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Becoming Historians:

A Project-Based Learning Curriculum

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree Master of Arts

in

Teaching and Learning (Curriculum Design)

by

Tina Marie Rasori

Committee in charge:

Marcia Sewall, Chair
Alison Wishard Guerra
Paula Levin

2009

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Chair

University of California, San Diego

2009

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my husband, Phil, for his guidance, support and love. This work is also dedicated to my parents for their love of history and unconditional support. This work is dedicated to my wonderful students for their persistence, motivation and love of learning.

Epigraph

While not every student
will grow up to be a scientist or a mathematician,
every student will be a citizen.

Brendan T. Byrne, Daniel J. O'Hern and John J. Degnan

The aim of education should be to teach us rather how to think, than what to think - rather
to improve our minds, so as to enable us to think for ourselves, than to load the memory
with thoughts of other men.

Bill Beattie

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Becoming Historians: A Project-Based Learning Curriculum

by

Tina Marie Rasori

Master of Arts in Teaching and Learning (Curriculum Design)

University of California, San Diego, 2009

Marcia Sewall, Chair

Many students think of history as a subject that explains the past with little application to the present or life today. Because they are unable to relate history to their own lives and present experience, they are perhaps more likely to see the subject as “boring.” However, historians are active seekers of primary sources, which allow students of history to experience moments from the past in an active and present sense. Teaching students to become historians begins with teaching students how historians actually think about history, which is often based on finding and interpreting primary sources, and then formulating opinions about history.

Becoming Historians: A Project-Based Learning Curriculum was developed for educators to teach their students historical thinking skills such as connecting, analyzing

and applying. By acquiring historical thinking skills, students will learn both the content of history and transfer those skills in order to be effective citizens in society. The overall goals of the curriculum are for students to learn how to think historically about a topic through connecting a historical figure's actions to a historical time period, analyzing the causes and effects of a historical figure's actions and applying a historical figures actions to the world today, while collaboratively engaged in a project-based research project.

Becoming Historians was implemented in a fifth grade multiple subject classroom. Data from research reports, poster board projects, world exploration essays, observations and field notes were analyzed to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum.

The results indicate that students become motivated, work collaboratively and learn how to think historically when immersed in an inquiry-based project that incorporates graphic organizers and explicit modeling. *Becoming Historians* assists teachers to teach history in an engaging and interactive way that helps students learn important thinking skills such as connecting, analyzing and applying concepts that they can use in history as well as in their lives.

Introduction

What is the purpose of social studies education in the elementary classroom? Is the purpose of social studies to teach students how to be effective citizens in our society, or is it to teach history, or both? The National Council for Social Studies (National Council for Social Studies, 2008) states that social studies educators should teach students content, intellectual skills, and civic values that enable students to learn the duties of citizenship and how a participatory democracy works. The California Council of Social Studies (California Council of Social Studies, 2008) states that social studies involves learning about social sciences and humanities in order to promote civic responsibility. California social studies educators must strive for a demanding balance between encouraging responsible civic behaviors and providing historical content to students. These two related goals can be somewhat irreconcilable classroom subjects since they require different focuses during social studies instruction.

Early in the school year, I conducted a survey with my fifth grade class to discover my students' ideas about the purpose of social studies. In the survey, I asked my students about the importance of social studies, how much time they thought the class spent on it during the first month of school, and if they could list topics they learned in social studies.

The majority of my students wrote that the importance of social studies was to learn about the past. For example, one student wrote, "I think social studies you study is about what happened in the past." None of my students related social studies to being productive citizens in our society or how history connects to other historical events and

the present. However, my students did not have much prior experience connecting social studies with citizenship, which might account for their responses. One reason for the lack of connecting social studies to citizenship could be that the majority of social studies teaching throughout the grades focus on historical content rather than on developing personal and historical connections or citizenship skills. My students also wrote that social studies is important because it allows us to know what happened in the past. Based on the survey, students did not think about history as the connection between various historical events or apply history to their lives. Therefore, my students should learn that history can be connected to other historical events and applied to their lives since these historical thinking skills are ones that responsible citizens use daily.

My students also responded that they were aware of studying social studies and actually felt that they spent a lot of class time learning about history. One student wrote that we spend “forty minutes each day” learning social studies. Another student wrote, “one hour because social studies is important.” The survey results are accurate because the class spends about an hour a day learning social studies.

The final question on the survey asked, “What do you remember learning in social studies?” Most of my students only mentioned the unit we were currently working on, Native Americans, instead of California History, which they studied the prior year. This might illustrate that my students were not retaining or recalling what they learned from previous years of social studies education. Based on their limited responses, I asked myself how I might be able to present information to students in a way that promotes retention of the social studies curriculum we studied.

The results of the survey indicated my students believe that social studies teaches them about the past, but they did not connect it to the present nor to other historical events or civic responsibility. In addition, I found that my students spent time learning in social studies but apparently forgot topics they had studied in that subject.

Based on my class survey results, I designed a social studies curriculum to promote the historical thinking skills of connecting, analyzing and applying historical concepts. These skills are necessary to learn historical content but can also be used in daily life to connect, analyze and apply societal information in order to be an effective and informed citizen. In addition, the curriculum I developed encourages motivation and collaboration, which in turn promotes understanding of historical concepts in the social studies classroom, by using project-based learning as the core of the curriculum.

The Value of Social Studies

Social Studies Nationwide

According to the National Center for Educational Statistics and the International Association for the Evaluation of Education Achievement (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2003; International Association for the Evaluation of Education Achievement, 2007), the amount of time spent on social studies in elementary schools is shrinking due to the national, state, district and school focus on language arts and math. The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) (Sainsbury, Twist, Woodthorpe, and Whetton, 2003) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) (International Association for the Evaluation of Education Achievement, 2007) reports indicate that the United States has been falling behind in math and language arts compared to the rest of the world, resulting in efforts to make all students proficient in these disciplines. To address students' low performances in language arts and math, the No Child Left Behind Act (Public Law, 2001) was passed in order to close the achievement gap by focusing on accountability and assessment. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) goal is for all students to be proficient in language arts, mathematics and science by the years 2013 and 2014. Although social studies is not directly removed from the curriculum, NCLB does not test it so schools tend not to focus on the subject.

Passe (2006) surveyed several teachers at various elementary schools and found that social studies was no longer part of the school day. A teacher survey given as part of the Federal Schools and Staffing Survey (Jerald, 2006) showed that, from 1990 to 2004, the amount of time students in grades one through four spent on reading and mathematics

increased by 96 minutes per week total, while the time spent studying social studies and science declined by 48 minutes, and that overall the hours that elementary school teachers spend on social studies is clearly decreasing nationwide. Dillon (2006) states that schools around the country are responding to the No Child Left Behind requirements in reading and math by decreasing the amount of time spent on other subjects and, for students who are low performing, eliminating non-priority subjects such as social studies and art altogether. Consequently, the time spent on social studies education nationally is decreasing as a result of No Child Left Behind legislation.

It is important to teach the NCLB-assessed subjects of language arts and mathematics since those subjects directly affect school funding and curriculum. As part of NCLB mandates, schools are required to meet their federal Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) goals for improvement and their California Academic Performance Index (API) testing objectives. AYP is the federal ranking of schools based on test scores in the same content area or for any numerically significant subgroup. California uses a numerical scoring, API, to rank schools based on their California Standards Test (California Department of Education, 2008). Social studies is not part of the API ranking since it is not tested in elementary school.

If a school does not meet its AYP or API objectives for two consecutive years, the school is considered to be a “program improvement” or “PI” school (California Department of Education, 2008). Each school has its own specific objectives to meet, which are determined by its previous years’ test scores and school demographics. For example, my school’s API for 2008 was 748; the API must reach 753 for 2009 to avoid

becoming a PI school. For 2008 AYP, 38.2% of the students were at or above proficient, and the target was 35.2% in language arts. For 2009, the goal became 46% proficiency. In math, schoolwide proficiency was 56.8% with a target of 37% in 2008. For 2009, the goal is 47.5% math proficiency. In addition, a certain number of students from each of the school's subgroups, such as English Language Learners, need to demonstrate improved proficiency in language arts and math. Schools that fail to meet the expected AYP outcomes are "taken over" by the state; meaning the school can be restructured and can, in some cases, be required to use scripted curricula for teaching. The majority of such scripted curricula do not include social studies curriculum but instead focus on language arts and mathematics. Since it is important to meet school AYP and API objectives on NCLB tests based in language arts and math, social studies has become a "backburner" subject and given much less focus than the tested subjects.

Social Studies in California

Even though social studies education is given much less focus and teaching time nationwide due to the NCLB act, California has allocated time for teaching social studies and a set of social studies standards that teachers are expected to teach (California Department of Education, 2008). The California Department of Education (2008) and the National Council for Social Studies (n.d.) each recommend that teachers in grades one through six spend one hour of instructional time on social studies each day. Many teachers overlook this time allocation due to the NCLB act or simply run out of time to teach social studies. Passe (2006) states that many elementary teachers are getting the

impression that overlooking social studies is acceptable and even encouraged by some administrators due to NCLB.

The California History-Social Studies Standards (California Department of Education, 1998) provides grade-level standards for each teacher to address. The focus of the California History-Social Studies Standards is the “expanding community model” in which the standards progress from teaching students about family to the school to the surrounding neighborhood, city, state, national and international community (Duplass, 2007). For example, the third grade California History-Social Studies Standards cover the students’ local community from the past to the present, while the fourth grade standards cover the state of California, and the fifth grade standards cover United States history up to the Westward Expansion Era. There is a very large amount of social studies content to be covered in the California standards, especially with the limited amount of time given to teach it. In this educational climate, teachers are challenged by the need to teach social studies standards in very little time.

Eighth graders in California are given a History-Social Science Standards Test (California Department of Education, 2008) based on the History-Social Studies Standards taught throughout the grades. In 2008, 64% of California eighth grade students scored Basic, Below Basic and Far Below Basic on the History-Social Science Section of the California Standardized Test (California Department of Education, 2008). According to the California Department of Education, eighth graders who score a Basic, Below Basic or Far Below Basic understand less than fifty percent of the social studies content. Jerald (2006) discusses the importance of having a strong foundation and broad range of

elementary social studies curricula in order for students to have an opportunity to develop vocabulary and background knowledge that will help their reading comprehension later in education. Based on these CST scores, it seems clear that many California students are in need of becoming proficient in the field of social studies in order to understand social studies content and eventually become effective state citizens, but less and less time is devoted to teaching and learning the subject.

Social Studies in an Urban District

The decrease in time spent on social studies is also seen throughout school districts, as it is in the nation and state. A large urban district in California provides an example of how the attention given to social studies has declined as a result of NCLB. This district gives district “benchmark” assessments in math, language arts and science for grades two through twelve. These benchmark assessments test students’ skills in these subjects three times throughout the year, determined by the pacing of the subjects. However, social studies is not one of these benchmark assessments, which may give teachers in the district the impression that social studies curriculum is not important to teach compared to tested subjects. As a result, many teachers spend less time teaching social studies in comparison with the disciplines that are assessed on the district benchmarks. For example, in 2008, elementary school teachers in this district were allotted two thirty-minute time slots for teaching social studies throughout the week, while other subjects such as math are allotted five one-hour time slots for the week. (San Diego Unified School District, 2009)

More evidence of social studies taking a lesser role in the curriculum can be found on the districts' standards-based report cards. Each content area standard from the state standards is condensed and written on the report card. Students are given a grade of Proficient, Basic, or Below Basic in each content area based on student work samples that address the different content standards. The social studies section of this standards-based report card includes only a third of the state History-Social Studies Standards. According to the district website (San Diego Unified School District, 2008), the district cut a third of the time allotted to social studies in order to allow more time to be spent on other subjects such as mathematics and language arts.

Conclusion

The focus on certain disciplines such as language arts and mathematics by NCLB and other mandates, as outlined above, has resulted in a decrease in class time allotted to the study of social studies across the nation. Thus a gap exists in California between what the state History-Social Studies Standards require to be taught and what is actually taught in the elementary classroom. Although, it is important to close the achievement gap in mathematics and language arts, it is also important to close the gap between what is expected in social studies education and what is actually happening in classrooms around our nation.

Given the time constraints imposed by NCLB policies, while also attending to the expectations of state standards, an issue arises as to how social studies can be taught in both historical and practical ways. I argue that students can be taught historical thinking

within these teaching constraints through a project-based learning social studies curriculum.

This paper addresses the issue of what happens when students are taught historical thinking skills such as connecting, analyzing and applying through a project-based learning curriculum and whether such a curriculum promotes understanding of historical concepts through encouraging motivation and collaboration among students in the elementary classroom.

Review of Literature

Research suggests that students who are motivated, think historically, and work in collaboration foster strong learning habits (Bayer, 1990; Brophy, 2009; Wineburg, 1991). These educational constructs of motivation, historical thinking and collaboration are the foundation of a strong social studies curriculum and, because they contribute to strong learning practices, they are valuable to studies across the curriculum. In the following sections, these constructs will be reviewed as they pertain to the field of social studies learning and education in order to provide the background on which this project was developed.

Motivation

Motivation can be defined as an “individual’s energy and drive to learn, work efficiently and achieve the thoughts and behaviors that reflect this motivation and engagement” (Martin, 2009). Martin conducted several surveys over the course of many years, involving elementary, middle and high school students, and found that in most cases motivated learners have positive relationships with their teachers. He concluded that the level of motivation among students depends on the relationship with the teacher, what the teacher is saying and how it is being said. But how do teachers use this information to motivate students to learn, especially in social studies? Other studies have shown that three approaches are conducive to motivating students to learn: provide a safe classroom environment (Stipek, 2002), allow students to choose and make decisions about their learning (Zemelman, Daniels and Hyde, 2005; Deci, 1995) and provide

students with engaging learning activities (Brophy, 2009; Zemelman, Daniels and Hyde, 2005).

According to Stipek (2002), the first way to promote motivation in students is to foster a safe environment in which students feel valued, secure and enthusiastic about learning. He claims teachers can provide such environments by being motivated themselves; thus, the culture of the classroom can motivate students. Martin (2009) points out that when teachers establish a connection with students, the classroom environment becomes a safe place and students are more motivated to learn. In terms of motivating learning in history classes in particular, Brophy (2009) suggests that teachers foster environments that engage students in inquiry, structure discussions and questions, explore multiple perspectives, and develop and defends stances. He notes that these skills are authentic not only to the history discipline but to life skills in general.

Zemelman, Daniels and Hyde (2005) researched best practices in teaching generally and in teaching social studies. Two of these best practices revolve around motivation. Zemelman et al. suggest that teachers provide choice and responsibility to students by allowing them to choose their topics to study in the social studies field. Deci (1995) concurs with Zemelman et al. by suggesting the importance of giving choice in order to promote motivation. Deci states that students should have choice and a role in decision-making, although, he believes there should be set limits. Deci claims that giving people choice enhances their intrinsic motivation; that is, people will be motivated and committed to various assignments in order to get the assignment done well. In turn, providing choice gives students a personal stake, an investment in a project, and forces

them to make a commitment to their own learning.

Zemelman et al. also suggests that teachers should provide various activities that promote student engagement through inquiry and problem solving surrounding significant human issues. When students are engaged in an activity, they are motivated to complete the activity and learn from it. Brophy (2009) compiled a list of ten engaging history activities for teachers from various educational history books, articles, and websites. These are:

- Using alternative texts
- Analyzing historical artifacts
- Conducting perspective/role taking activities
- Taking a stance on historical concepts
- Investigating personal/family history
- Participating in simulations
- Creating art and/or drama
- Providing outside resources (fieldtrips)
- Encouraging personal relevance
- Implementing historical curriculum with depth rather than breadth

Brophy suggests that students will be motivated with the above activities since they are interesting and enjoyable while:

- Encouraging enthusiasm
- Displaying vivid representation
- Providing personal relevance

- Provoking response
- Valuing differing opinion
- Appreciating original student thought
- Allowing higher order thinking
- Creating empathy
- Integrating multi-sensory and multi-modal learning
- Possessing utility value across other disciplines

Since each of the activities listed above have several motivational aspects to them, Brophy suggests they are engaging to students.

To summarize, students must have several motivational principles present in their classroom in order to be motivated to learn history (Brophy, 2009; Deci, 1995; Martin, 2009; Stipek, 2002; Zemelman, Daniels and Hyde, 2005). First, students must have a safe and risk free environment that promotes good relationships with the teacher (Martin, 2009; Stipek, 2002). Second, students must have the ability to choose and make decisions about their own learning (Deci, 1995; Zemelman, Daniels and Hyde, 2005). Third, students must have engaging learning activities that are based in inquiry (Brophy, 2009; Zemelman, Daniels and Hyde, 2005). When embedded in a curriculum, these principles will foster motivation for learning history and are central to the development of this curriculum project.

Historical Thinking

For the purposes of this paper, historical thinking will be defined as the ability to “do history” like a historian through analyzing historical concepts within a chronological

period, interpreting the connection between concepts, and making decisions about how to apply the historical knowledge (National Center for History in the Schools, 1996). Many people think learning history is memorizing names and dates; however, historical thinking lies in sharp contrast to simple memorization. The National Center for History in the Schools (1996) states that historical thinking skills enable students to connect, interpret, analyze and use information about past events in order to understand history and life today. The California History-Social Studies Standards (California Department of Education, 1998) state that historical interpretation, one historical thinking skill enables students to summarize the key events of the era they are studying and explain the historical contexts of those events by, for example, connecting contemporaneous events to one another. In addition, the standards indicate that students should be able to identify and interpret the multiple causes and effects of historical events by analyzing them. Finally, the standards state that students should conduct cost-benefit analyses of historical and current events allowing them to apply the history to their life today. Historical thinking is learning how to think like a historian, which is a practical application of history in the contemporary moment. Therefore, thinking like a historian is learning history through historical themes while analyzing and interpreting the historical concepts in order to make connections and apply the knowledge. But how do we teach students to think like historians?

Wineburg (1991) examined historical thinking and compared the ways in which expert and novice historians read historical texts. Wineburg found startling differences between the experts and novices when they approach primary sources. The experts

sought to discover both context and content, that is, the purpose of the text, bias of the text, and argument of the text. The novices sought to know only the content, think of the text as facts, gather information and see the text as possible truth. Historical experts made connections between sources and used historical thinking strategies by asking, “Why should I believe this is true?” On the other hand, novices were not making these connections nor transferring their historical understanding to new contexts. Therefore, to teach elementary school students how to think like a historian, it is important to model for them how to examine the context and content of the text, the purpose, bias and argument as well as making connections between sources. In addition, it is necessary to use multiple types of historical texts for students rather than just the social studies textbook.

Bransford, Sherwood, Hasselbring, Kinzer and Williams (2000) examined the importance of learning and transfer in order for understanding to occur. They suggest many strategies to promote transfer, such as degree of mastery, motivation to learn, context, problem representations, and building on existing knowledge. People who learn for understanding do not simply memorize facts or procedures; rather they are able to transfer their knowledge to multiple contexts. Like Zemelman et al. (2005), Bransford et al. express the need to teach for mastery rather than rote memorization. Based on Wineburg and Bransford et al. research, connecting, analyzing and transferring (applying) concepts are the essence of mastering a concept. Therefore, elementary students who can connect, analyze and apply historical concepts are mastering history and becoming historians.

Teaching students how to think historically is important for developing an understanding of history and also for learning how to be an effective citizen in society (Wineburg, 1991) since many of the historical thinking skills are also citizenship skills. For example, connecting, analyzing and applying material to decision making is a skill that responsible and productive citizens use everyday. Harvey (2000) researched various reading strategies that teach comprehension and enhance understanding. Of the many strategies she analyzed, connecting, determining importance, and synthesizing were the most important because they are strategies that proficient readers do on a daily basis to understand various texts. To be a productive citizen it is important to use these thinking skills because people need to make well informed, critical decisions, and understand complex situations throughout their lifetimes. These life skills are also the essence of historical thinking. Therefore, historical thinking skills are important to master in order to learn history as well as be an effective citizen in society, which are the two purposes of teaching social studies in school.

Historical thinking is connecting, analyzing and applying information in order to formulate one's own opinion about a historical concept. Thinking like a historian teaches students to take a stance about an historical issue or event rather than taking a historical text at face value. Historians interact with the text by questioning it to formulate their own informed decisions. In the same way, students learning how to think historically will interact with the text and learn how to formulate their own opinions about the text. Formulating their own opinion about historical texts will help students create their own interpretations of history.

Collaboration

Collaborative learning can be defined as, “students working together without immediate teacher supervision in groups small enough that all students can participate collectively on the task” (Wilczenski, Bontrager, Ventrone, and Correia, 2001, p. 269). In the classroom, teachers need to give opportunities for students to work collaboratively in order to learn various concepts (Wilczenski, Bontrager, Ventrone, and Correia, 2001). This collaboration can take many forms, such as group work, class discourse and/or project-based learning. Bayer (1990) suggests learners understand more when they work in collaborative-apprenticeship learning groups that consist of experts and novices. Bayer suggests that this method of instruction benefits all learners by using Vygotsky’s (1978) “zone of proximal development” to achieve every learner’s potential learning level. Vygotsky argued that working in joint activities advances a novice learner’s development. Vygotsky found that a novice’s learning ability lies between what the novice can do independently and what the novice can do when working with more capable others or experts.

Bayer researched whether apprenticeship learning would work in the educational setting. She shows examples of several classrooms using the collaborative-apprenticeship learning model in various disciplines, audiences and purposes. In each of these classrooms, the teachers started with what the “students knew, shared that knowledge, built on it collaboratively, used language as a tool for learning and support increasing student initiative” (Bayer, 1990, 94). In each of these classrooms, student understanding increased as measured by formative and summative assessments given by

the teacher. Collaborative-apprenticeships may enhance the learning of social studies by grouping experts and novices together and using language as a tool for learning.

Zemelman et al. (2005) also suggest that collaborative learning is a valuable practice when teaching social studies. He states that students should participate in engaging, interactive and cooperative processes that bring together students of various ability levels in order to increase learning for all students. This is very different from the traditional social studies classroom in which students are passively receiving a teacher-given lecture. Lecturing students deprives novice learners of knowledge and opportunities to learn new concepts since students are not actively using language to learn. During lectures, students merely are fed information rather than being able to examine it through discussions and talk with peers at varying levels. This opportunity to use language increases knowledge for all students (Bayer, 1990). Thus, by using collaborative group discussion, learners are able to understand new concepts.

Bayer and Zemelman et al. claim that collaborative learning is an important aspect of learning; however, it is easier said than done. Based on research by Bayer (1990), Deci (1991), Martin, (2009) and Zemelman et al. (2005) there are several guidelines in order for effective collaboration to occur. Teachers must create a respectful community, establish clear partnership expectations and objectives, assign an inquiry-based project, assure teacher modeling of project and partnerships, and emphasize student choice about project study and partnerships. When these components are in place, there are many benefits to collaboration. Academically, students share their own knowledge and begin to see the teacher as a facilitator rather than the only knowledge holder (Bayer,

1990). Teachers seen as facilitators help students learn because students feel safe in the classroom and are seen as active contributors to the knowledge base of the classroom. Socially, students learn how to work together and solve problems they encounter during the activity (Bayer, 1990; Zemelman et al., 2005). Personally, students are motivated and take responsibility for their own learning since they are given several choices in their learning, which in turn enhances their understanding of professional work environments (Deci, 1995).

Project-Based Learning

As outlined above, many important educational constructs need to be in place when teaching for understanding in social studies such as motivation, historical thinking and collaboration each of which is fostered by project-based learning (PBL). Thomas (2000) defines PBL as a model of teaching that organizes learning around projects. However, many researchers have their own unique ideas of what PBL entails and how it should be implemented in classrooms. Thomas (2000) identifies five PBL criteria: Projects are the center of the curriculum, focus on core questions or problems of various disciplines, encourage students to investigate, are student-driven and based on real-world phenomena.

According to Thomas (2000), PBL emerged from three different arenas, which are Outward Bound wilderness expeditions, postsecondary models of "problem-based" learning, and university-based research in cognition and cognitive science applications. Thomas explained the various cognitive research areas that support PBL, which are motivation, expertise, contextual factors, and technology. He described how

PBL promotes motivation by providing choice in project activities. Blumenfeld (1991) further states that the PBL model builds in variety, challenge, student choice, and real world problems (such as history applied to contemporary issues) that pique student interest and value, which in turn promote student motivation. Therefore, PBL is a way to enhance motivation, an important educational construct to have in a social studies curriculum.

Project-Based Learning also aligns with research concerning experts and novices, which is incorporated in the idea of historical thinking. According to Blumenfeld (1991), the way to assist novices in becoming successful at inquiry and problem solving is to provide an environment that experts would use to investigate and master content. Thomas suggests that this idea of learning involving the collaboration between experts and novices, shifts instruction from the teacher to the student because students are investigating and mastering content with guidance from the teacher. Also, Thomas suggests that there is an emphasis on knowledge building rather than simple memorization of concepts because this is the way professionals treat their own fields of learning.

In addition, research on experts and novices surrounding PBL has led to the use of scaffolding, supporting learners through various teaching strategies such as questioning, modeling, and gradually releasing responsibility to the student. Collins, Brown and Newman (1991) discussed "cognitive apprenticeship" as another model of PBL for teaching in which students: "(a) learn the 'crafts' of subject matter areas such as mathematics, writing, and reading in the identical context that they would be expected to

use these skills in later life; (b) receive a large amount of practice; (c) learn from experts who would model the skills and then give feedback to students as they practice them; and (d) receive an emphasis on the acquisition of metacognitive skills useful for applying the to-be-learned skills” (p. 462). In short, students emulate the work of a professional such as a historian in order to make their work more relevant to the real world and so to their lives.

Thomas (2000) also suggests that PBL instruction is based in a real life problem-solving context that is built around collaboration and the use of technology. PBL instruction, based on real life problem solving, helps students apply what they are learning. If this occurs, students retain the information and are able to apply it more readily, making the learning more transferable to new areas (Boaler, 1998b; Bransford, Sherwood, Hasselbring, Kinzer, and Williams, 1990). In addition, students involved in real life problem solving are learning how to collaboratively work with others to solve problems that they might not be able to solve on their own.

Thomas also showed how cognitive research on PBL supports the use of technology as a “cognitive tool” that can support student abilities and extend new learning. For example, students work together to use the Internet and watch educational computer videos to research a topic of interest. This supports student academic and language abilities and provides new learning opportunities in collaborative groupings. Thus, PBL incorporates motivation, learning like a professional (such as historical thinking), and collaboration, all of which are important educational constructs to embed into a social studies curriculum. But does PBL increase students’ understanding of

concepts?

