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The integration of literature with kindergarten social studies

Kathryn Dellert Kothlow

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THE INTEGRATION OF LITERATURE WITH KINDERGARTEN SOCIAL STUDIES

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Education: Reading

by
Kathryn Dellert Kothlow
June 1993
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WITH KINDERGARTEN SOCIAL STUDIES

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June 1993

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Abstract

Literature has been proven an effective tool in content area instruction. Through a review of current literature it has been shown that the use of literature increases students' motivation, interest, participation, and comprehension in the content areas. Students that disliked or had little interest in content areas become active participants when literature is introduced.

Literature provides holistic language and literature-based instruction, both emphasized in the California History - Social Science Framework. The framework also emphasizes the need to develop well-read, thoughtful and concerned citizens and literature provides one means of doing so. Students that are able to synthesize information, relate the past to the present, form personal unbiased opinions and apply this knowledge to their lives are on their way to becoming thoughtful, ethical and respected citizens.

The incorporation of literature and social studies is important for all grade levels. The accompanying project is a current list of literature selections that coincide with the Houghton - Mifflin kindergarten textbook. The annotated bibliography is listed in sequential order according to the area of study in the textbook.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER ONE</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Foundations</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of the Project</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals of the Project</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of the Project</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of the Project</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER TWO</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to the Project</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX A</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Survey</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

The love of reading is one of the most important gifts teachers and parents may give to children. Literature will provide experiences that are ordinarily inaccessible to students, broaden their knowledge of the world and its peoples and improve reading skills, such as decoding and comprehending. Literature is one of the basics and should be taught in all curricular areas (Bainter, Crozler, and Deegan, 1988). Literature provides children with a wealth of experiences they might not have had the opportunity to enjoy first hand.

As stated in the book, Literature Based Reading, (Laughlin and Swisher, 1990), literature can expand a child's world in many ways. The first is the development of insights and understandings of the world. Through the reading of a good book, children can develop a sense of connectedness with the world around them. They may have come to realize that others their own age have the same feelings, hopes or fears that they have. Children can become more empathetic with other peoples or cultures through books. Knowing something about others often makes their actions easier to understand.

A second value of literature is its role in the development of a child's imagination. Children can have wonderful adventures, experience thrills and dangers or travel to other lands simply by opening a book. These
experiences can all be gained in the safety of their own classroom or home.

A third value of is the development of "interior landscapes:, to visualize settings and events. This type of visualization promotes the use of higher level thinking skills. Through the visualization of settings and events, the child is able to sequence events, predict outcomes, reflect upon character's decisions and integrate their own prior knowledge with the text.

Reading for pleasure is the fourth value. Good books instill a joy of reading and learning that is often lifelong. It is a wonderful feeling to know that one can pick up a book and be transported to another world filled with mystery or adventure. Teachers and parents play and especially vital role in this particular area. Children learn best from example or rolemodeling. It is essential that the adults in their lives present literature and reading in a positive light.
Statement Of The Problem

Many educators believe that literature plays an important role in all curricular areas and are striving to incorporate quality literature/trade books into their teaching programs. Since literature holds such importance in the minds of educators, it is difficult to imagine a current classroom that is solely basal or textbook oriented.

With an increased use of literature in the classroom and the increasing popularity of whole language, reading and the content areas are no longer considered separate areas of the curriculum. Instead they are now viewed as parts of an interdependent curriculum, with all areas meshing to form a whole. A good piece of literature that relates to all content areas strengthens this interdependence.

Too often content area texts give dry and lifeless accounts of facts with little attention given to background information that might relate to or expand upon the subject. The addition of literature selections can make content curriculum palatable, comprehensible, and memorable (Brozo & Tomlinson, 1986). The use of literature is likely to promote students' interest in and involvement with content material and thereby increase learning (Brozo and Tomlinson, 1986).

By combining literature with the content areas a well-rounded rather than one-sided view of the subject develops.
By presenting several literature selections to the students, a teacher is offering a variety of viewpoints on the subject including authors' and illustrators'. This variety allows children to synthesize the information and form their own opinion on the topic. Allowing the synthesis of information is one way that the presentation of literature promotes higher level thinking skills in the content areas.

Anxious to keep up with the current trends in education, publishing companies are attempting to convert or expand their textbooks to include more literature. Consequently, publishers are now promoting a type of "whole language textbooks". Although they may include several annotated selections of literature pieces or additional reading lists, these new books continue to contain skills and comprehension checks, which often do not include critical thinking questions. With the inclusion of such skills, the new textbooks continue to resemble the basals of the past.

The Moreno Valley Unified School District has selected the Houghton Mifflin series as its primary social studies text. Although the Houghton Mifflin text is an improvement over the past series, it is lacking in the literature selected for inclusion. The text does offer reading lists for the children and for the teacher as well as multimedia selections. However there is no expanded bibliography for
the units of study or additional activities should one wish to go beyond the text.

