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Teaching the fifth grade social studies curriculum through thematic units

Helen A. Gagnon

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TEACHING THE FIFTH GRADE SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM THROUGH
THEMATIC UNITS

A Project Submitted to
The Faculty of the School of Education
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the
Degree of
Master of Arts
in
Education: Reading Option

By

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1990
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Statement of the Problem

The History-Social Studies curriculum at the fifth grade level, when taught as an isolated content area, does not meet the requirements of the California History-Social Studies Framework. The inclusion of core literature, and related literature, in a variety of genres, is required to properly fulfill and create an integrated curriculum that will follow the guidelines of the California History-Social Studies Framework. An integrated curriculum will provide a means of converting the History-Social Studies content area into a meaningful component of the fifth grade curriculum.

Through the creation of thematic units, the blending of the History-Social Studies curriculum requirements, and other subject areas can be addressed in a meaningful environment for the learner.
Procedure

Six thematic units and curriculum maps are included within the project to provide an example of how to plan and prepare an integrated curriculum. The topics of these units are as follows:

Perseverance, Creating and Accepting Change, Courage, Understanding Others, Hardship, and Human Dignity

Core literature that could be used as starting points for the thematic units are Jim Thorpe, Young Athlete by Laurence Santrey, Sign of the Beaver by Elizabeth George Speare, What's The Big Idea, Ben Franklin? by Jean Fritz, Sarah Bishop by Scott O'Dell, Sarah, Plain and Tall by Patricia MacLachlan, and Anthony Burns: The Defeat and Triumph of a Fugitive Slave by Virginia Hamilton.

The Into, Through and Beyond format is the curricular model that I have chosen for this project for the teacher to develop background for the learning experiences that the student will encounter within the thematic unit. In the "Through" section the students will have opportunities to research, explore and discover concepts of the thematic unit through active participation. In the "Beyond" section of the curricular model, the student will have the opportunity to apply and extend learning experiences that have occurred.

Suggestions for related literature, incorporation of resources, activities that will involve all areas of the
curriculum, are included in each of the thematic units. Participation and the provision of choices through which students may attain more information and knowledge about the thematic unit concept are important components for the success of this project.

Conclusions

Implementing the integrated thematic approach will provide the teacher and the student with a positive and meaningful experience. The end result of a thematic approach to the teaching of the fifth grade curriculum will be manifested in an interest on the part of the learner to investigate further into an area that is interesting and thereby learn even more about the subject matter.
This project is dedicated with love to my husband, Richard, and my children Grant, Amy, and Stephen, who supported me through the difficult and solitary hours of research and development.
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TEACHING THE FIFTH GRADE SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM THROUGH THEMATIC UNITS

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

The Social Studies curriculum at the fifth grade level presents a sterile and obsolete approach to an otherwise exciting and meaningful content area. For the past three years I have struggled with my personal thoughts about the presentation of information in the textbook for my students. I believe that there is a more viable method of presenting information to the learner.

Presently a controversy is surfacing within the state of California as to the format and requirements that History-Social Studies textbooks should meet. Geographers, historians and economic educators continue to infuse more information into an already over-burdened curriculum that is impossible to be absorbed by children (Schneider, 1989).

Several alternatives to the present curriculum are being considered by educators involved with History-Social Studies instruction. Within the state of California the History-Social Studies Framework for California Public Schools calls for a renewed emphasis on history and geography, a new look at the primary curriculum, the integration of literature with the History-Social Studies curriculum, and an in-depth study of the history of the world and the United States.
Some of the proposed alternatives to the present isolated teaching of Social Studies could provide educators with the ideas necessary to deliver deeper understanding to students. Schneider (1988), in his address to the NCSS Annual Meeting, reviewed some of the new ideas that are surfacing within the realm of History-Social Studies instruction. One idea that was suggested would have a common core of learning built around history and the humanities or around geography, and civic education. Arguments against this approach state that our culture is too diverse to adhere to a single common core.

A second approach presented by Ravitch (1987) proposed that instead of expanding the information in textbooks, students should be given the necessary background knowledge needed to comprehend the cultural information found in myths, legends, fairy tales, folktales, and stories about historical events and persons, heroes and villains.

A third approach by the American Federation of Teachers (1987) would like to establish a required core that would consist of the study of history of the United States and a democratic civilization, world geography, and at least one non-western society in depth. If this approach is utilized students would be asked to compare nations.

A fourth approach presented by the Maryland Thinking Collaborative suggested that courses be organized around essential questions that would encourage them to learn more
about cultures. The members of this group would encourage students to demonstrate their knowledge through research projects and other devices such as exhibits.

Educators must deliberate and try to determine which of these approaches, if any, will be most beneficial for their students. An analysis of research recently performed in connection with the teaching of social studies by Downey and Levstik (1988) indicates the need to present students with information and ideas, and then apply these in new settings. Elementary and middle grades are important times for value learning and attitude formation. Some of the conclusions from Downey and Levstik's study were as follows:

- that children are capable of more mature thinking when they possess adequate background information
- there is a need to focus on identifying subject matter that is both culturally significant and interesting
- content, context and process are all factors in teaching social studies
- students should be taught to become critics of narrative material
- a new curriculum design should be developed
- teacher training is essential

Problems within the structure and requirements in the teaching of History-Social Studies must be resolved since the present approach is failing to meet the needs of
students. In the report, "How Fares the Ninth Grade?" by Lounsbury and Johnston (1985), evidence indicated a lack of meaningful interaction between teachers and students, little direct concern or involvement in critical thinking or problem solving, and an emphasis on "true or false" answers rather than discussion.

New social studies programs and approaches must be considered by both elementary and secondary teachers. The need to help develop and establish a curriculum that will raise History-Social Studies back to its important status and help students develop into effective citizens for the future is vital. New approaches should be used to provide students with access to knowledge and attitudes required for living in a complex society.

In an effort to develop a History-Social Studies curriculum that will provide fifth grade students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes in this content area, several barriers must be overcome.

The first barrier is the conception that History-Social Studies is a minor content area. This belief often results in an attitude problem on the part of the teacher, and results in poor presentation of the content and, at times, allowance of less than sufficient time for the teaching of concepts and materials.

A second barrier is the textbooks that are used for instruction. The increase in difficulty between the fourth
and fifth grade History-Social Studies textbooks is extreme in some cases. Fifth grade students are expected to read longer and more difficult material without any consideration for providing a more gradual transition from one text format to another. The frustration exhibited even by the more capable student is evidence that the presentation of the information needs to be reconstructed.

A third barrier that teachers must overcome is the attitude that History-Social Studies content must be taught as factual information rather than as concepts and ideas. This barrier fosters a return to drill and skill practices and prevents a meaningful transaction between the learner and the information presented.

The fourth barrier that must be overcome is the inability of the teacher to understand that History-Social Studies should encompass the whole language philosophy of meaningful learning through an interaction and an integration of writing, reading, and response. Within the History-Social Studies curriculum, students are often asked to read and discuss material of which they have little or no previous knowledge, then they are asked to respond to questions that they do not comprehend. Previous experience and prior knowledge are essential for the learner if meaning and interaction with the text is to occur.

I believe that the use of thematic units, correlated with core literature and arranged to coincide with the
required curriculum, would overcome these barriers. This approach would provide the learner with information and a frame of reference from which to draw information and meaning.
Implementation of the project that I have proposed will depend on several factors to overcome the barriers that prevent the History-Social Studies fifth grade curriculum from developing into opportunities for learning. These factors are: developing background knowledge, learning for meaning, relating the experiences that the learners have within their homes and communities to those experiences through the study of the thematic unit. Active participation of the learners in the presentation of concepts and ideas, and the organization of thematic units is to be used as a focal point are important to the success of the project.

The project that I have planned to implement, is based on the Whole Language Theory. To understand why the elements of this project are rooted in the Whole Language Theory it is helpful to have an overview of the Reading Continuum and its components. A comparison of the Reading Models that are on the Reading Continuum can then be made and the rationale used to design my project will be made clearer. An illustration of the Reading Theories Continuum is included in Figure 1.
The Reading Theories Continuum consists of three models: the decoding Model, the Skills Models and the Whole Language Model. The Decoding Model emphasis is placed on converting symbols into sounds and concentrating on pronunciation rather than on meaning. The Decoding Model is based on word analysis that teaches the learner to convert symbols into sounds. Comprehension for the Decoding Model is determined when the learner is able to decode the symbols into sounds. Swaby (1984) believes that the drawbacks of this phonic methodology are: a heavy emphasis on decoding, use of non-realistic situations, use of texts that restrict the language, and the inability of the learner to derive meaning from the decoded words.

For the success of the project the Decoding Model would not be a feasible choice. Reading that is confined to sounding out words and not utilizing meaningful content will provide frustration rather than learning if emphasized in this project.

The middle model on the Reading Continuum is the Skills Model. Emphasis within the Skills Model is based on a hierarchy of skills used to comprehend words or groups of words either out of content or in controlled sentences.
Workbooks and printed drill exercises are often used to meet the criteria for the Skills Model. Skills are often taught and then are repeatedly drilled out of context. Some learners develop the ability to respond to the questions asked in skill lessons automatically, but fail to relate to the actual content meaning. This is the result of presentation methods that have resorted to teaching isolated words and workbook exercises that have a minute relationship, if any, to actual reading of material.

I believe that the learner needs to be taught how to use strategies as well as skills to comprehend material that is unfamiliar or confusing. Learning how to use many different strategies will be more helpful to the reader than to become dependent on one particular skill. Within my project there will be opportunities for the learner to use a variety of strategies to derive meaning from the content of the material that is read.

Routmann (1988) explains the difference between strategies and skills as follows:

Strategies are the thoughtful plans or operations readers use while involved in the reading process; these plans are activated, adjusted and modified for each new reading situation. Skills are the learned procedures the student has been repeatedly drilled on, and they are automatic, passive and similar for each reading situation.
imply high-level thinking, integration, and self-direction; skills imply low-level thinking, isolation, and accurate, rapid responses based on previous training (p. 40).

Effective readers learn to use strategies to develop their learning and understanding. The reader learns to use knowledge of three cuing systems and use each system to help derive meaning from what is being read. The three cuing systems that the effective reader uses are: the graphophonemic cuing system that is based on sound-relationships and visual knowledge; the syntactic cuing system, which is based on knowledge of language patterns and grammatical structure; and the semantic cuing system which is based on meaning of content and illustrations.

The third model on the Reading Continuum is the Whole Language Model. The emphasis within the Whole Language Model is on the transaction of the reader with the text that is being read. This transaction results in a meaningful outcome that can be evidenced through writing, discussion, art, music, speaking, and drama. The Whole Language Model consists of the following learning theories outlined by Goodman (1986):

- Language learning is easy when it is whole, real and relevant: when it makes sense and is functional; when it is encountered in the context of its use; when the learner chooses to use it.
Language is both personal and social. It's driven from inside by the need to communicate and shaped from the outside toward the norms of society.

Kids are so good at learning language that they can even overcome counter-productive school programs.

