

Becoming Integrated Thinkers

CASE STUDIES IN ELEMENTARY SOCIAL STUDIES

Becoming Integrated Thinkers Excerpts

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EDITORS

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Preface

LINDA BENNETT AND ELIZABETH R. HINDE

AT A TIME when social studies, especially in elementary schools, is being curtailed and teachers are feeling pressure to teach only those subjects that are tested (often to the exclusion of social studies), we want to show that social studies is indeed alive and well in many classrooms across America. Despite the lack of attention, and perhaps even respect, that surrounds social studies, many elementary teachers are teaching the subject, and teaching it very well. This book provides descriptions of elementary teachers throughout the United States who are integrating social studies across the curriculum. Throughout the school day, students in their classrooms are learning the skills and knowledge that embody effective social studies instruction.

Integrating social studies has often been suggested as a solution to keeping the subject in the curriculum. However, as the following chapters describe, integrating social studies is not easy and requires much planning and pedagogical knowledge on the part of the teacher. The pay-off is enormous. Students in classes whose teachers have effectively integrated social studies not only keep it in the curriculum, but also demonstrate increased reading comprehension as well.

The book is organized so that the first part provides a foundation for integrating social studies in elementary classrooms. In the second part, seven case studies of authentic classrooms where teachers truly integrate social studies throughout each school day are described. The third and final part provides food for thought for teachers and teacher educators to examine and encourage the integration of social studies in their own classrooms.

Part 1: The Foundation

“Students could not have learned the historical content without informational text reading skills; and they could not have applied those reading skills meaningfully without rich content.”

Anne-Lise Halvorsen and Janet Alleman
in Chapter One below, p. 10.

Chapter One lays the foundation for the role of integration in education for citizenship, and describes effective integration and instructional approaches of integration, as well as the role of integration in national standards and curriculum design. The sections “A Snap Shot of Integration of Social Studies and Literacy” and “Authentic Concerns and Questions of Wonderment” entice the reader to engage in the process of becoming an integrated thinker.

Chapter Two presents theoretical foundations for curriculum integration. The historical and philosophical roots of integration are explored, and models of integration that teachers commonly use are described. The chapter delves into three types of integration that are commonly seen in classrooms today: Fractured, Stealthy, and Healthy Integration. Examples of each type are described in detail.

Fractured, Stealthy, and Healthy integration are later referred to in a number of case studies throughout the book.

Part 2: Putting Research into Practice

The seven case studies in Part 2 put research in practice. The integrated curriculum presented in this NCSS book demonstrates tried and timeless examples of integration in elementary social studies. The case studies are descriptions of best practices for the integration of social studies and content such as science, art, global, citizenship, human interactions, government, technology, culture and universalities. From a school-wide program to a single lesson, the chapters document unique strategies for social studies integration. Elementary educators can read, discuss, analyze and develop classroom practices for exemplary integration.

Case 1 (Chapter Three): Ruby Roberts is a first-grade teacher at Granger Elementary, a Title I school in a rural town in Texas. Through vignettes, reflections, and conversations, she shares her planning process in an accountability-driven system and her enthusiasm for teaching and assessing a unit on inventions.

Case 2 (Chapter Four): Entering Jonie Kipling's first grade classroom is to feel as though Dewey's vision is alive. She shares experiences integrating "living democracy into the classroom where students participated in decisions that mattered." Jonie has been consistently successful in putting social studies at the center of her curriculum and connecting in logical ways to language arts and science. Her love of literature and language are brought to the reader's attention as she describes her experiences with the students from the suburbs of New York.

Case 3 (Chapter Five): In a slight departure from the case studies of other chapters, this chapter describes an entire elementary school where social studies is the core and all other subjects revolve around it. The authors describe the school as one that "strives to educate our children to live democratically, in and out of schools, as the best way to advance our concept of democracy and produce citizens with high ethical standards as well as inquisitive and reflective dispositions." The school's curriculum from early grades to upper grades is described and the reader will see the social studies content, skills, and dispositions that are threaded through each grade.

Case 4 (Chapter Six): Responsible for teaching students about themselves, as well as about other people near and far, one second-grade teacher in central Arkansas constructed an integrated social studies unit of learning about Antarctica by tracking a National Science Foundation scientist/station manager. This instructional unit is steeped in standards and driven by layers of integration across the curriculum.

Case 5 (Chapter Seven): Bill Hamilton is a third grade teacher at an intermediate elementary school in a rural mid-western community. His integrated instructional unit on national symbols is designed using the eMINTS instructional model, which connects high-quality lesson design and inquiry-based learning, powered by technology and a community of learners.