Thomas describes the various successes that PBL has had on student achievement in regards to standardized testing. Thomas focused on three elementary schools that implemented Project-Based Learning school-wide. After four years, these three schools scored above the district average in every content area on their state standardized tests (Thomas, 2000). Thomas suggests that the valuable educational constructs of motivation, expert practices such as historical thinking and collaborative work are embedded through PBL. In addition, Thomas suggests that student achievement increases and student understanding is deepened.

PBL is a time saving strategy. The use of PBL in an elementary school classroom to teach social studies will help cover the vast amount of History and Social Studies Standards (California Department of Education, 1998) in the limited amount of time given to teach social studies through the integration of grade level curriculum. However, it is difficult to achieve curriculum integration (Thomas, 2000). As Thomas states, PBL is based on projects being the core of the curriculum. If the project is at the center of the curriculum then linking various discipline standards to the core project may help save time. The project may fulfill the requirements of not just one set of standards but the standards of several disciplines. For example, if the social studies topic in fifth grade is Native Americans, then a teacher could link this concept with the reading standards of finding patterns in literature and the writing standards of writing a narrative. The teacher is then teaching social studies as well as covering various language arts standards. Subjects are now integrated through PBL and students are focused on the overall project

rather than learning separate grade level standards. Thus, PBL may help the teacher use limited class time efficiently, while at the same time attend to prescribed curriculum standards.

Conclusion

Becoming Historians incorporates motivation, historical thinking, and collaboration within a project-based learning curriculum. However, the current state-adopted curricula do not take advantage of these educational constructs nor do they incorporate project-based learning to teach students about social studies. Reviewing these state-adopted curricula through the educational constructs of motivation, historical thinking, collaboration and project-based learning will be the subject of the next chapter.

Social Studies Curricula Review

History textbooks provide the majority of available state-adopted social studies curricula (Kobin, 1996; Loewen, 1995) and, in general, the teaching that occurs in most history classes centers on such textbooks (Zemelman, Daniels and Hyde, 2005). This means that history instruction is only or primarily based on what is presented in the textbook. One possible reason for this is that teachers were taught from the textbook and therefore believe that they should teach straight from the textbook as well (Zemelman et al., 2005).

Teacher reliance on textbooks in the social studies classroom is controversial for several reasons (Kobin, 1996; Loewen, 1995). Textbooks usually under-represent women and minorities and present information as “objective facts” (Kobin, 1996; Loewen, 1995). Textbooks are also seen as boring and uninteresting to students and undermine the process of learning history (Kobin, 1996; Loewen, 1995).

Problematically, the textbook curriculum tends to emphasize broad coverage versus depth of concepts (Kobin, 1996; Loewen, 1995). In other words, the textbook has a rapid pacing guide when it comes to teaching historical concepts in order to cover all of the state’s History-Social Studies Standards. The textbook editors address all of the state’s standards superficially so that their editions can become state-adopted curriculum. This comes at the cost of covering the standards in a deeper manner that allows for retention and understanding.

Due to these controversial issues, textbooks and most social studies curricula do not promote important theoretical constructs about teaching and learning such as

motivation, historical thinking and collaborative learning (Kobin, 1996; Loewen, 1995). For example, a motivational barrier is constructed when students think that textbooks are boring and uninteresting because they emphasize memorization rather than allowing students to form their own opinions about history (Kobin, 1996; Loewen, 1995). Another danger from learning only from the textbook is that students may believe that the canonical information closes the book on how history occurred rather than historically, and so critically, thinking about history (Kobin, 1996; Loewen, 1995). This chapter suggests that the majority of the state-adopted social studies curricula are textbooks which do not provide ample opportunities for collaborative learning, another construct shown to promote understanding. In addition, this chapter illustrates that the state-adopted curricula fall short of offering approaches that teach history through project-based learning.

In this chapter, the social studies materials reviewed are *Harcourt Social Studies Textbook: Grade Five: United States History: Making a New Nation* (Harcourt, 2007), *Scott Foresman History-Social Science for California* (Scott Foresman, 2006) and *Teachers' Curriculum Institute: History Alive!* (Teachers Curriculum Institute, 2007). These curricula were chosen because they are representative of the approved adoptions for social studies curriculum in the state of California and thus school districts are mandated to use them. They are also the curricula currently used by the majority of elementary schools in California. The curricula will be reviewed based on the educational research constructs informing this study: motivation, historical thinking, collaboration and project-based learning.

Harcourt Social Studies Curriculum

Harcourt Social Studies Textbook: Grade Five: United States History: Making a New Nation (Porter, 2007) aligns content with California History-Social Science Content Standards (California Department of Education, 1998) and tries to promote current teaching research. For example, the editors developed the curriculum based on “backward mapping.” This type of curriculum starts with determining the student learning objectives of a unit of study, then maps the curriculum “backward” to determine the steps necessary to achieve that outcome. Therefore, the curriculum starts with the standards that align with the unit of study, plans assessment, and then plans instruction based on the student learning objectives. Harcourt uses the California History and Social Studies Content Standards (California Department of Education, 1998) to guide the presentation of the content. In this text, history is told as a story, which highlights significant people and places, identifies important events in time, presents vocabulary and literature from the time period, and reflects contemporary socio-historical research. In addition, the text focuses on developing students’ skills in historical analysis, such as chronological and spatial thinking skills, critical research practices, the ability to consider multiple perspectives, and historical interpretation skills. The curriculum is able to achieve this since it focuses on breadth rather than depth. Harcourt superficially covers the California History and Social Science Standards but fails to significantly incorporate the educational constructs critical to a social studies curriculum, namely, motivation, historical thinking, collaboration and project-based learning.

Motivation in Harcourt

Although the Harcourt textbook may seem comprehensive, it fails to develop a student's motivation for social studies. There are several ways that curriculum can promote student motivation. For example, if a curriculum provides engaging activities and choice for students then it is attempting to motivate students to learn. Harcourt curriculum lacks in both respects.

The Harcourt text is organized by units and chapters within the units. Each of the units include sections entitled Unit Previews, Reading Social Studies, Study Skills, Start with Literature, Core Lessons and You Are There. Unit Previews provide an overview of the significant events, people and places that the chapter will cover. Reading Social Studies introduces the reading focus skill that the lesson will focus on, such as comparing and contrasting historical events. Study Skills provides students with techniques to help them remember what they read in each unit such as a summary. Each chapter begins with a literature selection that builds background knowledge about the concept. For example, the chapter may begin with a short story of Columbus sailing to the New World. Then the core lessons within the unit begin by identifying key events in chronological order. The lesson is filled with an abundance of introduced historical facts, and the activities consist primarily of reading and answering questions with few activities designed to promote engagement with the text. To reinforce the lesson concepts, teachers can assign homework and practice worksheet pages from the Homework and Practice Workbook. Brophy (2009) suggests many examples of history activities to promote motivation such as simulations and role-playing, however reading the text and answering

questions is not one of them. The one component that appears to be designed to engage students in the time period is entitled You Are There. In the You Are There sections, students listen to a short story and are asked to imagine that they are in the time period. This section attempts to connect students to the lesson in order for them to become engaged. Unfortunately, it does not promote active engagement.

Within each of the lessons are also several special features that could promote engaging activities and thus motivation. These special features are: Children in History, Citizenship, A Closer Look, Cultural Heritage, Fast Fact, Geography and Primary Sources. Each of these components could possibly draw in students and motivate them by applying history to their lives. However, they are considered special features, and therefore optional, not the core learning aspects of the program. In addition, there are supplemental one- or two-page features based on Biographies, Citizenship, Primary Sources, Points of View, Skill Lessons, Chapter Reviews, Unit Reviews and Fieldtrips. These additional resources as well the Biographies and Primary Sources information could motivate students to think like a historian. However, again, they are not the center of the learning aspect of the curriculum but are supplemental components of the textbook. Therefore, there is opportunity for engaging activities based on the Harcourt additional resources but it is the instructor who determines the use of these resources.

Providing choice to students is another way to motivate students (Deci, 1996; Zemelman, Daniels and Hyde, 2005). Harcourt is centered on direct instruction provided by the teacher, therefore, there is little choice provided to the student. In the Harcourt curriculum, the teacher chooses the parts of the curriculum to use, the ways historical

content is accessed by the students, and how instruction is differentiated to accommodate different ability levels of the students. However, when it comes to students being able to choose what they want to learn, how they want to learn, and/or whom they want to work with, Harcourt does not provide any resources or suggestions in the curriculum.

Therefore, Harcourt falls short of providing engaging activities as well as choice for students, which are two ways to promote motivation during learning.

Historical Thinking in Harcourt

Historical thinking involves students connecting, analyzing and applying historical ideas in order to meet the two overall purposes of social studies, which are fostering effective citizens in society and helping students understand historical content (National Council for Social Studies, 2008). A curriculum that promotes historical thinking would use a variety of primary sources, give ample amounts of time to connect, analyze and apply the sources, and allow students to take a stand on what they believe happened in history (National Center for History in the Schools, 1996). The Harcourt curriculum falls short in this area as well. The Harcourt text provides a Primary Source section in which students are provided with a primary source, such as a diary entry from a settler in Jamestown. In addition, there is a Points of View section in which students are presented with viewpoints of various citizens during a time period. However, Harcourt curriculum fails to teach students how to actually analyze the primary sources and viewpoints in order to make their own stance about history based on multiple sources. According to Wineburg (1991), students need to be explicitly taught how to analyze primary sources like historians rather than merely provided with primary sources. For

example, Wineburg suggests providing students with graphic organizers to include guiding questions that teach them how to analyze primary sources. This graphic organizer is intended to aid students in learning how to become historians.

Collaboration in Harcourt

The Harcourt curriculum lacks any mention of collaborative learning. Instead, the majority of the curriculum is focused on teacher-centered instruction rather than student-centered instruction. Students are rarely provided with opportunities to discuss ideas or work together to learn from each other. The Reader's Theater provides one of few such opportunities. Reader's Theatre includes a play based on the social studies content of the unit of study that students can collaboratively read. Other than this component, however, the curriculum is primarily teacher-driven and provides little opportunity for collaborative learning. Obviously, teachers can make the Harcourt curriculum more collaborative in their own classrooms, but Harcourt does not give any directions on when or how to do this when using their curriculum.

Project-based learning in Harcourt

Project-based learning involves centering learning around projects based on major themes within different disciplines (Thomas, 2000). Harcourt does not base its curriculum on projects that are centered on the major themes of the California History and Social Studies Standards. There is a supplemental book that comes with the curriculum entitled "Social Studies in Action," which offers several different ideas of projects and/or activities that relate to the social studies content. The various activities

are culminating projects at the end of units rather than investigative projects conducted throughout the unit. This means they supplement rather than drive the curriculum.

Thomas (2000) suggests that project-based learning drive the overall design of the curriculum as opposed to being a supplemental activity or project at the end of a unit, as Harcourt suggests.

Scott Foresman History-Social Science Curriculum

Scott Foresman History-Social Science for California: Grade Five (Berkin et al, 2006) includes several components, such as a student text, teacher resources binder, overhead projector transparencies, primary sources, biographies, content supplemental readers, an atlas, a flip chart, literature books, maps, activities, and digital resources that include videos, music, and games. The curriculum is aligned with the California History-Social Science Content Standards and is organized into nine units, each of which focuses on part of the story about how the United States became a nation. Throughout the units are various assessments that measure what students understand about the topic of each unit. The curriculum is designed to be accessible to all performance levels of students, such as students in special education classes, English Language Learners, and students who are performing below or above the specific grade level. In addition, there are various strategies for English Language Learners embedded in the curriculum. However, *Scott Foresman History-Social Science for California: Grade Five* does not fully address several key educational concepts such as motivation, historical thinking, collaborative learning and project-based learning.

Motivation in Scott-Foresman

The Scott-Foresman curriculum rarely provides engaging activities or student choice, which are two key components for promoting motivation (Deci, 1996; Zemelman, Daniels and Hyde, 2005). The activities are primarily teacher-centered and do not take into account student needs for motivation. The primary activities are based on reading the textbook, answering questions at the end of each lesson, completing workbook pages based on the covered material, and taking a test. None of these activities are examples that Brophy (2009) suggests will engage students with historical content in a motivating way. While some history activities in Scott-Foresman that meet Brophy's criteria for promoting motivation such as simulations, using alternative texts, and analyzing historical artifacts, these types of activities are rare and not easily located within the Scott-Foresman curriculum.

In addition, the curriculum does not provide opportunities for choice. Like Harcourt, the Scott-Foresman curriculum is teacher-centered rather than student-centered and focused on direct instruction. The students do not have much choice in their learning since the teacher is at the center of the curriculum. Therefore, the Scott-Foresman curriculum rarely provides engaging activities or opportunities for student choice, which in turn hinders student motivation.

Historical Thinking in Scott-Foresman

The Scott-Foresman curriculum does not promote the historical thinking processes due to its lack of primary sources analysis. Throughout the textbook, there are

a variety of primary sources that students are able to read, but students are not taught how to analyze the primary source or examine multiple primary sources to make their own stance on history as Wineburg (1991) advocates in his research. In order to teach students how to be historians and think historically, it is essential for them to use the same set of skills that real historians use on a daily basis. These skills involve using primary sources to connect, analyze and apply historical knowledge. Without the opportunity to use these various skills, which is the case in the Scott-Foresman curriculum, students will not be able to become proficient in historical thinking.

Collaboration in Scott-Foresman

According to Bayer (1990) and Vygotsky (1978), students learn when working together collaboratively. The Scott-Foresman curriculum does not provide opportunities for collaborative learning. The majority of the teaching involves direct instruction of content such as listening to the teacher read a lesson and then answering questions from a worksheet rather than inquiry-based projects done in groups. In addition, many of the activities are done independently. Web-based activities in which students are given worksheets to complete after they've read information from websites would be an example. Students are not working together unless the teacher decides to incorporate various teaching strategies that he or she knows promote collaborative learning and in turn, understanding for students (Bayer, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978). The curriculum does not provide any support for collaborative learning; instead the curriculum focuses on direct instruction and independent student work.

Project-Based Learning in Scott-Foresman

Since the Scott-Foresman curriculum is primarily based on direct instruction rather than student inquiry, the curriculum lacks opportunities for project-based learning. According to Thomas (2000), a project-based learning curriculum is centered on a project that provides multiple opportunities for students to investigate a topic of their choice within a certain discipline. Scott-Foresman curriculum includes various small projects or writing projects that students can complete at the end of units such as writing a letter to a historical figure. Other projects that Scott-Foresman includes in their curriculum are writing a newspaper about the events during the time period or writing a diary page about a historical event. However, students are not actively investigating throughout the unit nor are they working on an inquiry-based project. Thus, Scott-Foresman has very limited components of project-based learning, which promote motivation and collaboration throughout their curriculum.

History Alive!

The last curriculum reviewed is *Teacher Curriculum Institute: History Alive!* (Teacher Curriculum Institute, 2007), which seeks to promote historical understanding by bringing “history alive.” The curriculum is aligned to the California History-Social Science Content Standards and is based on three educational theories: Gardner’s (1983) theory of multiple intelligences, Cohen’s (1994) research on cooperative group work, and Bruner’s (1977) notion of spiral curriculum form. Gardner suggests that students possess a variety of intelligences, such as visual, interpersonal and intrapersonal. According to

Cohen, students learn best when working together. Bruner suggests that curriculum should be revisited many times throughout a unit of study through various forms of representations and levels of complexity. These educational theories are integrated throughout *History Alive's* eight teaching strategies, which include Interactive Slide Lectures, Social Studies Skill Builders, Experiential Exercises, Problem Solving Group Work, Response Groups, Writing for Understanding, Interactive Student Notebooks, and a Culminating Project. The final section of the curriculum provides teachers with strategies for how to establish cooperation and tolerance among the students in order to best implement the curriculum.

Motivation in History Alive!

One strength of the *History Alive!* curriculum is the focus on engaging activities. The entire curriculum is created to make the study of history interesting and enticing for students. Therefore, the activities and lessons in which students are involved are interactive and simulating. For example, the Experiential Experiences in the fifth grade unit on Colonial Life involves several rotations that teach students about life in Colonial Williamsburg. When rotating, students “visit” places such as the church and courthouse and are therefore actively participating in an authentic task, a task that colonists would do during colonial times, during the rotation. Another type of activity is the Interactive Slide Lecture in which students are shown a variety of slides about a certain historical concept and discuss their ideas about the event with partners, groups and the whole class. These activities are very engaging and motivating to students since they are student-centered and promote a fun learning environment.

There is evidence of choice for students in the *History Alive!* curriculum. *History Alive!* provides students some choice over their topic of study for culminating projects. For example, one of the final projects allows students to choose if they would like to live in a rural, suburban or urban area, explain their reasons and then choose somewhere in America to live. In addition, *History Alive!* promotes collaborative group work with different classmates. For example, the curriculum provides a teaching strategy called Desk Olympics, which is a game students play to quickly find different groups of peers to work with during a *History Alive!* activity.

Another element of this curriculum that is not seen in the more standard textbook curricula is the cooperative learning environment. The research about motivation suggests that the environment of the classroom is important for establishing student motivation. The final part of the curriculum suggests teaching strategies about how to establish a cooperative and tolerant classroom in order to use the eight teaching strategies. This is a tool that is missing from other textbook curricula. This curriculum does encourage motivation among its learners with more emphasis on engaging activities and positive classroom environment; however it does not provide opportunities for choice of culminating activities and student groupings. Therefore, *History Alive!* is an improvement over both the Harcourt and Scott Foresman curricula in terms of providing motivation, however it lacks the critical motivational factor of choice.

Historical Thinking in History Alive!

The eight teaching strategies in *History Alive!* integrate historical thinking skills. Students are using primary sources during Interactive Slide Lectures. For example,

students analyze a picture from various time periods to determine its importance such as a picture of the Boston Massacre and discuss the bias that the artist had when drawing the picture. This promotes historical thinking because teachers are explicitly guiding the students to think like a historian through several questioning techniques provided in the curriculum. The students are also connecting, analyzing and applying their ideas about the time period throughout the units in their Interactive Student Notebooks (ISNs) and during their Culminating Project. For example, during the American Revolution Unit, students write in their ISNs to connect a Tug-of-War Experience to the American Revolution, take guided notes in their ISNs throughout the reading lesson and then apply their knowledge in a culminating project by writing a letter to a family member arguing their position on the American Revolution. Students are “doing” history as suggested by Wineburg (1991) when they are explicitly taught how to analyze history through graphic organizers in their ISNs and apply history to their lives during their Culminating Project.

Collaboration in History Alive!

History Alive! is based on collaborative learning strategies since it provides opportunities for students to learn from a variety of classmates, establishes clear expectations and partnerships when learning with peers, and provides ways to create a respectful community. Throughout the curriculum the students work in several different collaborative groups, discussing concepts during Interactive Slide Lectures, doing Problem-Solving Group Work, participating in Response Groups and completing group Culminating Projects. This is very different from textbook curricula that use more of a teacher-centered approach rather than a student-centered approach to learning. By

allowing students to be grouped in various arrangements, novice and expert students are constantly using language to share their ideas and learn about different historical concepts. This collaboration uses language as a tool for learning, which in turn enhances understanding for all students (Bayer, 1990).

The last section of the curriculum provides strategies of how to establish a cooperative and tolerant classroom. By providing teachers with guidelines on how to create a positive learning environment, teachers can make clear expectations on how to work with others and how to respect one another in the classroom. This makes the classroom a risk-free environment that promotes learning and the sharing of ideas (Stipek, 2002). The curriculum meets the criteria for being well designed in collaborative learning since it includes activities with various groupings of students and a section that explains how to create a positive classroom environment

Project-Based Learning in History Alive!

Although *History Alive!* embeds the educational constructs of motivation, historical thinking and collaboration into the curriculum, it falls short in the area of project-based learning. It promotes culminating projects at the end of units in order to assess whether students understand social studies concepts, but the curriculum does not center itself around a project, which is the essence of project-based learning (Thomas, 2000). For example, some of the end-of-the-unit projects include creating a monument marker, choosing a place to live in the United States, writing a letter about the American Revolution, and writing a diary about living in Jamestown. Although, all of these culminating projects are engaging, they are not the core of the curriculum. *History Alive!*

integrates motivation, historical thinking and collaboration through its lessons, but it relies only on culminating projects rather than a fully project-focused curriculum. Implementing a project-based learning curriculum engages students in topics at a deeper level by focusing on inquiry in which students guide their own learning around a concept.

Conclusion

None of the curricula reviewed incorporate all components of the educational constructs of motivation, historical thinking, collaboration and project-based learning. Table 1 summarizes the reviewed curricula in terms of organization, strengths and needs.

Table 1: Curricula Overview

Name of Curriculum	Organizational Overview of Curriculum	Strengths of Curriculum	Needs of Curriculum
Harcourt School Publishers: Reflections-California Series	The First Americans Cultures Meet Settling the Colonies American Revolution Governing the Nation Westward Expansion	Standards- Based Some Primary Sources	Pacing: No In-depth Study Motivation: engaging activities and choice Historical Thinking: analysis of primary sources Collaborative Learning PBL
Pearson Scott Foresman: Scott Foresman History-Social Science for California	The First Americans Age of Exploration The Fight for a Continent Life in the Colonies Causes of the Revolution Revolutionary War Becoming a Nation A Nation Moves West States and Capitals	Standards-Based Some Primary Sources	Pacing: No In-depth Study Motivation: engaging activities and choice Historical Thinking: analysis of primary sources Collaborative Learning PBL
Teachers' Curriculum Institute: History Alive!	Interactive slide lectures Social studies builders Experiential exercises Problem solving work Response groups Write for understanding Interactive notebooks Culminating projects	Standards-Based Motivational Collaborative Learning Use of Primary Sources	PBL

Harcourt and Scott-Foresman, the textbook curricula reviewed here, may seem to have all components of a well-rounded curriculum; however, there are serious flaws. The curricula do not focus on motivation through engaging activities or providing choice to students, nor do they embed collaborative work in the classroom activities. The curricula do not explicitly teach students how to think historically. Thinking historically allows students to connect, analyze, and apply research from various primary and secondary sources. The textbooks are written from one perspective and do not incorporate a variety of primary sources, and, as a result, are poor examples of historical inquiry themselves. Finally, the curricula do not focus on project-based learning since the textbooks focus on teacher-centered instruction, direct instruction of content to students.

On the other hand, at first glance, *History Alive!* seems to be the perfect curriculum. It incorporates all of the educational constructs of motivation, historical thinking and collaboration. However, the core of its curriculum is not focused on project-based learning. Each unit of the curriculum ends with a culminating project, but research shows that by using projects as the driving force of the curriculum, students are engaged and guide their own learning of concepts.

For students to best learn about history, research suggests that motivation, historical thinking, and collaborative learning should be embedded in the social studies curriculum. These educational constructs fall under the umbrella of project-based learning. Students who are in a caring environment that provides engaging tasks and choice will be motivated to learn (Brophy, 2009; Deci, 1995; Stipek, 2002). This will in turn foster historical thinking through the use of primary sources and historical skills of

connecting, analyzing and applying (Wineburg, 1991). Through collaborative working partnerships learners are able to build up their knowledge by working together to understand new concepts (Bayer, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978). All of these constructs can be embedded into project-based learning that turns students into historians, which is the goal of *Becoming Historians*, as described in the following chapter.

Overview of *Becoming Historians*

Becoming Historians: A Project-Based Learning Curriculum aims to address both purposes of social studies, which are learning historical content as well as preparing responsible citizens. To accomplish this, *Becoming Historians* has three goals. The goals are for students to learn how to historically think by connecting, analyzing and applying historical concepts to the historical time period and the world today. These historical thinking skills are also skills that are used by responsible citizens and must be taught explicitly in order for them to be learned. *Becoming Historians* is based on the educational constructs of motivation, historical thinking, collaboration and project-based learning, which are constructs not sufficiently addressed in the majority of current curricula. This curriculum implements several activities that integrate social studies and language arts through a core project in which students collaboratively work together while learning how to think historically. The curriculum ends with a culminating research project that integrates the two disciplines of social studies and language arts.

The social studies focus for the *Becoming Historians* curriculum is the study of one of the historical figures from the world exploration time period. Students choose a historical figure to research, such as Prince Henry the Navigator and examine the ways in which their chosen historical figures changed history by studying the causes and effects of their actions. The language arts components of the curriculum ask students to learn how to read historical sources write a research report, and share their findings on a poster board. The curriculum evaluation is based on four pieces of data: observations, a research report, a poster board and a world exploration essay. This chapter will give a

brief overview of my educational assumptions, the goals, educational constructs, and curricular activities.

Assumptions about Teaching and Learning

I believe that students learn when they are doing authentic learning tasks. I integrate social studies with language arts because I want students to do historical research, read, and write for authentic purposes. In *Becoming Historians*, students research a topic in history, such as the world exploration era and learn how to read primary and secondary sources pertaining to that topic. After researching, students write about their findings to a real audience. In this way, *Becoming Historians* teaches students to be historians by reading and writing in the same ways historians read and write about history.

Another assumption I have is that students learn by collaborating with and teaching each other. For this reason, I integrate group activities throughout the BH curriculum. My third assumption is that students learn when they are motivated when given choice and engaging learning topics. The *Becoming Historians* curriculum gives students choice during various engaging activities in order to teach students about history. I enjoy using project-based learning as the core of my social studies curriculum in order to engage students and help them understand the importance of social studies and how it relates to their lives today.

My final assumption for this curriculum is that all students can learn how to think like historians when they are given support. Therefore, I provide numerous graphic organizers and small group instruction to fit the needs of students. Teaching students

how to think historically is a key ingredient in education so students are prepared to make informed decisions as citizens, which is the goal of this curriculum.

Goals

The overarching goal of my curriculum is for students to think like historians by researching a historical figure from the world exploration era and presenting their findings in an authentic way. My hope is that this curriculum transforms students into critical thinkers beyond the classroom walls and into society at large when presented with a vast array of information. The three main goals for my curriculum are for students to think historically by connecting, analyzing and applying a historical concept to the world exploration time period and the world today.

Goal One: Connecting a Historical Figures' Actions and Historical Events

The first goal of the *Becoming Historians* curriculum is for students to learn how to connect historical figures to historical events within an era. A person creates a historical legacy not just by his or her actions but also because of the time and place that the person was alive. I want students to be able to recognize that what is happening in the world can be a catalyst for a person becoming historically famous. In turn, I want students to connect their chosen historical figures to events happening during the time of world exploration.