Language is learned as pupils learn through language and about language, all simultaneously in the context of authentic speech and literacy events. There is no sequence of skills in language development. Teaching kids about language will not facilitate their use of language. The notion that "first you learn to read and then you read to learn" is wrong. Both happen at the same time and support each other.

Language development is empowering: the learner "owns" the process, makes the decision about when to use it, what for and with what results. Literacy is empowering too, if the learner is in control of what's done with it.

Language learning is learning how to mean: how to make sense of the world in the context of how our parents, families and cultures make sense of it. Cognitive and linguistic development are totally interdependent: thought depends on language and language depends on thought.
- In a word, language development is a holistic personal-achievement (p. 26).

Within the Whole Language Model there are immense opportunities for the teacher to vary activities and approaches that will prevent some of the tedious practices associated with the Decoding and Skill Models of Reading. The teacher takes the role of an observer and a facilitator rather than a lecturer. Learning cooperatively, interacting in a group and performing for an audience help the learner generate meaning and share knowledge through a variety of methods. Writing and reading are integrated and provide many areas for learners to express themselves. Since the material that is required as part of the curriculum will be presented in a more meaningful format and presented through the Whole Language Model, the use of thematic units will provide a core of opportunities which the learner can make choices and develop knowledge of all content areas. Through this thematic approach teachers will be able to incorporate varieties of learning experiences for the learner, and provide opportunities for response.
Chapter Three

The fifth grade History-Social Studies curriculum provides many opportunities for teachers to develop an integrated curriculum through a thematic unit approach. Rather than a futile attempt to teach by isolated subject areas the teacher can concentrate on a central concept within a thematic unit.

Through this approach, both background knowledge and cultural experiences can be presented to the learners. The History-Social Studies textbook will be utilized as a reference and a resource rather than as the sole source of information and readings. An involvement of the students through writing, reading, discussion, art, music, drama, group projects, peer involvement and research will be essential elements to be woven into the curriculum.

My decision to use thematic units is based on several valid reasons. First, I have experienced success when thematic units have been incorporated into the learning process for instructional purposes.

Second, History-Social Studies involves people and their
cultures. Thematic units can be developed to concentrate on helping the learners understand the diversity of cultures.

Third, the factual and fragmented approach presented in the History-Social Studies textbooks is difficult for students to relate to and retain. Weaver (1988) states that content materials should be read as resources in thematic units and as part of problem solving situations.

My fourth and final reason for the use of thematic units is that they provide opportunities to incorporate several alternative meaning systems, through which I can help the learners respond and develop as active, rather than passive learners.

In compliance with the recommendations set forth in the California History-Social Studies State Framework of 1988 the use of thematic units, which incorporates core literature, weaves naturally into the curriculum. The recommendations of the California State Framework of 1988, for the fifth grade course of study, states that "whenever possible, students should experience history through the eyes of the participants as told in biographies, autobiographies, speeches, narratives, ballads, folk tales, diaries, journals, Indian myths, and poetry" (p. 50).

Through the use of literature, it is hoped, that the learners will be able to understand and relate to the feelings of the different religious, racial and ethnic groups who have created and formed our country. At the end
of the fifth grade a learner is expected to be able to reflect on the ethical content of the nation's principles and on the promise of a democratic government.

The specific goals and curriculum strands of the History-Social Studies Framework reveal further how relevant thematic units are to the integration of Language Arts and History-Social Studies.

The following is a list of the Goals and Curriculum Strands from the Fifth Grade section of the History-Social Studies Framework for 1988 (p. 11).

Goal of Knowledge and Cultural Understanding

- historical literacy
- ethical literacy
- cultural literacy
- geographic literacy
- economic literacy
- sociopolitical literacy

Goal of Democratic Understanding and Civic Values

- national identity
- constitutional heritage
- civic values, rights, and responsibilities

Goal of Skills Attainment and Social Participation

- basic study skills
- critical thinking skills
- participation skills
Teachers are expected to integrate and correlate these goals and strands as part of their teaching of the History-Social Studies curriculum.

In a report by the National Council for the Social Studies Task Force on Early Childhood/Elementary Social Studies (1989), the importance of developing a systematically developed program, focusing on concepts from History and Social Studies, was stressed. The report stated the following:

Basic skills of reading, writing, and computing are necessary but not sufficient to participate or even survive in a world demanding independent and cooperative problem solving to address complex social, economic, ethical, and personal concerns (p. 25).

The report also recommends that "children need to develop an understanding of, and an appreciation for their physical and cultural environments and to consider how resources will be allocated in the future" (p. 26).

In addition to these needs there is the need to educate teachers as to how to integrate concepts, processes and examples from science, literature, mathematics, music, art, and social studies. Teachers must understand the effects of sociopolitical and economic variables on families and, consequently, on children.
The diversity between the goals of the California History-Social Studies Framework and regular classroom instruction needs to be addressed. Dobson and Dobson (1983) stated that teaching practices, whether consciously or unconsciously chosen, are expressions of the belief held by the teacher. Suggestions made by Goodman and Adler (1985) state that the problem should be addressed in college method classes. They say that preparation for student teachers to teach History-Social Studies should begin with the student's understanding of social education.

According to Mills (1988) factors that teachers felt prevented them from spending more time teaching History-Social Studies was the pressure to develop reading and math skills first. Several teachers involved in the study related that most of their students were not ready to develop critical thinking skills and that students should not be encouraged to ask critical questions about political social or economic institutions.

It was evident from this study by Mills that teachers were not using many of the strategies that could help the learners such as inquiry, role playing, critical thinking and problem solving. One group of teachers suggest that History-Social Studies be viewed as a nonsubject. This gave me encouragement to use the thematic unit approach, thereby providing a means to blend the History-Social Studies content area with all areas of the curriculum.
Teacher attitude is the first barrier that must be overcome if the learner is to obtain meaningful knowledge. Effective teachers understand the link between why something is taught, what is taught and how to teach a particular subject (Bruner 1971).

Both teacher planning and student-teacher planning should be readily available and referred to often. Skills that have carryover and functional value in day-to-day adult living should be prominent in addition to attitudes and appreciations that become part of the value system underlying one's every decision. Much is taught and learned about values and the social sciences by the way the classroom and the school are organized and operated (Lounsbury 1988).

Through the planning of thematic units, teachers can expand their range of thinking beyond the textbook and provide the learner with interesting and nonmonotonous responses. Teacher attitude becomes positive rather than negative as interesting materials and enthusiastic learner responses are encountered. Involvement and commitment of the teacher are essential to the success of thematic teaching.

Shaver, Davis, and Helburn (1979) reported in their study sponsored by the National Science Foundation that teachers are the key to what History-Social Studies will be for early adolescents. Some of the recommendations for
consideration to help teachers become more effective were:

- textbook should be used as a major resource along with supplemental resources
- emphasis on history, government, and geography with numerous opportunities for integration of other social science disciplines, humanities, and student's personal life experiences
- a variety of teaching methods and materials should be used
- recognize the uniqueness of the preadolescent student
- exposure of students to value conflicts through literature, films, community involvement
- open-ended discussions to help students determine direction in life and their role in society
- making the classroom a forum for democratic action
- skill development should be systematic and on-going
- teachers should recognize their responsibility to contribute significantly to the personal development of the learner (p. 150-153).

In addition to these recommendations, teachers were asked to review the way they are presently teaching History-Social Studies and analyze whether or not the objectives were being met. An interdisciplinary approach was suggested
as an alternative to the isolation of the subject area which leads to deeper understanding of important concepts, generalizations, skills and values. While history, government and geography are vitally important, they should be studied in connection with other social sciences, the humanities, and student's personal life experiences (Miller and Young 1979).

Teachers who choose to become involved in using the thematic approach will have to realize that they are crossing the threshold from that of prepared lesson plans dictated by teachers guides and venturing into the world of curriculum development. The construction of the curriculum and the planning with the students creates a change in the role of the teacher as traditionally viewed by those both in and out of the field of education. Harste, Short and Burke (1988) explain this role change as,

"teachers encouraging students to move beyond what they already know by considering new kinds of resources, and finding a variety of ways to present their ideas back to the group. This encouragement should take the form of invitation rather than assignments." (p. 369-370).

The second barrier to be overcome when developing thematic units is the type of textbooks that are presently being used in our schools for History-Social Studies instruction. Teachers often complain that History-Social
Studies texts are like catalogs of information. Teachers are concerned that textbooks are not practical and easily comprehended by students.

Critics of History-Social Studies textbooks have stated that "the textbooks are flawed in content and little more than illustrated dictionaries" (Butts 1988, 24-26). Other reviewers state that there is no sense of structure of what is important and meaningful. The textbooks fail to provide context and to discuss the significance of events and issues, or to present the real-life drama that unfolded in times past and so are mere chronologies (Fitzgerald 1979; Gagnon 1987; Sewall 1987).

The History-Social Studies textbooks are often the products of a profit-driven system. Publishers and authors often succumb to the demands of pressure groups rather than produce textbooks that would enhance the learning ability of the students.

Within the new California History-Social Studies Framework (1988), the emphasis is not on the information found in the textbook but rather on other resource materials and literature that relates to the area of study. The California State History-Social Studies Framework provides many suggestions and an outline for teachers to utilize when planning their thematic units.

The third barrier that must be overcome is the attitude that this History-Social Studies content area must be taught
as factual information rather than concepts and ideas. Smith (1986) perhaps states this best when he says,

"In the real world, "fact learning" is the most difficult kind of learning, unless it is embedded in something that is understood. The recall of nonsense is much less efficient than the recollection of situations that were comprehensible" (p. 75).

Some strategies that can be used to overcome this barrier are easily incorporated into a thematic unit and blend all areas of the curriculum. The variety of learning experiences will enable the learner to respond to and retain the information and knowledge that is presented.

The fourth and final barrier that must be overcome is the inability to understand that the teaching of History-Social Studies should encompass the whole language philosophy of meaningful learning through an integration of writing, reading and response. To implement this phase of the project there must be time spent to plan and organize the thematic units to correlate with, and include the essential concepts of both the language arts and the History-Social Studies curriculum. The whole language philosophy provides both the learner and the teacher with several opportunities to learn and become involved as they venture through the thematic units.

Goodman (1986) states that language development and content become dual curriculum. For the learner it is a
single curriculum focusing on what is being learned, what language is being used for. The content curriculum draws on the interests and the experiences children have outside of school, and thus incorporates the full range of oral and written language functions.

The learner is given opportunities to think, react and make choices rather than passively try to obtain bits of meaningless information. Oral discussions and dramatic involvement provide opportunities for the teacher to observe the opinions of the learners as well as understand their individual ideas about different issues and concepts. I believe that through the use of thematic units a meaningful experience for all learners can be made available without the loss of content knowledge. The incorporation of literature, within the thematic units, will provide language experiences and build a bridge to meaning and useful knowledge for the future.

My project is built on a curriculum plan consisting of six themes. These six themes integrate all subject areas and follow a chronological progression that coincides with the History-Social Studies curriculum as outlined in the framework. The thematic units provide structure and allow the teacher and learners to expand ideas and needs.