Case 6 (Chapter Eight): In this chapter, two acclaimed 4th grade teachers share their first person accounts of integrating the curriculum around social studies ideas and content. Barbara, an experienced teacher who works in a middle class school in Lansing, MI, shares her experiences in designing integrated units as well as how she uses literature to teach social studies. Rob is a Nationally Board Certified Teacher who recently moved from North Carolina to the University of Chicago's Lab School, which has students from 45 different countries and a variety of religious and ethnic backgrounds. Rob shares his philosophical insights about integrating the curriculum and the need to tie it to the realities of children's lives.

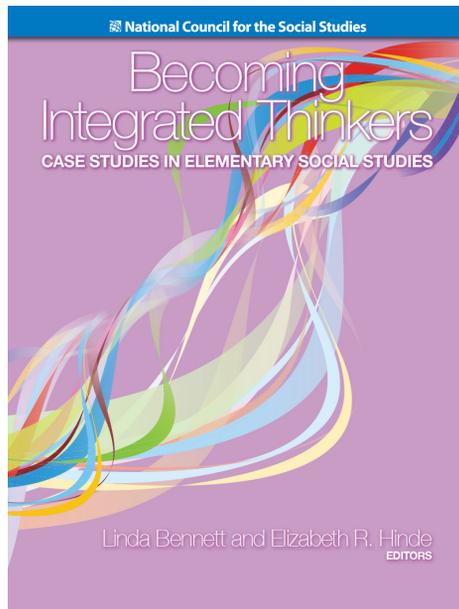
Case 7 (Chapter Nine): Mary Ledbetter is a fifth grade elementary teacher of social studies and English/language arts at The University of Texas Elementary School (UTES) in Austin, Texas. The students in her classroom are 69% Latino/a, and 11.1% are English learners, so they bring unique opportunities for Mary to broaden her curriculum to engage diverse learners. As a veteran teacher, Mary shares insights into planning and the integration of standards, content coverage, assessment strategies, and visions for future instruction. The conversations and vignettes with Mary are rich with insights into her classroom.

Part 3: Review and Analysis

In the final section of the book, chapters ten and eleven review and analyze the cases, and discuss issues related to integrating the curriculum. We hope to encourage teachers and teacher educators to be both critical and creative as they consider integrating social studies throughout the curriculum.

It is our hope that this book will provide support for and ideas to teachers and teacher educators in truly and effectively integrating social studies. Social studies is not dead, and is actually alive and well in classrooms across America.

The following excerpt is from Chapter 2,
“The Theoretical Foundations of Curriculum Integration and
its Application in Social Studies Instruction,”
by Elizabeth R. Hinde



Ineffective curriculum integration can have negative consequences for students. Teachers must be wary not to distort or water down content in the name of integration; they must be cognizant of the developmental appropriateness of their methods; and they must ensure that the content is of rich educational value. Poor application of integration can have the effect of students learning nothing at all, or of learning incorrect information.

On the other hand, when teachers have knowledge of the content areas being integrated and possess the ability to translate that knowledge in ways that their students understand, integration is particularly effective. In any case, curriculum integration is a powerful tool that can educate—or miseducate—students.

In today’s classrooms, attempts at integrating social studies across the curriculum are commonly manifested in three ways: fractured, stealthy, or healthy. Figure 3 describes each approach.

Fractured Social Studies

When curriculum integration leads to social studies being disconnected from a child’s life and the rest of the curriculum, it is fractured. Fractured social studies results when teachers attempt to infuse social studies skills or content into, for instance, language arts lessons; in such cases, the learning outcomes of the lessons revolve around language arts, and social studies content or skills are only superficially addressed. Consequently, the language arts curriculum drives what is taught in social studies. In this case, social studies topics are chosen simply because they complement the reading or writing activities that the teacher has planned and students are not expected to come to a deep understanding of social studies. Students learn reading skills with some semblance of social studies content attached, and the content to which students are exposed is disjointed from the rest of the social sciences and unconnected to their lives outside the classroom.

An example of fractured social studies can be seen in the case of Mrs. Smith’s first grade classroom in a wealthy school in the American Southwest (Mrs. Smith is a pseudonym). In an attempt to teach her students some social studies content while keeping the instructional focus on reading, she tries to

Figure 3
Common Manifestations of Curriculum Integration in Elementary Classrooms

