

2013

A Handbook of Learner-Centered Projects to Supplement Fifth Grade, Social Studies Curriculum

CharRe Margaretha Burnum
Central Washington University

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.cwu.edu/graduate_projects



Part of the [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#), and the [Elementary Education and Teaching Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Burnum, CharRe Margaretha, "A Handbook of Learner-Centered Projects to Supplement Fifth Grade, Social Studies Curriculum" (2013). *All Graduate Projects*. 68.
https://digitalcommons.cwu.edu/graduate_projects/68

This Graduate Project is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Student Projects at ScholarWorks@CWU. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Graduate Projects by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@CWU. For more information, please contact scholarworks@cwu.edu.

A HANDBOOK OF LEARNER-CENTERED PROJECTS TO SUPPLEMENT
FIFTH GRADE, SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM

A Project Report

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty

Central Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Education

Master Teacher

By

CharRe Margaretha Burnum

March 2013

ABSTRACT

A HANDBOOK OF LEARNER-CENTERED PROJECTS TO SUPPLEMENT FIFTH GRADE, SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM

by

CharRe Margaretha Burnum

March 2013

This handbook has been created in an effort to assist teachers with establishing a hands-on, learner-centered environment. The purpose of this handbook is to assist educators with teaching fifth grade, Social Studies curriculum. This handbook will help teachers to organize fifth grade expectations into thematic, learner-centered, intrinsically motivated projects that will allow for a well-planned, teacher facilitated, and educational experience. This is more than just a how-to manual; it includes the theoretical and empirical basis thesis for using thematic, cross-curricular projects, to enhance student retention, motivation and independent learning.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I	INTRODUCTION.....1
	Statement of the Problem.....2
	Purpose of the Project.....3
	Significance of the Project.....3
	Limitations of the Project.....4
	Definitions of Terms.....5
	Project Overview.....7
II	LITERATURE REVIEW.....8
	History of Learner-Centered Education.....8
	Opponents of Learner-Centered Education.....14
	Multicultural Benefits.....15
	Assessing Learner Centered Education.....17
	Summary.....18
III	BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT.....21
	Project Development.....21
	Project Procedure.....22
	Project Implementation.....22
IV	DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT.....26
	You are the Teacher.....27
	Newspaper Project.....28
	World Leader Journal.....28
V	SUMMARY.....29
	Conclusion.....29
	Implications.....30
	Recommendations.....31
	REFERENCES.....32

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

Teachers have an opportunity to establish a trustworthy, cooperative working environment, where students feel as though they have a distinct role in how they will be learning; for instance, when children's pleasure conflicts with the theorists' convictions, so much the worse for pleasure (Flinders & Thornton, 2009). Thus, there is widespread support suggesting that learner-centered pedagogy is a promising alternative and of practical interest to educators of any developmental age or subject area. This handbook was created to share an organized collection of thematic, learner-centered projects which are meant to supplement fifth grade, social studies curriculum. This curriculum was put together to organize and assist fifth-grade teachers with establishing a learner-centered environment within their classroom. This learner-centered environment initiates the ability for students to easily connect prior knowledge and newly learned concepts. More importantly, allows for students to explore their strengths and interests into the assigned activities thus giving these activities meaning.

Instruction is meaningful to students when students are provided with choices regarding how their educational goals are implemented. The teacher can create a learner-centered environment by applying instruction which supports multiple intelligences, different modes of learning, and learning styles (Turner, (2011). Students in turn are self-motivated as their emotions are directly connected to the outcome of the said project. This then creates a positive learning environment and establishes meaningful relationships between the student and teacher and the student and class (Garr, Salinas, 2009).

Statement of the Problem

The problem of the lack of teacher resources exists in learner-centered components because hands-on projects that match fifth grade social studies curriculum are not readily available to educators. The reason this is a problem is because 5th Grade social studies handbooks are rarely made specifically for the purpose of learner-centered education. The importance of studying this problem is for educators to become aware that student motivation toward their life-long education is based on a personal investment to learning (Egan, 2002). Traditional classrooms provide the teacher with unlimited control over their academia; however, in the traditional setting students are not given the opportunity to decide how the academia will be taught.