In order to follow the goals for the fifth grade History-Social Studies curriculum, the thematic units have been written using core literature books and additional
lists of texts that students may choose to read. The following thematic units have been written:

I. Perseverance
II. Creating and Accepting Change
III. Courage
IV. Understanding Others
V. Hardship
VI. Human Dignity

Within each thematic unit will be a core literature book and a complete integrated unit for the literature book that can be used as a starting point for each of the thematic unit themes. Each of the thematic units have been allotted six weeks to provide flexibility and time to thoroughly experience and learn about the time period and the people who lived and endured in our country from pre-Columbian settlements up to 1850.

Within the six thematic units the core literature books that will be studied are the following:

Jim Thorpe by Laurence Santrey, Sign of the Beaver by Elizabeth George Speare, What’s the Big Idea Ben Franklin? by Jean Fritz, Sarah Bishop by Scott O’Dell, Sarah, Plain and Tall by Patricia MacLachlan and Anthony Burns: The Defeat and Triumph of a Fugitive Slave by Virginia Hamilton.

These literature books will provide a starting point from which the learner and the teacher will be able to
develop an understanding and an appreciation for the time period that is to be studied and the people who lived during those time periods.

Social Studies textbooks will be used within the thematic units as resources rather than the only course of study. This will provide teachers with the flexibility needed to either change or expand upon areas of study that the learners may desire to concentrate on within the thematic units.

My project is capable of being adapted to any fifth grade History-Social Studies curriculum within the state of California since it conforms to the guidelines of the state framework and integrates through literature the goals and objectives of the framework. I believe that the sample thematic units that I have developed for my project will be helpful and provide the teacher and the learner with a greater understanding and appreciation of our country and our people.
Goals and Objectives

Through the use of thematic units I expect to accomplish the creation of a positive environment for the learner. The important components that will be emphasized within the thematic units used for this project are: development of background experience, alternative methods of teaching and responding, meaningful instruction, and exposure to literature in a variety of genres are the important components that will be emphasized within the thematic units used for this project.

The transition through the units should be made smoothly, relating to, and building upon each other. The themes provide opportunities for a myriad of activities. They also serve as avenues to other readings that will provide enrichment with benefits for both the teacher and the learner.

My major goal is to provide the learner with the opportunities to interact with the core literature and relate what has been read and discussed to the History-Social Studies curriculum as well as other content areas. It is important that the thematic unit become the unification and seed for the growth of learning that the learner will experience.

Goals of the Project

The following is a list of goals this project uses
to assist the learner to:

- develop an understanding of the human and environmental factors that determined historical events and settlements
- understand that historical events usually have multiple causes and effects
- gain an understanding of a culture's ethical and moral background by studying the religion, philosophy, and folkways of the culture
- use active response to different genres of literature through writing, drama, art, music, and oral expression
- choose opportunities to use and develop critical thinking skills, locational skills, mapping skills, and informational skills through thematic units designed to integrate and provide purpose for the reader
- develop an understanding of the American political and social systems through reading and discussion

Objectives of the Project

Within each of the thematic units the objectives for the entire curriculum will be reinforced and developed. Through planning and participation the understanding of the concepts for the fifth grade History-Social Studies curriculum will
be presented to the learner with meaning and purpose.

The following is a list of objectives that I hope to accomplish through the use of the thematic units designed to:

- help the learner observe historical events through the eyes of participants such as explorers, American Indians, colonists, free blacks and slaves, children or pioneers

- help the learner visualize and understand hardships and problems involved with the exploration and settlement of unknown lands through the reading of historical biographies, journals, non-fictionalized material

- help the learner understand through the reading of stories and biographies about the resistance of the American Indian tribes to the settling of the West

- help the learner understand how the pioneers travelled and the dangers that they encountered through folk songs, sea chants, diaries, journals and mapping activities

- help the learner understand that the American culture is the result of the contributions of many groups of people and their individual beliefs

- encourage the development of critical thinking,
informational and locational skills through on-going instructional related activities

- develop reading, writing, listening and speaking though active participation in response to literature

- develop specific writing skills in the area of autobiography, journals, almanacs, diaries, folk tales, legends, myths, biographies and essays

- provide opportunities for the learner to use a variety of evaluative techniques to determine understanding of a concept

Limitations of the Project

This project is limited in that it is designed to be used only on the fifth grade level of instruction. The concept of the unit, the use of thematic units to integrate the curriculum can, however, be adapted to any grade level.

A second limitation to the use of this project could be created by departmentalized approaches that would not allow enough time for adequate integration of subject areas.

A third limitation to the implementation of the project is the evaluation of the thematic unit as segmented subject areas rather than a conceptual whole. Individual grading of sections and record keeping can be developed to overcome this problem and meet the requirements of the grading system.

Time elements could provide another limitation in some
instances. I have set my project up as six themes to be done over the traditional thirty-six week school year. If more time needs to be spent per theme the overlapping could be a factor although I believe that meaningful learning of two-thirds of the concepts is better than covering all of the content without meaning.

Availability of books and resource materials for the students to use as the units are developed could cause some aspects of the units not to be successful. Planning with the school librarian and local libraries to have books and other resources available before beginning the thematic units could help with this limitation.

Record keeping for the thematic unit could be another limitation if not handled effectively. A portfolio for student work could be set up and a checklist of choices that will be done for each unit can be helpful for evaluation and justification of the project.

Grade keeping to correspond with the format of the report card could be another limitation since the students will be holistically evaluated on their performance rather than on isolated subject areas. Discussion of this limitation with administrators may help develop a new format for the report card presently in use.

Finally, the lack of support from administrators and parents for the thematic approach to be utilized as an alternative curriculum choice could result in a return to
the textbook. Hopefully teachers will begin to develop and participate in programs that will provide support for the thematic approach and become innovators of new curriculum concepts.

Other than these limitations I believe that the project I have proposed can be implemented with success and adapted to various grade levels. Planning and preparation of material is important to the success of the project. The learner should become the participant and the teacher an observer as they move through the thematic units. Training the learners to develop into active participants and responsible evaluators will be difficult at first, but the results will be rewarding as learners become involved in the various phases of the thematic units.
References


Atwell, N. (1987). In the middle. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook


American Federation of Teachers.


APPENDIX
PROJECT

The following pages contain six fully developed thematic units and curriculum maps to be used to develop thematic units.

Evaluation procedures have also been included to assess the student's understanding of the units and their responses through a variety of methods.
PERSEVERANCE

A Thematic Unit Developed for Use in the Fifth Grade

by

Helen A. Gagnon, M. A.
Perseverance

This thematic unit will build upon the quality of perseverance and how it has been shown by many people during the beginnings of our country. Areas that will be highlighted during this unit will be the Indian cultures and the first explorers who encountered hardships and yet struggled to overcome many obstacles.

Core Literature for this Thematic Unit is Jim Thorpe, Young Athlete by Laurence Santrey

Goals of the Unit
- to develop an understanding of the quality of perseverance
- to learn how various Indian cultures adjusted to their environment
- to introduce students to the mythology and literature of the American Indian Cultures
- to understand the fears and doubts of those who explored the unknown land

Objectives of the Unit
- students will learn and read about major pre-Columbian settlements such as the cliff dwellers and pueblo people of the desert Southwest, the American Indians of the Pacific Northwest, the nomadic tribes of the Great Plains and the woodland people east of the Mississippi
- students will discuss and learn about the reasons for exploration of the unknown regions
- through different readings the students will learn about
the way of life that existed for the American Indians and explorers during the time period

- the students will use map skills, reading, observation, and discussion to determine and understand the routes of exploration and the European countries that participated in the exploration of unknown lands

- the students will incorporate art, mathematics, music, drama and physical education, as well as, language to develop an understanding of the era that is being studied.

The Into, Through and Beyond format that I have used provides an outline for the instructor as to how to blend the various content areas and create consistency. An explanation of the Into, Through and Beyond format is included on the following page to serve as an outline.
EXPLANATION OF THE INTO, THROUGH, AND BEYOND FORMAT

The Into, Through and Beyond Format is the method I have chosen to present the six thematic units for the project. For those who are unfamiliar with the format I would like to present the following outline:

Into

Through this section of the format the teacher will develop background for the learning experiences that the learners will encounter within the thematic unit. Providing background knowledge and drawing upon the learner's prior knowledge is an essential first step. Encounters with unknown materials and unfamiliar concepts can be made exciting rather than frustrating when background knowledge and previous experiences can be drawn upon for support.

Activities for the Into section:

- Showing of films, videos, filmstrips, photographs, viewing maps; listening to music, poetry, stories; singing songs, discussing items in an interest center; reading and listening to literature related to the concept of the thematic unit.

Through

This section of the format provides the learners with opportunities to research, discover and learn about the concept or concepts of the thematic unit by involvement and
participation. The teacher's role, as a facilitator during this part of the format, will help maintain interest for the learners as they research, discover, compare and hypothesize about the various experiences they encounter.

Activities for the Through section:

Discussion groups, offering of choices to involve participation in writing, reading, music, drama and art; incorporation of all content areas through solving, food preparation, environmental studies and the existing culture.

Beyond

This section of the format will help the learner transfer the learning experiences that have taken place during the Into and Through sections of the thematic unit. The learners should be given the opportunities to deepen and extend their comprehension through the choosing of a variety of responses.

Activities for the Beyond section:

It is important that the activities for this section be presented as learner choices rather than mandated assignments. The role of the teacher is to guide and facilitate the choices for the learners by providing research materials, and other items that the learners will need to complete the requirements for the choices they have made. Some activities for the learners to choose from are book writing, Readers Theater, role playing, research
involving scientific discoveries, making comparisons, response journals, writing poetry, composing music, murals, displays, classroom presentations, mini-museums, writing a newspaper, related mathematical activities such as calculation of lengths of trips, architecture, use of related computer programs and word processing programs for presentations and sharing of knowledge through school programs.

The suggestions that I have given for the Activities sections of this format may be embellished in many ways through the creative ingenuity of the teacher and the learners. As different thematic concepts are explored the choices may differ and expand.
CURRICULUM MAP FOR PERSEVERANCE - A THEMATIC UNIT
Core Literature - Jim Thorpe, Young Athlete
by Laurence Santrey

Mathematics
- calculate the distances Indian tribes travelled to their settlements
- measure for recipes
- construct bead counters
- write problems about Indians, explorers etc.

Science
- discuss Ice Age
- discuss effects of environment on Native Americans
- define "Horse and the Doldrums"
- use of plants for medicine
- importance of animals to Native Americans

Art
- construct dioramas of different Indian homes
- draw mural depicting different Indian groups
- construct totem poles, necklaces, masks
- illustrate stories, poems

Physical Education
- create a dance to show the movement of Native Americans from place to place
- design a game that could be played on a ship
- research the Olympic games and conduct an Olympic Game for the class to compete in

Social Studies
- trace routes of the explorers
- locate Europe and places in No. and So. America where explorations took place
- compare types of ships
- research and discuss different Indian tribes
- draw and describe an Indian village

Language Arts
- Reader's Theater of Jim Thorpe
- descriptive writing of various Indian tribes
- role play explorer discoveries
- conduct an interview and write a biography
- journal writing
- poetry writing
- compare and contrast different Indian cultures

Music
- make instruments from natural materials
- play and listen to classical Spanish and English music
- ballads
THEMATIC UNIT - PERSEVERANCE

Concept: The quality of perseverance has been demonstrated by many different people during the settling and development of North America.