FRACTURED SOCIAL STUDIES INTEGRATION	STEALTHY INTEGRATION	HEALTHY INTEGRATION
<p>Small chunks of content area information related to the weekly reading or language arts activities are presented to students without much depth.</p> <p>Social studies content has no connection to children’s lives or to other areas of the curriculum.</p> <p>The purpose of social studies is mainly to enhance reading/language arts and is not focused on preparing students for effective citizenship.</p> <p>Does not inspire disciplinary modes of thinking because the content is disjointed.</p>	<p>Disguises social studies content as language arts lessons.</p> <p>Covertly teaches social studies content in order to satisfy mandates to spend most of the daily instructional time on language arts activities.</p> <p>Teacher chooses reading/language arts materials with rich spatial or historical content, but focuses on reading/language arts skills.</p> <p>Reading/language arts are the center of the curriculum.</p> <p>Social studies has no pedagogy of its own.</p> <p>Does not inspire disciplinary modes of thinking because content is disguised as something else.</p>	<p>The connection of social studies to children’s lives and other content areas is explicit and clear to students.</p> <p>Reading/language arts are recognized as tools for helping children come to an understanding of the world (and how to communicate that understanding) and are not considered the purpose of schooling.</p> <p>Children and their knowledge of the content are the center of the curriculum.</p> <p>Reading/language arts activities are focused on developing disciplinary frames of mind in students.</p>

“integrate” as much social studies content into her teaching of reading as she can. For instance, one week the students read a story about a little boy and his grandmother. In an effort to tie social studies to the reading activities, the students watched a streaming video about the many faces of grandparents and then they completed a worksheet about the video. The next week, the students read a story in their basal reader about penguins. Mrs. Smith showed pictures of penguins, pointed out Antarctica on the map, and then had the students color a picture of penguins and write a one-sentence caption about something they learned about penguins from the story. The sentence was graded for spelling and punctuation. Since Thanksgiving was approaching, during reading time the following week, the students read about pilgrims and constructed pilgrim hats and paper buckles for their shoes.

In the course of one month the social studies to which these students were exposed was grandparents, penguins, and pilgrims. Many educators and parents would laud Mrs. Smith’s attempt at integrated lessons. At least, they could argue, she is teaching some semblance of social studies in an elementary classroom and not completely neglecting the subject.

However, there are serious problems with the way social studies is taught in Mrs. Smith’s classroom. In choosing social studies topics only because they relate to the content of the reading story of the week, students will not learn the values, dispositions, and knowledge that is necessary for citizens in the U.S. and of the world—the main purpose of social studies.²⁵ As mentioned previously, in a truly integrated curriculum, social studies helps students to think like disciplinarians—historically, spatially, civically, and economically. In other words, integrating social studies across the curriculum should help students become integrated thinkers. That is, as Bloom pointed out, the learning experiences are organized to give meaning, depth, and multiple perspectives to their lives.²⁶

Mrs. Smith’s classroom is typical of what Boyle-Baise, *et al.* found in their study of elementary classrooms.²⁷ They noted that elementary teachers often make reference to social studies in order to enhance reading instruction. For these teachers, social studies content is a vehicle for learning reading, indicating that reading, not education for effective citizenship is the goal of schooling. Historically speaking, educators and philosophers have espoused for over 100

years that it is through the content areas that students learn to read.²⁸ As early as 1917,²⁹ E. L. Thorndike argued that “perhaps it is in their outside reading of stories and in their study of geography, history, and the like that many school children really learn to read.”³⁰ Reading is a vital skill that must be taught in order to help students further their knowledge of the disciplines—not the other way around.

Another issue with Mrs. Smith’s attempt to integrate the curriculum is that it does not allow for the effective pedagogical methods that are associated with teaching social studies. The methods that Mrs. Smith employed are centered on ensuring that students learn important reading skills and not on the critical thinking that is the hallmark of effective social studies methods and described in the C₃ Framework. Students are not taught to consider that there are multiple perspectives or to critically examine any aspect of the stories. In other words, methods that are associated with teaching social studies effectively are not employed in *Fractured Social Studies*.

Any attempt to integrate the curriculum while disregarding disciplinary knowledge fractures the curriculum and results in “superficial programs.”³¹ Mrs. Smith’s efforts to integrate the curriculum were done without consideration of disciplinary thought as a means for understanding the world and therefore rendered social studies as just a supplement to reading and not a vital part of the curriculum.

Stealthy Social Studies

In an article published in 2008, Sekeres and Gregg describe the stealth approach to teaching geography in elementary grades.³² In the article, they describe the stealth approach as teaching language arts (in this case, poetry) while sneaking geography concepts into the lessons. Therefore, teachers can somehow circumvent the pressure to concentrate all their instructional time on reading and writing by covertly infusing geography into language arts. Teachers can then assure their supervisors that they are meeting mandates in reading and writing without having to be explicit in their teaching of social studies. In the Sekeres and Gregg article, the authors explain that students can be exposed to major geographic concepts while learning poetry. The main objectives of the lessons revolve around reading and writing poetry, but savvy teachers should choose poems that have rich geographic content, and in that way the students will learn spatial concepts as well as the required language arts content.