There is a need for the development of a more complete list of children's literature that relates to the areas of study in the kindergarten social studies text. Many quality pieces of literature, that have been overlooked by the publisher, are available. This project will provide a more complete annotated list of children's literature that relates to the areas of study in the Houghton Mifflin kindergarten text book. It will also provide accompanying activities for those pieces. The activities will be developed and presented in a manner that reflect a whole language perspective and will incorporate objectives that are an essential part of the kindergarten social studies curriculum.
Theoretical Foundations

The theoretical foundations of this project lie within two teaching approaches. These approaches are "whole language based instruction" and "literature based instruction". Although referred to, by many educators, as separate teaching approaches; these two styles are actually very similar and depend upon one another for success.

Many educators, following the current teaching trends of California and the nation, are now instructing their students using the whole language approach. This whole language approach concentrates children's efforts on expressing and gaining meaning. "Writing, reading, spelling and punctuation are all seen as means toward successful communication" (Laughlin and Swisher, 1990, p. x). Whole language educators are interested in a child's ability to obtain meaning from and integrate prior knowledge with the text.

Since whole language educators are interested in the whole classroom picture, there is often little need for basals or content area textbooks. Many whole language teachers ignore basals, and build their programs around children's literature, often in thematic units. "Some teachers salvage what they can -- whatever good children's literature there is in their basals -- to support their whole language program" (Goodman, 1986, p.29).
Many whole language teachers instruct their students using literature based programs. These programs are often arranged around topics or themes that apply to the curriculum. One or several pieces of literature provide the base and the background knowledge for instruction. Therefore, it is through literature, not only text books, that the student gains knowledge of any particular subject.

As stated previously, the two teaching approaches, whole language and literature-based instruction, depend upon one another for success. An instructor, practicing whole language does not rely solely on textbook instruction. Reliance on textbooks does not give students a complete picture of the content areas which is the goal of whole language instructors. Textbooks tend to relate facts in a listlike manner, whereas trade books incorporate those same fact into an interesting and enjoyable narrative. Tradebooks offer opinions and emotions that are essential if a student is to acquire the whole picture of content learning.

This project will be based on the above mentioned approaches. It will incorporate quality children's literature and apply it to social studies objectives and themes in a kindergarten curriculum.
Literature Review

"Children are (even) introduced to, and become interested in, social studies learnings long before they enter school. These concepts come into a child's life as soon as he learns the street on which he lives, drops coins in a savings bank, observes a bus or a train transporting people or materials, or hears a relative speak of his travels" (Dzur, 1965, p. 365).

This beginning knowledge of the world is gained by children through first hand experiences. They have the pleasure of participating in each event as it occurs in their life. It is through active participation that social concepts become clear, understandable and exciting. Recognizing the importance of student enthusiasm and interest in the social sciences, the California History - Social Science Framework (1987) states:

whenever appropriate, history should be presented as an exciting and dramatic series of events in the past that helped to shape the present. The teacher should endeavor to bring the past to life, too make vivid the struggles and triumphs of men and women who lived in other times and places. The story of the past should be lively an accurate as well as rich with controversies and forceful personalities. While assessing the social, economic, political, and cultural context of events, teachers must never neglect the value of good storytelling as a source of motivation for the study of history (p. 4).

Social studies text books have often been criticized as being lifeless accounts of historical events. Often they contain far too many concepts and present these concepts in a listlike fashion, thereby making them incomprehensible (Guzzetti, Kowalinski and McGowan, 1992). "Materials
written in such a way are unlikely to stir the reader's blood, to build strong pride in character and acts of great people, to give insight, to develop ideals. If we are interested in developing patriotism, world citizenship, and feelings of responsibility for making a contribution to humanity, we will have to look beyond textbooks" (Dawson, 1965, p.431).

According to current books and journal writings there are two significant arguments for the integration of literature and social studies. These are: increased student interest and understanding in social studies and an increased reader response to the literature.
Literature Promotes Increased Student Interest

The search for alternative means of conveying knowledge, in the area of social studies, has lead educators to the use of trade books. The incorporation of trade books has strengthened many social studies programs by adding human emotions to a topic, presenting a variety of topics and writing styles, and allowing for a variety of reading levels. Armbruster states "trade books offer important advantages in teaching the content areas. There are countless high quality trade books available from which to choose. Trade books may be the best means available to provide for individual differences and the general high interest value of trade books can help motivate children to learn content as well as to read" (Armbruster, 1991, p. 324).

These pieces of literature add interest by allowing the student to experience the subject in narrative or story format. Literature and personal narratives can be used to enhance and support the learner in the goal of developing cultural literacy in family and community. "Literature helps children 'understand the common memories that create a sense of community among people'. One way to create a sense of community is to share stories both public and private, which reflect our experiences in real life" (Busch and Cousin, 1990, p. 44). Trade books offer the reader a look
into the past, present or future through the eyes of the author or storyteller. Social studies students can experience concepts in a more complete and personal way.