Goal: To help students develop an understanding and an awareness of the hardships and adjustments that various groups of people endured to settle in North America.

Into | Through | Beyond
--- | --- | ---
- Using maps/atlas' trace and discuss routes used by the first settlers of North America | - On a chart ask students to list what they know about the settlement/development of North Am. and what they would like to know | - (Student choices) what they want to learn about first people to settle No. America
- Discuss and list reasons for the movement of the first nomadic groups—followed herds for food—climate | - Students may choose to do research about the following: a) Indian groups of No. America b) Ice Age c) Effects of climate on No. American and settlements d) Plants used by Indians e) Importance of animals to Native Americans | - Students write songs, poems
- Read the following book to develop background: Hunters of the Whale | - Make bark cloth from paper bags write stories using Indian sign language | - Discuss the differences in travel today from that of the 1400's
- Display Indian foods, artifacts, pictures of Indians | - Trace routes of different groups of people to North America | - Compose songs and poems that relate to nature
- Listen to Indian chants | - Write poems about Indians, nature or families and discuss | - Display of Indian homes, tools, invite parents to view
- Read The Earth is Sore by A. Amon | - Students demonstrate thinking skills by composing math problems involving distance and measurement | - Draw inside of a ship and compare travel on the old ships to cruises
- Read Conquista | - Discussion of hardships that different groups endured trying to reach North Am. |
Into

- Read/discuss Jim Thorpe
- Discuss how perseverance was demonstrated by Jim Thorpe
- View Indian art either through visit to a museum or slides or prints
- Guest speaker to provide information about Indians and ways of life

Through

- Locate Horse Latitudes and Doldrums on a map and research how they were named
- Use recipes for foods eaten by Native Americans to involve math/reading
- Students may choose to construct various homes used by Indians such as teepee, wickiup, long house, pueblo
- Totem poles/masks weaving
- Make musical instruments from natural materials
- Students read/discuss Indian poems
- Students may choose to do:
  a) make maps showing routes of explorers to No. America
  b) pretend to be a sailor on a ship to North America and keep a journal of the trip
  c) describe ship/conditions on the ships
  d) compare sailing ships
  e) choose a story to illustrate about the explorers

Beyond

- Choose an explorer to research, present an oral report about that explorer
- Write a story on what would have happened if North America had never been discovered by Europeans
- Script a Reader's Theater for Jim Thorpe
- Plan a mini-olympiad for the students
- Make a collection of biographies for class
- Critique the video "Jim Thorpe"
- Plan a presentation for other students and parents to share knowledge about settlers and explorers—this could involve a play, murals, museums, food samples, guest speakers from area who are Native Am.
those who came by land and those that came by sea to the new world

- students list the advantages and the disadvantages of living on a reservation

- Research how Indian reservations were set up

- Students may choose a specific tribe and write about the reservation they live on

- Students interview each other and write biographies about each other

- Research the Olympic Games

- Play games related to the Olympiads using a frisbee as a discus

- Students may retell a chapter of the Jim Thorpe Story that they liked and illustrate it

- Students choose to create their own activities using Indian methods to construct art projects
EVALUATION OF THE UNIT

Evaluation criteria that I will use for this unit are as follows:

I. Self-Evaluation

   A. After writing a draft of the various assignments the students will be asked to reread their own drafts and then with the use of a checklist sheet make any needed corrections. When the student has checked himself he may then ask two other students to read his paper and write corrections or comments on the checklist paper.

   B. Daily writing logs will be kept by individual students and shared and discussed in small or large group settings.

II. Peer Evaluation

   A. Students may work in small groups that have been set up by the teacher to read each other’s papers and offer constructive criticism.

   B. Group projects may be evaluated by the students and questions about how the group performed or problems that were encountered may be listed on a special form.

   C. Completed Projects done by groups or individuals may be presented to the entire class for a sharing of information and building concepts.
III. Teacher Evaluation

A. Correction of final drafts for special writing folders may be done by the teacher. The students should always be given the opportunity to work on their drafts and make corrections.

B. Checking of daily journals, writing logs and story outlines should be done by individual conference time with each student at least once a week. This will enable the teacher to discuss any problems that the student is having regarding the assignments.

C. Observation of the students as they interact with each other in group discussions and projects is most helpful in evaluating a student's understanding of the concepts presented in the unit. An informal checklist could be used to keep track of those students who participate and contribute to the project or assignment.

D. Publishing and displaying of the students work is an indication to the students that they have done well and these two methods provide positive evaluation for the students as well as a wonderful method to stimulate further interest in future projects.

The following pages contain samples of the Evaluation Forms and a method that I use when assessing a writing grade:
**Group Project Evaluation Form**

1. Names of students in the group are:
2. Project/Activity that our group did was:
3. What we did to complete our project:
4. Things that we could have done better:
5. Things that we did a good job on:
6. We would give ourselves the following rating:
   - satisfactory
   - good
   - wonderful
7. Why did you rate yourselves as you did?
8. Did you like another group’s presentation or project better than yours? Why?
Assessing a Grade

Assessing a grade to writing is a difficult task. The following method is what I used to evaluate the students writing assignments for individual grades:

Content - does the writer address the assignment and follow the prompt?
Organization - the writing should indicate proper sequence, word choices, paragraph structure and cohesiveness
Mechanics/Usage - improvement in the use of punctuation, vocabulary and capitalization should be evident from the first to the final draft
Daily Work - writing logs, brainstorming, rough drafts, should receive credit since this is the base of future
Participation - oral response in Read Around Groups, discussions and dramatic presentation
Ability to Complete Assignments on Schedule - Student should develop responsible attitude in passing in assignments
Evidence of Editing - student's writing should indicate editing and revising

Points to be assessed for each criterion is as follows:
Content - 20 points
Organization - 20 points
Mechanics/Usage - 20 points
Daily Work - 10 points
Participation - 10 points
Ability to Complete Assignment on Time - 10 points
Evidence of Editing - 10 points
References


Shephard, E. (1970). The discoveries of Esteban the
black. New York: Dodd, Mead.


CREATING AND ACCEPTING CHANGE

A Thematic Unit Developed for Use in the Fifth Grade

by

Helen A. Gagnon, M. A.
Creating and Accepting Change

This thematic unit will present changes that are good and changes that are harmful. Throughout history cultures have been changed, blended, acquired or lost through the processes of migration, wars, and accumulation of territories. Our country has evolved through many of these changes, some of which have benefited the population and some that have created severe losses of cultures.

Through this thematic unit many views of change will be read about and discussed to help the learner observe changes that have taken place within the history of our country and the effects of these changes on the land and the people.

Core Literature for this Thematic Unit is The Sign of the Beaver by Elizabeth George Speare.

Goals of the Unit
- develop an understanding of the meaning of change
- help the learner understand the human and environmental factors that determine historical events and settlements
- develop an understanding of Indian cultures
- help the learner understand the hardships of adjusting a new environment
- understand that changing can have both good and bad consequences

Objectives of the Unit
- the students will learn and read about the effects of
settlements for the Northeastern part of North America on both the settlers and the Native Americans
- the students will use map skills to locate the land areas
- the students will construct time lines to gain perspective of the periods of time when this occurred
- the students will discuss the effects of change on people, animals, and the land
- students will develop an understanding of the Northeastern Indians through art, reading, and discussion
- the students will incorporate science, language, music, mathematics, physical education, drama, and social studies into the unit as it is being studied

The Into, Through, and Beyond format that I have used provides an outline for the teacher to demonstrate how to blend the various content areas and create consistency. An Explanation of this format is on the following page.
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The Into, Through and Beyond Format is the method I have chosen to present the six thematic units for the project. For those who are unfamiliar with the format I would like to present the following outline:

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Activities for the Into section:

- Showing of films, videos, filmstrips, photographs, viewing maps; listening to music, poetry, stories; singing songs, discussing items in an interest center; reading and listening to literature related to the concept of the thematic unit.

Through

This section of the format provides the learners with opportunities to research, discover and learn about the concept or concepts of the thematic unit by involvement and
participation. The teacher's role, as a facilitator during this part of the format, will help maintain interest for the learners as they research, discover, compare and hypothesize about the various experiences they encounter.

Activities for the Through section:

Discussion groups, offering of choices to involve participation in writing, reading, music, drama and art; incorporation of all content areas through solving, food preparation, environmental studies and the existing culture.

Beyond

This section of the format will help the learner transfer the learning experiences that have taken place during the Into and Through sections of the thematic unit. The learners should be given the opportunities to deepen and extend their comprehension through the choosing of a variety of responses.

Activities for the Beyond section:

It is important that the activities for this section be presented as learner choices rather than mandated assignments. The role of the teacher is to guide and facilitate the choices for the learners by providing research materials, and other items that the learners will need to complete the requirements for the choices they have made. Some activities for the learners to choose from are book writing, Readers Theater, role playing, research
involving scientific discoveries, making comparisons, response journals, writing poetry, composing music, murals, displays, classroom presentations, mini-museums, writing a newspaper, related mathematical activities such as calculation of lengths of trips, architecture, use of related computer programs and word processing programs for presentations and sharing of knowledge through school programs.

The suggestions that I have given for the Activities sections of this format may be embellished in many ways through the creative ingenuity of the teacher and the learners. As different thematic concepts are explored the choices may differ and expand.
CURRICULUM MAP FOR CREATING AND ACCEPTING CHANGE
A THEMATIC UNIT

Core Literature - The Sign of the Beaver
by Elizabeth George Speare

Mathematics
- graphs to illustrate plants and animals in the stories
- calculate the distance of Quincy, Mass. to Maine
- story problems related to the story
- measuring for recipes

Science
- research beaver
- explain importance of plants and animals to Native Americans
- list different types of plants that Matt learned to eat and prepare

Art
- illustrate legend or poem
- design a family sign
- make "birch paper" and write stories using sign language on the paper
- make a long house or cabin
- illustrate a chapter from The Sign of the Beaver

Physical Education
- Indian Games—Tossing Game Stick in Hoop, Obstacle Course

Drama
- Reader’s Theater for the story The Sign of the Beaver
- dramatize a chapter of the book

Music
- Indian Chants
- learn an Indian dance

Language Arts
- read Indian legends
- write about change
- write a character description about Matt, Attean, or Ben
- keep journals
- letter writing

Social Studies
- make maps of the New England Colonies
- discuss method of travel
- discuss effects of settlement by the white man
- make a time line of Matt’s wait for his father
- draw and describe an Indian village
THEMATIC UNIT - CREATING AND ACCEPTING CHANGE

Concept: Our country has evolved through many changes, some of which have benefited the population and some that have resulted in losses of cultures.