The problem with the stealth approach to geography is that this form of pedagogy assumes that geography has no unique pedagogy of its own. Teaching geography according to the stealth approach “strips the subject of its integrity and renders it simply a nice way to enhance reading lessons,”³³ in this case, poetry lessons. Teaching geography effectively, like all the disciplines, requires that the teacher have fundamental knowledge of the content and is able to help students think spatially. If the teacher’s objective is to teach students to think spatially through poetry, then there is no need to employ stealth. Students should be aware that they are learning geography and how to think spatially so that they can generalize that learning to other areas, including poetry.

Stealthy social studies is a creative way that some educators employ in efforts to keep social studies in the curriculum. Sunal and Sunal report that in many K-3 classrooms, social studies is not only marginalized, it is discontinued altogether in order to focus all instructional time on reading, writing, and math.³⁴ However, they also found that some teachers subverted the established system of teaching reading (and some math) in K-3 by disguising social studies in the form of reading themes and other stealthy curricular maneuvers. Students were exposed to a little history, a little geography, and perhaps a little civics and economics if concepts from those areas relate to the story du jour, much like in Mrs. Smith’s class.

Teaching social studies stealthily or disguising it through reading or other language arts themes, results in a diminished view of social studies. Social studies concepts in this case are secondary to language arts activities and may be the reason that social studies continues to be regarded as an unimportant subject by both teachers and students.³⁵ Critical thinking and in-depth analysis of social studies content is not required in stealthy social studies since the main objectives of the lessons are related to language arts and not knowledge of the disciplines. True integration of social studies involves students learning to think historically, spatially, civically, or economically throughout the school day. Integration helps students adjust their way of thinking so that when they conduct their reading activities, they are able to access their knowledge of social studies content to help them make sense of what they are reading.

Teachers who are familiar with social studies concepts should be explicit in their teaching and not attempt to disguise the content as something else. As Gardner points out, it is the disciplines that motivate students to read.³⁶ Explicitly teaching the disciplines furthers reading skills by motivating students to read to find answers to their questions about the world. Teachers who realize that the language arts are the vehicles through which students learn and communicate social studies concepts need not resort to stealth and can help students clearly make connections between their studies in school and the real world.

Healthy Social Studies Integration

Healthy integration of social studies helps students come to understand the world around them and other content areas. It renders social studies as the thread that ties the curriculum together and connects school learning to the world. They learn to use reading, writing, and mathematics as the tools by which they understand and communicate their understanding of the world. Therefore, effective, healthy integration motivates students to continue to learn and does not relegate social studies content or any other disciplinary knowledge to lowly status in the curriculum, as the following teacher demonstrates.

Mrs. Hunter (a pseudonym), like Mrs. Smith, is a first grade teacher in a wealthy school in the American Southwest. She wants her students to be motivated to read and to understand the world around them. As one learning goal, students were to learn about families and each other in the classroom. She had the students read the same story that Mrs. Smith’s class read about a little boy and his grandmother. In an effort to tie the reading curriculum to the students’ lives, Mrs. Hunter had the students bring in artifacts (pictures, letters, etc.) from their own grandparents and invited the students’ grandparents to the classroom one day. Students heard stories about each other’s families and were introduced to primary sources. Mrs. Hunter provided books and magazines that the students could peruse during their free time, and students wrote or drew pictures about their own families comparing them to the characters in the story. The connection between school and their own lives was explicit, and they were able to express the connection through reading and writing. Students were assessed on the depth of their knowledge, as well as reading and writing skills.

In another instructional unit later in the year, Mrs. Hunter wanted her students to be introduced to geographical concepts and skills—to begin to think spatially. She decided that for reading time she would have the students read a book from a spatial perspective. The class read *Mr. Popper's Penguins*³⁷ and did other reading and writing activities that focused on such geographic concepts as place and human-environment interaction. To accompany the reading lessons, Mrs. Hunter showed videos of penguins and had pictures of penguins on the walls around the room; she introduced maps to the students and had them find their own country (U.S.A.) in relation to Antarctica; and they discussed the climate and conditions under which penguins thrive. Students compared and contrasted their own climate to Antarctica's and discussed what local zoos would have to do in order for penguins to live there. They wrote poems and letters to relatives and friends concerning penguins and Antarctica. Again, students were provided opportunities to connect reading to real life, and used literature as the vehicle to make sense of the world.

Around the time of Thanksgiving, Mrs. Hunter wanted her students to appreciate the conditions of the lives of the pilgrims—to think historically (temporally). She and the class read a story from their basal reader about the pilgrims and then she had the students generate questions about the time period. Later, the children assumed roles of pilgrims and Indians and wrote (or told) stories from the perspectives of both. She provided books that they could peruse concerning the time period, and briefly visited a website (www.plimoth.org) so the class could listen to audio of actors speaking English as it was spoken in the 17th Century. She helped the children come to a rudimentary understanding of the conditions the pilgrims faced, and introduced the fact that Native Americans were already on the land when the pilgrims arrived. Since Thanksgiving was a dominant feature of students' lives at that time of year, Mrs. Hunter used it as the basis for meaningful integrative learning.