Active participation is a key when using literature in social studies. Textbooks are known for containing far too many concepts and for highlighting each one briefly. Even though a whole section may be devoted to a specific topic, the reader of a textbook continues to lack a substantial body of information. Reports indicate that textbooks are dry and lifeless and reading in content textbooks is much more difficult than narrative, which elementary students are accustomed. This means that social studies students are faced with a dual problem reading and comprehending the textbook and then relating it to the content area (Drake and Drake, 1990). Since they are unappealing, most students skim social studies textbooks rather than read them. "These criticisms fit with our own as teachers and as learners; that students rarely curl up in bed with a good textbook" (Guzzetti, Kowalinski, and McGowan, 1992, p. 114). However, students begin to actively participate when the textbook is replaced or coupled with literature. Students begin to identify with the characters of a novel and get caught up in the drama of the piece. The literary world becomes "real". This internalization of the story guides the reader through social studies concepts in an interesting and exciting way.
A student, motivated to read the next chapter, will do so and will comprehend what was read. Textbooks lack the excitement and motivating forces that literature effortlessly offers.

A school/university partnership developed, implemented and evaluated a sixth grade literature based social studies unit. This partnership team consisted of a sixth grade teacher, a professor of content reading and a teacher educator in social studies who collaborated in the formation of a social studies unit on China, taught solely with literature. Another member of their team taught a comparison lesson using only textbooks and related activities. This other classroom provided a means by which to measure the results (Guzzetti, Kowalinski & McGowan, 1992).

Guzzetti, Kowalinski and McGowan found that "students can acquire more concepts and greater understanding of those concepts through literature and literature based instruction than through a traditional approach" (p. 121). They also noted that "by focusing instructional activities on concept acquisition and application, teachers can effectively use literature to teach social studies" (p. 121).

A similar study, involving third and fourth grade students, examined what effect the use of children's literature would have on elementary students. Specifically,
the study involved the effects of historical fiction in the social studies classroom (Drake & Drake, 1990).

The nine week study included both pre and post tests regarding student views of history. The teacher read the historical novels out loud to the students to "alleviate any chance that a student's reading dysfunction might influence the results of the study" (p. 6). Each student was required to record their thoughts about the daily reading in a literature log. The results of the study were similar to reported by Guzzetti, Kowalinski and McGowan. Drake and Drake found that the students expressed a great deal of enthusiasm and interest while studying history. The students' interest was also seen to carry over into other subject areas. All scores improved from the pre-test to the post-test showing that the children gained information from the literature. The Drakes conclude that "educators should use children's love of stories and the story format to make history come alive for younger students. Children are capable of learning about the past and enjoy doing so when history comes alive for them in the format of a story" (p.8).

The use of literature in social studies also allows for a variety of reading levels in the classroom. "A variety of trade books ensures that more able readers will be challenged, while less able readers will be able to find
reading material appropriate for their levels" (Armbruster, 1991, p.324). Students reading comfortably at their level, rather than struggling with a text book, will have an increase in comprehension and interest. Children's comprehension has been shown to be greater with high interest materials because interesting material better maintains their attention and the children are more motivated to read (Brozo and Tomlinson, 1986,). In addition, with added interest, the student will be motivated to go beyond stories in search of more information on the given topic. These students are also more apt to continue reading in the content areas throughout their life.

"Social studies teachers must share a role in promoting longterm literacy" (Sanacore, 1990, p. 414). "Regardless of the approach taken, using literature in social studies classes increases the potential for enjoying reading and for considering it as a lifetime activity. Students also gain important values from literary activities, and teachers should encourage them as a major complement to the instructional program.

There are several means of incorporating literature in the social studies classroom. Literature can be used as the major focus of the instructional program. Historical fiction, biographies, novel and diaries all bring a personal story to the reader. Educators need to provide a wide
variety of materials. Newspapers, magazines, and paperbacks are several readily available resources. Finally, social studies teachers should read aloud to their students. Reading aloud to students is a key motivating factor. "Reading to students frequently is an excellent strategy for motivating them to read" (Sanacore, 1990, p. 415).

Understanding what is being read, being interested in classroom topics and participating in discussions are three areas in which trade books add to students' self-esteem. By addressing the wide variety of interests and reading levels in a social studies classroom, literature can add to a students' feelings of self-worth. Students that are motivated and excited about what they are doing will ultimately feel good about themselves, learning and the classroom.

Many students receive their first serious look at different cultures, historical eras and events, politics and the scientific advances of the human race through content area textbooks. Unfortunately, "the narrative element -- that is the stories that lie within all human interactions is usually omitted from textbooks" (Brozo and Tomlinson, 1986, p.288). According to Anne Martin (1990) many of us grew up thinking of history and social studies as the study of a series of disconnected battles, dates and concepts from the past. We were unaware that the social sciences could be
an exciting area of study filled with adventure, discoveries and conflicts. Current trends in the social sciences are attempting to correct the view of a disconnected past. Educators are now trying to present a connected and comprehensive view of the past to their students. The means they are utilizing to accomplish this is the integration of literature. Clearly in an effort to emphasize the value of literature in the social studies classroom, the California History - Social Science Framework describes history as "a story well told" (1988, p. 4).

By offering an assortment of literature, educators can assure that the students will receive a variety of viewpoints and opinions on any given topic. This allows educators to present historical and social events without personal bias. Students are able to read the literature and form their own opinions. Without meaning to social studies textbooks present the reader with a biased view. Often textbooks are thought of as absolute. The student reads the facts as they are presented and accepts them as truth, which they are. However, textbooks lack the varying viewpoints, opinions, and nuances that trade books provide so easily.