Goal: To help the learner understand the changes that have taken place within our country and their effect on land and the people.

Into

- Maps of New England Colonies, display Indian artifacts
- Pictures of animals common to North Am.
- Read: Indian Poems and Folklores
- Read to understand importance of plants/animals to survival - see "Through the Forest"
- Sing "The Loneliness Song", Green Rainbow an Indian Chant, Music Book - 5
- Read The Sign of the Beaver by Elizabeth G. Speare
- Make folders to save writings for story-decorate with Indian symbols if student wishes
- Show film about "The Beaver"
- Read about gifts shared by Attean and Matt at the end of the story in The Sign of the Beaver

Through

- Ask students to list what changes took place when Europeans settled in North America
- Have students list who changed
- Discuss viewpoints of Indians toward land and animals
- Students choose to write their own legends or poems
- Need for plants (medicine)
- Need for animals
- Listen to songs, chants
- Trace the route Matt took to reach their land in Maine
- Keep daily journal relating travels to Maine
- Discuss in small groups changes that Matt must face

Beyond

(Student choices) write a response journal about changes and its effects on our own lives
- Compose songs, chants
- Make books using Indian legends, poems
- Research herbal medicine
- Compare views of Indians to views of white man towards animals and plants
- Role play Attean and Matt from a chapter of Sign of the Beaver
- List things you would bring with you if you had to live alone for six weeks
- Design a sign that could symbolize your family
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Into</th>
<th>Through</th>
<th>Beyond</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-Make a time line of Matt’s days as he waits for his father’s return</td>
<td>-Prepare to share by presenting a Reader’s Theater</td>
<td>-Present a Native American Day, demonstrate games, tell legends, recite poems, discuss importance of environment and changes that all have experienced thru their lives</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Compare how Attean and Matt change in the story</td>
<td>-Write story problems using information from story</td>
<td>-Use clay to make figures of animals in story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Choose a character from Sign of the Beaver to write a character description of</td>
<td>-Graph plants or animals found in the story</td>
<td>-Dioramas or collages of cabins/villages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Write story problems using information from story</td>
<td>-Compute distances from the settlement in Maine to Quincey, Mass.</td>
<td>-Research to find out what will happen from 1760 to 1860 to affect Matt and Attean’s lives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Choose Indian names to demonstrate to class</td>
<td>-Prepare recipes for food mentioned</td>
<td>-Write a story about a future meeting of Matt and Attean</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Make maps of Attean’s village</td>
<td>-Explain how the gifts exchanged by Matt and Attean were significant</td>
<td>-Devise new laws for settlement of North America</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Discuss Matt’s decision to wait for his father</td>
<td>-Describe tools made by the Indians and purpose</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
EVALUATION OF THE UNIT

Evaluation criteria that I will use for this unit are as follows:

I. Self-Evaluation

   A. After writing a draft of the various assignments the students will be asked to reread their own drafts and then with the use of a checklist sheet make any needed corrections. When the student has checked himself he may then ask two other students to read his paper and write corrections or comments on the checklist paper.

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5. Things that we did a good job on:

6. We would give ourselves the following rating:
   satisfactory     good     wonderful

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8. Did you like another group's presentation or project better than yours? Why?
Teacher Evaluation Form to be used for checking those students who participate and contribute to projects, oral participation, group discussions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informal Evaluation Form</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Student Name</strong></td>
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COURAGE

A Thematic Unit Developed for Use in the Fifth Grade

by

Helen A. Gagnon, M. A.
Introduction for Courage

Through the thematic unit entitled Courage, the students will observe, read, and discuss the meaning of courage as it was displayed by the American colonists during the Revolutionary War. Events leading to the Revolutionary War will be presented. Students will also be made aware that not all of the colonists supported the American Revolution. Courage was demonstrated by those who revolted against Britain as well as those who remained loyal to the King of England.

Students should be given an opportunity to view the American Revolution from various points of view and understand why choices to support or not to support the Revolution were made. The core literature book that is used to introduce this unit is What's the Big Idea, Ben Franklin? by Jean Fritz.

Through the reading of What's the Big Idea, Ben Franklin? the students will be given information of life in the colonies and the changes that led to the Revolutionary War.

Goals of the Unit
- to develop an understanding of courage as displayed by different individuals
- to learn how the colonies provided a haven for a variety of ethnic, linguistic and religious groups
- to analyze the causes of the Revolutionary War
- to develop an understanding of the time period through the reading of biographies, tall tales, legends, journals, and diaries

Objectives of the Unit
- students will locate the thirteen American colonies on a map and discuss the importance of the colonies to England
- students will read and discuss life in the American colonies and use comparisons to present day life in the United States
- students will construct timelines to provide an outline of the events that occurred up to and after the Revolutionary War
- students will develop an understanding of the reasons why the American Revolution was supported or not supported by various groups or individuals
- students will learn about inventions and how they affected the lives of people
- students will depict through art, drama, dance, and music life in the American colonies
- students will have access to various genres of literary materials to read and research for discussion and writing in addition to the core literature
- students will view films and videos to observe life in the colonies and inventions of the time period
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Activities for the Into section:

Showing of films, videos, filmstrips, photographs, viewing maps; listening to music, poetry, stories; singing songs, discussing items in an interest center; reading and listening to literature related to the concept of the thematic unit.

Through

This section of the format provides the learners with opportunities to research, discover and learn about the concept or concepts of the thematic unit by involvement and
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This section of the format will help the learner transfer the learning experiences that have taken place during the Into and Through sections of the thematic unit. The learners should be given the opportunities to deepen and extend their comprehension through the choosing of a variety of responses.

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The suggestions that I have given for the Activities sections of this format may be embellished in many ways through the creative ingenuity of the teacher and the learners. As different thematic concepts are explored the choices may differ and expand.
## CURRICULUM MAP FOR COURAGE - A THEMATIC UNIT

### Core Literature - What's the Big Idea, Ben Franklin?
by Jean Fritz

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mathematics</th>
<th>Science</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Magic Squares</td>
<td>learn about electricity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>story problems about the American Revolution</td>
<td>how soap and other products were made</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Art</th>
<th>Drama</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>design kite and fly it</td>
<td>Reader's Theater of What's the Big Idea, Ben Franklin?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>design/make an invention</td>
<td>dramatize different professions of the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discuss fashion of the time/draw pictures of the type of dress</td>
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<tr>
<td>depict scenes of the Am. Rev. events in dioramas, murals etc.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Social Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>discuss diseases of revolutionary times e.g. gout, pneumonia, boils</td>
<td>locate the American colonies</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literature</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>folktales of colonial times</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>almanacs</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Education</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>colonial period dances</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>aerobic exercises that could dramatize scenes from the stories</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Arts</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>write an almanac (possible class project)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>list Ben Franklin's &quot;big ideas&quot; after reading What's the Big Idea, Ben Franklin?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>research and report about an invention of the 1700's</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>compare growing up during the 1700's to the 1900's</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>class newspaper depicting news in the colonies with different points of view about the American Revolution</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
THEMATIC UNIT - COURAGE

Concept: Courage has been displayed by many who believed in and desired independence from unjust rule.

Goal: Through reading and discussing the events leading to the American Revolution, and the people involved, the students will develop an understanding of the causes and emotions involved with the Revolutionary War.

Into
- Show filmstrip "Life in Colonial America" - 1979 Nat. Geographic
- Read Legend of Sleepy Hollow-Rip Van Winkle, 1988
- Read: (poetry) Visit to William Blake's Inn by Willard
- Read: 1) What's the Big Idea Ben Franklin? by Jean Fritz 2) Ben and me by Robert Lawson 3) Benjamin Franklin by d'Aulaire 4) Ben Franklin of Old Philadelphia by M. Cousins

Through
- Discuss type of homes, different foods, dress, viewed in the filmstrip
- Compare different colonies to how they were founded, ways of life, (southern plantation)
- Make maps of the colonies
- Importance of religious beliefs to colonists
- Taxation problem need for taxes reasons for anger
- Students write about what would happen if they were to wake up 20 yrs from now
- Discuss poems, how they relate to the times, observe pictures
- Discuss different trades mentioned in readings

Beyond
(Student choices) murals dioramas clay figures collages of - villages homes dress colonial landmarks plantations
- Mobiles of 13 colonies
- Dramatize life in colonies - short plays written by students
- Compare taxes during Colonial period to taxes of today (state, local, federal)
- Make illustrated pop-up books of colonial legends, stories, settlements
- Compose colonial poems
- Draw pictures of clothing worn
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Into</th>
<th>Through</th>
<th>Beyond</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Magic Squares</td>
<td>Describe an apprentice’s life</td>
<td>Design a kite and fly it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locate England, Colonies on maps</td>
<td>Make a timeline of Franklin’s life</td>
<td>Create an invention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read: Daniel Boone by Laurie Lawlor</td>
<td>Research the inventions of Ben Franklin</td>
<td>List ways we use electricity today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Songs of the Revolution Period</td>
<td>Describe some inventions, explain operation</td>
<td>How would our lives be different without electricity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dances of the Colonial Period</td>
<td>Discuss health problems of the Colonial period e.g. pneumonia, gout, boils, etc.</td>
<td>Guest speaker from local power company to explain use and conservation of electricity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>View video “Ben and Me”</td>
<td>Electricity discovery</td>
<td>Write a class almanac</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Try to interpret meanings of the sayings with the students</td>
<td>Students design their own magic squares</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Need for almanac, e.g. Farmers</td>
<td>Compare travel and time needed to travel during colonial period to today</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Demonstrate how Magic Squares were developed by Ben Franklin</td>
<td>Learn Minuet and Virginia Reel</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Measure distance between England and Colonies</td>
<td>Students could compose and print Colonial newspaper – this would involve planning, students may take different viewpoints as to colonial independence</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trace Franklin’s trip to England and France</td>
<td>Discuss different life of a trail blazer and frontiersman of the period</td>
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<tr>
<td>Into</td>
<td>Through</td>
<td>Beyond</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Locate areas explored by Daniel Boone</strong></td>
<td><strong>Students can interpret meanings of songs and how they were used to stir people up</strong></td>
<td><strong>Write a historical fantasy about another well known patriot</strong> — e.g. Paul Revere, Samuel Adams</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Research dances brought from Europe</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Write about differences in film from actual biographies of Ben Franklin</strong></td>
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EVALUATION OF THE UNIT

Evaluation criteria that I will use for this unit are as follows:

I. Self-Evaluation
   A. After writing a draft of the various assignments the students will be asked to reread their own drafts and then with the use of a checklist sheet make any needed corrections. When the student has checked himself he may then ask two other students to read his paper and write corrections or comments on the checklist paper.
   B. Daily writing logs will be kept by individual students and shared and discussed in small or large group settings.

II. Peer Evaluation
   A. Students may work in small groups that have been set up by the teacher to read each other's papers and offer constructive criticism.
   B. Group projects may be evaluated by the students and questions about how the group performed or problems that were encountered may be listed on a special form.
   C. Completed Projects done by groups or individuals may be presented to the entire class for a sharing of information and building concepts.
III. Teacher Evaluation

A. Correction of final drafts for special writing folders may be done by the teacher. The students should always be given the opportunity to work on their drafts and make corrections.