Mrs. Hunter understood that in order to effectively integrate the curriculum, it is essential that the teacher have disciplinary knowledge along with the ability to translate that knowledge into forms students understand. Prior to teaching, she spent time refreshing her knowledge of the appropriate disciplines and skills that she would be introducing, and she was cognizant of her students' learning abilities so that she could provide rich learning

opportunities. Therefore, her students were able to achieve a deep understanding of the content and were motivated to learn more through reading and writing. It is notable that she addressed state mandated standards in language arts and social studies in her lessons as well. She also explicitly expressed to the students and their parents that they were learning social studies.

Conclusion

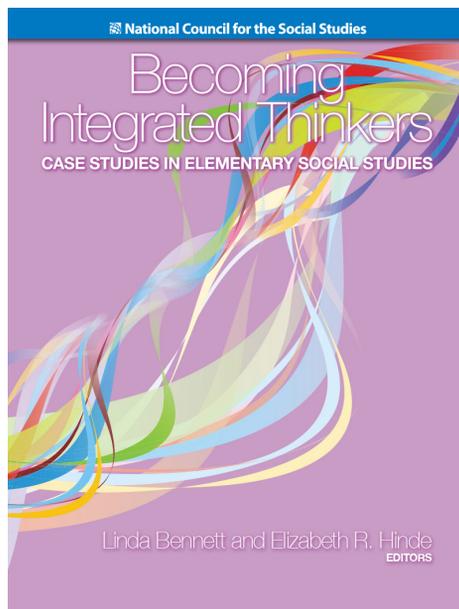
Curriculum integration has a long history in education and psychology. Early educators and psychologists from Europe and America promoted the idea of creating integrated thinkers through the school curriculum. That is, the curriculum should enable learners to access knowledge of the disciplines in order to understand the world and to advance a democratic way of life. Whether a teacher is attempting to create truly integrated individuals who are capable of using the disciplines to make sense of their world or simply trying to keep social studies content in the school day, educators have often turned to the idea of integrating social studies throughout the curriculum.

Researchers and educators have attempted to categorize the various ways that teachers integrate, and disagreements persist as to how integration is defined. The practice of curriculum integration falls onto a continuum that reveals student-determined curricula on one side and teacher-determined on the other. Regardless of where a teacher's pedagogy falls on the continuum, the practice of integration should be focused on the objective of creating integrated thinkers.

Although the ways that teachers attempt to integrate can be described using various models, teachers' attempts at integration today fall into three categories: fractured, stealthy, and healthy. Healthy integration should be the goal of teachers who try to integrate, in that it will lead to students being able to access disciplinary thinking and use reading/language arts as tools to enhance and communicate their understanding.

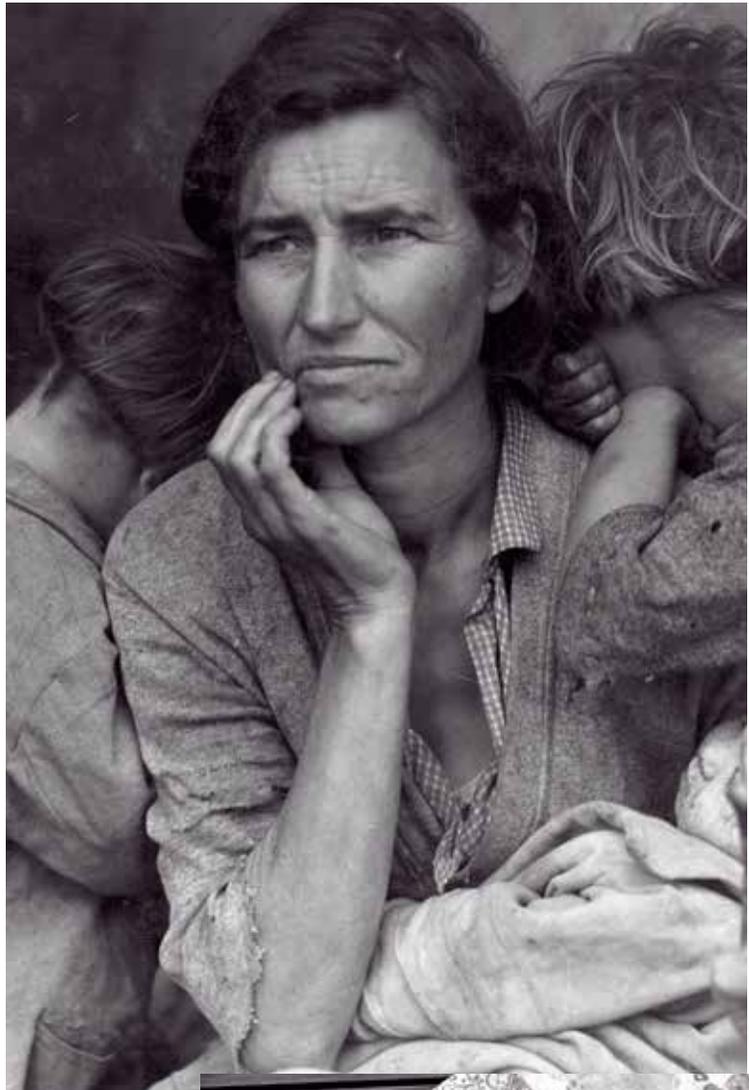
Regardless of the model of curriculum integration that teachers choose or the actual practice of integrating the curriculum, the main focus of teaching and learning in social studies continues to be to advance democratic thought and to create effective citizens of the nation and world. Curriculum integration is a powerful means of doing so.