Trade books also allow the teacher to present the contemporary view of the topic. Since school district funding only allows for their update every seven to ten years, textbooks are often out dated. Trade books come into
print every year and contain the most current information available to the author. These new books are frequently readily available to teachers through libraries and other sources (Moss, 1991).

Literature provides many things that a student needs to be successful in the classroom. It provides motivation, interest, a comfortable instructional level, increased self-esteem, current information and the option of forming one's own opinion. Textbooks, lacking in several of these areas, cannot provide the same type of motivation for study.
Reader Response to Literature

"Reading to learn is necessary to academic success" (Moss, 1991, p. 31). If we are to develop "a nation of readers" educators must motivate children to read long after the bell rings. "Through the selection of quality literature and the incorporation of trade books with the academic program, this goal of developing thoughtful readers can be accomplished" (Moss, 1991, p. 31).

Regardless of the area of study, getting children to respond to and think about their reading is a major goal of educators. By providing quality literature and guidance through questioning, educators can encourage students to think about and respond to what they have read.

Children learn about the world through active participation. It is this response to or manipulation of environment that allows the child to make sense out of every day occurrences. Children need a wide variety of experiences; and exposure to an assortment of literature is an excellent method to provide meaningful, thought provoking activities that children might have otherwise missed.

Most educators use a variety of methods to encourage their students to think about and respond to their reading. Literature study groups or workshops, book talks, literature logs, creative dramatics, reader's theater and art are a few activities that promote reader response to literature.
Literature study groups or literature circles are heterogenous groups of children working together to discuss their reading. Placement in these groups is usually random or according to the books being read. According to Danielson (1992) literature circles help children focus which in turn brings the reader and literature closer together. "Response to literature is an important aspect of literature discussion groups. As readers read quality literature and share their reactions to what they have read, further reading and writing is enhanced. Fifth and sixth grade students shared personal stories, became active readers, evaluated the text as literature and valued alternative views of literature when placed in literature study groups" (p. 373). Although the teacher has a dynamic role in literature study groups, the students are the active participants. "In sharing their own impressions and listening to the impressions of others, students are often forced to rethink their original responses, to search for information or reasons to fill the openings that may exist" (Aker, 1992, p.109). Not the only ones asking and answering questions, teachers are viewed as facilitators that keep the groups focused and moving. Bringing the spotlight away from the teacher and on to the students helps the students become more active classroom participants. The students now share
responsibility and control over their learning. This increased control adds to the students' self-esteem. Students who feel valued and in control of what they are doing will ultimately feel good about what they are reading and learning in the classroom.

Swift (1993) reports a yearlong research project concerning the effects of reader's workshop on two groups of sixth grade students. (In this case the terms reader's workshop and literature study group are synonymous.) Using a counter balanced research design, group one began reader's workshop in the fall and changed to basals in the spring; the second group did the opposite. They began with basal lessons in the fall and later switched to reader's workshop in the spring. Swift's standardized testing and anecdotal records were used to measure comprehension of a few students as they responded to the two teaching methods (Swift, 1993).

The results support the use of reading workshop as effective. Additionally, through use of anecdotal records, it was found that reading workshop improved students' interests and attitudes about reading. "Students come to see reading books as a source of knowledge and pleasure" (Swift, 1993, p.370).

The use of literature study groups often leads directly to the use of literature logs. In literature logs, students
record their reactions to a specific piece or answer open
ended questions about their reading. Danielson (1990)
argues that literature logs can provide a forum for rich
responses to literature and that since students can record
their thoughts and impressions, literature logs offer an
exciting means of linking the reading writing process.

Sara Angeletti (1991) describes the effectiveness of
using literature logs in her fifth and first grade
classrooms. When the Iowa Test of Basic Skills was
administered students performed as well as other students at
the same grade levels. Students' writing was seen to
improve. In pre-test responses, the students included more
that twice as many facts as opinions and no statements of
cause and effect, inference or conclusions. On a post-test
measure, students included slightly more opinions than facts
from the stories, justified almost half the opinions with
facts from the stories and included statements of cause and
effect, inference and conclusions. The use of literature
logs encourages students to read more critically. Students
move away from recall into more complex thoughts about their
reading. Students using literature logs analyze, predict
and synthesize information when they are reading.

Other teachers use literature logs more as literature
letters. They set up an ongoing dialogue between themselves
and their students about the books they are reading.

21
Literature letters, like literature logs, encourage students to move beyond recall when reading. Literature letters differ from literature logs in the sense that the teacher can guide the student through direct questions. Teachers, when using literature letters with their students, can make direct suggestions or ask direct questions to the students about their specific story. Teachers using this method may influence the student's thoughts without meaning to; as student's search for the "right" answer to the teacher's question (Aker, 1992).

The use of literature logs and literature letters also encourage the acceptance of a wide variety of reading level in the classroom. When reading literature, students are able to read a variety of books on their level and participate in discussions or write thoughtful pieces about them. Textbooks do not allow for the variety of reading level that literature does.