B. Checking of daily journals, writing logs and story outlines should be done by individual conference time with each student at least once a week. This will enable the teacher to discuss any problems that the student is having regarding the assignments.

C. Observation of the students as they interact with each other in group discussions and projects is most helpful in evaluating a student's understanding of the concepts presented in the unit. An informal checklist could be used to keep track of those students who participate and contribute to the project or assignment.

D. Publishing and displaying of the student's work is an indication to the students that they have done well and these two methods provide positive evaluation for the students as well as a wonderful method to stimulate further interest in future projects.

The following pages contain samples of the Evaluation Forms and a method that I use when assessing a writing grade:
Teacher Evaluation Form to be used for checking those students who participate and contribute to projects, oral participation, group discussions.

**Informal Evaluation Form**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>Group Discussion</th>
<th>Oral Participation</th>
<th>Project</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
Group Project Evaluation Form

1. Names of students in the group are:

2. Project/Activity that our group did was:

3. What we did to complete our project:

4. Things that we could have done better:

5. Things that we did a good job on:

6. We would give ourselves the following rating:
   satisfactory good wonderful

7. Why did you rate yourselves as you did?

8. Did you like another group’s presentation or project better than yours? Why?
Assessing a Grade

Assessing a grade to writing is a difficult task. The following method is what I used to evaluate the students writing assignments for individual grades:

Content - does the writer address the assignment and follow the prompt?
Organization - the writing should indicate proper sequence, word choices, paragraph structure and cohesiveness
Mechanics/Usage - improvement in the use of punctuation, vocabulary and capitalization should be evident from the first to the final draft
Daily Work - writing logs, brainstorming, rough drafts, should receive credit since this is the base of future
Participation - oral response in Read Around Groups, discussions and dramatic presentation
Ability to Complete Assignments on Schedule - Student should develop responsible attitude in passing in assignments
Evidence of Editing - student's writing should indicate editing and revising

Points to be assessed for each criterion is as follows:
Content - 20 points
Organization - 20 points
Mechanics/Usage - 20 points
Daily Work - 10 points
Participation - 10 points
Ability to Complete Assignment on Time - 10 points
Evidence of Editing - 10 points
References


*Ben and Me*, Disney Studios (video).


UNDERSTANDING OTHERS

A Thematic Unit Developed for Use in the Fifth Grade

by

Helen A. Gagnon, M. A.
Understanding Others

This thematic unit will present the student with the conflicts that occurred within families and between neighbors and friends as a result of the American Revolution. Through the reading of the core literature for this unit, Sarah Bishop by Scott O'Dell, the students will experience the feelings of a young girl caught in the turmoil of war. Comparisons could be made to other wars that have created problems and controversy such as the Vietnam War, World War II, Korean War etc... The students could compare the treatment of the Japanese-Americans during World War II and the American soldiers during the Vietnam War to the treatment of the Loyalists during the American Revolution.

Concepts that will be presented during this thematic unit will concentrate on helping the students perceive problems from different points of view and understand why individuals and groups tend to react in various ways. Discussion and role playing different individuals will help the students express how this period of American history created changes for many colonists.

Goals of the Unit are:
- to develop an understanding of the reasons why certain individuals and groups opposed the American Revolution
- to understand the tensions and frustrations that take
place between friends and family members during wars
- to help the learner understand the hardships that were faced by those who lost the American Revolution and the losses that they endured

Objectives of the Unit are:
- students will read *Sarah Bishop* by Scott O’Dell and other books about those who remained loyal to the King of England
- through films and videos the students will view various battles of the American Revolution
- students will use maps to trace the areas that Loyalists fled to after the American Revolution
- through research the students will locate information about Patriots and Loyalists who lived during the American Revolution and how they reacted to the war
- outline survival skills necessary to live in the wilderness as Sarah Bishop did
- students will predict how our country would be different if England had won the American Revolution
- students will incorporate music, art, and drama from the Revolutionary period to present information of the period
- students will utilize all areas of the content areas to expand their understanding of the theme Understanding Others

The Into, Through and Beyond format that I have used provides an outline for the teacher to demonstrate how to
blend the various content areas and create consistency. An explanation of this format is on the following page.
EXPLANATION OF THE INTO, THROUGH, AND BEYOND FORMAT

The Into, Through and Beyond Format is the method I have chosen to present the six thematic units for the project. For those who are unfamiliar with the format I would like to present the following outline:

Into

Through this section of the format the teacher will develop background for the learning experiences that the learners will encounter within the thematic unit. Providing background knowledge and drawing upon the learner's prior knowledge is an essential first step. Encounters with unknown materials and unfamiliar concepts can be made exciting rather than frustrating when background knowledge and previous experiences can be drawn upon for support.

Activities for the Into section:

- Showing of films, videos, filmstrips, photographs, viewing maps; listening to music, poetry, stories; singing songs, discussing items in an interest center; reading and listening to literature related to the concept of the thematic unit.

Through

This section of the format provides the learners with opportunities to research, discover and learn about the concept or concepts of the thematic unit by involvement and
participation. The teacher's role, as a facilitator during this part of the format, will help maintain interest for the learners as they research, discover, compare and hypothesize about the various experiences they encounter.

Activities for the Through section:

Discussion groups, offering of choices to involve participation in writing, reading, music, drama and art; incorporation of all content areas through solving, food preparation, environmental studies and the existing culture.

Beyond

This section of the format will help the learner transfer the learning experiences that have taken place during the Into and Through sections of the thematic unit. The learners should be given the opportunities to deepen and extend their comprehension through the choosing of a variety of responses.

Activities for the Beyond section:

It is important that the activities for this section be presented as learner choices rather than mandated assignments. The role of the teacher is to guide and facilitate the choices for the learners by providing research materials, and other items that the learners will need to complete the requirements for the choices they have made. Some activities for the learners to choose from are book writing, Readers Theater, role playing, research
involving scientific discoveries, making comparisons, response journals, writing poetry, composing music, murals, displays, classroom presentations, mini-museums, writing a newspaper, related mathematical activities such as calculation of lengths of trips, architecture, use of related computer programs and word processing programs for presentations and sharing of knowledge through school programs.

The suggestions that I have given for the Activities sections of this format may be embellished in many ways through the creative ingenuity of the teacher and the learners. As different thematic concepts are explored the choices may differ and expand.
CURRICULUM MAP FOR UNDERSTANDING OTHERS - A THEMATIC UNIT
Core Literature - Sarah Bishop by Scott O'Dell

Mathematics
- measuring to bake Indian Corn Muffins
- trace and calculate escape routes of Loyalists to Canada

Science
- geology/study of land & its changes
- survival skills used by Sarah Bishop
- role of animals in the wilderness

Art
- quilling
- make mobcaps and tricorns
- design scenery for a play
- draw designs using stencils

Drama
- role playing of a Patriot and a Loyalist
- presentation of the play Patriot and Tory: The Children (copy included)

Music
- songs from the American Revolution
- compose a drum and fife song

Social Studies
- map skills locating colonies and battles of the American Revolution
- read and discuss reaction of Loyalists to the American Revolution

Language Arts
- reading about the Colonial Period and the American Revolution
- predict what will happen to Sarah Bishop
- read biographical stories about Patriots and Loyalists
- write about the American Revolution from the Loyalists point of view
- discuss how our country would be different if the British had won the American Revolution
**THEMATIC UNIT - UNDERSTANDING OTHERS**

**Concept:** It is important that students look at the American Revolution from human sides of the conflict rather than just historical dates and events.

**Goal:** To help students understand the tensions and frustrations involved with the American Revolution that set friend against friend and tore families apart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Into</th>
<th>Through</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-View the video &quot;The American Revolution: Two Videos&quot; 1988 Whole Video Catalog</td>
<td>-After seeing the video discuss in small groups reaction to video - have each group record responses and report to class</td>
<td>(Student choices) play the parts of Loyalists, Patriots, Quaker during Am. Rev.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Read: Social Studies book about Am. Revolution</td>
<td>-Outline on a chart causes of the Am. Revolution and ask students to refer to these causes throughout the unit</td>
<td>-Research Stamp Act, Townshend Acts, Boston Massacre, Boston Tea Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Read:</td>
<td>-Outline on a map where major battles occurred and results of them</td>
<td>-Broadcast a news program about one of the following battles: Bunker Hill Valley Forge Concord Lexington and Yorktown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) Toliver's Secret by Esther Brady</td>
<td>-Through the reading of the various books the student will be able to develop a sense of the feelings and reactions of the colonists</td>
<td>-Write how you would feel if you lived during the Rev. War and your parents could not decide who to support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) This Time, Tempe Wick? by Patricia Lee Gauch</td>
<td></td>
<td>-Predict what will happen to Sarah Bishop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) George Washington by Zachary Kent</td>
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<tr>
<td>4) Mr. Revere and I by Robert Lawson</td>
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<tr>
<td>5) The Story of the Boston Massacre by Mary K. Phelan</td>
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<tr>
<td>6) John Treegate's Musket by Leonard Wibberly</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Read Sarah Bishop by Scott O'Dell</td>
<td>-List ways Sarah used the environment</td>
<td>-Discuss or write about how one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Show filmstrip &quot;Autumn and Winter&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Science text - Animal Adaptation</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Read the play Patriot and Tory:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Into</td>
<td>Through</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Children by Fitzgerald/1987 (Aug) Cobblestone</td>
<td>-Discuss climate changes and how weather effected outcomes of some of the battles of the Am. Rev.</td>
<td>-Using the book Colonial America choose a craft to demonstrate or a food to prepare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Songs of the Am. Revolution - 5th grade music book</td>
<td>-Sarah Bishop was lonely and sought companions—what survival skills did she learn from watching the animals?</td>
<td>-Students present the play, create scenery and costumes using texts as guides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Read - poetry</td>
<td>-Compare/contrast the children in the play and the situation they are placed in because of the Am. Rev. War — use Venn diagrams for comparisons</td>
<td>-Research song writing of the Am. Rev. then Dramatize a song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Home Book of Verse for Young Folks by Burton Egbert Stevenson</td>
<td>-Sing Yankee Doodle Dandy</td>
<td>-Students may illustrate poems or write their own poems about the Am. Rev.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Read -</td>
<td>-The World Turned Upside Down (battle of Yorktown)</td>
<td>-Respond to one of the journal writers in the response journal by writing a letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) Weathering the Storm: Women of the Revolution by Elizabeth Evans</td>
<td>-Students may read and discuss poems written by Am. and British authors</td>
<td>-Research different participants in the First Constitutional — write about one of the signers of the Constitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Abigail Adams, an American Woman by Charles Akers</td>
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<td>3) Private Yankee Doodle by J. P. Martin</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Read:</td>
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<td>1) Shh! We’re Writing the Constitution by Jean Fritz</td>
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<td>2) If You Were There When They Signed the Constitution by Elizabeth Levy</td>
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<tr>
<td>3) Fireworks, Picnics, and Flags: The Story of the Fourth of July by J. C. Giblin</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Videos: &quot;The Americans, 1776&quot;</td>
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<td>-Locate recipes for foods eaten by the colonists or mentioned in stories</td>
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<td>-Research games played by the colonial children/demonstrate</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Read and develop background knowledge of the</td>
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<td>Into</td>
<td>Through</td>
<td>Beyond</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constitution and the need for the document</td>
<td>-Locate where and when signed on maps or using the</td>
<td>tag, blindman's bluff, marbles, hoop races, top spinning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students plan a menu based on colonial recipes and prepare foods</td>
<td>Have a &quot;Fourth of July&quot; show sharing: plays, readings, written stories, demonstrate games prepare colonial foods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use math for measurement of fractions, multiplication, division, thinking skills</td>
<td>Present a Reader's Theater or ply about Sarah Bishop by Scott O'Dell</td>
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<td>Debate two sides of the American Revolutionary Loyalist versus Tory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EVALUATION OF THE UNIT

Evaluation criteria that I will use for this unit are as follows:

I. Self-Evaluation

   A. After writing a draft of the various assignments the students will be asked to reread their own drafts and then with the use of a checklist sheet make any needed corrections. When the student has checked himself he may then ask two other students to read his paper and write corrections or comments on the checklist paper.