The following excerpt is from Chapter 9,
“Social Studies, Language Arts, and Social Action: Learning
from a Fifth Grade Teacher,”
by Sherry L. Field, Michelle Bauml, and Mary Ledbetter



Vignette 3

The class has been learning about the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl for many days. Mary’s fifth graders are engaged in an animated discussion of Dorothea Lange’s famous photograph from the Great Depression, “Migrant Mother,” which is shown on a large poster in the front of the classroom. After explaining the story behind the famous image, Mary pulls out a book containing photographs from the Dust Bowl/ Great Depression. She asks students to compare various images to “Migrant Mother” as they are projected on the wall with a document camera.



“Migrant Mother”

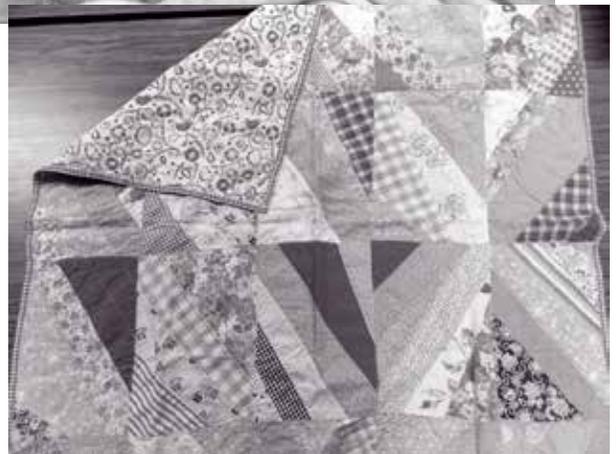
Several minutes of observation and conversation pass, and Mary poses a hypothetical situation for the students: “Consider that you’re a child in a migrant family that is headed west to California to pick a crop, like peas.... What prized possession might you have that could tell a story?”

Mary moves quickly to the Promethean board to record students’ responses. They have no difficulty identifying possessions: doll, stuffed animal, book, photo album, Bible.

Mary: *What else?*

Student: *Maybe like a quilt.*

Mary has an image of a patchwork quilt nearby, which she flashes on the document camera for a close-up view. She also shares a small artifact from the Depression era—her grandmother’s watch.



A patchwork quilt

To prepare her students for their independent assignment, Mary solicits a few more ideas about items that could tell a story “because you’re going to be writing a story.” Revisiting a literary concept with which her students are somewhat familiar, Mary reviews the definition of personification as she introduces a narrative poetry assignment that requires personification of a Great Depression era artifact.

“I’m going to give you an opportunity to become one of these things. Does it have to be just on this list? No. It could be an automobile. It could be a pocket knife. Your poem needs to tell me what you know about the Great Depression. Tell me a story.” On the document camera, Mary explains the format for the poem:

IF I WERE A _____

If I were a _____ during _____ (the Dust Bowl Years or the Great Depression)

I would live _____

I would eat _____

I would work _____

For fun I would _____

My happiest time would be _____

My greatest fear would be _____

I would love to be _____

So _____

As students begin working on their poems, Mary circulates to offer assistance to those unsure of which item they would like to “be.” She asks questions to help students extend their writing for depth and clarity. A thin girl with long, dark hair who has decided to take on the role of a doll in her poem approaches Mary for feedback.

Mary reads the poem and asks thoughtfully, “What do you think that doll would do?”

“I would want to protect my owner.”

Mary wants more information. She extends her student’s statement: “...while she...?” With a look of understanding, the student smiles and returns to her seat to elaborate. The writing process has begun, and Mary will continue challenging her students to add descriptive, relevant details to their poems over the coming days.