Creative dramatics is another means of literature response. Through dramatics, children are able to express themselves and their ideas in a safe and creative environment. When dramatizing, "the children appear to be thoroughly absorbed and enjoying themselves, as if at play. They also appear to retain more of the information presented during the reading" (Putnam, 1991, p.464). Providing unlimited opportunities for language, dramatics encourages
children to express themselves in a manner uninhibited by adults. Dramatics also offers a means of expression for reluctant writers or for students that have a language barrier.

According to Putnam (1991) dramatics can be used with expository text as well as works of fiction. Nonfiction dramatizations transform factual information into understandable and exciting scripts. "Acting out this information generates a rich context of extra linguistic associations which children can easily relate to and recall. Important information is lifted off the page, in effect, and experienced as a complex, dynamic and holistic event" (p.464). Through the use of drama, nonfiction can take on new meaning and understanding for the reader. Printed words become real and exciting to students as they dramatize the events of a story. Putnam (1991) also states "the challenge when reading nonfiction with young children, of course, is to help mediate what is often an unstorylike text in ways that make it interesting, and comprehensible "(p.468).

Another response method that is similar to creative dramatics; and most often used with children who are reading is reader's theater. Young and Vardell (1993) introduce teachers to the idea of using nonfiction and reader's theater. Although fiction is the chosen type of literature, the combination of nonfiction trade books and reader's
theater provides teachers with another means of incorporating content area reading and learning with language arts. Students' retention of information is greater as they become actively involved with content area trade books.

There are several advantages to the use of reader's theater in the content areas. The students have an opportunity to practice oral reading in an area that usually focuses around silent reading. Students are exposed to a wide variety of literature through the performances of their classmates. Also comprehension may improve since reader's theater is a form of dramatics.

"Using nonfiction books as legitimate literature for learning in the content areas is an interesting, lively way to share up-to-date information. Experiencing this literature through reader's theater is an option that gives that words on the page a voice and the students in the classroom an active role in internalizing and interpreting new knowledge" (Young and Vardell, 1993, p.405).

Literature circles, literature logs, book talks, creative dramatics and reader's theater are several means available to a teacher which bring literature to life in the classroom. These means offer exciting and interesting ways to bring literature and students together in the content areas so that content areas no longer need to be viewed as dry and lifeless areas of study.
All people think on many different levels every day. The goals of social studies educators are to encourage their students to think in terms of citizenship and their place in society. The production of students who "understand the values, the importance, and the fragility of democratic nations...who have a keen sense of ethics and citizenship, and who care deeply about the quality of life in their community, their nation, and their world" California History - social science framework, 1987, p. 2) is the goal of California social studies educators.

Smith, Monson, and Dobson (1992) conducted a study of fifth graders in which their usual basal reading textbook was replaced by historical novels. The team of educators wished to discover if the use of historical literature would promote student learning in both reading and social studies. The study, involving four fifth grade classes, was based on the use of three historical novels and the traditional social studies textbook. The teachers generally followed four instructional steps. They determined what to teach, introduced background information, read the text as a class and provided follow-up enrichment activities.

Based on a comparison with a control group (three fifth grade classes that were instructed using traditional methods). Results of the project favored literature-based
instruction. The teachers who used historical novels to integrate reading and social studies found that their students learned more historical details, main ideas and more historical information than the control classes. The project also revealed an increased student interest in social studies in the project classrooms.

The addition of literature in the classroom is beneficial in accomplishing the main goal of elementary social studies; the production of well-read, thoughtful and concerned citizens. Literature promotes the use of critical thinking because it allows the student to bring personal interpretations and prior knowledge to the piece. "Many books on the same topic can be gathered; students can synthesize information, compare viewpoints and construct semantic maps" (Young and Vardell, 1993, p.398). It also encourages students to question, interpret and predict. Textbooks lack the depth needed to allow this type of thought process to happen naturally in the reader's mind.

McGowan (1987) contends that storybooks provide examples of citizenship skills in practice. Characters communicate, determine cause and effect, locate places on maps and process information. Characters are concerned about society and make choices that influence others. "When children pursue citizenship themes within works of quality fiction, they construct knowledge about the human condition,
perceive alternate views, think through important issues, and meet characters who model values that guide and inspire our society" (McGowan, Guzzetti, and Kowalinski, 1992, p.11). In other words, characters in literature provide role models for the type of concerned citizens educators wish their students to become. According to Lawson and Barnes (1990) by becoming involved with and relating to the characters in the stories, the students are able to develop a deep understanding of their lives, values, conflicts and stresses. Because students grow to care about the people through literature, they become actively involved in the time period. Literature helps students ask important and excellent questions which might not otherwise occur to them. Factual textbooks can not begin to provide the type of modeling and thought provoking questioning that literature does so effortlessly. McGowan, Guzzetti & Kowalinski (1992) attest the use of literature strategies, such as literature study groups and literature logs, believing they focus student's attention on citizenship lessons that so many quality books contain. These books and activities allow young readers to interact with an author and construct understandings they can use to make social decisions now and in years to come. With personal modifications, literature and response techniques can be the social studies teacher's answer to the incorporation of literature in the classroom.
Literature can pave the way for students to develop thoughtful insights and responses to important social studies topics. Insights gained early in life as students may carry over to adulthood resulting in well read, ethical, and concerned citizens.
Summary

As seen through a review of the current literature, the use of literature is an advantageous means of teaching social studies curriculum. It provides students with motivating, interesting, and thought-provoking study. No longer are social studies students forced to learn about world events through dry, lifeless textbooks.