Goal Two: Analyzing the Causes and Effects of a Historical Figures' Actions

My second curricular goal is for students to learn how to analyze the impact of their chosen historical figures' actions during the time of world exploration. To analyze historical figures, students conduct ample amounts of research with primary and secondary sources from that era. Throughout their research, students determine how their historical figure changed history. Students analyze several sources with explicit teacher modeling, questioning, and graphic organizers that promote historical thinking skills. Not only do I want students to analyze their historical figures' actions but also to understand the causes and effects of their actions. Through this process, students take a stance about their historical figure's' actions and how those actions changed history.

Goal Three: Applying Historical Figure's Actions to the World Today

The third goal of this curriculum focuses on helping students apply their historical figures' actions to their lives and the world today. The subject of history can seem boring and unrelated to students' lives in the 21st Century. However, when students apply historical events to their own lives, it becomes relevant, interesting and exciting. My goal is for students to apply their historical figures' actions to the world today as well as to their lives by participating in a Columbian Exchange Activity.

Constructs

The educational constructs of motivation, historical thinking, collaboration and project-based learning are embedded in the *Becoming Historians* curriculum. As outlined in Chapter Four, these educational constructs are not completely incorporated in the existing state-adopted curricula. More importantly, motivation, historical thinking,

collaboration and project-based learning are essential parts of student learning, and essential to the integration of social studies and language arts.

Motivation

Motivation is incorporated into my curriculum three ways: creating a risk-free and tolerant environment, providing student choice, and engaging activities based on inquiry. First, my classroom is built on working together as a community. I have had my students for the last two years (fourth grade and fifth grade) and we have community circle and class meetings every week to build a community of learners. The provision of a safe environment in which all students are accepted and able to take risks was already in place when this project was implemented. To continue providing a risk-free and tolerant classroom throughout this project, the class continually revisits expectations for group and work time.

Deci (1996) states that giving people choice can intrinsically motivate people, and the more motivated people are, the more engaged they are to complete their work. It was important to integrate motivation in my curriculum by giving my students choices. In my project students choose their research topics, their partners, and their design for the final poster project.

The third way I integrated motivation in my curriculum was to provide engaging activities based on inquiry. Rather than telling my students who their chosen historical figures were and why they were famous, students had to research them and formulate their own opinions about their historical actions.

Historical Thinking

Historical thinking is the ability to connect, analyze, and apply historical concepts in order to formulate one's own opinion about a historical concept (Wineburg, 1991). Students use historical thinking to formulate their own opinions about history based on evidence from primary and secondary sources. Teaching students how to make informed decisions when presented with evidence fosters thinking skills that help them become responsible citizens. The goals of the curriculum are for students to historically think by connecting, analyzing and applying their historical figures' actions in the world exploration time period to the world today.

Throughout the curriculum, students research primary and secondary sources related to their historical figure. Based on their research, students connect their historical figure with events during world exploration, analyze the cause and effect of their historical figures' actions in world exploration, and apply their knowledge by thinking about the lasting effects of their historical person on the world and their lives. Then students formulate their own opinions about why their historical figure is important in history. Therefore, students are doing the work of historians by learning how to think historically.

Collaboration

Becoming Historians includes many elements of collaboration, such as clear expectations for partner and group work, an inquiry-based project, teacher modeling of collaboration, and student choice. The students collaborate on an inquiry-based research

project about a historical figure that lived during the world exploration era. In addition, students collaborate to write about their historical figure, collaborate about how to present their findings on a poster board, and collaborate in several class activities about world exploration, by, for example, creating a Historical Timeline and in the Country and Map and Columbian Exchange activities (see Appendix). Throughout the curriculum, I model how to collaborate by working with the class on my own research of a historical figure. Students are provided several opportunities for collaborative choice, such as whom to research, whom to work with, and what to work on during curricular activities. All of these teaching strategies demonstrate how the curriculum incorporates collaboration and helps students reach their learning potential by learning from each other (Bayer, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978).

Project-Based Learning

Thomas (2000) defines project-based learning as being centered on a project, focused around a question, driven by students and based in investigation. *Becoming Historians* is centered on a research project based on world exploration, of which the other activities are designed to enhance. The research project is an inquiry focused on a major theme in social studies: “What were the causes and effects of world exploration?” The curriculum is student-centered in that the students are investigating and using inquiry to determine why their historical figure is important in history and then formulate their own opinions about their historical figure based on their research. Therefore, the curriculum is also student-driven in that students are not being told the answer to the central research question or why their historical figure is important in history. The

students are instead discovering the information themselves. *Becoming Historians* is grounded in project-based learning because the curriculum incorporates a core project, a central research question, and student investigation.

Curricular Activities

Becoming Historians consists of student pairs researching, reading, and writing about a historical figure of their choice and culminates in a collaborative poster project. The curriculum design teaches students to read, write and think as historians since the tasks are authentic to the disciplines of social studies and language arts. The historical thinking skills *Becoming Historians* teaches students are the same set of skills that responsible citizens use daily in order to make informed decisions about their life and society at large.

The focus at the beginning of the curriculum is to gain background knowledge about exploration before the students start focusing on the researching and writing processes. The teacher begins by holding a whole class discussion about the central research question on the age of exploration. The question in this case is, “What were the causes and results of world exploration?” The entire project revolves around students answering the research question in several ways. To explore the question and gain background knowledge about exploration, the teacher provides multiple shared readings and PowerPoint lessons on the topic of exploration.

After the initial lessons, students begin the first activity of the curriculum, which is an analysis of an historical figure. Students choose partners and a historical figure to research such as Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, Vasco Da Gama or Queen Isabella. Student

pairs then work on analyzing the causes and effects of the historical figure's actions during the time of world exploration. Students research why their historical figure is important in history by collaboratively working together in order to learn how to read and research historical sources. Throughout the researching process, students learn different ways writers organize their research notes. Students begin to fill out a Writing Brainstorm Tree Map (see Appendix) that contains several different branches: causes of their historical figure's ability to change history, results of the historical figure's actions on history, what was happening during the time their historical figure lived and the lasting effects of their historical figure's actions. At this time, students begin to fill out the first two branches of their writing tree map, that is, the causes and effects of their explorer's actions.

The second curriculum activity is a historical timeline. For this activity, students work in groups, jigsaw the world exploration chapters in their social studies textbook, and present the information from their chapter in a timeline form to the class. To conduct the jigsaw activity, groups choose the chapter they want to read, read the information as a group, create a poster about the main points of the reading, and present their information to the class. Students begin to fill out another part of their writing brainstorm, which is, what was happening during the time of their historical figure during the world exploration time period.

The third curriculum activity is called Countries Exploration and can be implemented towards the end of students' historical-figure research. For the Countries Exploration, students inquire collaboratively in groups about the European country

associated with their historical figure to analyze why the country promoted world exploration. Students then add more to their writing brainstorm to help connect their historical figure to the historical time period.

For the fourth curriculum activity, the class collaboratively works in groups to conduct a Columbian Exchange activity. The Columbian Exchange is a term that explains the trading of goods from Europe to the New World and from the New World to Europe. During the Columbian Exchange activity, students analyze several pictures about the Columbian Exchange and generalize the lasting effects of world exploration. After this activity, students add to the section of their writing brainstorm that addresses the lasting effects of their historical person on history.

The final curriculum activity is a research report and poster board. Based on their research and class activities, students have a completed writing brainstorm. Students then write a thesis about their opinion on the ways in which their historical figure's actions changed or influenced history. The students first create a rough draft of their research report, revise their writing for topic and concluding sentences, peer edit their work and publish their findings. Students construct a poster to display their research report and support their findings with primary sources. The students then present their posters to the entire school and enter them into a poster contest, which is judged at the district and county levels. To end the unit, the class generalizes the overall causes and effects of world exploration and then writes an essay about the central research question: What were the causes and effects of world exploration?

Conclusion

Becoming Historians is designed to impact students' historical thinking skills (connecting, analyzing and applying) through a project-based learning curriculum. Table 2 gives a brief overview of the curriculum: the goals, constructs, and activities.

Table 2: Implementation Overview

Three Research Goals	Educational Constructs	Activities
Goal One: Students connect their historical figure to historical events	Motivation Historical Thinking Collaboration Project-Based Learning	Timeline Activity Countries Exploration Activity Research Report and Poster Board
Goal Two: Students analyze cause and effects of historical figure's actions	Motivation Historical Thinking Collaboration Project-Based Learning	Analysis of Historical Figure Research Report and Poster Board
Goal Three: Students apply historical figure's actions to the world today and their lives	Motivation Historical Thinking Collaboration Project-Based Learning	Countries Exploration Activity Columbian Exchange Activity Research Report and Poster Board

The immediate goal of *Becoming Historians* is for students to “become historians,” as well as better readers and writers by enhancing their historical thinking

skills. The ultimate goal of *Becoming Historians* is for students to be able to transfer these historical thinking skills into the larger context of becoming responsible citizens.

Implementation of Becoming Historians

Becoming Historians was conceived and designed in response to a district, county, state and national competition called History Day. This nationally funded competition occurs every year and centers on a theme that students use to guide their historical research. The year this curriculum was implemented, students were required to research the actions and legacies of a historical person who changed history. There are many rules and regulations to participate in this competition; for example, only fifth graders are allowed to enter the poster category. This means that fifth grade students must enter a 30x40 inch poster including student-written text and primary sources that support their research and the competition's theme. The *Becoming Historians* curricular project was based on the History Day competition, and the activities throughout the curriculum enhanced the poster project. For example, my students followed the rules and regulations of the competition, but in addition, I created an integrated curriculum to match fifth grade social studies and language art standards. The overall objective of the curriculum was for students to become historians, readers and writers by learning historical thinking skills, which students can transfer to become responsible citizens.

Environment

The elementary school in which *Becoming Historians* was implemented is located in an urban area. Students at Junior Elementary School (pseudonym) are ethnically diverse and come from low-income families. More than 85% of my students speak a language other than English. The classroom includes a variety of ethnicities such as Latino, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Burmese, Somali, African American and Caucasian.

However, the majority of students are Latino. The classroom consists of 33 students ages 10 and 11, in a fifth grade multiple subject, Sheltered English Instruction classroom. Students range from beginners to advanced English speakers based on the California English Language Development Test (California Department of Education, 2008) and there are five students who receive GATE (Gifted And Talented Education) instruction as well.

There are several classroom factors that influenced instructional strategies for this project. One factor is students come from around the world and have little or no knowledge about United States history. In addition, students range in their language acquisition from beginning to advanced speakers of English. To meet these challenges, it was imperative to immerse the students in the historical world exploration era in order for them to have background knowledge of their historical figure during that time period. Before implementing this curriculum, students attended a fieldtrip to a maritime museum in order to visualize the caravels (explorer ships) and understand life during that era. Students needed to gain a wealth of background knowledge about the exploration time period before they started to research their own historical figure during that era.

Another factor that influenced my instructional strategies was the wide range of reading and writing abilities of my students. For example, 50% of my students read below grade level, and the majority of reading materials to meet the California History-Social Studies Standards are at a fifth grade reading level or above. Therefore, students worked together to comprehend multiple historical texts. In addition, resources to

support each group were found at the school library and district instructional media center.

Students also ranged in their writing abilities, from beginning to advanced writing composition. Therefore, another scaffold used in *Becoming Historians* is varying writing instruction with graphic organizers and small group instruction.

Finally, students were supported through the classroom environment. The classroom organization supports a community of learners. The classroom consists of five table groups, which foster student interaction and peer support. Creating a supportive classroom environment and addressing the variety of language and academic skills in the classroom are essential before implementing a new curriculum.

Overview of Implementation

This curriculum was implemented from November of 2008 to February of 2009. During these months, students were immersed in the social studies topic of world exploration as well as in writing a research report. Both of these concepts contain standards from the fifth grade California History-Social Studies Content Standards and California English-Language Arts Content Standards and were integrated into a comprehensive unit. The overarching California History-Social Studies Standard that was the focus of this curriculum asks for students to trace the routes of early explorers and describe the early explorations of the Americas (California Department of Education, 1998, Standard 5.2). In addition, the curriculum addresses the following California History-Social Studies Standards:

- Describe the entrepreneurial characteristics of early explorers and the

technological developments that made sea exploration by latitude and longitude possible (California History-Social Studies Standard 5.21).

- Explain the aims, obstacles, and accomplishments of the explorers, sponsors, and leaders of key European expeditions as well as the reasons Europeans chose to explore and colonize the world (California History-Social Studies Standard 5.22).
- Trace the routes of the major land explorers of the United States, the distances traveled by explorers, and the Atlantic trade routes that linked Africa, the West Indies, the British colonies, and Europe (California History-Social Studies Standard 5.23).
- Locate on maps of North and South America land claimed by Spain, France, England, Portugal, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Russia (California History-Social Studies Standard 5.24).
- Describe the competition among the English, French, Spanish, Dutch, and Indian nations for control of North America (California History-Social Studies Standard 5.31).

The overarching California English-Language Arts Content Standard for this curriculum focuses on students learning how to read non-fiction texts (California Department of Education, 1997, Standard 2.0). Within this standard, students learn how to analyze non-fiction pieces of text by examining text features, main ideas and drawing inferences about text. In addition, students learn how to support their inferences with

evidence from the text. The California English-Language Arts Reading Comprehension Standards addressed in this curriculum were:

- Understand how text features make information accessible and usable (California English-Language Arts Reading Comprehension Standards 2.1).
- Discern main ideas and concepts presented in texts, identifying and assessing evidence that supports those ideas (California English-Language Arts Reading Comprehension Standards 2.3).
- Draw inferences, conclusions, or generalizations about text and support them with textual evidence and prior knowledge (California English-Language Arts Reading Comprehension Standards 2.4).
- Distinguish facts, supported inferences, and opinions in text (California English-Language Arts Reading Comprehension Standards 2.5).

The overarching California English-Language Arts Writing Standard focuses on students learning how to create multiple-paragraph expository compositions (California Department of Education, 1997 Standard 1.0). Within this standard, students learn how to establish a topic, provide details and transitional expressions that link one paragraph to another and offer a concluding paragraph that summarizes important ideas and details (California English-Language Arts Organization and Focus Standard 1.2). Several other writing and research standards from the California English-Language Arts Standards are also a part of the *Becoming Historians!* curriculum. Accordingly, students are asked to -

- Write research reports about important ideas by using the following guidelines:
frame questions that direct the investigation, establish a controlling idea or topic,

and develop the topic with simple facts, details, examples, and explanations (California English-Language Arts Writing Applications Standard 2.3).

- Follow the writing process to edit and revise manuscripts to improve the meaning and focus of writing by adding, deleting, consolidating, clarifying, and rearranging words and sentences (California English-Language Arts Evaluation and Revising Standard 1.6).
- Use organizational features of printed text to locate relevant information and create simple documents by using electronic media and employing organizational features (California English-Language Arts Research and Technology Standards 1.3 and 1.4).

The curriculum was based on California fifth grade content standards in social studies, reading and writing, all of which my students worked towards mastery throughout *Becoming Historians*.

Teaching and Learning Prior to Implementation

At the outset of the academic year, students in my class created PowerPoint presentations about various Native American tribes around the United States. This experience taught students about the many different peoples living in America before explorers came to the New World. In addition, the Native American project gave them an understanding of the different tribes and cultures in the New World. This was an important beginning to understand world exploration because of the interaction between the Native and European cultures. However, students still needed additional background knowledge about world exploration before they could begin the current curriculum.

Thus, sequenced knowledge building lessons were taught for about a week before the actual curriculum began.

To begin building background knowledge about world exploration, the social studies research question, “What were the causes and results of world exploration?” was introduced. A large graphic organizer chart guided the discussion (see Appendix). Students then discussed their current ideas about the research question; however, many students had no idea that, why, or how world exploration was started. Therefore, a PowerPoint presentation (see Appendix) was shown, which the students read together in order to find the main ideas about the various causes of world exploration. Within this presentation, students were able to see the various technological advances that were a major cause for the beginning of world exploration. Based on the PowerPoint, students participate in a Shared Reading in which the teacher and students work together to comprehend a text that provides a brief description of New Technology (Harcourt Textbook, 2007, p. 117) (see Appendix). The Shared Reading focused on text features because the text included illustrations of the different technological tools used by explorers. Students then reproduced several technological tools that they read about, such as a caravel ship and astrolabe (see Appendix). This helped students realize how important these tools were in order for world exploration to occur. In addition, the class took a fieldtrip to a local maritime museum (see Appendix) to experience first hand explorer ships and an explorer’s life on the high seas. After the discussions, PowerPoint presentation, technology reading, technology recreations and maritime museum fieldtrip,

students had built up background knowledge and were ready to start their research on a historical figure during the world exploration time period.

Implementation

Activity One: Analysis of a Historical Figure

Students chose a famous historical figure during the exploration era from a designated list to research for approximately six weeks, working for thirty minutes four times a week. The problem was that students displayed little knowledge of who the famous historical figures were and which historical figure to research. Therefore, during the first week, I implemented small groups instruction with a variety of different books about historical figures from the exploration era for students to skim and pick a historical figure based on their interest. At the same time, students were able to pick a partner with whom they wanted to research. Students also had a choice of working alone because students are always provided the choice for their working preference. Students were given clear expectations and several guidelines about choosing a partner, such as choosing someone they can work well with and someone that contributes to their learning. After students chose their historical figures and partners, they were ready to start researching.

For the next two weeks, students were instructed in small groups in order to learn how to research and read non-fiction texts. I modeled how to research by doing my own research project on Christopher Columbus and showed them how to organize their notes in a journal that we called our “History Day Journal.” The students also learned how to cite sources at the top of their journal page, organize their notes based on chapter titles

book from our school library. Therefore, students had four sources but needed more in order to thoroughly analyze their historical figure.

Students continued to work in small groups learning how to conduct research on the internet to find more secondary sources about their historical figure. Also, students learned how to determine the main idea of various Internet sources. Students received a list of different websites that had reliable information about historical figures during the world exploration time period, which they were encouraged to use for research (see Appendix). For example, students used UnitedStreaming.com to find historical movies about their historical figures. Students were able to find many more secondary sources on the Internet. Throughout this time, students were taught how to cite websites as I continued to model how to organize their notes from websites. Students learned how to conduct research through my modeling of taking notes, citing sources and finding Internet sources.

We followed with a whole class discussion on the difference between primary and secondary sources. The students had little idea about the difference or even that there was even a difference between primary and secondary sources. I described the difference by using an analogy of a bottle of water and explaining that the water did not start out in a bottle but started out in a stream and went through several stages before it was ready to drink. In the same way, primary sources are where the information began while secondary sources are products of the original sources. The class then made a graphic organizer illustrating the different types of primary sources such as pictures, quotes, diaries, and letters.

Students now knew what primary sources were but were still confused about how to find them or what to do with them once they were found. Therefore, throughout the third week, students participated in more small group instruction to learn how to find primary sources. In the small groups, I modeled how I found two primary sources about Christopher Columbus and taught students some non-fiction reading strategies on how to analyze them.

More specifically, students learned how to read and analyze primary sources to make inferences, generalizations and conclusions about their historical figure. By using the crest of Christopher Columbus, I modeled how to fill out the Source Analysis Form (see Appendix) that would help students analyze a primary source (adapted from Wineburg, 1991). The Source Analysis Form asked several questions about the source being analyzed. These questions were:

- What is the style of the document?
- What is the point of view of the document?
- What is the main idea of the document?
- What is the impact of the document?
- What questions are raised by the document?
- What are other documents worth finding?
- How does this source support how the person changed history?

I modeled how to use the Source Analysis Form a second time with a diary of Christopher Columbus. Students then researched and analyzed primary sources during their work time as I continued to meet with struggling groups and support them on

analyzing primary sources. The entire process of researching for ten primary and ten secondary sources took about six weeks. Through this process, students learned how to research for secondary and primary sources, determine the main idea of their sources, organize their notes and analyze primary sources.

Once students completed their History Day Journal with all of their notes, students organized their notes into a pre-made tree map brainstorm (see Appendix) for their final research project. The notes were organized into five categories: thesis, what was happening in the world during world exploration, the causes which allowed their historical figure to change history, the effects of their historical figure changing history, and the lasting effects of their historical figure's actions. After they organized their notes, students noticed they did not have information about what was happening during the time of world exploration nor lasting effects of how their historical figure's actions changed history. The class was reassured that we would be participating in more activities to help them fill in the other branches of their brainstorm tree map before they started to write their research reports. The students were excited to hear this and were ready to learn more about the world exploration time period.

Modifications for Activity One.

The students knew exactly what their historical figure did in history; however, they had a difficult time using their notes to find the causes and effects of their historical figure's actions. Therefore, I consulted with each pair of research partners to go through their notes and highlight causes and results of their historical figure's actions. Although students were challenged as they moved from one inquiry to the next, I think it was

educational for the students to learn all aspects of their historical figure before sifting through to find the causes and effects of the historical figure's actions. Students then wrote their information on the brainstorm tree map. Students were now ready to move on to the next activity: Historical Timeline.

Activity Two: Historical Timeline

Students needed to determine what was happening in history during the time of their historical figure and to explore how the state of the world can affect people's actions. Over two days, during the classes' 45-minute social studies instruction time, I led a jigsaw activity of the Social Studies Unit on World Exploration in the *Harcourt: Reflections Textbook* (2007). The jigsaw activity is one in which groups choose a chapter they want to read (from the assigned chapter readings), read the information as a group, create a poster about the main points of the reading, and present their information to the rest of the class. The objective of the activity was for groups to create a class timeline of world exploration. Each table group worked with a different chapter in the unit, such as Asia During World Exploration, African Trade Routes, Europe (Trade and Religion) and Europe (Rebirth in Europe). The first day, groups collaboratively read the lesson, determined the main events in the lesson and made a poster with the timeline of those events (see Appendix). I circulated around the room to guide each group's decisions about the main idea of the text. In addition, I focused students' attention to the text features in the readings to help them determine the main idea of the text. During the next day, the students presented their timeline poster to the rest of the class. At this time, I

asked students attention to infer and draw conclusions about how certain events during the time period of world exploration directly affected their explorer's actions.

Modifications for Activity Two.

During one presentation, a group stated that Marco Polo invented the printing press. This was inaccurate, however, it was a perfect opportunity to discuss historical accuracy. I asked the class if they knew what historical accuracy means and most students looked confused but one of my students said, "It is something to do with history." We determined that historical accuracy means that the information reported happened in history based on evidence from their sources. In other words, students cannot make up facts but rather need to determine historical truths based on their research. I taped up the timeline posters in the front of the room for students to use to fill out their writing brainstorm tree map section of what was happening in the world during their historical figure's life.

With the groups' timelines taped up in the front of the classroom, students worked with their partners to make connections with the time period and their historical figure. However, some of the groups started to pick events that did not directly connect with their historical figure. For example, the group researching King Henry VIII wanted to show how King Henry changed history by breaking away from the Catholic Church and starting the Church of England. Thus, the historical events should have surrounded England's dependence on the Catholic Church and England's history with religion. However, the group focused on Prince Henry the Navigator starting a navigation school and new technology to help improve exploring. Both of these events happened during

this time period but they were not strong connections to what their historical person did in history. Therefore, I decided I needed to implement a whole group discussion with my class about the historical events they should pick that would have a strong connection to their historical figures' life.

I modeled how to connect Christopher Columbus with different events during the time period, such as Henry the Navigator, and added it to my brainstorm chart. Students then started to fill out their brainstorm tree map section which asked, "What was happening during the time of your historical figure?" The brainstorm tree map was quickly getting organized but I still felt students were a bit confused on how to connect their historical figure to what was happening in the world because they were not connecting their historical figure with the correct time period events. Thus, added another activity that would aid students in connecting their historical figure with world exploration.

Activity Three: Countries Exploration

There were two purposes for the Countries Exploration Activity. One purpose was to scaffold student understanding of how to connect their historical figure's actions to the time period. The second purpose was to provide possible lasting effects of world exploration, which students could use to discuss the lasting effects of their historical figure's actions. In other words, this activity would be a scaffold for students to apply their historical figure to the world today and/or their lives.

To begin the activity during the first social studies period, students who researched an explorer mapped their routes using a world map (see Appendix). Students

who did not have an explorer for their historical figure, such as King Henry the Eighth, were able to choose the group that they worked with during the route mapping.

Afterwards, students were grouped based on their historical figure's country. For example, the students who researched Prince Henry the Navigator and Vasco Da Gama were in a group together since their historical figures were from Portugal.

The "country groups" completed two tasks. First, the groups received another world map in which they traced all of the explorer's routes from their country and drew them on the map. The second objective was for students to complete a World Map Graphic Organizer (see Appendix) about their country which synthesized all of their individual research about their explorers such as their country, ruler, explorer, explorer routes, what the explorer was after and what the explorer actually found

In addition, the students wrote a paragraph compiling the information from their chart. I gave them sentence starters, the beginning of sentences, to aid in this process. Once the groups finished their map and their graphic organizer to help write a paragraph, the group then glued the map and paragraph on a poster.

During the next social studies class time, groups presented their country to the rest of the class, an example of which is shown in Figure 2.

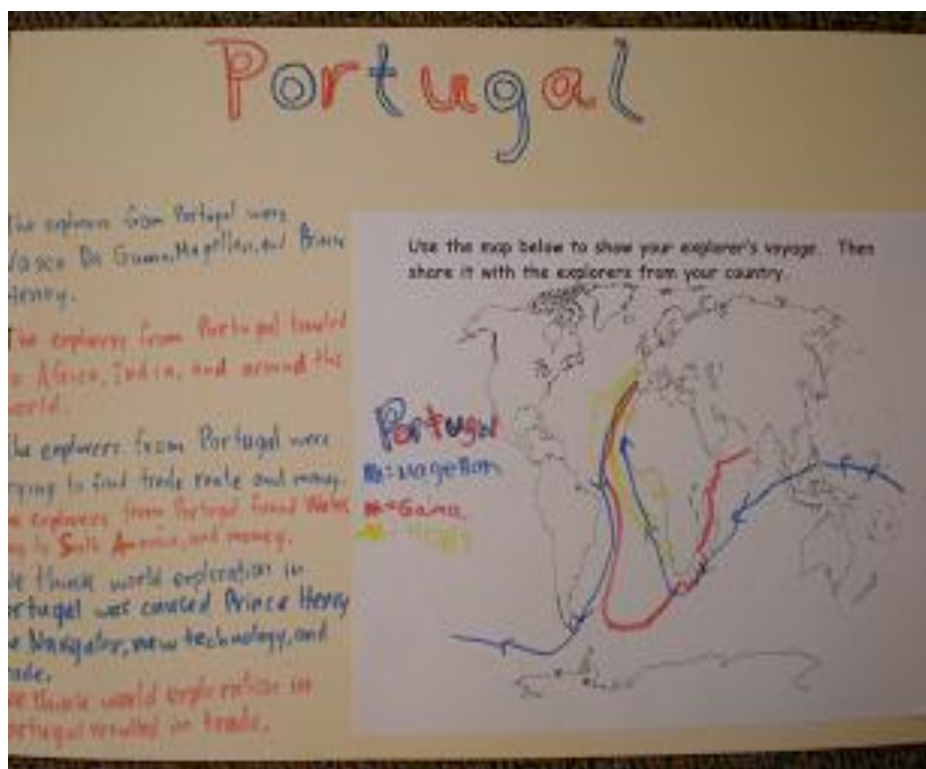


Figure 2: Country Poster for Portugal

After the presentations, the class and I compiled a larger world map that showed the areas that each country focused on during world exploration and discussed the country paragraphs with the class in order to make more connections with the historical time period and the historical figures. Some of my students made great connections with history after this discussion such as, “I didn’t realize so many countries were exploring” and “Wow! Countries explored different places” and “If it weren’t for the kings and queens, no one would have been exploring.” These comments went right into their graphic organizer of what was happening in the world during the time of exploration and helped students make strong connections to history.