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A. Correction of final drafts for special writing folders may be done by the teacher. The students should always be given the opportunity to work on their drafts and make corrections.

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D. Publishing and displaying of the students work is an indication to the students that they have done well and these two methods provide positive evaluation for the students as well as a wonderful method to stimulate further interest in future projects.

The following pages contain samples of the Evaluation Forms and a method that I use when assessing a writing grade:
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1. Names of students in the group are:

2. Project/Activity that our group did was:

3. What we did to complete our project:

4. Things that we could have done better:

5. Things that we did a good job on:

6. We would give ourselves the following rating:
   satisfactory  good  wonderful

7. Why did you rate yourselves as you did?

8. Did you like another group's presentation or project better than yours? Why?
Teacher Evaluation Form to be used for checking those students who participate and contribute to projects, oral participation, group discussions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Name</strong></td>
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Assessing a Grade

Assessing a grade to writing is a difficult task. The following method is what I used to evaluate the students writing assignments for individual grades:

Content - does the writer address the assignment and follow the prompt?
Organization - the writing should indicate proper sequence, word choices, paragraph structure and cohesiveness
Mechanics/Usage - improvement in the use of punctuation, vocabulary and capitalization should be evident from the first to the final draft
Daily Work - writing logs, brainstorming, rough drafts, should receive credit since this is the base of future
Participation - oral response in Read Around Groups, discussions and dramatic presentation
Ability to Complete Assignments on Schedule - Student should develop responsible attitude in passing in assignments
Evidence of Editing - student's writing should indicate editing and revising

Points to be assessed for each criterion is as follows:
Content - 20 points
Organization - 20 points
Mechanics/Usage - 20 points
Daily Work - 10 points
Participation - 10 points
Ability to Complete Assignment on Time - 10 points
Evidence of Editing - 10 points
References


Levy, E. (1987). If you were there when they signed the Constitution. New York: Putnam.


environment (pp. 181-211). New Jersey: Silver Burdett.


HARDSHIP

A Thematic Unit Developed for Use in the Fifth Grade

by

Helen A. Gagnon, M. A.
HARDSHIP

During the movement of settlers to the Western part of the United States many hardships were endured. Travel was difficult and settlement on homestead involved years of manual labor and sacrifice. The men worked tending to the land and trying to grow crops while the women supplied all of the household needs. Women made clothing, cooked, educated their children and bore more children to populate the sparse and lonely settlements.

Loneliness, illness, and death were endured by the early settlers of the Midwest and the West. In an attempt to make new homes the settlers often drove Native Americans from their lands and caused feelings of resentment and anger that often turned into fighting and bloodshed.

Daily life for the settlers was filled with toil and little time for pleasure. As more settlers moved into an area social activities increased and some time was set aside for dancing and group activities such as quilting bees and fairs.

Through this thematic unit the student will have the opportunity to share through reading, observation, listening and viewing the hardships that were endured by those who lived and settled the western part of the country. With an understanding of the people, the land and the events that led to this migration to the West, the students will be able to appreciate and question the movement and its results on
American history and culture.

Core literature for this thematic unit is *Sarah, Plain and Tall* by Patricia MacLachlan. Several other books, poems, filmstrips, computer software and music are listed in the curriculum map and the references for this unit. The materials all blend to provide a rich and full curriculum or both the learner and the teacher.

Goals of the Unit
- to develop an understanding of the meaning of hardship
- to help the learner understand the reasons and events that led to the migration of settlers to the West
- to help the learner understand the hardships that the settlers endured while attempting to make new homes or travel
- to understand the changes that occurred as a result of the settlements to the environment and the people

Objectives of the Unit
- students will read and discover the events that caused the Western Movement
- students will use map skills to indicate the migration of settlers from the Eastern parts of the country to the Western part of the country
- Students will discuss the effect of the difficult ways of life and travel on the settlers and compare their own ways of life to that of early settlers
- students will also compare present day settlers in the
United States to those of the past
- students will learn about the types of environmental conditions that created problems for settlers
- students will learn songs and dances that expressed the feelings of the settlers
- students will utilize all content areas to derive meaning from this theme as it is explored

The Into, Through and Beyond format that I have used provides an outline for the teacher to demonstrate how to blend the various content areas. An explanation of this format is on the following page.
EXPLANATION OF THE INTO, THROUGH, AND BEYOND FORMAT

The Into, Through and Beyond Format is the method I have chosen to present the six thematic units for the project. For those who are unfamiliar with the format I would like to present the following outline:

Into

Through this section of the format the teacher will develop background for the learning experiences that the learners will encounter within the thematic unit. Providing background knowledge and drawing upon the learner's prior knowledge is an essential first step. Encounters with unknown materials and unfamiliar concepts can be made exciting rather than frustrating when background knowledge and previous experiences can be drawn upon for support.

Activities for the Into section:

Showing of films, videos, filmstrips, photographs, viewing maps; listening to music, poetry, stories; singing songs, discussing items in an interest center; reading and listening to literature related to the concept of the thematic unit.

Through

This section of the format provides the learners with opportunities to research, discover and learn about the concept or concepts of the thematic unit by involvement and
participation. The teacher’s role, as a facilitator during this part of the format, will help maintain interest for the learners as they research, discover, compare and hypothesize about the various experiences they encounter.

Activities for the Through section:

Discussion groups, offering of choices to involve participation in writing, reading, music, drama and art; incorporation of all content areas through solving, food preparation, environmental studies and the existing culture.

Beyond

This section of the format will help the learner transfer the learning experiences that have taken place during the Into and Through sections of the thematic unit. The learners should be given the opportunities to deepen and extend their comprehension through the choosing of a variety of responses.

Activities for the Beyond section:

It is important that the activities for this section be presented as learner choices rather than mandated assignments. The role of the teacher is to guide and facilitate the choices for the learners by providing research materials, and other items that the learners will need to complete the requirements for the choices they have made. Some activities for the learners to choose from are book writing, Readers Theater, role playing, research
involving scientific discoveries, making comparisons, response journals, writing poetry, composing music, murals, displays, classroom presentations, mini-museums, writing a newspaper, related mathematical activities such as calculation of lengths of trips, architecture, use of related computer programs and word processing programs for presentations and sharing of knowledge through school programs.

The suggestions that I have given for the Activities sections of this format may be embellished in many ways through the creative ingenuity of the teacher and the learners. As different thematic concepts are explored the choices may differ and expand.
CURRICULUM MAP FOR HARDSHIP – A THEMATIC UNIT
Core Literature - Sarah, Plain and Tall
by Patricia MacLachlan

Mathematics
- story problems using events of the books read
- estimation of the number of plants in an area
- calculation of the length of a trip from Maine to Chicago

Music
- square dancing
- folk songs such as The Farmer is the Man from The Music Book - 5th grade - Holt, Rhinehart and Winston

Science
- describe and identify different types of sea-shells
- report on the flowers mentioned in the story, Sarah, Plain and Tall
- weather on the prairies compared to weather on the coastline of New England
- chart showing different plants, animals and weather on the prairie and the coast

Art
- chalk drawings of prairie and sea coasts
- mobile of the story Sarah, Plain and Tall
- pictures of different flowers and plants in the story

Language Arts
- write an advertisement for a mother
- list the qualities of a good mother
- story chart for Sarah, Plain and Tall
- write a poem about an unusual plant
- discuss, write about experiencing a loss
- character description of Sarah, Anna and Caleb from Sarah, Plain and Tall
- explain importance of animals in the story Sarah, Plain and Tall

Physical Education
- square dancing
- exercises that depict the work done by farmers digging, walking, loading wagons etc..

Social Studies
- discuss and read about the Westward Movement
- trace a trip on the map from Maine to the Midwest
- importance of the railroads
- types of buildings - sod houses
- mail-order-brides
- frontier life
- farming
THEMATIC UNIT - HARDSHIP

Concept: The physical and psychological dangers of settling the West were endured by a variety of people desiring to fulfill their dreams.

Goal: To provide students with information about the westward migration, how and why people chose to move.

Into | Through | Beyond
---|---|---
Display of seashells and flowers | Discuss types of shells, flowers displayed, areas where they could be found | (Student choices)
Filmstrips about plants and animals | Trace a trip on a map from Maine to Chicago | Research plants of seashore/prairie
Read The Dakota Dugout by Ann Turner (a poem) | Discuss/write about experiencing a loss of family member | Science investigations of plants
Read about tornadoes, dust storms, blizzards | Trace a trip on a map from Maine to Chicago | Chalk drawings of prairies and seacoasts
Read American Tales by Adrian Stoutenberg | Discuss and write about how Sarah, Anna, Caleb, and Papa interact in the story | Mobiles of story characters, events for Sarah Plain and Tall
-Read:
1) Getting There: Frontier Travel Without Power by Suzanne Hilton
2) If You Travelled West in a Covered Wagon by Ellen Levine | Research how the term "mail-order bride" developed | Research unusual plants, flowers mentioned in the story and write a report or a poem
-Read:
1) Indian Chiefs by Russell Freedman
2) The Defenders by Ann McGovern
3) Sing Down the Moon by S. O'Dell | Compare, contrast life in Maine with life on the prairie | Square Dancing
| Compare plants found on the prairie with those found in Maine | Dramatize jobs of farming through pantomime or dance
| Explain importance of animals | Write an advertisement for a mother | Research weather maps in newspapers to deter-
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Into</th>
<th>Through</th>
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</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Read: history text about the War with Mexico</td>
<td>List the qualities of a good mother</td>
<td>Write a modern day tall tale – use one of the heroes as a main character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Program – Oregon Trail</td>
<td>Calculate distance of a trip from Maine to Chicago</td>
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<tr>
<td>Film about weather</td>
<td>Discuss types of storms common to Midwest/safety measures</td>
<td>Choose a mode of travel to reach the west – write about it in a journal format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filmstrips about plants, animals</td>
<td>Compare/contrast Tall Tale heroes</td>
<td>Write about one of the Indian Chiefs – e.g. Osceola, Tecumseh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference list contains several additional books and sources</td>
<td>Discuss why stories were invented</td>
<td>Draw a picture of the Alamo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Illustrate types of travel to the west</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Compare movement of Mexican settlers into the West and Southwest</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outline movement of Indians and results of settlements by white men</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>View video about The Alamo</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complete unit by depicting frontier life and its hardships in any way wishes – some suggestions are murals, videos, Reader’s Theater, plays, illustrated literature such as poems, books, journals</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Into Through Beyond

- Trace weather patterns for U.S.