"Literature can and should be used as an integral part of teaching history-social studies because it is only through literature that we can begin to truly experience one of the basic goals of the California History - Social Science Framework, that of understanding the experiences of culture--both our own and that of others" (O'Brien, 1988, p.63).

The addition of literature/tradebooks can modify a content area many regard as dull. Utilizing literature has also been seen to promote critical thinking by social studies students. With the increase of literature in their classrooms, students are using what they read and applying it to personal decisions in and out of the classroom. The addition of this type of response in the social sciences can only be helpful in creating more thoughtful and attentive citizens.
Summary Of The Project

This project is based in the theoretical foundations of whole language and literature-based instruction. It supports the premise that students learn best when exposed to and are able to interact with quality literature in its authentic form.

An annotated bibliography will provide teachers with a wide selection of current literary works in social studies. These pieces of literature are correlated with the areas of study in the Houghton Mifflin kindergarten textbook. The list of books will include works of fiction and nonfiction revolving around kindergarten social studies topics and will be listed in sequential order according to the textbook topics.

The readily available bibliography and outlined activities are intended to provide an uncomplicated means for all kindergarten teachers, using the Houghton Mifflin series, to add literature to their social studies program. Teachers and students alike will benefit from this addition of literature.
Goals Of The Project

There are several goals for teachers that will be accomplished by this project.

1. Teachers will have access to a wide variety of literature that accompanies their kindergarten social studies textbook. This access will make it easier to present social studies topics through a wide array of appropriate children's literature.

2. Teachers will make social studies topics interesting and exciting for their students through the presentation of literature. This presentation should include the modeling of expressive reading and a genuine sense of value about the literature being read.

3. Teachers will motivate their students' interest in social studies topics through their use of literature response techniques. These techniques should include literature circles, literature logs, creative dramatics and reader's theater.
Limitations Of The Project

There are three main limitations to this project.

1. There is a time limitation factor. Because of time constraints this project had only initial field testing, whereas a full program of field testing is warranted.

2. There are many new books that relate to social studies topics coming into print daily. This project will need to be updated periodically to keep up with the addition of current literature.

3. This project is designed to be used specifically in conjunction with the Houghton Mifflin kindergarten textbook. Other kindergarten teachers may find the annotated bibliography useful however, it is not directly correlated with their specific texts.
Evaluation Of The Project

This project is designed for kindergarten teachers and its evaluation will be directed towards them. The evaluation method chosen is an informal written survey in which the teachers will respond to several open ended questions that will reveal the teachers' feelings about teaching social studies topics and the use of textbooks before and after the addition of the annotated bibliography. The project will be viewed as successful if the teachers respond positively and use the annotated bibliography to include literature selections in their teaching of social studies. The effectiveness of the bibliography rests in the teachers' hands. The bibliography will be successful only if it is used in to enhance classroom instruction.


Chapter 2
Introduction To The Project

This project is designed for use with the kindergarten Houghton Mifflin social studies textbooks, *The World I See*. It is designed to help teachers incorporate quality children's literature into their social studies program. The addition of literature into any content area will improve student motivation, comprehension and interest.

This project, an annotated book list, is meant to follow the sequence of the Houghton Mifflin kindergarten textbook. The titles are grouped in alphabetical order, by author's last name, according to topic. Although this annotated bibliography pertains specifically to the Houghton Mifflin text, it may be helpful to other teachers using similar textbooks or teaching the same topics.

By selecting a variety of literature, a social studies teacher can be assured of meeting the needs of all students. The literature offered should include several genres as well as a variety of reading levels. Since these books are to be used in kindergarten classrooms and read by the teacher, the types of literature are emphasized more than the reading levels.

It is the author's hope that the teachers using the bibliography will attempt to go beyond simply reading the text and explore the many types of reader response
techniques that encourage children to think about what they are reading. Book talks, literature logs, creative dramatics and reader's theater are several of techniques that can bring literature, both fiction and nonfiction, to life for students.

This is a limited bibliography based on present research; in order to remain useful and current, it will need to be updated yearly; since the publishing industry continues to turn out many quality pieces of children's literature.

It is the author's hope that this bibliography will make the addition of social studies literature an easy task. The books included are current and readily available through local libraries and book stores. Social studies literature can be an exciting, thought-provoking experience that should be shared with all students.
Project

Houghton Mifflin Social Studies
The World I See
Lesson 1 Getting To Know You


Eight children ready themselves for the first day of school. This book illustrates the activities children might have on the first day, second day and the first week of school. It continues with the phrase "time goes by" and illustrates all that might occur between September and the Christmas holiday.