There was only one more Brainstorm Tree Map Branch to fill out before students would start drafting their research reports: the lasting effects of their historical figures' actions. This activity scaffolded students' application of their historical figure to the world today and to their lives. The country paragraphs discussed who the explorers were, where the explorers traveled, what they wanted to find, what they actually found, and generalizations about the causes and effects of world exploration from the country. This last section helped the students think about lasting effects because students had to think about what were the results of world exploration in general. Some of the groups wrote that the countries traded, settled and mapped the New World. From these ideas, students discussed the lasting effects of their historical figure's actions such as world trade, colonization and understanding new cultures. These ideas were added to the student's brainstorm tree map under lasting effects.

Modifications in Activity Three.

I felt that after doing the Countries Exploration activity, students would have a good grasp on the lasting effects on the world of their historical figure's actions. Students did understand that there were some lasting effects of world exploration but again students did not apply those lasting effects directly to the actions of their historical figure. I had to have several conferences with various groups about the lasting effects of their historical figure's actions and its application to the world today. I realized that students also needed a little more background knowledge about applying their historical figure to the world today and/or their lives, which was embedded in my next activity, The Columbian Exchange.

Activity Four: Columbian Exchange Activity

The final activity was implemented in order to help students write their research report. The purpose of the Columbian Exchange Activity was to describe how the world changed due to world exploration and provided students a chance to think about the lasting effects of their historical figure's actions. To begin the activity, students were at their table groups. I passed out six different pictures of the Columbian Exchange to each group, such as a picture of a diseased body, a map of the exchanged goods, and a diary from a sailor about the Columbian Exchange (see Appendix). Every student in the group received a different Columbian Exchange picture and was directed to think about its meaning for about five minutes. Then students were asked to write down their initial thoughts about their picture on the construction paper their table group received. Afterwards, students moved into different groups based on those who had similar pictures. For example, if I received a picture of a diseased body in my group, I would write down my initial thoughts at my table group then move into a new group with students who had the same diseased body picture.

In the new groups, students discussed what their picture was about and why it was important. The students were becoming experts on their picture to share with their original table group. Students then went back to their original group and explained what they now thought their picture was about and wrote their new understandings underneath their initial response on their group construction paper. For example, one student originally wrote that her picture was about "Christopher Columbus giving things to Indians and traded with them." After the discussion, she became an expert for her picture

and added more to her original statement. The girl wrote, “Christopher Columbus traded with the Indians because they did not have weapons of iron.”

As a class, we discussed the overall importance of the pictures and how the pictures related to world exploration. Some student comments were, “New things spread around from east to west/west to east” and “Columbian Exchange brought horses to Americas. Columbian Exchange brought American plants to Europe.” These comments helped move our discussion to lasting effects of their historical figure’s actions such as today’s American diversity or how diverse foods became identified with a particular country. Students then used these ideas to fill in their final branch of the graphic organizer. Figure 3 is one student’s completed tree map brainstorm. Now students were ready to write their research reports.

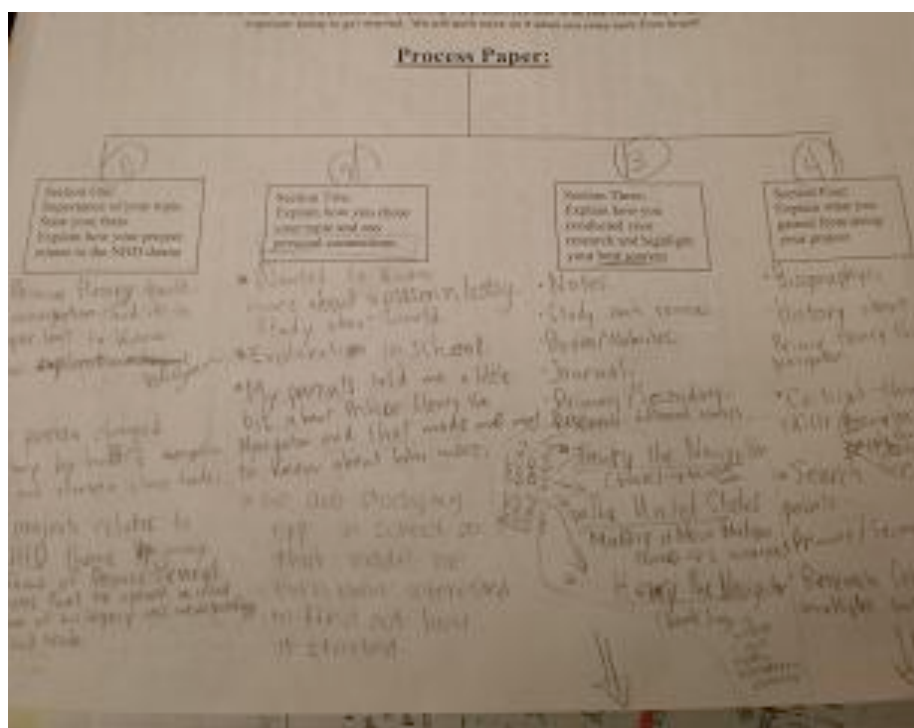


Figure 3: Research Report Graphic Organizer

Modifications in Activity Four.

I noticed that students looked at the Columbian Exchange pictures once and understood the meaning of the pictures quickly. The students did not need extra time to become an expert or to rewrite their new understandings because a lot of the students had nothing new to write about. For example, one student, initially responded, “Columbus brought plants back home like chilies, tomatoes and corn. They also brought horses and wheat (and) the Native got sick.” This was the essence of the picture, to see the exchange taking place between the cultures, so the students had nothing more to add. While I was originally hoping that I would see a lot of growth in their learning between their initial response and their revised response, it was very minimal. However, I think the pictures helped the students visualize what the Columbian Exchange was and how it affects our lives today based on our class discussion at the end of the activity.

Activity Five: Research Report and Poster Board

Throughout the researching and social studies activities, student groups were working on writing by collecting their research, that is, collecting ideas and content for their research report writing and organizing it in a tree map brainstorm. The writing process continued when I conducted a whole class discussion about what needed to be included in the research report. As a class, we created a rubric to set up clear expectations for their research report writing. At this time the rubric stated that there needed to be a paragraph on each of the tree map branches such as a paragraph on connecting their historical figure to the time period, the causes which allowed their

historical figure to influence events, the result of their historical figure and the lasting effects of their historical figure. There was only one part of the brainstorm that was not yet discussed: the thesis.

I modeled writing the thesis paragraph because my students needed to learn how to write about their historical figure's actions that changed history since this was the basis of their research report. I modeled writing a thesis paragraph based on my Christopher Columbus research. I showed my students how to start with an enticing sentence or question, state what their person did to change history, the effects of their historical figure and then quickly discuss the lasting effects of their person's actions on the world. After I modeled, students worked together to write their thesis paragraphs. We revisited the rubric and wrote that students needed to have a thesis in their final research report.

Students were now ready to continue the writing process and write the first draft of their research report based on their opinion on what their historical figure did to change history, the causes and effects of the action, what was happening in the world exploration time period that relates to their historical figure's actions, and lasting effects of their historical figure's actions on the world today. I modeled writing the rest of the research report based on my research of Christopher Columbus.

After students drafted their research report, students worked on revising their research report by focusing on topic sentences, concluding sentences and appositives. For each of these revisions, I conducted a focused writing mini-lesson, modeled how to revise my paper, provided student work time and then added the writing focus to our class research report rubric (see Appendix). For example, the first mini-lesson's focus

was on topic sentences, so I discussed what topic sentences were and showed some examples of them. Then I modeled how to add them to my research report and gave students time to work on their own revisions on topic sentences. At the end of the lesson, we added topic sentences to our research report rubric. To check their revisions on topic sentences and concluding sentences, students filled out a writing outline (see Appendix) that also made them work on having strong supporting details.

Student groups now had a revised research report that was ready for peer editing. Students participated in an activity called Read Around Groups (RAG) to peer edit. During RAG every group read every group's research reports and determined what was needed to add or take out to make it align with the class rubric. Afterwards, groups were given back their research reports and were able to revise them again. Then the groups typed new draft of their research report to attach to their poster boards.

Students worked on their poster boards during the last week of the curriculum. To present their research reports, students followed the poster guidelines (see Appendix) I created to make a visually appealing 30"x 40" poster that showcased their findings with additional support from primary sources. Students then needed to print out all of their primary sources that they had recently found which supported their opinion about their historical figure's actions on history. In addition, students typed up captions for each of their primary sources to explain why the primary source was important to their historical figure. Finally, students added a timeline of their historical figure, based on their research, to their poster.

During the last week of the curriculum, students also consulted with an art professor from a local college to discuss their color palette and visual graphic that portrayed their thesis statement. They also worked with other art scholars from a local university for two weeks to make their poster visually appealing, as shown in Figure 4. One student commented, “The History Board was like an art project and was exciting.”



Figure 4: Poster Board

The students presented their poster boards to the entire school at a History Day Fair. Each grade level came to see the students’ poster boards and discuss with them what they researched. One of my students exclaimed, “On History Day Fair, all the little kids ask you for help. I liked to present my board!!” I created a scavenger hunt for the other grade levels to use to help them find how various historical figures changed history (see Appendix). Another student mentioned, “I also think that the History Fair was a great idea because the smaller kids will get to learn new things.” Afterwards, the

students and I reviewed everything that they learned about world exploration for the last few months in a class discussion. Then students took an essay test answering the overall research question about world exploration: What were the causes and effects of world exploration?

At the end of the project, judges from our local school district judged the posters and advanced all of the students to the county level competition. Each student received a ribbon and certificate of achievement. To compete at the county level, students wrote an additional essay that discussed their topic and thesis, why they choose their topic, how they researched, and what they learned. In addition, students wrote an annotated bibliography on all of their primary and secondary sources. The students were ecstatic to move onto the county level. When I explained to the students that the judges advanced every one of them to the county level competition, one student commented, “They chose all of us! Wow! We must have done really good research!” Three of the groups from the class won awards at the county level for their History Day Posters.

Conclusion of Implementation

Overall, *Becoming Historians* was implemented successfully for many reasons based on observations and collected data that will be discussed in further detail in the next chapter. First, the students were thinking like historians by analyzing primary and secondary sources to formulate their own opinion by connecting, analyzing and applying their historical figure’s actions to the world exploration time period and the world today. Second, students were passionate and motivated to work on their research. Third, students worked efficiently and effectively during work time in the classroom. Fourth,

students learned how to make their poster visually appealing from the art scholars and enjoyed the creative process. Finally, students enjoyed working with their partners and learning about other historical figures during the small group instruction time.

The curriculum encompassed approximately eight weeks of instruction, centered on World Exploration, so all other social studies units were put on hold during that time. Therefore, at the end of the year, students were taught shorter units on the Thirteen Colonies and the American Revolution. In addition, the class did not learn about Westward Expansion at all due to time constraints.

Overall, *Becoming Historians* was successfully implemented with these students based on several pieces of data. Students met the goals of the curriculum and even showed improvement in motivation, engagement and collaboration through the social studies curriculum. These findings will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Evaluation of Becoming Historians

The overall goal for *Becoming Historians: A Project-Based Learning Curriculum* was to help my students learn how to think like historians. The specific curriculum goals were for the students to connect, analyze and apply their historical knowledge about a historical figure's actions to the world exploration era and the world today. To evaluate the effectiveness and success of the curriculum *Becoming Historians*, I collected and analyzed five principal pieces of data, which were the students' final research reports, poster boards, world exploration essays, observations and field notes. There was a mixture of collaborative and individual data among the data collected. The research paper and poster board were collaborative projects. The world exploration essay was an individual in-class assignment and the observations and field notes were teacher recorded. With these pieces of data, I examined the findings and assessed the curriculum goals of connecting, analyzing, and applying. This chapter will be organized by data collection strategies, examining the data, findings, summary and discussion, unexpected findings and educational constructs.

Data Collection Strategies

Research Report

The research report was a final product based on notes about the students' chosen historical figures recorded over several weeks. The research notes were organized into a tree-map brainstorm with five branches that became five paragraphs in their final research report. The students then drafted and revised their report several times. Throughout this process, I modeled researching, brainstorming, drafting, revising and

publishing my own research about Christopher Columbus. The report was written collaboratively with student partners.

The final report was a five-paragraph essay with specific writing objectives for each paragraph. The first paragraph was a thesis paragraph, which described the historical figure and the students' stance on why their historical figure changed history. The next paragraph examined what was happening in the world during the time of their historical figure. The purpose for this paragraph was for students to connect their person to the world, which was the first goal of the curriculum. In the third paragraph, students were to write the causes and effects of their historical figure's actions in history. This paragraph relates to the second goal of the curriculum where students learn to analyze a historical figure by examining the cause and effect of the historical figure during the world exploration era. The final paragraph's purpose was for students to write about the lasting effects of their historical figure. This paragraph relates to the third goal of the curriculum, which was to apply their historical figure's actions during the world exploration era to the world today and/or their lives.

The reason I chose the research report as a data collection piece is because it was aligned with the three goals and the education constructs of my curriculum. The historical thinking goals provide the content of the research report because in it students make connections, perform analysis and apply their knowledge in their five-paragraph essays. The research report is also evidence of the education constructs in my curriculum, these being motivation, historical thinking, collaboration, and project-based learning. To promote motivation, students were able to choose their partner and their

historical figure to find information for their research report. In addition to writing the research report, students used historical thinking by connecting, analyzing, and applying their historical figure's actions. This research report was a collaborative piece of writing with their research partner. Finally, the research report made up the core of the project-based learning curriculum with the goal of learning how to be historians, readers and writers. The research report went through the writing process and therefore was revised several times before it became a published piece that was displayed on their final poster board.

Poster Board

The poster board is an extension of the research report that includes several primary sources and a timeline of their historical figure. Students were asked to publish their research findings in a research report that would eventually be presented on a poster board. Students' poster boards included their research report as well as primary and secondary sources with captions that further supported their research findings. The poster boards consisted of a research title, the research report's paragraphs, primary sources (for example, diaries, letters, songs, pictures, or artifacts), captions to describe their primary sources and a timeline. In addition, students had to make the poster board visually appealing to their audience by painting their boards, creating a background image depicting their historical figure, deciding on a color palate that matched, and displaying their items in a creative and logical way. The students had two weeks to complete their poster board presentation.

The poster board is another piece of evidence to determine the success of the curriculum goals: connecting, analyzing and applying their historical figure's actions to the world of exploration and the world today. The students were expected to use their primary sources on their poster board as support to provide evidence of their research report thesis. The students needed to have primary sources that demonstrated how their historical figure's actions connected to the world exploration time period and that also examined the causes and effects of their historical figure during world exploration. Primary sources were also needed in order to provide evidence of the lasting effects of their historical figure's actions and the world today or their life. For example, I researched Christopher Columbus and my thesis stated that he started the exchanging of goods from Europe to the New World (a lasting effect), so I would show this through a primary source about the Columbian Exchange. Underneath each of the primary sources, students were required to write a caption that described their reason for using the primary source and how it provided evidence for their thesis statement and research report.

The poster board can help determine the success of the *Becoming Historians* curriculum by examining the goals of the project and educational constructs of motivation, historical thinking, collaboration and project-based learning. The poster board was designed to motivate students because they were given choices on how to design their poster board. The poster board displays historical thinking because students were required to have primary sources with captions that provided evidence about their historical figure's actions in history. The poster board was intended to also promote collaboration among students collecting their primary sources, designing their board, and

completing their board. This collaboration extended to students' work with an art professor and art scholars who helped them make design decisions and their boards visually appealing. Project-based learning was accomplished because while the poster board was the final product made for the world exploration project, it was a result of an extensive core project, which spanned several weeks. Therefore, the poster board not only addresses the curriculum goals but also relates to the educational constructs of motivation, historical thinking, collaboration and project-based learning.

World Exploration Essay

Another type of data collected was the world exploration essay. The essay prompt was:

Write an essay below describing the causes and effects/result of world exploration. Use the shared readings, charts, maps, your research and activities to help answer the big idea question about world exploration. You might want to make a tree map to brainstorm your ideas before you begin.

The essay was given at the end of the curriculum as a final assessment of the social studies standards covered throughout the unit. This piece of data was written individually in class. The students had about an hour and thirty minutes to complete the essay assignment. Before the essay assignment, the class reviewed world exploration and created a brainstorm about how to develop their essay. However, the brainstorm was erased from the board and students had to write independently during the specified amount of time.

The world exploration essay's purpose is to examine whether students could independently address the goals and educational constructs of the curriculum. The essay

response required students to state the definition of world exploration and connect historical figures to the world exploration era. Connecting historical figures to the time period of world exploration was a goal in the curriculum and therefore addressed through this essay. In addition, the students were expected to analyze world exploration through the causes and results of it, which was another goal of the curriculum. Finally, the students were requested to apply their understanding of world exploration to the world today and their lives. Students applying world exploration to life today was the third goal of the curriculum.

The educational constructs were also addressed through the world exploration essay. Students were motivated to write since they were invested in the entire project about world exploration. Students were historically thinking by addressing the prompt of the essay. Collaboration happened prior to writing the essay when the class worked together to create a brainstorm tree map about how to address the essay prompt. In addition, PBL was addressed because this was the final assessment in the learning goals for the project driven curriculum. Therefore, I chose the world exploration essay because it addressed each of the curriculum goals and the educational constructs.

Examining the Data

The data were analyzed through a class summary to determine the curricular findings. To begin analyzing the data, I read each of the students' types of product data (research report, poster board, world exploration essay) while noting samples of student writing as evidence of the curriculum goals of connecting, analyzing and applying. Then I organized the evidence in a matrix in order to visually display it with student writing

samples based on the curriculum goals. Class patterns were determined by tallying how many students met the three curricular goals for each piece of data based on their writing. I then combined the tallies to determine class patterns. Based on the class patterns, I made a bar graph that displays the overall results of students meeting the curricular goals based on the compiled data from the three assessed projects. The bar graph, shown in Figure 5, shows that 88% of the students succeeded in connecting their historical figure's actions to the events in the time period, 92% of the students succeeded in analyzing the causes and effects of their historical figures' actions, and 67% of the students succeeded in applying the lasting effects of their historical figure's actions to the world today.

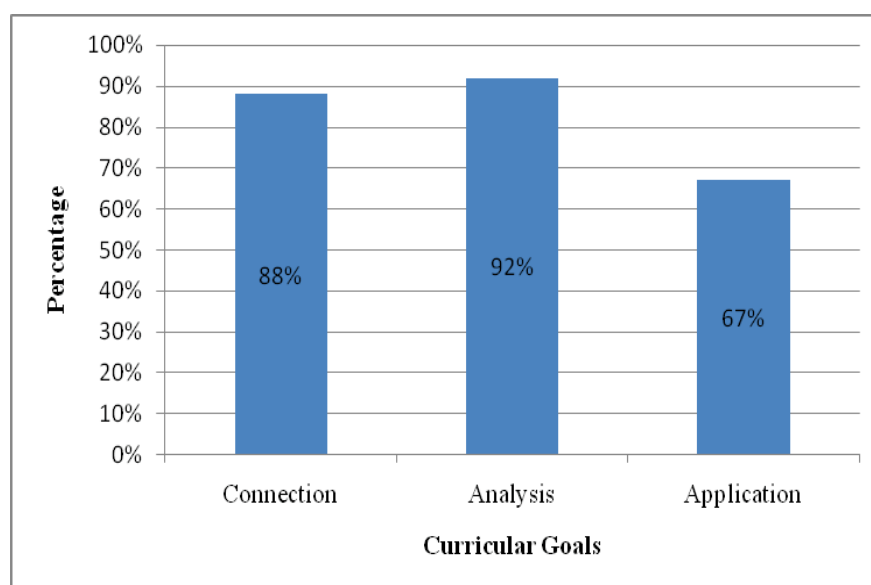


Figure 5: Overall Class Bar Graph

Another way I analyzed data was by creating three-point rubrics for each of the curricular goals and each piece of data in order to decipher a proficient (three points), basic (two points) and below basic (one point) data set. For example, I determined what

connection would consist of in a proficient, basic and below basic student work sample in the research report, poster board and world exploration essay. I used this scoring system mainly because, for each of my goals, I asked my students to produce three pieces of evidence to demonstrate their understanding of connecting, analyzing and applying. I then created a table to reduce the data and examine class patterns. Based on the students' writing from the collected data, the class bar graph and three point rubric analysis matrix, I determined class findings.

Based on the collected data, students accurately connected their historical figures to the world exploration era, students succeeded in analyzing the causes and effects of world exploration, students had difficulty applying historical ideas to the world and their life today, students were motivated and engaged to work on their research project, and students collaborated with their partners and classmates throughout the curriculum. These findings will be analyzed in depth throughout the discussion of findings in order to determine class patterns of performance as well as the possible reasons behind those patterns.

Findings

Finding 1: Students Accurately Connected their Historical Figures to the World Exploration Era

As shown in Figure 5 above, 88% of the students connected their historical figure to the world exploration era. However, the students varied considerably in connecting historical ideas on each of their products based on the three-point rubric analysis matrix (see Appendix). To determine whether or not the objective was met on the research

report, I examined whether the students wrote about three strong connections of their historical figure to the time period of world exploration. I determined that the connection was strong if the connection related their historical figure's actions with what was happening in the world such as Christopher Columbus connecting to Prince Henry. This connection is strong since Prince Henry made the caravel ships that Columbus sailed. For the poster board, I examined if students used a primary source to support their connections in their research paper and supported their primary source with a caption that demonstrated their understanding of the connection. For the world exploration essay, I examined if the student wrote about three things that occurred during the time of world exploration and connected those events with historical figures during that time period.

The connecting scores on each piece of data as well as the average connecting score can be seen in Figure 6. The range of student averages for connecting scores was 1.67 to 3.0 and the range of total possible values was 1.0 to 3.0 for each piece of data. The average connecting score on the research report was 2.5. The average connecting score on the poster board was 1.6. The average connecting score on the World Exploration Essay was 2.46. Overall, the average score for connecting on all three pieces of data was 2.21.

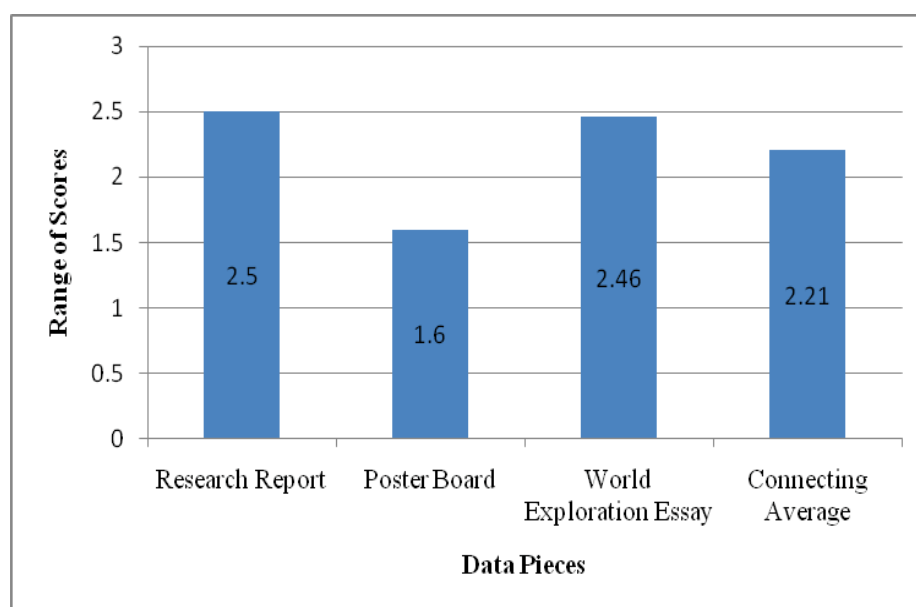


Figure 6: Overall Connecting Scores

It is important to note the low average score of 1.6 on the poster board. The students scored lower on this piece of data than the other pieces of data. There are many things that might have contributed to the decreased connecting score on the poster board data. One cause could have been that I did not stress the need to include primary sources for connecting. My focus was on writing about the connections between the students' historical figure's actions and events during the world exploration era, not necessarily the primary sources to support the connections. However, I did expect students to include at least one primary source on their poster board because of our class discussions about providing evidence for every idea presented in their research report.

Another reason for this score could have been students' understanding, or misunderstanding, of what constituted a primary source and how to use it as evidence for their ideas. I taught students to find primary sources and modeled how to do so several

times during small group instruction. We discussed finding sources that supported their ideas and worked together during work time in the classroom. Even so, this concept was hard for fifth graders to understand and research for multiple primary sources without the aid of an adult. In addition, their historical figures were from the world exploration era, and finding primary sources from that time period was often challenging.

As illustrated in Table 3, most students met or demonstrated high quality of work in regards to the connecting objectives based on the three-point rubric analysis matrix. Twenty-seven percent of the students exceeded objectives by providing more examples of how their historical figure's actions connected with the world exploration time period. Fifty percent of the students met the connecting objectives. Over 75% of the students met or demonstrated high quality of work for the connecting objectives. There were 23% of my students that did not meet the connecting objectives.