The next morning, Mary’s fifth graders gather as a group on the carpet at the front of the room. She has read their poems and has some suggestions. “I need you to add details so you can make sure your poem could only have happened during the Dust Bowl or the Great Depression. So if you were an automobile, you could be a Model A. If you are a doll, you could be a hand-stitched doll made by a grandmother with fabric from an old quilt.” Mary continues, “I edited the poems for spelling. They’re wonderful, and they moved me, but they’re a first draft. I want you to add details that tell where, when, who you might belong to—what, when, where,

why you are the way you are; what makes it uniquely the Great Depression era or uniquely the Dust Bowl era.”

During the unit, Mary’s students move through each stage in the writing process as they revise, edit, and share their poems with classmates and with Mary. For this assignment, the publishing stage entails students typing their completed poems into a Word document using self-selected fonts. Students have also painted watercolor images of the objects in each poem. Printed copies of students’ final drafts are displayed alongside the paintings throughout the classroom.

In this lesson, Mary’s use of the writing process in poetic format serves as an assessment to gauge her student’s understanding about contextual and personal facets of the Great Depression era; the process thus supports Dimension 4 of the C₃ Framework. The poetry frame prompts students to think about an artifact geographically and historically within the economic context of the times and to use descriptive language to convey knowledge. Students’ perspective taking also allows them to exercise historical empathy, which is a priority in Mary’s classroom.

A Conversation with Mary

Excerpts from a conversation we had with Mary show how Mary’s teaching has been enhanced by professional development and how she thinks about her goals for social studies and student learning.

Sherry: *Tell us about the professional development that you’ve had, Mary. Have you participated in any professional development that has really affected your social studies teaching?*

Mary: *The best thing I’ve done for my social studies expertise is attend a SHIPS (Scholars of History Integrating Primary Sources) summer workshop [through a Teaching American History Grant]. I had the opportunity to learn from historians and geographers, how to engage students in historical thinking, and find out about new resources...[I have also attended] training for students who are gifted and talented, and using multimedia—and also the training that I’ve done for my students with dyslexia...I wanted to know better ways to teach them, and they were in my classroom. So early on, I learned that those multisensory strategies work for the dyslexic students and help them to understand and become*

more engaged in the lesson. And then also, things to challenge—ways to challenge and engage those very gifted students. And I [give all of the children in my classroom] a level playing field in social studies, which they don't always have in math or in reading. But in social studies, they do. The kids with the special needs or the special gifts are the ones who make it sparkle. They're the ones with the perspectives that someone else who just reads and answers questions really...well, doesn't have.

Sherry: *What do you hope your students will leave your social studies class with by the end of the year?*

Mary: *I want them to love social studies... I want them to understand it; I want them to want to know more. One of my new goals is to leave them with a lot of information and understanding, but also a lot of questions. Because then they go and they check out a book [from the library]. And they come and share the book with me. There were a couple of boys last week, [who] checked out chapter books [about World War II]. They came into the classroom, and one was so excited that his...voice was shaking. He's a fifth grader! He said, "Mrs. Ledbetter, I read this book about World War II," and he wanted me to read the back [of the book], and then he paraphrased it for me. And then when he was leaving, he said [to the other student], "Did you hear that, I paraphrased"—because that's something we've been doing in language arts [paraphrasing]. So they want to know more, and they're checking out books, and they're seeing things on the web and they're researching on the web. [I want my students to] learn a lot and understand a lot, but also want to know more.*

During our conversation with Mary, we came to understand the role that self-selected professional development played in the improvement of her skills as a social studies teacher and a teacher who integrates the content areas in her classroom.⁵ We also gained insights into her deeply held beliefs that her children will come to enjoy social studies as much as she does, and that they all will learn.

We believe that Mary's integration of social studies, language arts, and social action is an exemplar of Hinde's description of "healthy integration" from Chapter 2. Mary's

Questions for Reflection

1. How does content integration enhance Mary's teaching of social studies?
2. In vignette 3, Mary's students engage in perspective-taking as they write original poems. How does perspective-taking lead to historical empathy in Mary's classroom?
3. How does Mary utilize state and national standards as she plans for instruction? In what ways does Mary's unit align with the C₃ Framework?
4. In what ways does Mary use big ideas to anchor her unit planning?
5. What kinds of resources are evident in Mary's teaching?
6. What role does technology play in Mary's teaching?
7. Do you agree that Mary's case is an exemplar of "healthy integration?" If so, in what ways? If not, why not?
8. How has Mary applied what she learned from professional development workshops to her teaching?
9. Why does Mary believe that professional development has strengthened her teaching?
10. What are the lessons to be learned from Mary's case?

strong knowledge of content, curriculum, students, and pedagogy contribute to her ability to connect the subjects in meaningful ways. Mary recognizes that social studies is at the heart of her curriculum, and that reading/language arts are tools to advance her social studies teaching and the children's rich understanding of the social studies content. The classroom arrangement serves as a symbol of the child-centeredness of Mary's work. By placing their work tables strategically around the room, she establishes an environment where children work, question, think, reflect, respond, write, edit, and create together. As Mary's students become adept at historical thinking, and, in turn, perspective-taking and historical empathy, they begin to develop the disciplinary expertise one would expect of a historian. Mary's own words describe what we see in her classroom: "The social studies and language arts content really complement one another beautifully."