A young boy just entering school worries if he will make friends. His nervousness continues throughout the day as he fears that all the children have already paired up. However, at the end of the day he does meet that one special friend he has been hoping for.

This watercolor illustrated poem relates all of the fun activities that are packed into each school day.


This is a collection of fifteen poems relating to different aspects of school including recess, science and after school day care. Each poem is beautifully illustrated. Included in the appendix is a list of questions that school-aged children might have about what to do in various situations. The book provides simple and easy to understand answers.


A terrific wordless picture book about eight mice who go to school. Unfortunately, the youngest one is left behind with Mom, but not for long as he decides to head down the path and discover school for himself.

A great story about the first day of school for a young boy and a teacher. Both encounter many obstacles on their way to the classroom such as a late start and what to wear. After all the mishaps, both arrive at school on time and happily begin a new year in the same classroom. This book would provide a great opportunity for the teacher to introduce herself to the class.


This book shows how each child is special and unique. It mentions many of the various strengths that children may have. This book also takes a look at different homes and lifestyles. It concludes with being different is being special.
Lesson 2 We Are A Team


Easton presents us with an updated publishing of the classic tale *Peter and the Wolf*. Peter, a cat and a bird work together and cleverly capture a wolf that has wandered too close to their homes.


In this southwestern version of *The Three Little Pigs* which ends happily for all three pigs. The pigs manage to escape the coyote, wishing to eat them with red hot chili sauce, by working together, at the third pig's house, to send the coyote away in a puff of smoke.


*The Turnip* is a Russian folktale about a farming family and their animals who work together as a team to pull an enormous turnip from the ground.
Lesson 3  Jobs At School


Black and white photographs illustrate various jobs children do at home with adults. Jobs pictured include snow shoveling, herding sheep on a farm and cleaning a work bench. This book shows both common and unusual jobs that children might have.


Annabelle's older sister has educated her on the ways of kindergarten. However, on the first day, all of Annabelle's practiced answers seem to be wrong until she shows off her counting skills and is chosen to be milk monitor for her class.

Lesson 4  Rules Are For Everyone


Alexander has one of those days where everything seems to go wrong. His father reminds him of the rules of his office, but even those seem to turn disasterous. Alexander concludes that some days are just like that.

Beautiful photographs make this book an appealing one to read or to look at. The minimal text describes various types of families found around the world performing everyday tasks such as marketing, playing and reading. This book is a good multicultural introduction to families.


The authors tell the story of how each grandparent that we have was once a baby, grew up, married and had children. The authors then describe some of the things that grandparents like to do with their grandchildren.
Lesson 2 Jobs At Home


With excellent pictures and minimal text, this book portrays working mothers in a variety of roles. The mothers are seen as plumbers, pianists, taxi drivers, researchers and etc. This book is an excellent resource for non-stereotypical jobs.


A young girl describes all the good things about her family owning a small country store. She explains how each person has a special job, how they work together and how they have fun.

Lesson 3 Special Times Together


Arthur's family makes the best of a rained out vacation at the beach. After a few mishaps, they all end up having a terrific time together.

A young girl and her grandfather share a special time fishing from their rowboat. Together they share the beautiful sights along the lake and the special memory of catching a large bass.


This book's beautiful oil illustrations add to the story of two sisters who enjoy visiting their great-great aunt. During each visit they take down their aunt's many hat boxes. As the girls try on each one their aunt tells a story from the past involving the hat. The girls learn a great deal about their family and American history.


A family spends a special week camping and boating. They enjoy many outdoor activities together that provide winter memories for the young girl telling the story.
Lesson 4  We Grow And Change

Ira's life changes dramatically when he learns that his best friend Reggie is moving. After dealing with the change, Ira realizes that although things won't be the same he and Reggie will continue to see each other and be friends.

Lesson 5  Where We Live

Beautiful color photographs illustrate the many types and styles of homes that people live in around the world. The examples range from grass huts to apartment buildings to The White House to Buckingham Palace.

Niles, Il: Albert Whitman & Co.
After a divorce, a young girl and her mother move to an apartment in the city. In the beginning the girl is extremely unhappy and wants her house back. However, after meeting a special neighbor, the girl realizes that an apartment can be a perfect home.
Lesson 6  Our Neighborhood


Simply written and containing beautiful illustrations by Giles Laroche tell a story about the many types of people found in a city. This rhythmic text will easily capture the attention kindergarten children.


This is an easy to follow, rhythmic book about the numerous things that neighborhood people do throughout the day. After one or two readings, most kindergarten students would be able to read along with the refrain.
Lesson 1  People We Meet


Color photographs show the daily lives of nurses in various settings, including the classroom. This book's text describes in simple language what nurses do and the amount of work it takes to become a nurse. This book portrays both male and female nurses at work.


Photograph illustrations and simple text describes the many tasks of male and female fire fighters. The photographs are realistic and show the fire fighters in a variety of settings including the station and fire scenes.

The caption "Who uses this? begins each section of this book. The phrase is shown under an object such as a hammer, rolling pin or baton. The following two pages reveal the use of the object and two photographs. The first photograph is an adult with the object and the second is a child. This book portrays non-traditional roles of employment.