Table 3: Overall Connecting Objectives

	Goal: Connecting
High Quality of Work	27%
Met Objectives	50%
Did Not Meet Objectives	23%

Based on evidence from the data, there are several patterns that emerged as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Connecting Patterns

Patterns in Findings for Connecting	Possible Reasons
Difficulty choosing historical events that match the historical figure	Focus on events in class Not enough modeling of how to connect events and historical figure
Few students included a primary source that connected their historical figure to the time period	More focus given to analysis of primary sources than to connecting historical figure's actions to events during the world exploration time period Students did not know they needed to include a primary source
Work on captions to support primary sources in connecting	Did not focus on primary sources to support connecting historical figure's actions to events during the world exploration time period Students needed more explicit direction for connecting captions
Listing events in essay rather than explaining how the events and the historical figures connect	Not modeled how to specifically connect events and figures Major focus on events and figures separately not as whole

One pattern is that students had difficulty choosing historical events that connected to their historical figures' actions. Some possible reasons could be that I did not focus on matching historical events specifically to their historical figure rather I taught the students about the various historical events. Another pattern that became apparent from the data was that few students included primary sources that connected their historical figure's actions with the world exploration time period. Some possible reasons could be that the focus was given to finding primary sources that connected to their analysis of their historical figure. In addition, students might not have known that they needed to include a primary source to support their connection since we only discussed this as a class. A final pattern for connecting is that students listed events in

their world exploration essay that happened during the time period but did not connect those events to the people or list them in a logical manner. One possible reason is that I did not specifically model how to connect events and figures throughout the curriculum instead I implemented the Timeline Activity and the Countries Exploration Activity to aid the students in making these connections.

Finding 2: Students succeeded in analyzing the causes and effects of world exploration

The data from the student scores on the assessed projects (see Figure 5) suggests that the students understood how to analyze historical figures during the time of world exploration after participating in the *Becoming Historians* curriculum. Ninety-two percent of students accurately analyzed the cause and effect of their historical figure's actions as well as the world exploration time period based on the data. Furthermore, based on the three-point rubric analysis matrix (see Appendix), students excelled in the research report, poster board and world exploration essay as shown in Figure 7.

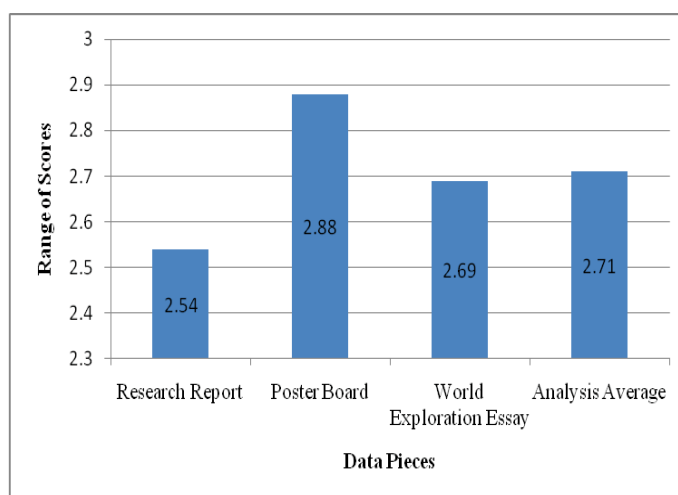


Figure 7: Overall Analysis Scores

To determine whether or not students' analyses of the causes and effects of their historical figures' actions during the world exploration era was met on the research report, I examined whether or not the students wrote about three strong cause and effect relationships about their historical figure's actions in history. I determined that the analysis was strong if the analysis showed clear relationships between the causes of the historical figure's actions and the effects of the historical figure's actions. For example, a cause for Christopher Columbus' explorations might be that his brother was a mapmaker, and the effect of that may have been Columbus became intrigued with exploring and maps and therefore wanted to sail west. For the poster board, I examined whether or not students used a primary source to support their analysis in their research papers and supported their primary sources with captions that demonstrated their understanding of the cause and effect relationship. For the world exploration essay, I examined whether or not the student wrote about three causes and effects of world exploration.

The range of student averages for analyzing scores was 2.0 to 3.0 and the range of total possible values was one to three for each piece of data. The average score on the research report was 2.54. Students' average score on the poster board was 2.88 and the average score on the world exploration essay was 2.69. Overall, the average score of all three assignments based on the three-point rubric analysis matrix was 2.71. This indicates that the students met or exceeded the analysis objectives, which were analyzing the causes and effects of their historical figure's actions.

As shown in Table 5, the majority of students either met or showed high quality of work for the analysis objectives since students wrote more than three causes and

effects about their historical figure's actions. In fact, none of my students had difficulty meeting the objectives. There are several reasons that may have contributed to student success. One reason that enhanced their analysis of their historical figure's actions is the overall question of the curriculum: What were the causes and effects of world exploration? Since this was the central focus of the curriculum, students were constantly working on the cause and effect relationship of their historical figure's actions and the world exploration era.

Table 5: Overall Analysis Objectives

	Goal: Analysis
High Quality of Work	77%
Met Objectives	23%
Did Not Meet Objectives	0%

Another reason that could have impacted students' analysis skills of their historical figure's actions in the research report was my modeling of how to research and write about cause and effect of a historical figure. Throughout the entire process, students were taking notes about cause and effect, using a tree map brainstorm to organize their ideas and writing paragraphs based on the cause and effect of their historical figure's actions. Students might have also excelled with analysis of their historical figure's actions on the poster board since cause and effect was the primary focus of the poster board. The students included several primary sources that supported their overall thesis of how their historical figure changed or influenced history. Since

their thesis was focused on cause and effect, the primary sources reflected this, which may be related to why the students excelled in analysis.

A fourth reason that seems to be associated with analysis skills in the world exploration essay could be the time spent on the world exploration era. Students were immersed in the world exploration era for over six weeks. During this time, students researched, collaborated, and presented their ideas to each other. This created a community of learning, in which all students were invested in the world exploration era. The amount of time spent on analyzing their historical figure and studying the world exploration era in depth could have had a positive impact on their understanding of the era and influenced their analytical skills on the world exploration essay.

Based on the collected data, several patterns emerge as shown in Table 6. Student work on all three products present strong cause and effect relationships and primary sources to support their research. However, some students repeated themselves in their research report. Some possible reasons for this are that students did not do enough research or might have become confused about how to write about another event. Students found primary sources to support their analyses of the causes and effects of their historical figure's actions, which, was the major focus of the curriculum and was modeled for them several times.

Table 6: Analysis Patterns

Patterns in Findings for Analysis	Possible Reasons
Some students repeated the causes of their historical figure's actions in their research report	Need to do more research or got confused about other events that happened
Good primary sources to support research	Focus on primary sources to support analysis and why they supported it Teacher modeling
Need help supporting strong relationships between research report and captions of primary sources	No teacher modeling
Essay showed good understanding of the causes and effects of world exploration	Major focus of the curriculum Overall curriculum question was based in analysis
Misconceptions about the causes and/or effect written in the world exploration in the essay	Based on memory; not allowed to use their notes First draft, timed essay

On the poster board project, however, some partnerships had difficulty writing the captions for their causes and effects of their historical figure's actions, which may have been caused by a lack of modeling. On the other hand, the majority of the class included captions with a clear relationship to their primary sources.

Another pattern seen was that students could recall the causes and effects of world exploration during the timed world exploration essay. Again this might be because this was the overall focus of the curriculum and the central research question was based in analysis of the causes and effects of world exploration. Finally, a third pattern that I noted from analyzing the work of several students was several misconceptions in the world exploration essay. As previously stated, this may be a result of the essay being an on-demand writing assessment and therefore based on pure recall of information without time for revision.

Finding 3: Students had difficulty applying historical ideas to the world and their lives today

The analysis of the data indicates that students struggled most with applying their historical figure's actions and the world exploration era to the world today and their lives. The class bar graph (see Figure 5) shows that 67% of students applied their historical figure and historical era to the world today and their lives. This is the lowest percentage of the three goals examined. This lack of skill in students' abilities to make those applications also appears when examining the three-point rubric analysis matrix. To determine whether or not the application objective was met on the research report, I examined whether or not the students wrote about three lasting effects that applied their historical figure's accomplishments to the world today or their lives. I determined that the application was strong if the application of their historical figure's actions had a relationship to the world today. For example, because of Christopher Columbus, the West and the New World started to exchange goods, and today we still exchange goods all over the world. For the poster board, I examined whether or not students used a primary source to support their application in their research paper and supported their primary source with a caption that demonstrated their understanding of the lasting effect of their historical figure's actions. For the world exploration essay, I examined if the student wrote about three ways that world exploration still influences our world and life today.

Figure 8 shows the different student scores for each set of data. The range of student averages for applying scores was 1.33 to 3.0 and the range of total possible values

was one to three for each piece of data. The student average on the research report is 2.46. The student average for the poster board is 2.42, while the world exploration essay student average is 1.27. The overall student average is 2.05 for the skill of applying, which is significantly lower than for the skills of connecting and analyzing.

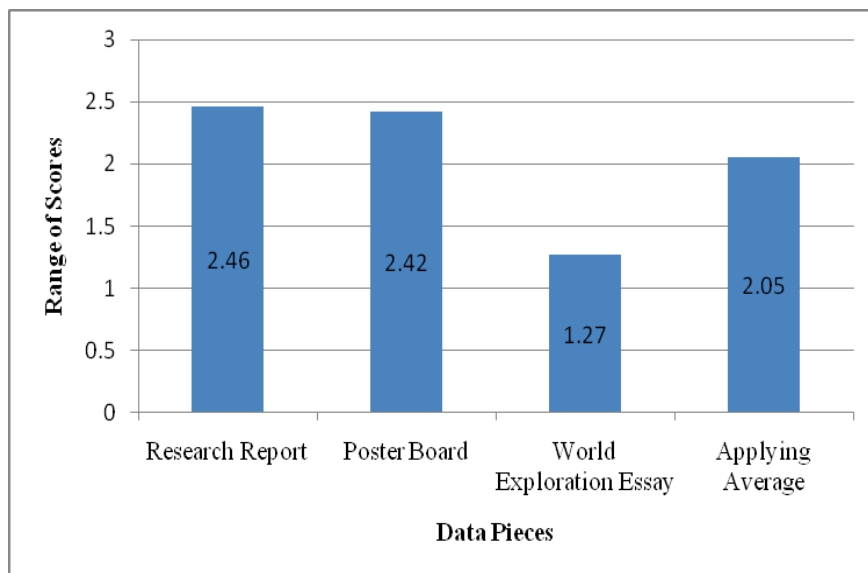


Figure 8: Overall Applying Scores

As shown on Table 7, only 7% of students were able to demonstrate high quality work for the applying objectives. The largest group of students (70%) met objectives, and 23% of students did not meet the objectives of the applying goals. These findings raise several questions about the curriculum.

Table 7: Overall Applying Objectives

	Goal: Applying
High Quality of Work	7%
Met Objectives	70%
Did Not Meet Objectives	23%

One question is: *Why did students underperform in applying, specifically in the world exploration essay?* To examine this question, it is necessary to understand the limitations of the world exploration essay. This essay was given to students during class and the students had 90 minutes to complete the essay. Therefore, one possible explanation for why students performed the most poorly on the world exploration essay is due to time constraints. Another possible explanation is that prior to writing the essay, the class brainstormed possible ways to address the essay prompt. During the brainstorm, no one mentioned the idea of applying the world exploration essay to the world today or to their lives. Since the objective of applying was not in the brainstorming, this may play a part in the majority of students not including it in their essay.

Another question is: *Why did only 7% of students exceed the objectives compared to the other two goals of connecting (27%) and analyzing (77%)?* There are several possible reasons that fewer students excelled in the applying goal. To begin with, application is one of the highest thinking skills according to Bloom (1956). Students in fifth grade are only ten and eleven years old and could be less cognitively developed than older students who have developed higher level thinking skills. Thus, the developmental

levels of the students may be connected to why the students did not perform as well in this goal area. Piaget (2002) also states that students who are ages seven through eleven are in the “concrete operational stage” and not able to think as abstractly as when they are older in the “formal operational stage.”

Another reason that could have influenced the low performance in applying goal is that applying is an abstract concept to understand. It is challenging applying what happened between the 15th to 17th centuries to the world and life today. Therefore, students may have struggled with applying their knowledge of world exploration to the world today. A third reason that could have impacted the finding is the lack of modeling of what was happening in the world today and in their lives. In class, we frequently discussed what was happening in the world during the time of exploration but never focused on what was happening in the world today. Implementing lessons focusing on the world today in relation to world exploration could have enhanced student understanding of the application skill.

Collected student work brings to the forefront several patterns and findings from the class on applying, which are summarized in Table 8. One pattern is that students needed more instruction on writing captions that supported their primary source in applying. One possible reason for this is that I did not focus on captions for applying as much as I did for analysis. In addition, I did not model how to write captions for applying.

Table 8: Applying Patterns

Patterns in Findings for Applying	Possible Reasons
Work on captions to support applying the lasting effects of the historical figure's actions to the world today	Focused on primary sources to support analysis Did not focus on captions for the poster board Needed more direction for applying the lasting effects of the historical figure's actions and the world today
World exploration essay did not have the lasting effects on how world exploration affects the world today	Needed more time Not specifically asked for on the prompt Abstract concept
Students repeated the same ideas for cause and effect as well as applying the lasting effects of the historical figure's actions to the world today	Needed more research time Needed to work on it during revising writing time

Another pattern that became apparent was that the majority of students' world exploration essays did not mention lasting effects. There are several possible reasons for the lack of including lasting effects in the essay. One reason is that the students needed more time to work on the essay. Another reason could be that it was not specifically asked for in the prompt on the final essay. A third reason is that students were writing the essay in a one-time sitting, and the historical thinking skill of applying is very abstract to write about in during a confined amount of time.

A final pattern seen, in terms of applying the lasting effects of a historical figure's actions to the world today, is that students repeated several of the same ideas. Some possible reasons could be that I did not model how to write about applying, or possibly students needed more time to research applying ideas.

Finding 4: Students were motivated and engaged to work on their research project

After analyzing observations and field notes, students' behaviors and comments suggest that they were motivated and engaged throughout the *Becoming Historians* curriculum. One support for this claim is that 26 out of the 28 students participating completed the research report and poster board. The research report and poster board were challenging to complete, even though the majority of the students completed the project as well as advanced to the History Day county level competition. This required students to complete even more work on their History Day Project, such as a process paper and annotated bibliography. Students came before school and after school to work on the process paper and annotated bibliography to complete their project for the competition. This illustrates how passionate and motivated the students were to work on their projects.

Several students commented on how they enjoyed History Day. A student mentioned, "I thought it was fun winning the SDUSD History Day winner!" Another student exclaimed, "The best day of my life was when I won, I was happy my mom was so impressed with me." These behaviors and observations suggest that the majority of the class were motivated researchers and enjoyed completing their research report and poster project. In addition, the data indicates that the majority of the students did not only complete the project but met all of the expectations for the three goals of connecting, analyzing and applying, providing further evidence that students were motivated throughout the curriculum.

There are several observational pieces of data that suggests students were engaged in the curriculum. A fellow teacher at my school commented that every time she walked by our classroom, students were always focused on their work and working together. Students were rarely, if ever, off task during work time throughout the implementation of this project. I observed several students commenting on how they were engaged when working on History Day. One student commented, “It is great (doing History Day) because it helps me a lot and also it is very fun because you get to do different kinds of stuff.” Another student mentioned, “I really liked everything we did to make our History Day Board like researching, writing, designing, and finally creating our board.” Since student behavior and comments illustrate how students were working continuously on their research and enjoyed the process, the data suggests that *Becoming Historians* engaged the majority of the students.

A surprising finding that supports the claim that students were motivated and engaged in the curriculum was that most of the students began to connect to history by actually taking on the persona of the historical figure they were researching. On several occasions, I overheard students commenting on how they knew each other in history. For example, a student who researched Martin Luther would say, “King Henry, you make me so mad!” This showed that the student who studied Luther was connecting to her historical figure and portraying his emotions to the student who researched King Henry VIII. The student who researched Queen Isabella would often come up to me and state, “I know you love me, I mean I gave you the money you wanted,” because I modeled how

to research with Christopher Columbus. This made the learning a social activity, which is an important factor for students when they are learning (Bayer, 1990).

As mentioned earlier, only two of the 28 students who started the curriculum did not complete the research project, which may be related to motivation and engagement. Neither of the students who failed to complete the research report and poster board was in my class the previous year. This was my second year with the majority of my students, as I taught them in fourth grade and again in fifth grade. Thus, I had a good relationship with them, which fosters motivation as noted by Martin (2009). However, these two unsuccessful students had difficulty working with me as well as other adults in the classroom, which in turn hindered the building of our relationship.

When I taught these students in the fourth grade class the previous year, I worked with them on collaboration, focused on what it means to be a team, and assigned numerous project assignments. The two students who did not complete the research report and poster board always had a difficult time working with others. In addition, these two students had difficulty making friends and keeping friends throughout the school year. Therefore, the classroom environment was not a safe and positive place for them, so their motivation might have been weakened as well (Stipek, 2002), which might have impacted their ability to complete the research report and poster board.

I provided my class with a variety of choices when working on their projects in order for students to choose whom to work with, what to research and which part of the project they would like to complete during workshop time. However, it was hard for these two unsuccessful students to manage their choices of whom to work with, what to

research, and when to work on the research project, which also might have hindered their motivation to complete the project (Deci, 1995). On several occasions, the two students were off-task as I observed them playing around with each other or just sitting at their desks. Thus, the two unsuccessful students had a hard time with time management given the choices they had to make. They seemed not to know how or where to begin their researching, even though I was modeling the research process to them during small group time.

The observational and field note data suggests that the majority of students were motivated and engaged in the *Becoming Historians curriculum*; only two students were unsuccessful in completion of the project. This finding supports the use of the curriculum in a social studies classroom because students are excited to learn about social studies. In addition, as the data indicates students excelled learning about social studies as well. Therefore, implementing *Becoming Historians* may contribute to heightened student motivation and engagement within the social studies classroom.

Finding 5: Students collaborated with their partners and classmates throughout the curriculum

Observations and field notes suggest that the *Becoming Historians curriculum* also helped the majority of students collaborate by providing clear expectations for partner and group work and implementing an inquiry-based project to promote collaboration. I set clear expectations about how to choose partners in order to work collaboratively together for six weeks. Throughout the curriculum, none of the partnerships broke up nor were there many problems between partners. I observed the

students solving their own problems about how to work together. For example, one pair was confused with note organization since each group member had notes from different sources. The group decided to keep all of the notes in one folder instead of two folders in order to keep more organized notes. This example illustrates how students made smart decisions about whom to work with as well as how to work with their partners.

The data indicates that students understood the importance of teamwork and collaborating together. I observed several groups discussing what they were going to work on for homework. Also, I observed groups sharing information that they found on someone else's historical figure. For example, the group studying Queen Isabella consistently shared primary and secondary sources about Christopher Columbus with me. Students also shared the increasing workload by deciding how to split up the work among them. One student mentioned, "I also learned how to research, work with peers and be more responsible." Based on the data, students who collaborated throughout the process did better than students who worked independently. Therefore, students working together on the inquiry-based project learned from each other and were able to help each other.

The two unsuccessful students' failure to complete the research project and poster board may also be related to collaboration issues. Since the unsuccessful students had difficulty working with others, they ended up working independently. This meant that they had no one to collaborate with or help them manage their time besides the teacher. Another aspect of collaboration that may be associated with their project incompleteness pertained to their reading levels. Both students read at a beginning fourth-grade level,

which may have made it difficult to find information on their historical figures that was at their reading level. However, if they worked with another student this may not have been a factor because they could have used a collaborative-apprenticeship learning model (Bayer, 1990).

The data indicates that the curriculum *Becoming Historians* positively impacts student collaboration. Teacher observations and field notes provide many examples of students working well together and helping each other learn. The two unsuccessful students did not have the opportunity to work or learn from others, which may relate to their project incompleteness. Therefore, based on the data, implementing *Becoming Historians* in a social studies classroom may increase student collaboration.

Summary and Discussion

The overall goal of *Becoming Historians* was for students to learn historical content and how to be responsible citizens in society during a time when our society educational system is primarily focused on math and language arts. Based on the data, *Becoming Historians* enhanced students' historical content knowledge about world exploration. In addition, the curriculum impacted students' historical thinking skills, which are essential skills for being a responsible citizen of society. After experiencing the *Becoming Historians* curriculum activities, the students appear to understand what it means to think like a historian based on the gathered pieces of data, which shows evidence of students' connecting, analyzing and applying historical concepts. In addition, the curriculum appears to have impacted students' motivation, engagement and collaboration in the social studies classroom.

Using project-based learning as the core of the curriculum was a success.

Throughout the curriculum, the students were collaborating on a project that centered on a central research question: What were the causes and effects of world exploration?

Based on the data, students did best on analyzing the cause and effects of world exploration. One hundred percent of students met or demonstrated high quality of work on analysis, which was the center of the project-based curriculum. To explore the central research question in depth, students inquired about a historical figure during that time period. I integrated many fifth grade social studies and language art standards centering on a project, which positively impacted the curriculum and contributed to students learning how to think historically. Students learned how to research and analyze sources like a historian and how to write their findings and present them on a poster board.

Conclusion

There are several things that I learned about teaching social studies throughout my project, such as the unwritten rules and expectations of my curriculum, how to effectively teach social studies, implications of my project, and what I would do differently. In addition, I also learned about the importance of conducting educational research in my classroom and the necessity of combining educational practices with educational theory.

I did not realize when I started to implement my project that there were several unwritten rules and expectations already set up in my classroom that contributed to the success of the *Becoming Historians* curriculum. These involved an environment that promotes collaboration and students being ready to work independently, as well as being familiar with project assignments and how to organize their time and notes. Most of the students in my class during this implementation were the same students as in the previous year's class. When teaching, I try to create a classroom community through such activities as morning meetings, class charities, buddies from younger grades, and group work. It is an expectation in my classroom that students will work with different students multiple times throughout the day and school year. Students understand and respond positively to this expectation in the classroom and follow it each day in school.

Another expectation relates to student independence. This does not mean that students work independently; instead students support each other's learning needs during work time. Students depend on each other for help and do not always depend on the teacher during work time. My students know how to be resourceful during work time when I am working with small groups. I also implement several project-based learning

projects throughout the school year. This means that my students are quite familiar with managing their time as well as their work through their involvement in complex projects.

These unwritten expectations are important to note about the *Becoming Historians* curriculum given that two students did not finish the project, and neither of these students were in my class the year before. Thus, these two students may not have understood the unwritten expectations in my classroom or the social skills to figure them out for themselves. Three fifth grade teachers at my school site also implemented the *Becoming Historians* curriculum but one of them did not complete the implementation. After a discussion with that teacher, it was clear that these unwritten expectations were not in place in that classroom making the project difficult to complete. For example, the teacher stated that students were not working well together or completing their work in a timely manner. Therefore, it is important to have a community of learners with explicit expectations on how to be researchers, collaborators, and independent workers in order to complete this curriculum successfully.

I learned how to effectively teach social studies by focusing on the purpose for teaching social studies, that is, how to “become a historian.” I learned that social studies can be taught to learn the content of social studies as well as how to be an effective citizen through historical thinking. Historical thinking skills such as connecting, analyzing and applying are the same skills that every citizen needs to have in order to be an effective citizen in society. Responsible citizens need to know how to connect ideas, analyze concepts and apply thoughts to new ways of thinking (Harvey, 2000). These skills help citizens make informed decisions in their daily life. I also learned that

students can “be historians” when given the appropriate tools, time, and support.

Students can learn how to think like historians and look at history through fresh eyes.

Students can take a stance on what they think happened in history by analyzing sources when given the proper scaffolding and tools.

Based on the evidence of this implementation, there are several implications for my curriculum. One implication is that project-based learning appears to be an important tool when teaching social studies that promotes an engaging learning environment and historical thinking. Another implication that the *Becoming Historians* curriculum supports is the integration of social studies and language arts to teach elementary school content standards. Teaching language arts and social studies through a Humanities Block, a time devoted to teaching the humanity subjects, is not only engaging but also useful when attempting to teach multiple standards in an upper grade classroom.

The third implication of *Becoming Historians* is that using a central research question helps guide curriculum and can influence students’ overall understanding and purpose. Based on the data, students did well on analysis, which was the central research question of the entire project. Focusing primarily on the research question might have impacted student success and therefore, could be an effective way to structure social studies curriculum.

There are several things that I would change the next time that I implement these activities. The first thing I would do differently is to focus on providing several types of scaffolds to students, such as graphic organizers to organize their thoughts and ideas especially for the connecting and applying goals. I think structured graphic organizers to

explicitly help students make reasonable connections and applications in history to their lives today would have helped students to better organize their thoughts.

Secondly, I would design the curriculum to focus on each of the historical thinking skills rather than just on analysis. I think that I focused the entire curriculum too much on analysis rather than on connecting and applying. This is evident in the central research question. I should have incorporated the other historical thinking skills of connecting and applying in the big idea question as well. This might have contributed to students better understanding these skills.

The third change I would make is to more effectively demonstrate how I integrated social studies, writing and reading throughout the curriculum seamlessly. In my classroom instruction, the curriculum integrated reading and writing standards met as well as social studies. I implemented a humanities block based on this project. However, my goals were based only in historical thinking skills rather than in reading or writing. Therefore, I would create goals based on writing and reading for the same curriculum to show that integration is extremely important when teaching social studies due to time constraints.

I learned several things about educational research and educational practice. I learned that it is an enriching experience to systematically implement and examine one's own teaching practice. A teacher must be able to open her eyes to what is happening in her classroom and must be willing to reflect upon the results of her teaching practices. Everything is a learning process, and researching systematically in one's classroom helps teachers become aware of their own teaching practices. The same project can never be

duplicated exactly because the classroom is a dynamic environment since the people and activities are always changing.

I also learned that action research is essential not only for the support and improvement of other teachers' teaching effectiveness but for the entire field of educational research as well. Teachers are in the classroom day after day, which gives them firsthand experience about what happens in the classroom. Therefore, they are the frontline of education. If school reform is to be effective and successful, it is important to be in the classroom to know what actually occurs there. However, it is also important to know what is happening in educational research in order to know how to implement the theory and research in the classroom. Therefore, a teacher action-researcher has the best of both worlds; the practical and the research benefits. This is a powerful combination for school reform and, in my opinion, is the direction in which education should be headed. Only with everyone working together, teachers and researchers, will education be the most beneficial for our students and the future citizens of our nation.

Appendix

Becoming Historians: A Project-Based Learning Curriculum

By: Tina Marie Rasori

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Section I

Introduction:

Letter to Potential Implementers

Tips for Teachers

For the Teacher

Becoming Historians is a project-based unit for teaching students how to think like historians. It is an approach to build historical understanding. It also helps students learn to work collaboratively and be motivated. The goal of the approach uses connecting, analysis and application skills to help students learn what it means to be a historian. Students are encouraged to collaborate, while also developing a greater awareness of historical research and presenting their findings. Although this curriculum was specifically developed for world exploration in a fifth grade class, it can be adapted to any social studies unit and any upper elementary classroom where students learn to become historians.

