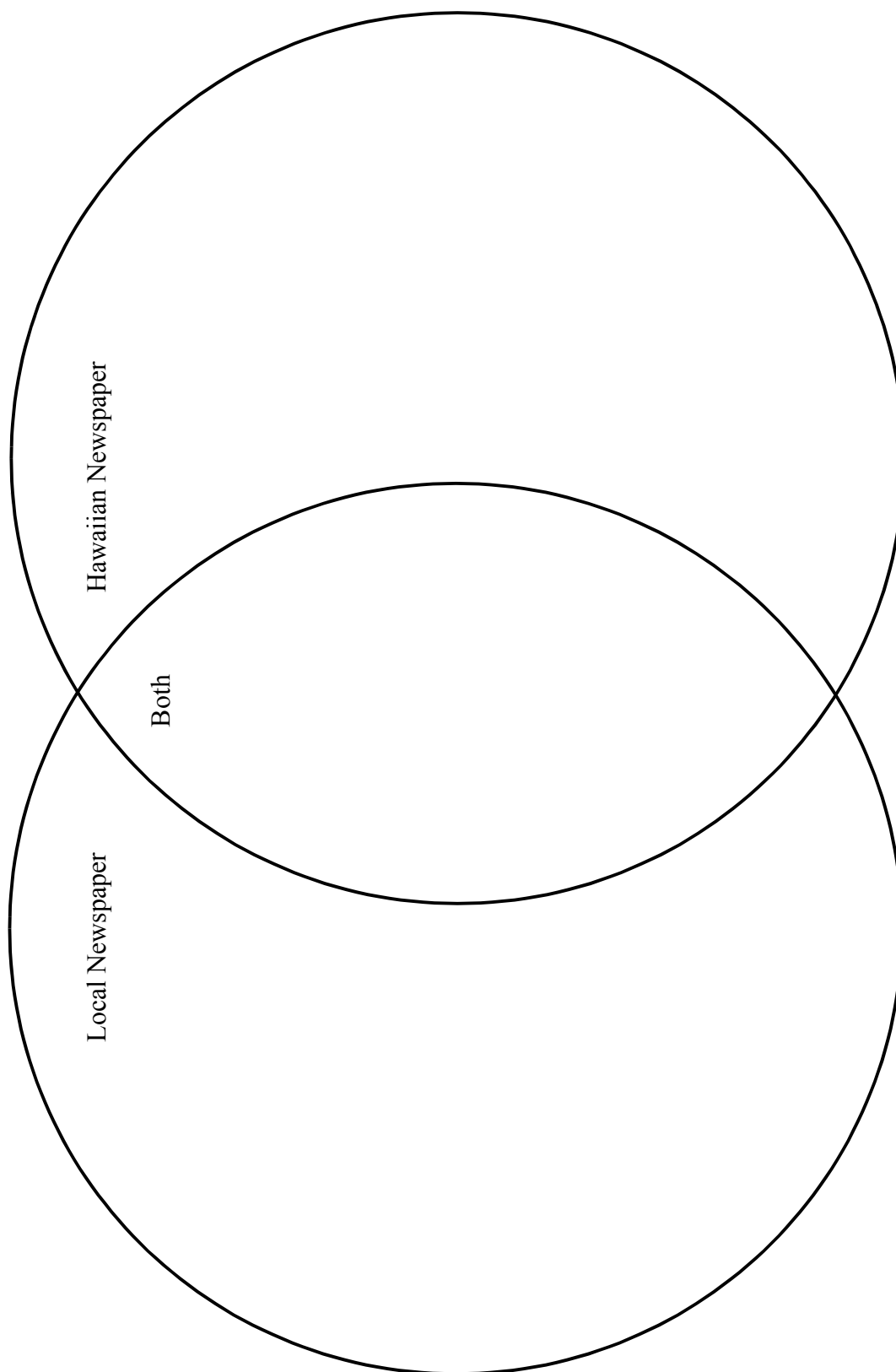
Fun Fact Book Master Page

Island _____

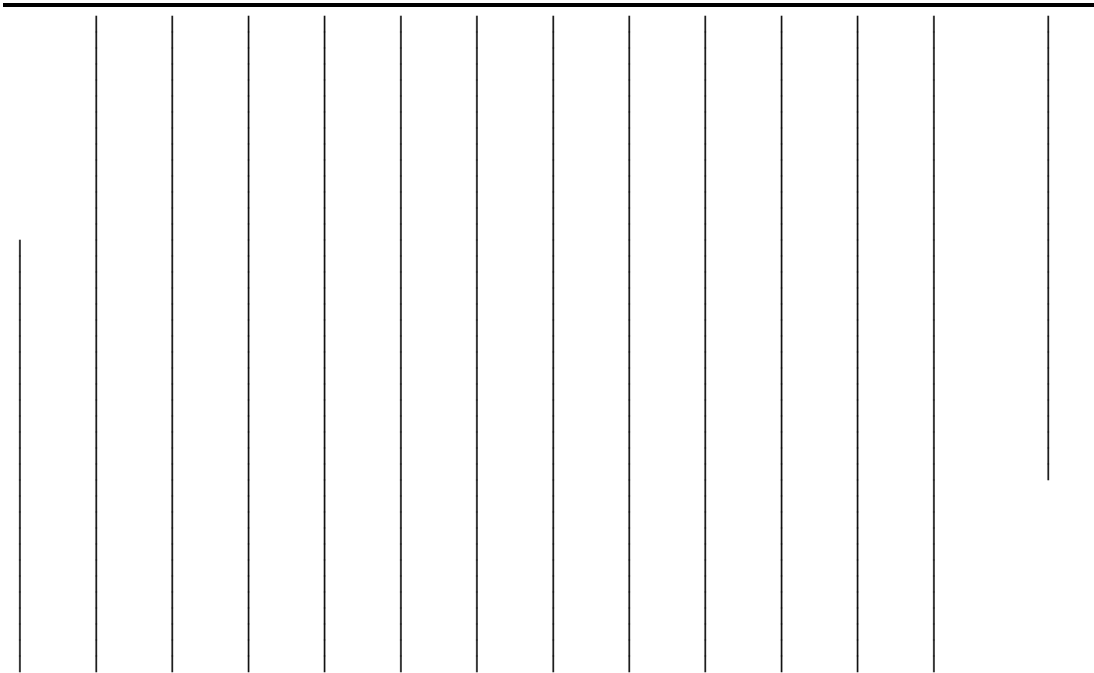
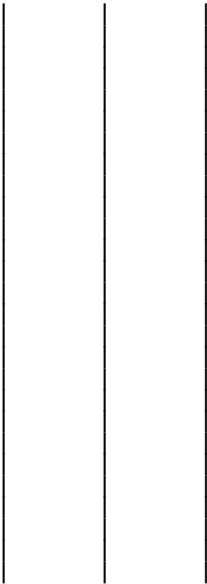
1. _____

2. _____

Venn Diagram Worksheet



Postcard Paper



Hawaiian Counting Book Master Page

Weather Log

[illegible]

Name _____

Name _____

Two Tales of Hawaii

1. What are some ways that the two stories are the same?

2. How are the two stories different from one another?

3. Do you think that it's possible for someone to believe in both stories? _____

Why or why not? _____

4. Why do you think that the Hawaiian people have a legend that explains the islands' volcanoes?

Story Sequencing Worksheet

Name _____

Lehua: A Legend of Old Hawaii

Directions: Cut out the events from the story. Glue them in the order in which they happened.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Lehua found the happy-face spider and the curse was lifted.

Lehua and 'Ehu travel to the Big Island on the back of a giant turtle.

Lehua was born from a lehua lei on top of a boulder.

Lehua helped the chief move the boulder.

The kahuna placed a curse on Lehua for freeing the pig.

APPENDIX B

Recommended Classroom Resources

Recommended Classroom Resources

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