Colorful illustrations show various children telling what career they would like as adults. The following pages show that child as an adult in their chosen career. This book portrays non-traditional roles for males and females.


This book explains the interesting job of caring for the many animals at a zoo. The photographs are brightly colored and illustrate nicely the amount of work involved in zookeeping.

A museum docent takes Bert, Ernie and Grover through the many rooms and displays at the local museum. Together they discover that a museum can be interesting and exciting.


Katy, a snowplow, plows the city out after a major snow storm. She visits each major area of the community along her route. This book is a good introduction to the parts that make up a community.
Lesson 3 Using A Map


An array of maps are explained and illustrated in this interesting book. The maps presented include weather, clay models, and a simple map of a classroom. The illustrations are good however, the text might be difficult for young children.


A variety of maps and map tools, photographed and drawn, are explained in this true book. Although the illustrations are good, the technical language might be difficult for kindergarten.


This book gives an historical look at maps, beginning with their invention through present day uses. Although the text is advanced for kindergarten students, this is an interesting and informative book about maps and their origins.
Lesson 4  Going To The Store


Paper illustrations by Giles Laroche make this child's rhyme a beautiful picture book. A young girl envisions all the things she would have in her own general store.


With tongue in cheek humor, this story tells of a small pig who is accidentally left at the store by his mother. Customers continually mistake him for grocery items and transport him to the various sections of the store. Poor Tommy is mistaken for a sack of potatoes, an ear of corn and cleaning supplies.

Lesson 5  Building A Community


In simple, easy to understand language this books explains the building of a house from a child's point of view.

Gibbons describes the building of a house from the basement to the roof in colorful pictures and simple, easy to follow language. All of the workers must function as team before a house is ready to become a home.


This colorful book looks at the building of a skyscraper from the bottom up. It also explains the many jobs that are involved in the construction of the building.


A young boy at home on a rainy day builds a block city. When he takes a break from building and rests, the city magically becomes real and is transformed into a kingdom. After the young boy's magical break, the city is dismantled with one pull of the rug underneath it.
Lesson 6 Communities Grow And Change


This classic tale shows the changes that take place around a small country home as the country becomes a fast moving city. The little house is finally returned to a country setting at the conclusion of the story.


Colorful illustrations and simple text show the changes that occur at an oak tree throughout an entire day. The changes are simple and might go unnoticed had the author not brought them to our attention.


The landfills are filling up and what are we to do? Recycle is the cry from this book. In colorful illustrations the author describes how kids can recycle paper, plastic, glass and aluminum.

Simple illustrations and simple text show the many changes that people made on a once quiet mountain. Children can easily draw the conclusion that some things are better left unimproved and unchanged as the mountain becomes less and less beautiful as the story continues.
Lesson 1  On The Road


Black and white photographs show the diverse means of transportation around the world. Examples include trains, oxen, bicycles, monorails and space travel.

Lesson 2  From Here To There


Two children (a boy and girl) take an exciting train trip to their grandma's house. The fold out and die cut pages of this book help to illustrate the countryside scenery and the various parts of the train.


A young boy and a large imaginary bear take their first flight to grandma's house. The bear's antics add a wonderful sense of humor to this simple, enjoyable story.

A young boy's journey across the barnyard is told in simple, rhythmic text. The boy encounters many farm animals that subsequently follow him on his journey. Kindergarten students will love the easy repetition of this story.

Lesson 3  Trucks


A colorful, wordless picture book shows different types of trucks and the various routes and signs they might encounter along the road.


Colored photographs tell this story of a young boy and his dad getting their eighteen wheeler ready for hauling a load of fish to market. The photographs show all aspects of the truck including the inside sleeping area.

The many types of trucks seen on the road and their uses is the story behind this book. The trucks that are portrayed are real in their functions however, in this book all of the trucks are driven by cats.

Lesson 4  A Journey Long Ago


This is a short story about the winter of 1911. A grandfather (then the father) tells how he had to leave his family in search of work and his difficult journey home to them during a snowstorm.


Charcoal drawings illustrate a pioneer family's journey from a town to the American West. The story continues through their first difficult year on the prairie. This book illustrates the hardships of family life so many years ago.

Covering past, present and future a young boy imagines what it would be like living in another time period. His imagination revolves around his younger sister loosing her sandal. As he envisions that past and the future he wonders if other little sisters ever lost their sandals.


Illustrations compare an American boy's life to the life of an African boy. The text in this book remains the same for each culture the comparisons are made through the illustrations.


A young boy, living in Cairo, describes his day as he delivers fuel throughout the city. As he works, he thinks about the special secret he will share with his family later that evening. His secret?---learning to write his name.
Appendix A

TEACHER SURVEY

Name________________________________________

Date________________________________________

Please answer each question briefly.

1. Do you consider social studies to be a worthwhile kindergarten area of study?

2. Do you consider kindergarten social studies topics to be interesting?

3. How often, in your teaching, do you incorporate literature with social studies topics?

4. Would you use more literature materials if they were readily available?

5. Do you enjoy teaching kindergarten social studies in your present manner?