Time constraints in teaching social studies in the elementary classroom place a lot of pressure on the teacher, but teaching history through project-based learning allows teachers to address several curriculum standards. Working with other teachers to determine the appropriate social studies unit and language arts standards that best fits the unit is crucial when adapting this curriculum. It is important to note that when integrating curriculum, both sets of standards need to be in the forefront in order for both standards to be addressed. In other words, when adapting the curriculum look at both sets of standards to align them in a way that makes the most sense.

There are several distinctive characteristics of this curriculum, which are connecting, analyzing and applying historical concepts. All activities involve some kind of collaborative effort including group work, research, discussions, and presentations. This means that there will be a lot of social activity going on in the classroom, which means that students that are more likely to be engaged and motivated to learn.

I organized the *Becoming Historians* curriculum into several sections: a brief overview, prior experience, activities, and formal assessments. In the second section, a brief overview, I included a brief description of History Day, which is a national competition that my students competed in based on the curriculum. However, the History Day competition is optional and does not need to be included to complete the curriculum. I also included the various California fifth grade standards in language arts and social studies that this curriculum addresses. Section three, prior experience, describes the various background experiences and knowledge that I introduced to the class before beginning the curriculum in order for students to have a brief understanding of world exploration. Again, it is up to you if you need this section or if you would rather dive into the curriculum. Section four describes all of the activities that I did in my classroom with brief lesson plans for each. The entire curriculum took me about five to six weeks. The final section, formal assessments, provides the final essay and a brief reflection students write about the curriculum. My hope is that your students enjoy the curriculum as much as mine did and your students understand what it means to be a historian! Enjoy and have fun bringing history alive to your students!

Tips for Teachers

Becoming Historians is a project-based learning curriculum. This means that students are actively engaged in a project that guides their historical understanding. To foster this type of curriculum, many environmental factors, support groups and classroom community need to be in place. Here are some tips to help:

Environmental Factors:

- **Space:** Students are going to be researching, collecting sources and working on poster boards. It is important to have designated areas in the classroom as student work centers for the students to work and keep their supplies together.
- **Organization:** Groups of students will be working on different projects and finishing steps in the research process at different times. It is very helpful to be organized with which groups have completed what and what groups still need to find their primary and/or secondary sources.
- **Technology and Supplies:** It is very helpful to have several computers that have Internet access in the classroom or a computer lab at the school to help with the research. Also, it is helpful to already have several books that students can use to start researching.

Support Groups:

- **Working with other colleagues:** It is helpful to work with other colleagues throughout the entire curriculum process: planning, during and after. This will allow you to bounce ideas off others, adjust the curriculum, and determine the effectiveness of the curriculum.
- **Art Support:** When students are finished researching and start to complete their final poster boards, it is helpful to get some extra hands in the classroom to help.
- **Book Club Support:** There are several books that discuss how to best teach social studies and the idea of historical thinking and could be excellent resources for a book club at your school site.

*Wineburg, S. (2001). Historical Thinking and other Unnatural Acts.

Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

* Zemelman, S., H. Daniels, and A. Hyde. (2005). Best Practice. Portsmouth: Heinemann.

Classroom Community:

- **Collaborative Group Work:** Students need to be able to work collaboratively with others. From the beginning of the year, I work on building a classroom community to help students work with all students in the classroom.
- **Research Minded Students:** Students should already have some experience with researching because this curriculum is pushing the envelope even further on how to find information and present it to an audience. Therefore, there needs to be expectations in place on how to organize your research as well as how to organize your time.
- **Active Involvement:** Students will be moving around the classroom, finding sources, discussing with their partners and helping others. Therefore, there needs to be expectations in place on how to behave in an active classroom setting.

Section II

List of Overview Materials:

Letter of Consent
History Day Overview
Overview of Curriculum
Standards in Curriculum

Letter of Consent

Title of Project: Project Based Learning in Social Studies and Writing
Tina Rasori, Teacher

Before agreeing to participate in my project, it is important that you read the following explanation of my project. This statement describes the purpose, procedures and benefits of my project. You have the right for your student to not participate in my project at any time.

I am asking for your child to participate in my project to examine project-based learning in social studies and writing at ____ Elementary School from January-March 2009.

My approach of the project is documenting regular teaching activities in our classroom. Your child will be doing a project-based research project and writing, which is part of the regular writing and social studies curriculum in my classroom.

All information gathered from the project will remain confidential. Your child's identity as a participant will not be disclosed and pseudo names will be used to protect your child's identity. Images will only be used with your consent on this form.

My project's potential benefits will be to improve my teaching practice as well as other teachers. Another potential benefit will be increased knowledge of how to connect writing and social studies and how to think like an historian.

Your signature below indicates that you agree for your child to participate in my project. Please keep a copy for yourself for your records. If you have any questions concerning the project please feel free to contact me. Thank you for your time!

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____

Student Name: _____

Sincerely,

Mrs. Rasori

History Day Overview and Rules

Here is an overview of History Day by the Constitutional Rights Foundation. For more information on History Day, please visit: <http://www.crf-usa.org/history-day-in-california/>. As stated previously, using History Day with the curriculum is optional. It is time consuming but very rewarding for all of the students.

What is History Day?

History Day in California is a statewide program sponsored by Constitutional Rights Foundation in conjunction with National History Day. Now in its 26th year, History Day is an exciting, history-based learning experience for students from 4th-12th grades. In History Day, students learn about issues, ideas, people, and events in history and apply what they have learned through creative and original productions. Beyond simply memorizing names and dates and reporting on historical events, History Day students develop invaluable research and analytical skills. They process information gathered through intensive research and draw their own conclusions about the topic's significance in history. Students can create historical papers, imaginative exhibits, original performances, multimedia documentaries, historical web sites, and posters related to the annual theme. There are two divisions, Junior Division (6th-8th grade) and Senior Division (9th-12th grade). The poster category is for 4th and 5th grade only.

Theme

Each year a broad theme is selected to encompass entries, including local, state, American, and world history. The purpose of the theme is to give a central focus to the work of all participants and provide a common "yardstick" against which the quality of research and understanding may be judged.

2008–2009 Theme: **The Individual in History: Actions and Legacies**

For more information, contact:

History Day In California/CRF
601 S. Kingsley Drive Los Angeles, CA 90005
(213) 316-2125 Fax (213) 386-0459
email: lourdes@crf-usa.org

Overview of Explorer Unit

Throughout this entire 6-8 week unit students are learning about world exploration during social studies, reading and writing time during the class day. This unit was developed based on project based learning and integrating disciplines in order to dig deeper into important historical ideas surrounding world exploration. This unit hopes to produce students who learn how to historically think by developing the skills of: connecting, analyzing and applying! Each of the lessons has the content standards that it addresses in parenthesis.

Social Studies Lessons	Reading and Social Studies	Writing and Social Studies
1. Introduce Big Idea question: What were the causes and effects of world exploration? (5.2) 2. Prior Experience Activities: Make explorer tools, songs and Fieldtrip to Maritime Museum (5.21) 3. Activity One: Analysis of Explorers (5.22) 4. Activity Two: Timeline Activity (5.22) 5. Activity Three: Countries Exploration (5.23 and 5.24) 6. Activity Four: Columbian Exchange Activity 7. Activity Five: Research Report and Poster 8. Assessment: World Exploration Essay Students generalize the overall causes and effects of world exploration (5.2)	1. Shared Readings to explore this question as a class and gain background knowledge (2.1) 2. PowerPoint about Explorers (2.3) 2. Students research primary and secondary sources (2.3 and 2.5) 3. Guided reading to support their research of primary and secondary sources (2.3 and 2.5) 4. Small group shared reading to help them infer and synthesize their information (2.3) 5. Historical Timeline Activity (2.4) Connecting 6. Shared Reading and class activities about Columbian Exchange (2.4)	1. Write a narrative about their explorer 2. Based on their research, students generalize about why their explorer is important to history and write an expository text about their explorer. 3. Students then create a poster and orally present their information.

California Department of Education. (1998) History-social studies content standards for California Public Schools. Retrieved on March 1, 2009 from

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/histsoscistnd.pdf>

California Department of Education. (1997) English-language arts content standards for California Public Schools. Retrieved on March 1, 2009 from

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/histsoscistnd.pd>

Overview of Standards

Below is a list of the multiple standards that are being taught throughout this unit. The unit is long, but covers many California fifth grade standards.

Social Studies Standards	Reading Standards	Writing Standards
5.2 Students trace the routes of early explorers and describe the early explorations of the Americas. 1. Describe the entrepreneurial characteristics of early explorers and the technological developments that made sea exploration by latitude and longitude possible (e.g., compass, sextant, astrolabe, seaworthy ships, chronometers, gunpowder). 2. Explain the aims, obstacles, and accomplishments of the explorers, sponsors, and leaders of key European expeditions and the reasons Europeans chose to explore and colonize the world. 3. Trace the routes of the major land explorers of the United States, the distances traveled by explorers, and the Atlantic trade routes. 4. Locate on maps of North and South America land claimed by Spain, France, England and Portugal.	Non-fiction Reading Standards: 2.1 Understand how text features make information accessible and usable 2.3 Discern main ideas and concepts presented in texts, identifying and assessing evidence that supports those ideas. 2.4 Draw inferences, conclusions, or generalizations about text and support them with textual evidence and prior knowledge 2.5 Distinguish facts, supported inferences, and opinions in text	Narrative Writing Standards: writing 1.1, conventions 1.1, speaking 2.1 Expository Writing Standards: 2.3 Write research reports about important ideas, issues, or events by using the following guidelines: a. Frame questions that direct the investigation b. Establish a controlling idea or topic c. Develop the topic with simple facts, details, examples, and explanations Research and Technology: 1.3 Use organizational features of printed text to locate relevant information 1.4 Create simple documents by using electronic media and employing organizational features 1.6 Edit and revise manuscripts to improve the meaning and focus of writing by adding, deleting, consolidating, clarifying, and rearranging words and sentences

California Department of Education. (1998) History-social studies content standards for California Public Schools. Retrieved on March 1, 2009 from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/histsoscistnd.pdf>

California Department of Education. (1997) English-language arts content standards for California Public Schools. Retrieved on March 1, 2009 from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/histsoscistnd.pdf>

Example of Timeline of Project

This is a rough timeline that you could possibly use to implement this curriculum. Feel free to adapt it to fit the needs of your students.

Week One:

- Introduce Big Idea Question: What were the causes and effects of world exploration?
- Prior Experience Activities
 - *World Exploration PowerPoint
 - *Shared Readings on Exploration
 - *Exploration Tools
 - *Maritime Museum Fieldtrip

Week Two:

- Introduce Research Project and model the entire time with Christopher Columbus
- Students get into research partners and pick topic
- Students start researching secondary sources and organizing notes in project folder

Week Three:

- Students continue to research secondary sources
- Introduce primary sources by modeling through Christopher Columbus

Week Four:

- Students continue to research primary and secondary sources
- Timeline Activity

Week Five:

- Countries Exploration Activity
- Columbian Exchange Activity
- Students transfer notes to brainstorm tree map and start writing their first draft of their research report
- Model writing research report from Christopher Columbus

Week Six:

- Students continue to write their research reports
- Students print out their primary sources
- Students paint their poster boards

Week Seven:

- Students work on their final research reports
- Students design and finish their poster boards

Week Eight:

- Students finish and present their poster boards
- Assessment: World Exploration Essay
- Students write a final reflection of the project

Section III

Prior Experience Activities

Overview of Prior Experience Activities

Graphic Organizer of Big Idea

World Exploration PowerPoint

Shared Reading of Technology

Exploration Tools

Maritime Museum Information

Overview of Prior Experience Activities

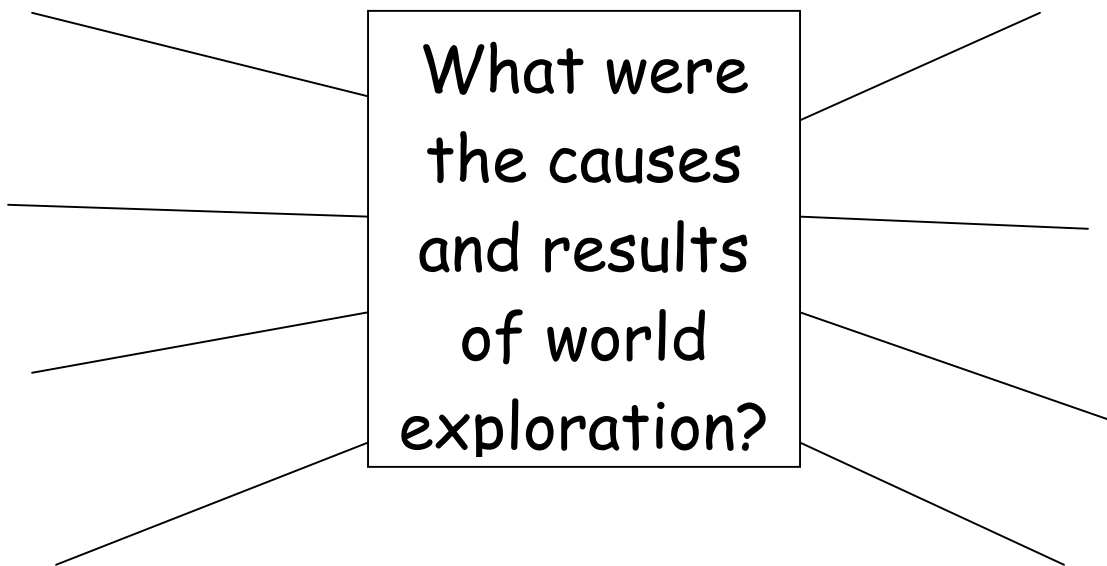
The majority of students in my class are English Language Learners ranging from beginning to advanced on the California English Language Development Test (CELDT). In addition, I have a variety of ethnicities and cultural groups in my classroom such as Burmese, Thai, Cambodian, Vietnamese, Sudanese, Somali, Latino, African American and Caucasian. It is important to scaffold the learning of new topics to meet the needs of my diverse student population. Therefore, before researching historical figures during the world exploration time period, it was essential to provide background knowledge and various prior experience activities about the world exploration era. To provide rich experiences about the world exploration era, I implemented a PowerPoint presentation, many interesting readings, hands-on activities, and a fieldtrip to the Maritime Museum in San Diego. At the Maritime Museum, students were able to step back in time when visiting caravels that explorers might have used when exploring. All of these experiences provided additional support to my students before implementing my curriculum. The curriculum further deepened their understanding of this time period.

Graphic Organizer of Big Idea

I used the following chart to begin and end the unit. The question in the middle box was the overall essential question/big idea question of the entire unit. The lines on the left side of the graphic organizer were used to write the different causes of world exploration. The lines on the right side of the graphic organizer were used to write the different results of world exploration. The chart was constantly added to after the prior experience activities and the various curriculum activities. The chart was also revisited before students wrote their final world exploration essay.

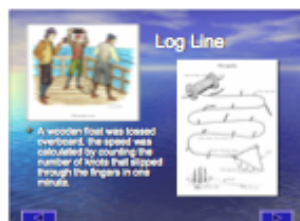
Causes of World
Exploration

Results of World
Exploration



World Exploration PowerPoint

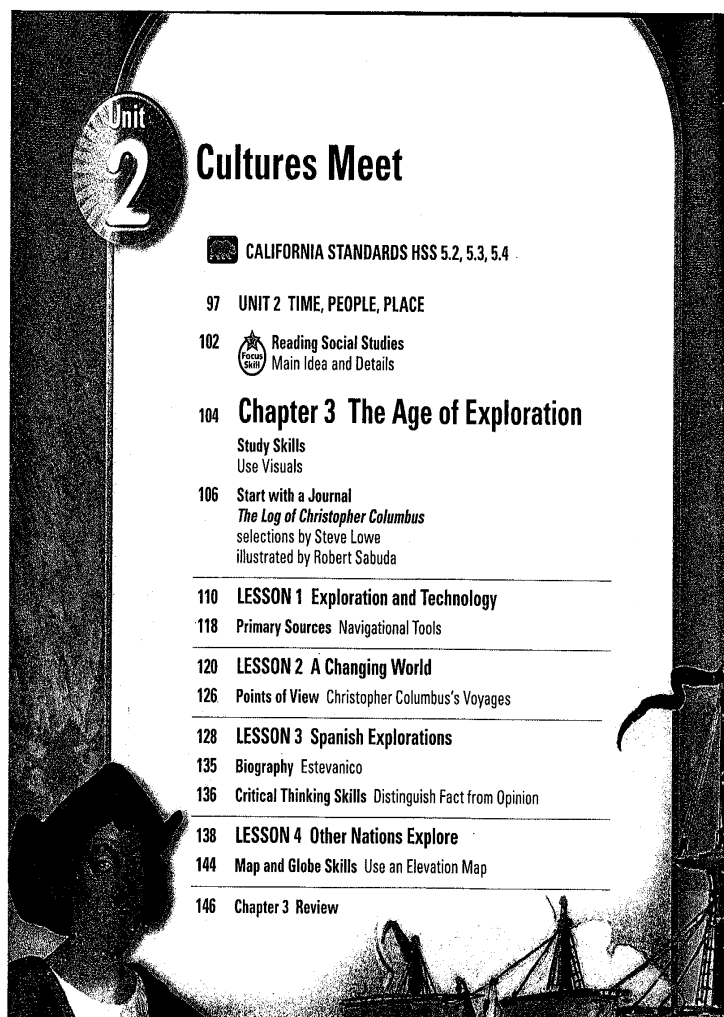
This PowerPoint presentation discusses the causes of world exploration in an engaging and interactive way. There are several different links within the PowerPoint that shows videos of various historical figures and how to use different navigational tools. It is an excellent resource when building background knowledge on world exploration.



Shared Reading of Technology

To provide more experiential opportunities for my students, I conducted several shared readings about the technology that was being used during the exploration time period. This is important to explain because students need to understand that the inventions of new technology were a cause of world exploration. The shared readings I used were from our textbook, Reflections: The United States: Making a New Nation, pages 104-118. Below is the citing to find the source.

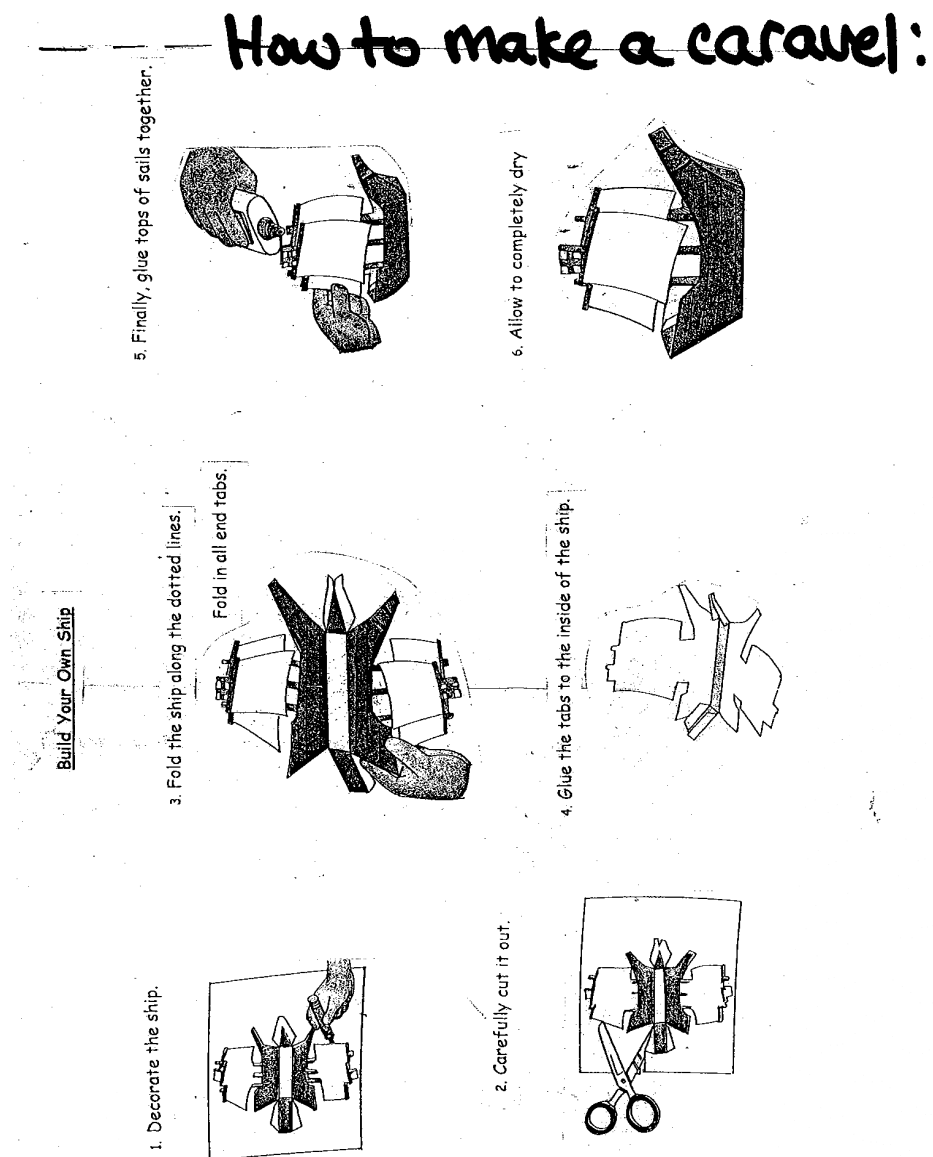
Porter, Priscilla. (2007) Reflections: The United States: Making a New Nation. New York: Harcourt.



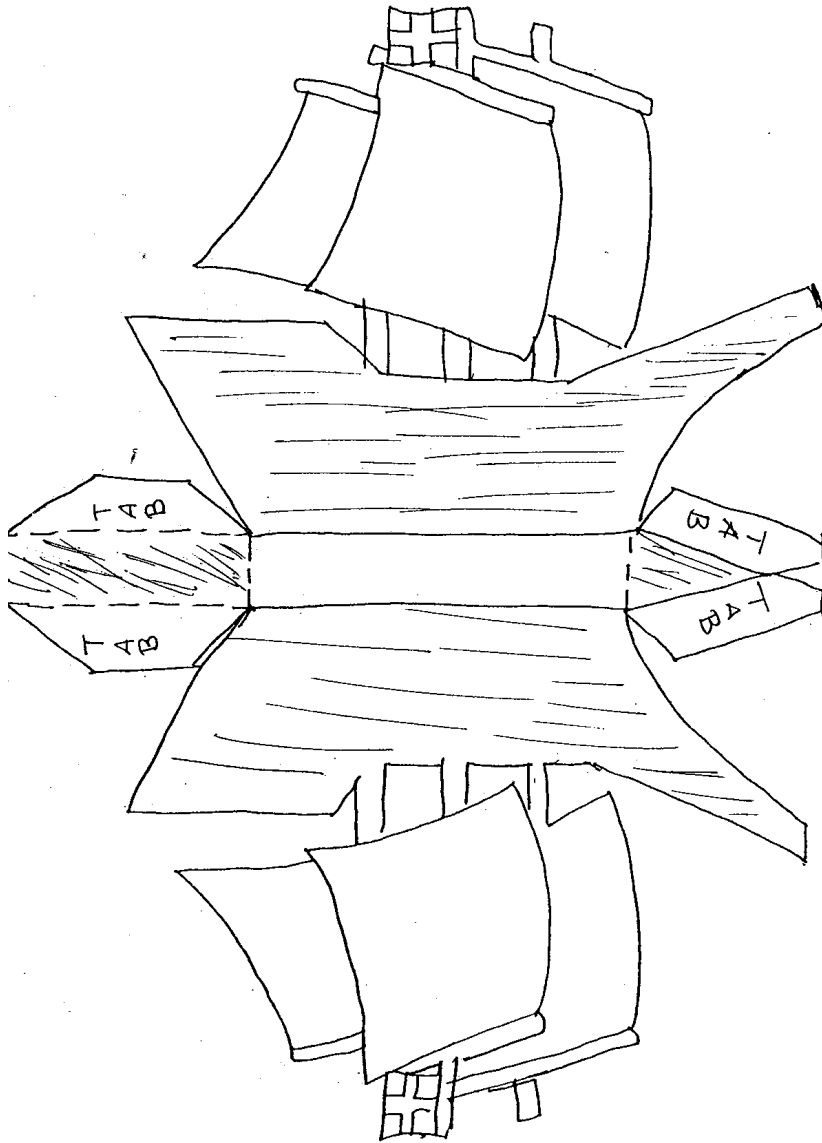
Exploration Tools

Students made the following exploration tools: a caravel and an astrolabe. Below are the directions and resources needed to make these tools in your classroom.

Caravel:



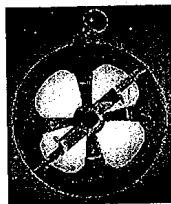
Caravel Ship:



Astrolabe:

Making a Simple Astrolabe

About this Activity
An astrolabe (pronounced AS'-tro-layb) is a device used for measuring altitude, including the height of objects in the sky. This activity covers the construction of the astrolabe; the next activity in the series, *Using a Simple Astrolabe*, focuses on how to use it.

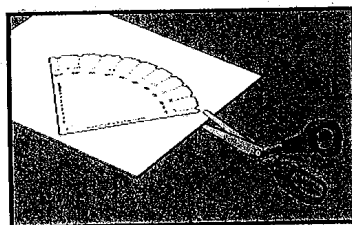
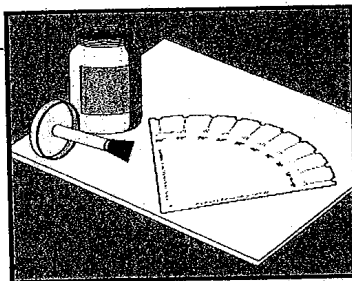


Used to determine the latitude of a ship at sea by measuring the altitude of the Sun or star, the mariner's Astrolabe was popular in the late 15th and early 16th Centuries.

Photo courtesy Adler Planetarium and Astronomy Museum.

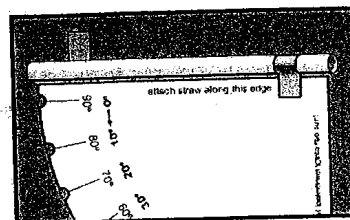
What to Do

- 1 Print out a copy of the **astrolabe drawing**.
- 2 Glue the copy of the astrolabe drawing to a piece of cardboard or file folder. Cut the astrolabe out with scissors.

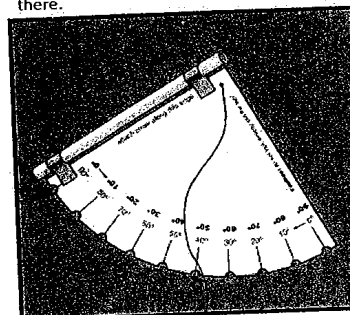


- 3 Using scissors or a paper hole-puncher, carefully make a small notch at each of the lines marked along the curved edge of the astrolabe. These notches will come in handy when you're measuring the angle between two celestial objects and you have to hold the astrolabe horizontally.
- 4 Cut a drinking straw to the same length as the sides of the astrolabe.