Discussing the Case

Small discussion groups may read Mary's case and reflect on the various ways in which she integrates social studies, language arts, and social action. They may use the case as a conversation starter about many ways to plan for instruction, beginning with Mary's method of concentrating on big ideas and surveying available resources. Additionally, they may consider the myriad resources with which Mary teaches and other resources that could be tapped into for a rich unit of instruction. The role that technology plays in an effective teacher's repertoire might be a jumping off point for discussing how technology can help individualize instruction, present new information, and foster useful assessment tools. Furthermore, attributes that make Mary an expert teacher could be examined.

Assessment Strategies

In Mary's classroom, daily activities serve as formative assessments that inform her teaching. Students are frequently engaged in conversations with each other, and they respond directly to Mary's questions during and after instruction. For example, in the unit introduction featured in the first teaching vignette above, Mary asked each student in turn to briefly describe what he or she learned from the Great Depression era artifact exploration. Doing so gave Mary an idea about their initial understandings as well as lingering misconceptions to address in subsequent lessons.

In addition to conversations, Mary uses a variety of formal formative and summative assessments to measure students' learning about social studies concepts. These assessments include written exams, reports, document-based questions (DBQ), descriptive poetry such as the one described above in the final vignette, and other written exercises. One strategy Mary uses frequently is one she learned in a professional development session, "RAFT" (which stands for Role, Audience, Format, Topic). RAFT writing samples provide Mary with opportunities to assess students' understanding of social studies content as well as their progress in writing conventions and skills. During the Great Depression unit, Mary assigned her students the following RAFT writing prompt:

Role: You are Migrant Mother

Audience: Your diary

Format: A letter or diary entry

Topic: What was it like to meet Dorothea Lange, photographer of the Migrant Mother series of photographs?

The example of RAFT writing described above highlights the student's understanding of the impact of the work of Dorothea Lange, who chronicled in photographs the lives of many women and children during the Great Depression. The writing about one of Lange's most famous photographs, Migrant Mother, accurately reveals the desolation, shame, and hopelessness conveyed by the photograph.

Mary's Visions for Future Instruction

I am proud that in the last five years, I have thought about my social studies teaching in new ways. I have added new in-depth units of instruction into the curriculum, and I have taught in a non-chronological way. In the future, I would like to continue to refine and expand the scope of these in-depth units of instruction—about the Great Depression, Civil Rights, and Mexico's role in America's past. I would also like to add a new in-depth unit of instruction, perhaps on women's history or women's right to vote. My students and I will continue to look for ways to be socially active in local and global ways. Globally, we will continue to participate in "H₂O for Life," a service-learning opportunity that teaches students about the global water crisis, and we will sponsor another community. We have sponsored schools in Haiti, Tanzania, Guatemala, and Kenya. This year we are raising money for a school in South Sudan. I believe that we should always strive to increase our opportunities to connect social action with units of instruction.

NOTES

- 1 National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), *The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards: Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K-12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History*. (Silver Spring, MD: NCSS, 2013).
- 2 Sherry L. Field, Michelle Bauml, Karon LeCompte, and Janet Alleman, "Mexico, Our Closest Neighbor: Three Elementary Teachers' Perspectives," *The Social Studies* 100, no. 6 (2009): 251-259.
- 3 James A. Banks and Cherry A. Banks, *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives* (New York: Wiley, 1992).
- 4 Tracy Hogan, Mitchell Rabinowitz, and John A. Craven III, "Representation in Teaching: Inferences from Research of Expert and Novice Teachers," *Educational Psychologist* 38, no. 4 (2003): 235-247; Amy B. Tsui, "Distinctive Qualities of Expert Teachers," *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice* 15, no. 4 (2009): 421-439; Sam Wineburg, "Reading Abraham Lincoln: An Expert/Expert Study in the Interpretation of Historical Texts," *Cognitive Science* 22, no. 3 (1998): 319-346.
- 5 Sherry L. Field, Michelle Bauml, and Mary Ledbetter, "Social Studies Every Day: Powerful Integration with English-Language Arts," *Social Studies and the Young Learner* 23, no. 3 (2011): 23-25.

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