- Read about plants of the desert and the seaside — invent a plant that could survive both climates
EVALUATION OF THE UNIT

Evaluation criteria that I will use for this unit are as follows:

I. Self-Evaluation
   A. After writing a draft of the various assignments the students will be asked to reread their own drafts and then with the use of a checklist sheet make any needed corrections. When the student has checked himself he may then ask two other students to read his paper and write corrections or comments on the checklist paper.
   B. Daily writing logs will be kept by individual students and shared and discussed in small or large group settings.

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   A. Students may work in small groups that have been set up by the teacher to read each other’s papers and offer constructive criticism.
   B. Group projects may be evaluated by the students and questions about how the group performed or problems that were encountered may be listed on a special form.
   C. Completed Projects done by groups or individuals may be presented to the entire class for a sharing of information and building concepts.
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A. Correction of final drafts for special writing folders may be done by the teacher. The students should always be given the opportunity to work on their drafts and make corrections.

B. Checking of daily journals, writing logs and story outlines should be done by individual conference time with each student at least once a week. This will enable the teacher to discuss any problems that the student is having regarding the assignments.

C. Observation of the students as they interact with each other in group discussions and projects is most helpful in evaluating a student's understanding of the concepts presented in the unit. An informal checklist could be used to keep track of those students who participate and contribute to the project or assignment.

D. Publishing and displaying of the students work is an indication to the students that they have done well and these two methods provide positive evaluation for the students as well as a wonderful method to stimulate further interest in future projects.

The following pages contain samples of the Evaluation Forms and a method that I use when assessing a writing grade:
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1. Names of students in the group are:

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Teacher Evaluation Form to be used for checking those students who participate and contribute to projects, oral participation, group discussions.

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Daily Work - 10 points

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Ability to Complete Assignment on Time - 10 points

Evidence of Editing - 10 points
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HUMAN DIGNITY

A Thematic Unit Developed for use in the Fifth Grade

by

Helen A. Gagnon, M.A.
Human Dignity

This thematic unit will provide the students with background and opportunities to learn about the slavery issue and its effects on the newly formed government of the United States. Through reading the core literature, *Anthony Burns: The Defeat and Triumph of a Fugitive Slave* by Virginia Hamilton, the students will have a frame of reference to view the slavery issue and the problems and issues that developed as a result of slavery.

This unit will also provide opportunities for the students to learn about the contributions of the different groups that built our country. Through reading, discussion and observation they will learn about the many races, religions and national origins of the people that compose our country. Immigration from 1850 to the present day will be a second focal point of the unit. The cultural contributions and skills of various groups will be researched and their benefits for the development of our country discussed.

Various genres of literature will be read and discussed to understand the human side of the migration and the hardships and discrimination endured by immigrants in America. An understanding of the American beliefs that the freedoms of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are rights of all citizens that must be safeguarded, will be stressed.
Goals of the Unit

- to develop an understanding that the American people are people of many races, religions, and national origins who live under one government
- to realize how slavery developed in our country and when it was ended
- to understand the human side of the migration to America
- to examine the hardships and discrimination that immigrants encountered because of their race, religion, or cultural traditions
- to encourage students to develop respect for the rights of others and an appreciation of the contributions made by the various groups and individual immigrants to our country

Objectives of the Unit

- students will read, view and listen to various genres of literature to gain information about the slavery issue
- students will engage in discussion, writing, and various projects to develop an understanding of the slavery issue and the reasons for its existence in our country
- students will learn about the contributions of black men and women to the economic, political and cultural development of America
- students will learn about the contributions of immigrants to the countries industrial, cultural, economic and social growth
- students will locate the countries from which the immigrants came and trace their settlement to America
- students will become familiar with the words of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights
- students will gain an insight into local and state governments through field trips, guest speakers, community projects
- students will learn about the economic importance of cotton, how it is grown and processed
- students will read and discuss American Black Folktales and poetry
- students will compare life on a plantation to that of life in the city
- students will listen to and dance to the various types of music and songs brought to America by the slaves and the immigrants
- students will research life as it was on a plantation
- students will become involved in the presentation of an International Festival as a culminating activity

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Activities for the Into section:

Showing of films, videos, filmstrips, photographs, viewing maps; listening to music, poetry, stories; singing songs, discussing items in an interest center; reading and listening to literature related to the concept of the thematic unit.

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participation. The teacher's role, as a facilitator during this part of the format, will help maintain interest for the learners as they research, discover, compare and hypothesize about the various experiences they encounter.

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The suggestions that I have given for the Activities sections of this format may be embellished in many ways through the creative ingenuity of the teacher and the learners. As different thematic concepts are explored the choices may differ and expand.
### CURRICULUM MAP FOR HUMAN DIGNITY - A THEMATIC UNIT

**-Core Literature-**

Anthony Burns, *The Defeat and Triumph of a Fugitive Slave*  
by Virginia Hamilton

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mathematics</th>
<th>Science</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Economy of the cotton industry</td>
<td>- Research and report about cotton</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Cost of slavery</td>
<td>- Climates that effect plant growth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Art</th>
<th>Drama</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- African art</td>
<td>- Read and present a play depicting an aspect of slavery</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Illustrate scene from the story of Anthony Burns</td>
<td>- Architecture of plantations</td>
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</table>

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<tr>
<th>Language Arts</th>
<th>Social Studies</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Write a biography about Anthony Burns</td>
<td>- Read and discuss the Underground Railroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Compare and contrast the lives of slaves and free men</td>
<td>- Read about the Fugitive Slave Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Discuss why slavery violates human dignity</td>
<td>- Abolitionists</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Research life on a plantation</td>
<td>- Life in the Northern and Southern states during the time before the Civil War</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Reasons for slavery</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Dependence on the slaves for economy in the south</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THEMATIC UNIT - HUMAN DIGNITY

Concept: Our country is strong because we are united in a pluralistic society of many races, cultures and ethnic groups. Respecting each other's right to be different and support each other as members of a common community.

Goal: To help students understand the importance of safeguarding the freedoms stated in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Into</th>
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<th>Beyond</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-View 2 filmstrips:</td>
<td>-After viewing filmstrips discuss meaning of immigration and important contributions to our culture</td>
<td>(Student choices) -Interview family members to find out where they are from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) Building a Nation: The Story of Immigration-National Geographic - 1983</td>
<td>-Discuss the Underground Railroad</td>
<td>-Draw underground railroad route</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) North America: Land of Many Peoples National Geographic 1983</td>
<td>-Life in So. and No. before Civil War</td>
<td>-Sequence charts showing ways cotton grows and make into cloth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Read: Anthony Burns, the Defeat and Triumph of a Fugitive Slave by V. Hamilton</td>
<td>-Reasons for slaves</td>
<td>-Research inventions after 1850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Read Cotton by Selsam</td>
<td>-Describe life on a plantation</td>
<td>-Make samples of African Art to decorate stories, bulletin boards etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Contact Music Centro for presentation by the D'Jimbe African Dance Troupe if possible or other groups</td>
<td>-Compare/contrast life of slaves to a free man</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Samples of African Art</td>
<td>-Climate necessary to produce cotton</td>
<td>-Draw scenes of past, present day life in American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Read American Artists fifth grade art texts or other sources</td>
<td>-Invention of the cotton gin and effects on the plantation</td>
<td>-Write poems to describe color</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Into</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Read: <em>American Black Folktales: The People Could Fly</em> by V. Hamilton</td>
<td>- Locate samples and materials used - help students recreate samples</td>
<td>- Students can retell the story of Anthony Burns through their own books or other media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Read: <em>Poetry My Black Me</em> by A. Adoff</td>
<td>- View art of Am. artists-discuss create samples what is depicted</td>
<td>- Discuss origin of spirituals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Music: <em>What a Morning</em> by J. Langstaff</td>
<td></td>
<td>- International Festival-choose different countries that sent immigrants to our land and research their contributions to American Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Read: <em>Streets of Gold</em> by K. Branson, <em>An Orphan for Nebraska</em> by Charlene Talbot</td>
<td>- Discuss how slavery violates human dignity</td>
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<td>- Read and discuss the tales and their meanings</td>
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<td>- Students choose a poem to read and discuss</td>
<td>- Samples of foods, traditions, clothing etc. can be demonstrated to show diversity of our culture</td>
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<td>- Listen to black spirituals and discuss meanings</td>
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<td>- Students can compare the lives of different groups of immigrants</td>
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<td>- Invite local city and government representatives to present talks about government</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Encourage parents to come and speak to the students about their heritage</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
EVALUATION OF THE UNIT

Evaluation criteria that I will use for this unit are as follows:

I. Self-Evaluation
   A. After writing a draft of the various assignments the students will be asked to reread their own drafts and then with the use of a checklist sheet make any needed corrections. When the student has checked himself he may then ask two other students to read his paper and write corrections or comments on the checklist paper.
   B. Daily writing logs will be kept by individual students and shared and discussed in small or large group settings.

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A. Correction of final drafts for special writing folders may be done by the teacher. The students should always be given the opportunity to work on their drafts and make corrections.

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2. Project/Activity that our group did was:

3. What we did to complete our project:

4. Things that we could have done better:

5. Things that we did a good job on:

6. We would give ourselves the following rating:
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7. Why did you rate yourselves as you did?

8. Did you like another group's presentation or project better than yours? Why?
Teacher Evaluation Form to be used for checking those students who participate and contribute to projects, oral participation, group discussions.

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<th>Informal Evaluation Form</th>
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Assessing a Grade

Assessing a grade to writing is a difficult task. The following method is what I used to evaluate the students writing assignments for individual grades:

Content - does the writer address the assignment and follow the prompt?

Organization - the writing should indicate proper sequence, word choices, paragraph structure and cohesiveness

Mechanics/Usage - improvement in the use of punctuation, vocabulary and capitalization should be evident from the first to the final draft

Daily Work - writing logs, brainstorming, rough drafts, should receive credit since this is the base of future

Participation - oral response in Read Around Groups, discussions and dramatic presentation

Ability to Complete Assignments on Schedule - Student should develop responsible attitude in passing in assignments

Evidence of Editing - student’s writing should indicate editing and revising

Points to be assessed for each criterion is as follows:

Content - 20 points
Organization - 20 points
Mechanics/Usage - 20 points
Daily Work – 10 points

Participation – 10 points

Ability to Complete Assignment on Time – 10 points

Evidence of Editing – 10 points
References