- 5 Tape the drinking straw to the edge of the astrolabe marked "Attach straw to this edge." Be careful not to tape the straw on the astrolabe, but just on the edge.

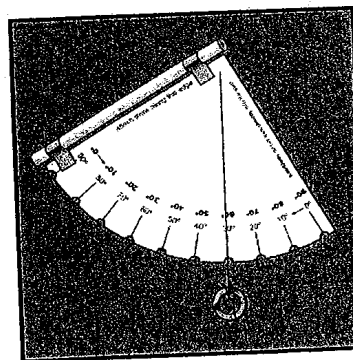


- 6 Carefully poke a small hole through the astrolabe where the "X" is marked, pass the string through it, and either knot the string at the back of the cardboard or tape it there.



- 7 Tie the small weight to the opposite (front) end of the string as shown.

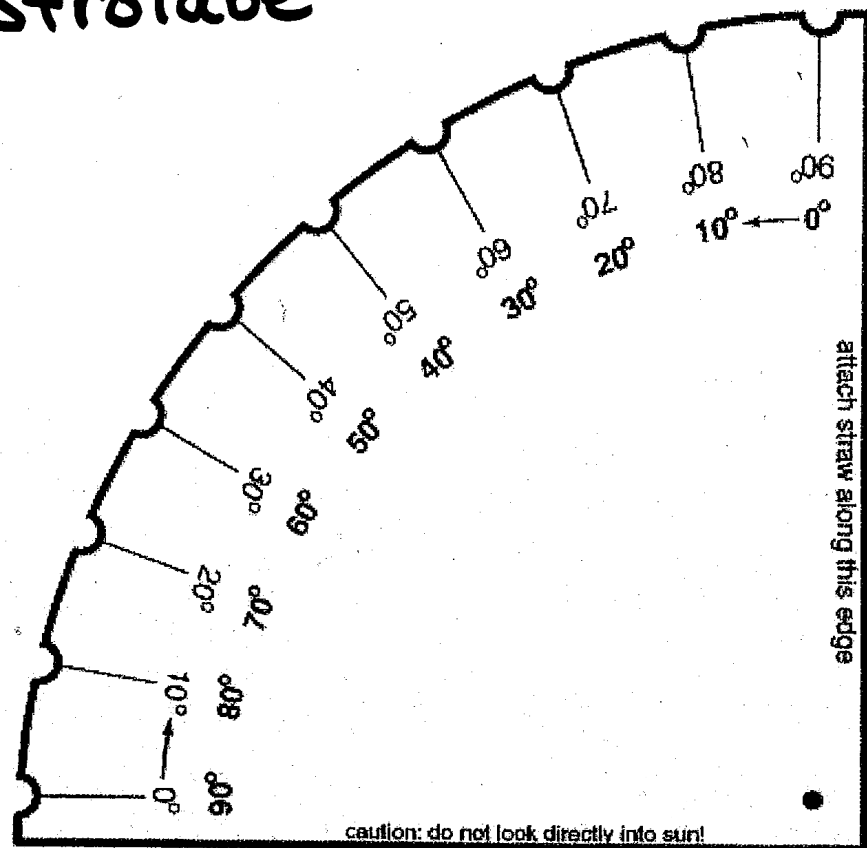
You have now constructed an astrolabe!

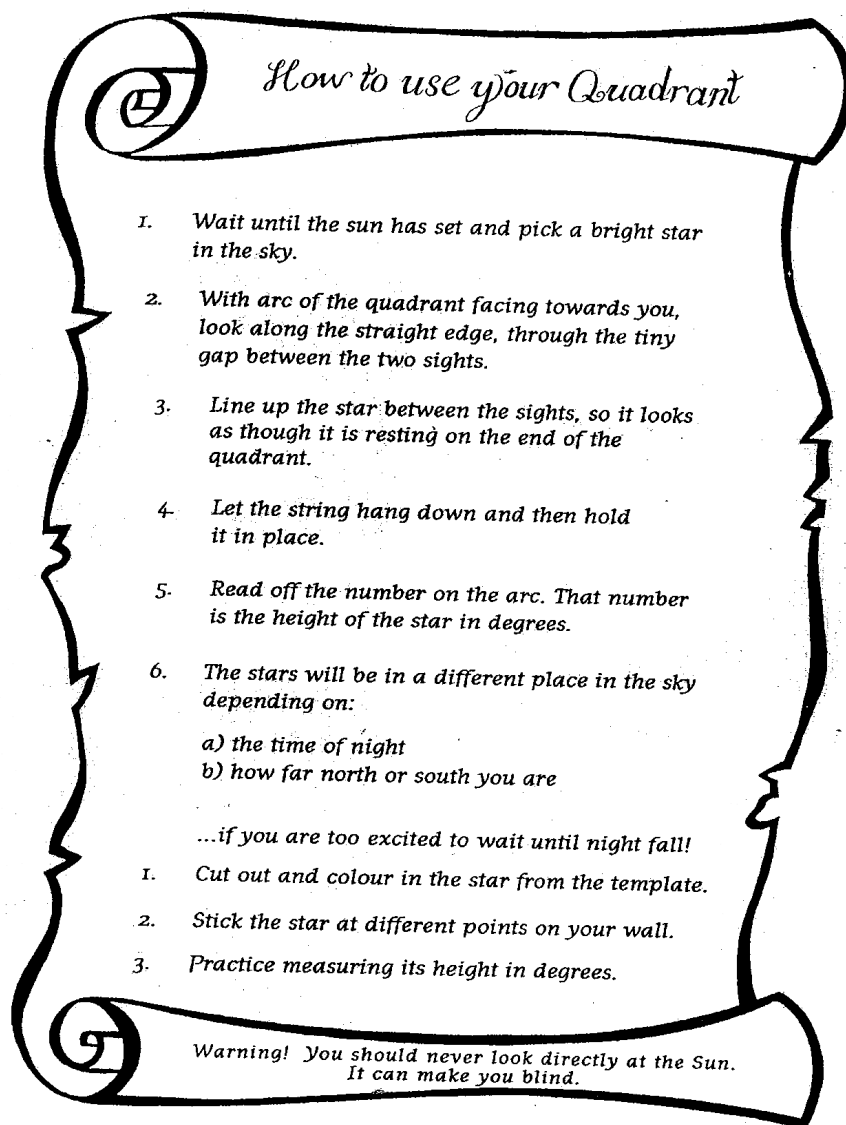


What's Going On

The astrolabe was invented in Greece either by Hipparchus, a 2nd century B.C. astronomer, or Apollonius of Perga, a 3rd century B.C. mathematician. For many centuries, it was used by both astronomers and navigators, and especially by the 15th century explorers who used it to determine latitude, longitude, and time of day.

Astrolabe



Sea and Learn – Using Your Quadrant

Maritime Museum Information

I took my class on a fieldtrip to the Maritime Museum in San Diego. The students were able to go aboard a caravel ship, learn how to tie ship knots, examine exploration tools, and discover what life was like on a caravel ship. This was an invaluable experience for my students and built their background knowledge about world exploration. Below is the information needed in order to plan a fieldtrip to the museum.

Guided Museum Tours



Museum Tours (K-12 and beyond...)

Let our well-trained tour guides, docents and living history presenters, help your group explore the great age of sail and steam. Tours are suitable for school field trips, scout groups, community groups or special interest groups.

Tours are organized along the needs and interests of your group. During your tour we will visit any number of our ships: *Star of India*, *HMS Surprise*, *B-39 Submarine*, the *1898 Berkeley* and the *1904 Medea* as well as our galleries and exhibits which display a wide variety of maritime topics. School Tours are presented in accord with class level curriculum.

(1.5 hours - 2 hours) Monday-Friday, \$4.50 per student, \$7.00 per Adult.

To reserve a date for a program, please call the Museum Tour Organizer,
(619) 234-9153 x 135

Section IV

Activities Material

Overview of Activities

Activity One: Analysis of Historical Figure

Activity Two: Timeline

Activity Three: Countries Exploration

Activity Four: Columbian Exchange

Activity Five: Research Report and Poster Paper

Overview of Activities

After students are exposed to world exploration through the prior experience activities, it is now time to dive into the curriculum. Activity One is a progression of research and can be continually happening when Activities Two, Three and Four are being implemented. Activity One will take approximately three weeks to complete the research process. However, activities Two-Four can be done in about one and a half hours, one social studies time period. Activity Five takes about three weeks because students are writing and presenting their research. Overall, all of the activities can be done within a six to eight week period (see Timeline in the Introduction chapter).

Activity One: Analysis of Historical Figure

Goal: Students will learn how to **analyze** the cause and effect of a historical figure.

- Students will research a historical figure during the world exploration time period. Students will be examining primary and secondary sources to analyze their historical figure's causes and effects on world exploration. Students will be taking notes in a project folder and starting to fill out their brainstorm tree map that they will use to write their research report.

Activity Two: Timeline Activity

Goal: Students will learn how to **connect** their historical figure's actions to the time period.

- Students will jigsaw various chapters in the textbook surrounding the world exploration era in order to connect their historical figure to the time period.

Activity Three: Countries Exploration

Goal: Students will learn how to **connect** and **apply** their historical figure's actions to the time period.

- Students will work with groups that researched historical figures from the same countries in order to connect their historical figure to the time period and apply what their historical figure was doing in regards to countries goals.

Activity Four: Columbian Exchange Activity

Goal: Students will learn how to apply their historical figure's actions to the world today.

- Students will become experts on a primary source picture about the Columbian Exchange and share their knowledge about it with their table group. Students will discuss how the Columbian Exchange relates to life today and their historical figure.

Activity Five: Research Report and Poster Board

Goal: Students will learn how to write about their historical figure and present their findings using primary and secondary sources as evidence.

- Students will use their tree map brainstorm that they have been writing on and their research notes to make a stance on how their historical figure changed history. Students will be able to draft and revise their writing.
- Students will publish their writing on a poster board that will have their findings in addition to primary sources that support their findings.

Activity One: Analysis of Historical Figure Lesson Plan

Historical and social science analysis skill: Analysis: Cause and Effect

Objectives: Students will determine the cause and effect of their historical figure in world exploration

Big ideas or concepts: Students will use the guiding question: “What were the causes and effects of world exploration?” to direct their research of a historical figure during that time period.

Resources:

List of explorers/historical figures during the exploration time period
Several Books about various explorers (see list)
Several websites (see list)
Tree Map Brainstorm
Project folder to take notes in
Primary Source Analysis Sheet

Preparation:

1. Do the prior experience activities in order for students to have a good grasp of what exploration is and when it started (optional)
2. Put students in groups based on explorers (optional: students can pick their own partners)

Procedure:

1. Review what the students know about world exploration
2. Explain to the students that they will be working with a partner (or individually if they want) to research a historical figure during the time of world exploration.
3. Have students get into groups to look at various books about historical figures during that time period then rotate the books until everyone has a chance to look at the books and decide who they are interested in
4. Have students then group up with other students that are interested in the same historical figure.
5. Discuss the importance of collaboration and that they will be working together for a long time and to make sure their partner is someone that they can work well with as well as their historical figure is very interesting to them.
6. Once partnerships are formed, discuss secondary sources and how to take notes using them (a tree map, outline format, bullet points). Make sure to stress to cite their sources since they will be collecting a lot of them and model how to cite sources. I modeled the project with Christopher Columbus.
7. Give students ample amounts of time to research using secondary sources and finding information about their historical figure. Focus their research on the causes and effects of their person during world exploration.

8. Throughout this time, pull small groups (or whole class if you would like) to model how to research and the various ways to take notes. Constantly model how to cite sources with your research on Christopher Columbus.
9. After two weeks of research, introduce primary sources and the difference between secondary and primary sources. Make a chart describing what is considered a primary source and how they know it.
10. Model finding a primary source for your research.
11. Model in small groups or whole class how to use the analysis of primary source form. Stress that historians use both primary and secondary sources to take a stance about history.
12. Give ample amounts of time to research using primary sources and finding information about their historical figure. Constantly check in to see how they are using the primary source analysis form in their notebook.
13. After about three weeks total of researching, have students start to fill out their tree map brainstorm about the causes and effects of their historical figure. Students will be adding to this as the activities progress in order to take a stance and present their findings.
14. Add student ideas and research to the class big idea chart on the causes and results of world exploration.

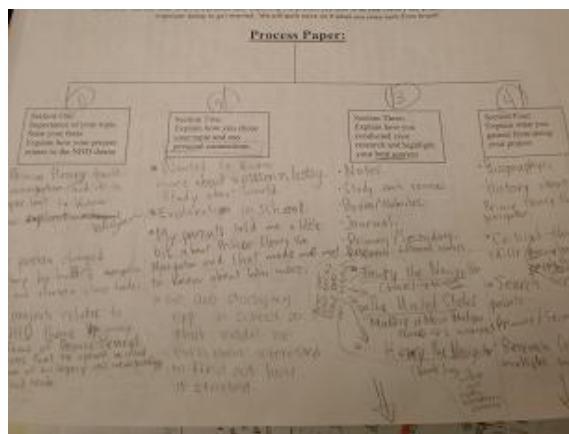
Assessment:

Project folder notes: to determine whether or not students found information pertaining to their historical figure

Primary Analysis form: to determine whether students understood primary sources and the connections made by them

Brainstorm tree map: to determine whether or not students understood the cause and effect of their historical figure on world exploration

Sample Brainstorm Tree Map



List of Explorers

I partner up my students in order for them to collaborate on their project and help each other out with their reading of primary and secondary sources.

William Bradford
Balboa
John Cabot
Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo
Coronado
Christopher Columbus (I used Christopher Columbus to model the entire project)
Cortez
Bartholomeu Dias
Sir Francis Drake
Vasco Da Gama
Prince Henry the Navigator
King Henry the Eighth
Henry Hudson
Queen Isabella
Ponce de Leon
Magellan
Martin Luther
Minuit
Pocahontas
Marco Polo
Sir Walter Raleigh
John Rolfe
John Smith
De Soto
Vaca
Vespucci
Veranzano

...And any others that you find in your social studies book or want the students to know about...

Researching Books and Websites

Books:

Here are some good series about explorers that my students used:

Social Studies Textbook

Groundbreakers Series of Explorers (Neil Champion)

In the Footsteps of Explorers (Katherine Bailey)

Explorers set one and two (Abdo Publishing Company)

Explorers of the New World (Library Binding)

Instructional Media Center for more individualized books!

Websites for

Primary and Secondary Sources

<http://library.thinkquest.org/J002678F/why.htm>

<http://www.gradebook.org/Age%20of%20Exploration%20History.htm>

<http://www.win.tue.nl/cs/fm/engels/discovery/primary.html>

<http://www.historyteacher.net/APEuroCourse/WebLinks/WebLinks-AgeOfExploration.html>

<http://www.historyteacher.net/APEuroCourse/WebLinks/WebLinks-AgeOfExploration.html#docs>

<http://www.enotes.com/colonial-america-primary-sources/european-exploration-settlement>

<http://www.schoolhistory.co.uk/year8links/explorers.shtml>

<http://www.mariner.org/exploration/index.php>

<http://www.win.tue.nl/cs/fm/engels/discovery/primary.html#second>

<http://www.historycentral.com/documents/Explorers.html>

<http://www.historycentral.com/documents/Colony.html>

http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/documents/documents_p1.cfm

Primary Source Analysis

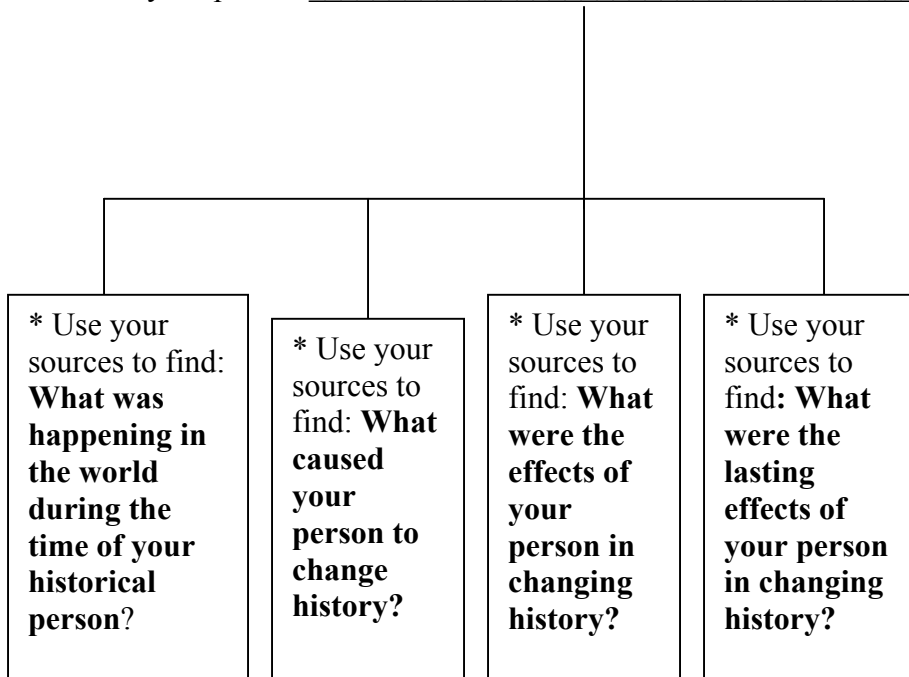
Bibliography:	
Style of Document: (secondary book, diary, internet site, pictures)	Point of View of Document: (“I” or secondary person)
Main Idea of Document:	Impact of Document: (How does it make you feel?)
Questions Raised by Document:	Further Research: (What are some other documents worth finding and reading?)
How does this source support how the person changed history?	

Tree Map Brainstorm

Directions: You have now collected all of your sources and are ready to synthesize the information. Use the graphic organizer below to organize your research. After you organize your research turn each of the categories into paragraphs. These paragraphs and images will be used for your research report and your poster presentation.

Title of your research report: _____

Thesis of your poster: _____



Activity Two: Timeline Activity

Lesson Plan

Historical and social science analysis skill: Connecting

Objectives: Students will connect their historical figure to the time period of world exploration.

Big ideas or concepts: Students will connect their research of a historical figure to the world during that time period.

Resources and Materials:

Textbook: Reflections: A New Nation (Optional: other texts that describe what is happening during the years of 1400-1600)

Chart Paper and Markers

Tree Map Brainstorm

Project folder to take notes in

Preparation:

1. Do the prior experience activities in order for students to have a good grasp of what exploration is and when it started (optional)
2. Put students in groups based on their historical figure (optional: students can pick their own partners)
3. Students research a historical figure and understand who that person is in history

Procedure:

4. Review what the students know about world exploration
5. Explain to the students that throughout their research they have been focused on the cause and effect parts of their tree map and now we are going to work on the connecting branch of their tree map.
6. Arrange students into about six groups of five to read a particular lesson in the textbook or the following topics:
 - Asia during world exploration (Silk Road)
 - African Trade Routes (increase trade and gold)
 - Europe (Trade and Religion)
 - Europe (Rebirth in Europe)
 - New Technology (Prince Henry and navigational tools)
 - Settlement and Colonies (Caribbean and the Americas)
7. Give students about thirty minutes to read their assigned chapter and make a timeline about their chapter. The timeline should have the dates of their chapter and the major events that happened during that time period.

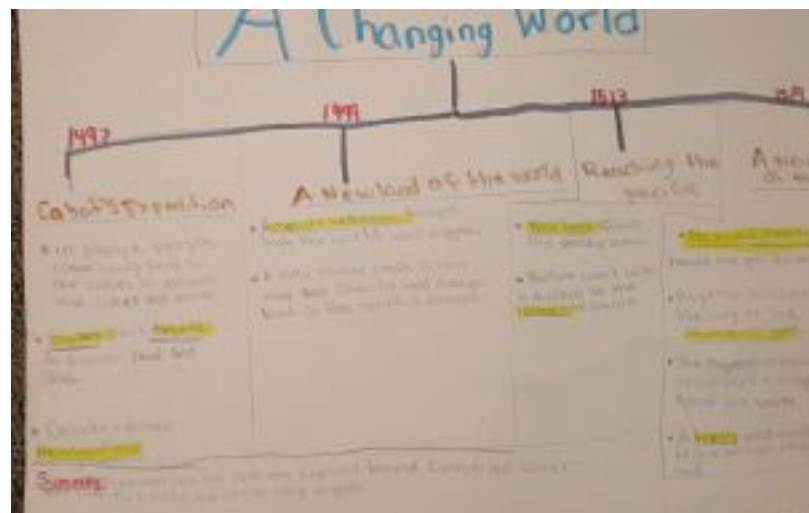
8. Groups will then present their posters in chronological order describing what was happening during their chapter's timeline. Post the timelines in chronological order (some will overlap) in a visible spot so students can refer to them.
9. Discuss the importance of each timeline and what was happening around the world during the time of world exploration.
10. Model picking out three events that have to do with Christopher Columbus' life. Write those three events down on your tree map.
11. Have students group with their research partners to pick out about three events that relate to their historical figure's life. Roam the room and help the various groups.
12. Different partnerships should share out their events and how it connects to their historical figures life.
13. Add ideas to the big idea chart under the causes of world exploration.

Assessment:

Project folder notes: to determine whether or not students found information pertaining to their historical figure

Brainstorm tree map: to determine whether or not students connected an event during world exploration to their historical figure

Sample Timeline



Activity Three: Countries Exploration

Lesson Plan

Historical and social science analysis skill: Connecting and Applying

Objectives: Students will connect their historical figure to what is happening during world exploration and apply their historical figure to the world today.

Big ideas or concepts: Students will be exploring the guiding question: “What were the causes and effects of world exploration?” by examining various events that connect to their historical figure and applying what their historical figure did to the world today.

Resources:

Several Books about various explorers (as reference)
 Poster Boards and Markers
 World Map (2 per group)
 Graphic Organizer of Country
 Tree Map Brainstorm
 Project folder with historical figure notes

Preparation:

1. Do the prior experience activities in order for students to have a good grasp of what exploration is and when it started (optional)
2. Put students in groups based on explorers (optional: students can pick their own partners)
3. Students are currently working on activity one (analyzing a historical figure) which is where research a historical figure and understand who that person is in history
4. Students completed activity two: timeline activity to have some events that connect their historical figure to what was happening during the time period of world exploration.

Procedure:

5. Review what the students know about world exploration
6. Explain to the students that they will be working with their research partner to map the route(s) that their explorer took on the provided map. (If students are not researching an explorer have them team up with an explorer group)
7. Group students by the country that their historical figure is from and give them a new world map. Have students work as a group to combine the explorers’ routes from the same country onto one world map.
8. Hand out the country graphic organizer. Students should work together to fill out each of the boxes in the graphic organizer describing their explorer, their explorer routes, what the explorer was after and what the explorer actually found.

9. Students then should write a paragraph about their country. They can use the sentence frames that are on the graphic organizer. The groups need to write their country's explorers, where their country's explorers traveled, what their country was after and what they actually found, what caused their country to explore and what were the results of their country's exploration.
10. Students will glue their country's map of the explorers' routes and their written paragraph on a poster board.
11. Students will present their country's findings to the class.
12. Discuss the reasons why different countries explored and what was the result of the exploration.
13. Model how to add on to your brainstorm tree map about different connections based on the various presentations (connect: other explorers exploring during the time period of your historical figure or what other countries were doing during the time of your historical figure).
14. Have students work with their partners to add more onto their tree map different connections that their historical figure has with what is happening in the world. Roam around the room and help different groups.
15. Have several groups share out their connections.
16. Model how to apply what was happening in the time of world exploration to lasting effects of world exploration such as settlements and colonies in the new world.
17. Have students work with their partners to add onto their tree map under lasting effects that their historical figure had in the world today. Roam around the room and help different groups.
18. Have several groups share out their applying of their historical figures actions and the lasting effects.
19. Add students' ideas to the class big idea chart under causes and results of world exploration.

Assessment:

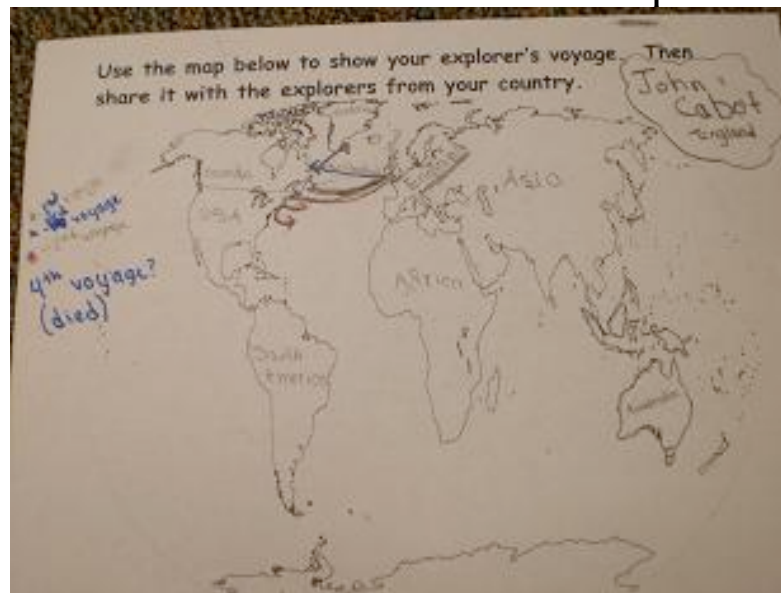
World Map: Research partner world map of their explorer's routes.

Country's World Map: to determine whether or not all of the explorer's routes were discussed and represented accurately

Country's Graphic Organizer and Poster: to determine whether or not the groups accurately represented their explorers, where they explored, what they were after, what they found and the cause and effect of world exploration for their country

Brainstorm tree map: to determine whether or not students added more on their connection branch and started to add ideas onto their applying (lasting effects) branch of their tree map

Research Partner World Map:



Country Graphic Organizer:

World Map Graphic Organizer

Our Country: Spain
 Our Ruler: Queen Isabella

Explorer	Explorer Routes	What Explorer was After	What Explorer Actually Found
Hernan Cortes	- Mexico - Yucatan	- gold - land	- gold - land - Mexico - Aztecs
Juan Ponce de Leon	- Spain - Cuba - Puerto Rico	- land - gold	- land - Puerto Rico
Balboa	- Darien - Panama - San Sebastian	- land - power	- Ocean - land - San Juan - Panama
Cabrillo	- San Francisco - San Diego	- land - gold - power	- California
Columbus	- Spain - Mexico	- gold - treasure	- South West of America

Country Graphic Organizer (Sentence Frames for Paragraph)

Based on the above information, write a paragraph about each column that states the explorers from that country, the routes they explored, what the explorers were after and what they explorers actually found. Use the sentence starters below to help your group get started but then rewrite your paragraph on a separate piece of paper and glue as your group's world map with your routes traced on it. Be ready to present your country's exploration to the class.

The explorers from Spain were Christopher Columbus, Vasco da Gama, and Ferdinand Magellan.

The explorers from Spain traveled to North, South, and Central America.

The explorers from Spain were trying to find gold, silver, and new lands.

The explorers from Spain found gold, silver, and new lands.

We think world exploration in Spain was caused by Christopher Columbus and Ferdinand Magellan.

We think world exploration in Spain resulted in finding new lands and starting colonies such as the Americas.

Final Country Poster:

Portugal

The explorers from Portugal were Vasco da Gama, Magellan, and Prince Henry.

The explorers from Portugal traveled to Africa, India, and around the world.

The explorers from Portugal were trying to find trade routes and money. Explorers from Portugal found new lands, and money.

We think world exploration in Portugal was caused by Prince Henry and Magellan, new technology, and trade.

We think world exploration in Portugal resulted in trade.

Use the map below to show your explorer's voyage. Then share it with the explorers from your country.

World Map

Use the map below to show your explorer's voyage. Then share it with the historical figures from your country.



Countries Graphic Organizer

Our Country: _____

Our Ruler: _____

Explorer	Explorer Routes	What Explorer was After	What Explorer Actually Found

Based on the information in the table, write a paragraph about each column that states the explorers from that country, the routes they explored, what the explorers were after and what they explorers actually found. Use the sentence starters below to help your group get started but then rewrite your paragraph on a separate piece of paper and glue on your group's world map with your routes traced on it. Be ready to present your country's exploration to the class.

The explorers from _____
were _____.

The explorers from _____
traveled to _____.

The explorers from _____
were trying to find _____.

The explorers from _____
found _____.

We think world exploration in _____
was caused by _____.

We think world exploration in _____
resulted in _____.

Activity Four: Columbian Exchange Activity

Lesson Plan

Historical and social science analysis skill: Applying

Objectives: Students will apply world exploration to effect of the Columbian Exchange and the lasting effects on the world today

Big ideas or concepts: Students will use the guiding question: “What were the causes and effects of world exploration?” to apply the lasting effects of world exploration to the world and their lives today.

Resources:

Columbian Exchange Pictures
 Reading on the Columbian Exchange
 Poster Boards and Different Colored Markers
 Tree Map Brainstorm
 Project folder of notes
 Timer

Preparation:

1. Do the prior experience activities in order for students to have a good grasp of what exploration is and when it started (optional)
2. Do Activities two and three and add their ideas to the big idea chart of world exploration.
3. Have students close to finishing their research on their historical figure (activity one).

Procedure:

4. Review what the students know about world exploration and the effects of world exploration. Refer to the big idea chart.
5. Put students into about 5 different groups with six students in each group.
6. Hand out a different Columbian Exchange picture to each of the students in a group and a poster board paper. Every student should have a different picture.
7. Set the timer for about 3 minutes for students to think about their picture and the meaning of it.
8. After the timer is up, students will then write their original thoughts about the picture on the poster paper. The poster paper should be divided into six boxes and numbered 1-6 according to the Columbian Exchange Picture numbers. Students will write their initial thoughts in the corresponding box on their poster paper with a colored marker.
9. Rearrange the students in the same picture groups. For example, if I have picture one I am in picture one group with every other student who has picture one.

10. Set the timer for about 10 minutes and have students discuss what they think their picture is about. The students are becoming experts about their picture because they are going to explain it to the other group members in their original group. Roam around the room and work with each of the groups.
11. Have students get back into their original mixed picture groups and have each student take turns explaining their picture to the group.
12. Have each student then rewrite their new understandings of their picture on the poster board in a different color pen or pencil.
13. Discuss the pictures as a group in relation to applying world exploration to the world (trade).
14. Model how to write these lasting effects on your tree map brainstorm.
15. Have students work with their research partner to write down some lasting effects of world exploration on their tree map brainstorm.
16. Have students share out their discoveries.
17. Add to the big idea chart of world exploration under effects.

Assessment:

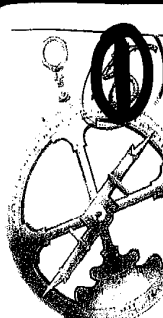
Columbian Exchange Poster: to determine whether or not students understood some lasting effects of world exploration

Brainstorm tree map: to determine whether or not students found lasting effects that relate to their historical figure on world exploration

Columbian Exchange Poster



Columbian Exchange Pictures:



PRIMARY SOURCE

Excerpt from
The Log of Christopher Columbus,
presented to Queen Isabella in
1493.

At dawn we saw . . . people,
and I went ashore in the
ship's boat . . .

The people here call this island
Guanahani (gwahn uh HAHN ee) in
their language, and their speech is
very fluent, although I do not
understand any of it. They are
friendly . . . people who [carry no
weapons] except for small spears,
and they have no iron. I showed
one my sword, and through igno-
rance he grabbed it by the blade
and cut himself. Their spears are
made of wood, to which they attach
a fish tooth at one end, or some
other sharp thing.

. . . They traded and gave every-
thing they had with good will, but
it seems to me that they have very
little and are poor in everything. . . .

This afternoon the people . . .
came swimming to our ships and in
boats made from one log. They
brought us parrots, balls of cot-
ton thread, spears, and many
other things. . . . For these items
we traded them little glass beads
and hawks' bells.

. . . They ought to make good
and skilled servants, for they repeat
very quickly whatever we say to
them. . . . I will take six of them to
Your Highnesses when I depart.

fluent: smooth and rapid
ignorance: not knowing
hawks' bells: small bells that are attached to
the legs of a captive hawk





2

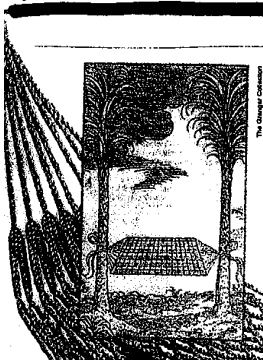
The
brought American plants
to Europe, including
chili peppers, tomatoes,
and corn.





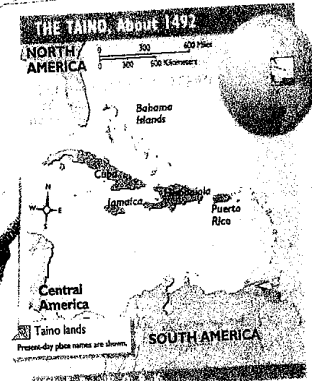
The Columbian exchange brought wheat and
horses to the Americas. However, as this
drawing (above) by a Spanish priest shows,
disappeared.

3



Taino hammocks might have
looked like the one in this
Spanish drawing (left).
It is almost the same as
hammocks used today.

THE TAINO, About 1492



Central
America

SOUTH AMERICA

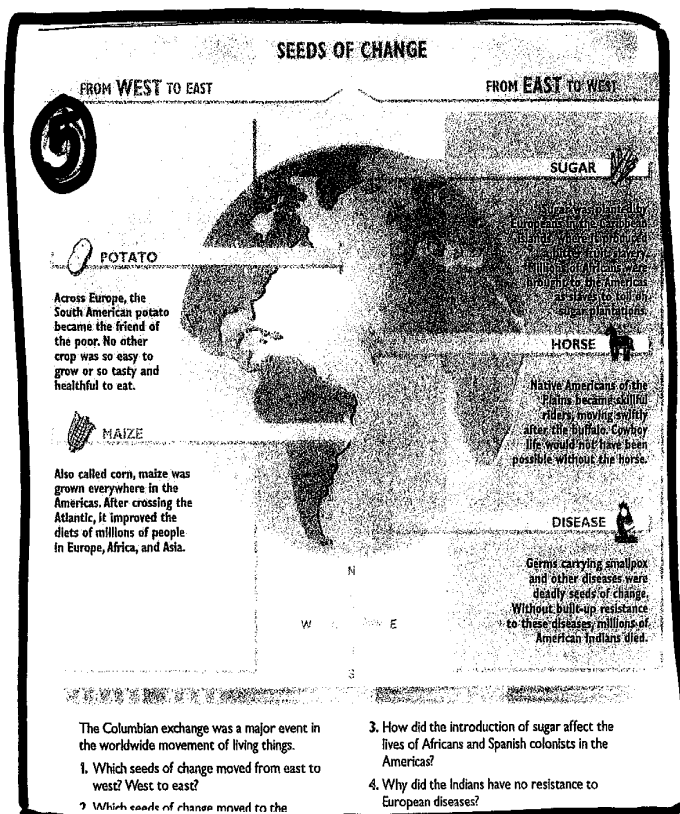
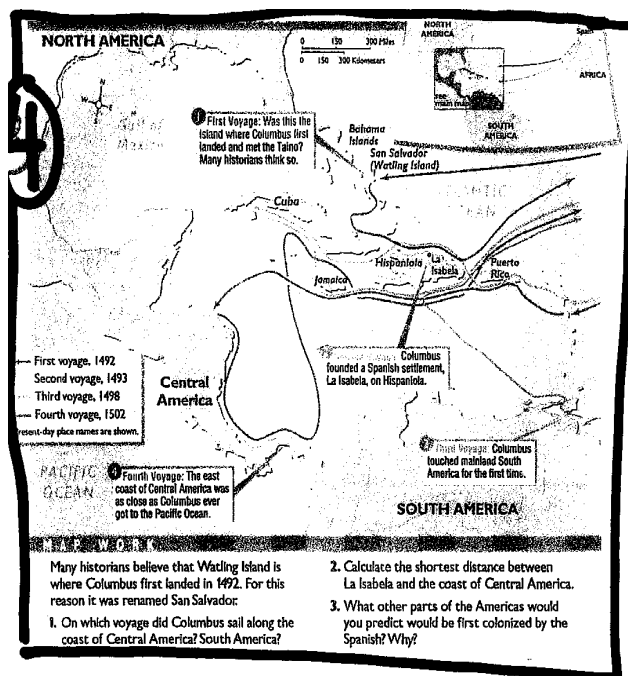
Taino lands

Present-day place names are shown.

The Taino were one of the major peoples living
on islands in the Caribbean Sea in 1492.

1. What are some of the islands on which the
Taino lived?

the continent was the Taino



6

COLUMBUS PAVES THE WAY

Christopher Columbus (1451–1506) did not discover America – that happened 15,000 years before his journey began.



Columbus landing in America

It wasn't the first European to reach the New World – that happened at least 500

years earlier. Nor, on any of his four voyages, did he ever reach the North American mainland itself – that would happen seven years after his death. What, then, was the significance of that cry of *Tierra! Tierra!* (Land! Land!) that rang out from the first of his three small ships in the predawn light of October 12, 1492?



THE NAVIGATOR
OF GENOA

By the middle of the 15th century, the idea that the earth was round – and not flat – was generally accepted by scientists and mathematicians. Sailors were more sceptical. But Columbus believed not only that the world was round, but also that he could reach the East by sailing west. He was equally certain that God had *"revealed to me that it was feasible to sail... to the Indies, and placed in me a burning desire to carry out this plan!"* He was right. But how difficult it was. It could only have been accomplished by a man of stubborn self-

confidence, and a navigator of genius. And the consequence of Columbus's mistaken discovery in 1492? It doubled the size of the known world – and changed the course of history.

Born in the Italian seaport of Genoa, Columbus was the son of a master weaver, but the sea was his passion. He spent nine years learning from the Portuguese, the most accomplished navigators in the world. During those years, his obsession was born. He was bright, enthusiastic, curious, and impressive – six feet tall with red hair, and a burning ambition.

CARAVELS

The three small ships used by Columbus on his voyage to the New World were caravels – known as explorer's ships. Designed by Portuguese shipbuilders, the caravel was small, light, fast, and easy to sail. Columbus sailed in three ships: the *Niña* (nickname of the *Santa Clara*), the *Pinta*, and the *Santa Maria*, whose fame is assured wherever his great feat of seamanship is mentioned.



Activity Five: Research Report and Poster Paper

Explorer Expository Assignment Lesson Plans

The following lesson plans are for a three-week unit on writing and presenting a research report. It takes the students through the writing process from brainstorming to publishing their piece. Each of the different writing processes have mini-lessons and supports to help teach the focus. To start planning my writing units, I think about what my students know how to do, what they need to do to write the piece and what they will do when writing their research report. Then I think about the background knowledge that they already have writing about this genre or topic. Afterwards, based on what my students' needs are, I plan the unit. Each mini-lesson is about a fifteen-minute lesson that has to do with the focus for the day. The last column are the various supports that I give my students to help them with that lesson. When the students finish their research report, they are ready to make their poster board. The poster board guidelines will help determine what needs to be on the board and how it needs to look. I have included two examples of finished poster boards.

What students know how to do: structure within paragraphs and essay, organize ideas, focus their research, main/central idea with supporting details, locate relevant information, conjunctions, prepositional phrases

What students need to do: Thesis statement about their research project, Voice: point of view: strong stance of their thesis, interpret primary and secondary sources, Organize essay with a thesis paragraph, topic sentences, concluding sentences, quotes and pictures to support their thesis statement, dependent and independent clauses

Students will: Write a 350 word expository essay proving how their individual changed history. Students will explain what was happening in the world during the time of their historical person, what caused their person to change history, what were the results of their person changing history and what were the lasting effects of their person changing history. Students will support their findings with primary sources and captions.

Background Knowledge:

Other Expository Writing: History Day Projects

Explorer Research of Narrative Writing

Primary and Secondary sources on their explorer

Writing Standards: Research and Technology 1.3, 1.4 and 1.6
Writing Applications 2.3

California Department of Education. (1997) English-language arts content standards for California Public Schools. Retrieved on March 1, 2009 from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/histsoscistnd.pdf>

Focus:	Mini-Lessons:	Supports:
Brainstorming:	Rubric	History Day Rubric and Expository Text Rubric
Central Idea: Thesis (voice of thesis and paper)	Examples of expository writing Analyzing different thesis examples and brainstorm thesis	Expository Examples from History Day Past NHD Examples of Thesis Interactive Writing
Explain and Interpret primary and secondary sources	How to organize their writing with the tree map Happening in World Cause and result of person changing history Lasting Effects	Tree Map to organize their thinking Timeline of World Exploration Chart: Cause and Effect Chart: Flow map of what impact it had today
Drafting: Drafting your essay	Turning your brainstorm into an essay	Outline of essay including thesis paragraph
Revising: Topic Sentence	How to create a topic sentence for supporting details based on tree map brainstorm	Teacher modeling Tree Map Brainstorm Highlighting with peers
Concluding Sentence	Restating main idea in concluding sentence	Teacher modeling Tree Map Brainstorm Highlighting with peers

Independent and Dependent Clauses	Revise expository paper adding in at least 4 clauses	Teacher Modeling Highlighting with peers
Editing:	Revisit class rubric of what needs to be included in expository	Rubric Charts Read Around Groups
Publish: Support Essay with primary sources and captions	Reviewing primary sources to find relevant visuals for presentation board and writing captions	Teacher Modeling Peer/Small Group support
Self Evaluation of expository Text	Self evaluate	Self evaluation form
Poster Presentation	How to make your poster visually appealing	SDCC Art Instructor UCSD Art Students Examples of Posters

Class Research Report Rubric

The following rubric was co-created with the students in my fifth grade class. I used the district's research report rubric to guide our class discussion.

The following components need to be included in your final research paper in order to receive a proficient grade.

1. Evidence of multiple sources used to support research
2. A thesis about your historical figure's legacy in history
3. Organize your research report into five paragraphs:
 - Thesis
 - Historical figure's actions connects with the world exploration time period
 - Causes of your historical figure's actions
 - Results of your historical figure's actions
 - Lasting effects of your historical figure's actions and the world today
4. Topic sentences for each paragraph
5. Concluding sentences for each paragraph
6. Four independent or dependent clauses

Poster Guidelines

Based on your research, create a poster presentation that includes the following:
(Use this page as a check-off list!)

Content:

Make sure the content of your poster is clear, precise and efficient!

- Title of your research (72 or larger)
- Thesis is visible and in a central area
- Paragraph about: What is happening in the World?
- Paragraph about: Causes of your explorer
- Paragraph about: Results of your explorer
- Paragraph about: Lasting Results of your explorer
- 10 Primary Sources (pictures/maps/etc.) are explained with captions
- Timeline about your topic

Layout:

Make sure the layout of your poster is well organized, neatly put together and visually pleasing!

- Poster size (30x40)
- Use all areas of the board
- Space content evenly on display board
- Use font size 32 for all written text

Visual Effects:

Make sure your poster is attractive and creative!

- Use a maximum of four colors for your poster
- Choose colors that complement each other
- Pick one solid color for your background color
- Choose a picture that relates to your topic to paint on your solid color background
- Frame all text and pictures with two complimentary colors (keep your display board color in mind)

***Now that you know what is required on your poster board presentation, use the back of this paper for your design layout.**

Expository Writing Outline:

Paragraph One: Thesis

Topic Sentence-_____

Supporting Detail One-_____

Supporting Detail Two-_____

Supporting Detail Three-_____

Concluding Sentence-_____

Paragraph Two: What was happening in the world during the time of your historical person?

Topic Sentence-_____

Supporting Detail One-_____

Supporting Detail Two-_____

Supporting Detail Three-_____

Concluding Sentence-_____

Paragraph Three: What was happening in the world during the time of your historical person?

Topic Sentence-_____

Supporting Detail One-_____

Supporting Detail Two-_____

Supporting Detail Three-_____

Concluding Sentence-_____

Paragraph Four: What were the results of your person in changing history?

Topic Sentence-_____

Supporting Detail One-_____

Supporting Detail Two-_____

Supporting Detail Three-_____

Concluding Sentence-_____

Paragraph Five: What were the lasting effects of your person in changing history?

Topic Sentence-_____

Supporting Detail One-_____

Supporting Detail Two-_____

Supporting Detail Three-_____

Concluding Sentence-_____

History Day Scavenger Hunt

Directions: While exploring the fifth grade History Day projects, use the clues below to find famous historical people during the exploration era! Look at the posters and talk to the fifth grade students to help complete your scavenger hunt!

1. A famous queen who gave money to Christopher Columbus. _____
2. Conqueror of the Aztecs. _____
3. Mapper of California. _____
4. A man who started a new religion. _____
5. Present at the first Thanksgiving. _____
6. An adventurer who went to Asia and wrote about his travels. _____
7. Two explorers that explored Canada. _____ and _____
8. Found a trade route to India. _____
9. An explorer that went to Florida. _____
10. The navigator who started a business to get money so he could explore more. _____
11. A pirate who was feared by all. _____
12. A person who did whatever the queen told him to do. _____
13. A woman who symbolizes peace and friendship. _____
14. A king who wanted it all. _____
15. An explorer who went on four important voyages. _____
16. A woman who is now known as "Bloody Mary." _____

Poster Examples



Section V

List of Formal Assessments

World Exploration Essay

Reflection of Project

Evaluation Rubrics

Student Samples

World Exploration Essay

At the end of the curriculum, I gave students a world exploration essay to summarize the entire world exploration time period. The class reviewed world exploration and then students wrote the essay in one and a half hours. I then collected the essay, reflections, research reports and poster boards to examine the effectiveness of the unit by using the evaluation rubrics.

Name: _____

World Exploration Assessment



Directions:

Write an essay below describing the causes and effects/results of world exploration. Use the shared readings, charts, maps, your research and activities to help answer the big idea question about world exploration. You might want to make a tree map to brainstorm your ideas before you begin.

Reflection of Project

I gave my students the following reflection on their project. The students took it home as homework for about three nights. This gave me insight into what I would change and or keep the same next implementation, what the students learned from the entire project, and what they were most proud of about the project.

Reflection Essay

You are to reflect on your history day project. Please write a paragraph for each question below, that is a total of five paragraphs.

You are to be thoughtful!

1. What did you think of the History Day project?
(research, writing, presentation board, history day fair)
2. What did you learn about while you completed the project? (exploration, famous historical figure, interesting facts, ways to write)
3. What are you most proud of with this project?
4. What would you do differently if you could?
5. What grade would you give yourself? (Proficient, Basic, Below Basic) Why? Explain your reasons for the grade.

Evaluation Rubrics

I used the following rubrics to evaluate the effectiveness of my curriculum. I scored each of my students on their research report, poster board and world exploration essay using the rubrics. The rubrics helped analyze which students met the objectives and which students did not meet the objectives of the curriculum.

Research Report:	Proficient: 3 points	Basic: 2 points	Below Basic: 1 point
Connection	*state 3 things that were happening in the world during the time of world exploration *all stated things relate to their historical figure	*state 2 things that were happening in the world during the time of world exploration *at least one stated thing relates to their historical figure	*state 1 thing that was happening in the world during the time of world exploration *stated thing does not relate to their historical figure
Analysis	*Cause: state at least 3 causes of why historical figure changed history *Effect: state at least 3 effects of what historical figure did *All of the causes and effects are related to each other	*Cause: state at least 2 causes of why historical figure changed history *Effect: state at least 2 effects of what historical figure did *Some of the causes and effects are related to each other	*Cause: states one causes of why historical figure changed history *Effect: states one effects of what historical figure did *The causes and effects are not related to each other
Application	*State at least 3 lasting effects of their historical figure by relating it to their life and/or the world around them *All of the lasting effects are related to their effect on the world	*State at least 2 lasting effects of their historical figure by relating it to their life and/or the world around them *Some of the lasting effects are related to their effect on the world	*State 1 lasting effects of their historical figure by relating it to their life and/or the world around them *None of the lasting effects are related to their effect on the world

Poster Board:	Proficient: 3 points	Basic: 2 points	Below Basic: 1 point
Connection	*has primary source(s) to provide evidence of the world during the time of world exploration *captions clearly provide reasoning for including primary source and its connection to the world	*has primary source to provide evidence of the world during the time of world exploration *captions provide some reasoning for including primary source and/or does not include its connection to the world	*Does not provide any primary source support for connecting their historical figure to the world during the time of world exploration *no captions are present or captions are confusing to understand
Analysis	*has primary source (s) to provide evidence of the cause and effect of how their historical figure changed history *captions clearly provide reasoning for including primary source and its relationship to the cause/effect of their historical figure	*has primary source (s) to provide evidence of the cause and effect of how their historical figure changed history *captions provide some reasoning for including primary source and/or does not include its relationship to the cause/effect of their historical figure	*Does not provide any primary source support for their cause and effect analysis of their historical figure *no captions are present or captions are confusing to understand
Application	*has primary source (s) to provide evidence of the lasting effects of their historical figure by relating it to their life and/or the world around them *captions clearly provide reasoning for including primary source and the lasting effect of their person	*has primary source to provide evidence of the lasting effects of their historical figure by relating it to their life and/or the world around them *captions provide some reasoning for including primary source and/or does not include its relationship to the lasting effect	*Does not provide any primary source support for the lasting effects of their historical figure on the world today *no captions are present or captions are confusing to understand

World Exploration Essay:	Proficient: 3 points	Basic: 2 points	Below Basic: 1 point
Connection	*Gives in depth definition of what exploration is *States 3 or more things happening during the time of exploration *Connects world exploration with two or more explorers/historical figures during that time period.	*Gives a definition of what exploration is *States 2 things happening during the time of exploration *Connects world exploration with at least one explorer/historical figure during that time period.	*Gives a brief or no definition of what exploration is *States 1 thing or nothing happening during the time of exploration *Does not connects world exploration with an explorer/historical figure during that time period.
Analysis	*States three or more causes of world exploration *States at three or more results/effects of world exploration *The causes and results relate to each other	*States at least two causes of world exploration *States at least two results/effects of world exploration *The causes and results somewhat relate to each other	*States one or no causes of world exploration *States at one or no results/effects of world exploration *The causes and results do not relate to each other
Application	*States at least 3 ways that world exploration has shaped the world today or their lives today	*States 1 or 2 ways that world exploration has shaped the world today or their lives today	*Does not state any way that world exploration has shaped the world today or their lives today

Student Samples

Here are two research report samples. These samples can be used as a model or as a teaching tool for implementing the curriculum.

Sample One:

Discovery of California

Did you know that in 1542, Cabrillo, a European explorer, sailed to Navidad and México but he never returned again?

Cabrillo changed history by finding out California was not an island. It was great that Cabrillo mapped California and let people know about Californian Indians.

They were many things happening in the world during Cabrillo 's time. First, there was a war of Crusades. Also, there was of school of navigation, this led to the map of the world getting bigger and more people were exploring. In addition, Spain wanted gold, power, land and routes to Asia due to the war. Explorers wanted to get those things for their country such as Juan Ponce de Leon and Sir Francis Drake. Also, there were missionaries wanting to spread God's word. It was a great time for exploring, especially for Cabrillo.

Many things caused Cabrillo to change history. Cabrillo went to explore because he wanted to claim land, power, and gold for Spain. In addition, Cabrillo wanted to find a northwest passage, the route to Asia. It was a great time for explorers to go find the route to Asia because kings and queens gave money to explorers since the trade routes were closed due to the war.

There were several results to Cabrillo's voyage. One result was that he was the first European to explore those new parts. Another result is he made it possible for further exploration in California. Cabrillo made a map of California and he documented meeting the natives. Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo found out California was not an island. It was a great time and great results of Cabrillo to change history.

There were many effects of Cabrillo changing history. Cabrillo wrote about California Natives and how they lived.

Also, Cabrillo discovered the San Diego bay, where we live today.

There were many things Cabrillo did to change history for the future.

Sample Two:**African Slave Trade**

Prince Henry's legacy in history is starting a West African slave trade. Prince Henry started a navigation school and needed money to explore Africa. His action resulted in a world with new technology and trade. This led to travel, new technology and trade.

During the time of Prince Henry the Navigator, there were people starting to explore all over the world. The Printing Press published Marco Polo's adventures encouraging exploration. People wanted to trade with Asia but the Crusades blocked the way to Asia for trade. It was the right time for Henry to change history and further the business of exploration.

The main thing that caused Prince Henry to change history was money! But why did this Prince need money to explore? Henry knew that if he sold slaves, he'd get more money and he did.

The Prince hoped his slave trade would be successful so he could continue to explore and it was successful! Henry earned money to go explore. He continued the slave trade to gain more money for his explorations! Henry was rich again and continued to explore!

Henry left some of his lasting effects for the world. Today we have new ships, and new technology like Prince Henry's school produced. Today, we still have trading. Today we have new ships and planes to travel. Prince Henry's lasting effect is new technology, trade, and travel.

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