This educational inadequacy does not allow students to practice self-direction, self-control or time management skills (Pereira, Smith-Adcock, 2011). Today's classroom needs to promote learner-centered education for many reasons; but one disparaging fact is that the global educational system is leaving America in the academic dust. Several countries such as Finland and Singapore have responded to the ever changing need for innovative, creative and analytical thinkers. In America's traditional classroom educators only (inadvertently) widen the already ever growing gap that separates American children from those in other countries who are at this very moment sitting in learner-centered classrooms (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

The issue being studied here is that the traditional classroom setting needs to be replaced with learner-centered education. This handbook was created to assist teachers with establishing a learner-centered environment. Educators need to be provided with an

educational resource that offers ready to teach projects relating to 5th Grade social studies curriculum.

Purpose of the Project

This handbook was created in an effort to assist teachers with establishing a hands-on, learner-centered environment. The purpose of this handbook is to assist educators with teaching fifth grade, social studies curriculum. This handbook will help teachers to organize fifth grade expectations into thematic, learner-centered, intrinsically motivated projects that will allow for a well-planned, teacher facilitated, and educational experience. This is more than just a how-to manual; it includes the theoretical and empirical basis thesis for using thematic, cross-curricular projects to enhance student retention, motivation and independent learning. This handbook provides thematic, learner-centered projects for fifth grade, Social Studies Curriculum based on the Washington State Educational Common Core Standards (OSPI, 2012). At the conclusion of each project section, a template is provided that will allow for educators to plug in alternate subject matter into the said project. This handbook was put together to organize and assist fifth-grade teachers with establishing a learner-centered environment within their classroom.

Significance of the Project

As John Dewey (1897) strongly states, “I believe that to endeavor to stimulate or arouse the emotions apart from their corresponding activities, is to introduce an unhealthy and morbid state of mind” (p. 83), Dewey believed passionately that children needed to be emotionally invested in their learning. Piaget clearly indicated the importance of student self-motivation through exploration and personally driven learning (McLeod, 2009).

Vygotsky supports the idea that students discover their zone of proximal development through learning which is self-motivated and of direct importance to the learner (Vygotsky, 1978). Montessori (1967) believed that students must have an invested interest in their learning in order to be motivated to learn. She indicates that by teachers providing materials or 'projects' that correspond to this motivation is necessary to a child's development. This handbook, created for 5th grade students, will enable them to be challenged intellectually and to become self-motivated learners. This handbook will get students excited about their learning, engage them in their learning, and move them forward to becoming the life-long learners that they were meant to be.

Limitations of the Project

The projects in this handbook were created by 5th Grade students and facilitated by the teacher, over the course of five years. This handbook took two years to construct during the process of a graduate program. As data were collected, necessary to create this handbook, it was quickly realized that in an effort to display the student-led projects which have so creatively come together within this specific classroom, will in effect, inadvertently remove the 'student-led' element when educators attempt to initiate the projects within this handbook. By the educators initiating or leading these projects, the projects themselves, they will lose the student-led quality about them. Educators need to be aware that when they use the projects with-in this handbook they attempt to allow the student-led element to occur by having students involved in the process of initiating the said projects.

Another element that may affect the success of these projects is class size.

These projects were created by classes of 16 (2008), 10 (2009), 12 (2010), 9 (2011) and

13 (2012) students. Gender make up included; 10 female and 6 males in 2008, 6 females and 4 males in 2009, 7 females and 5 males in 2010, 5 females and 4 males in 2011 and 9 females and 4 males in 2012. To implement these projects in a classroom consisting of more than 16 students may impose unforeseen complications regarding the amount of time needed to complete the said projects.

Classroom demographics may also play a role as to whether or not the activities are successful. These projects were created in and for a private non-denominational classroom environment consisting of students belonging to: small class sizes (16 and under), middle and high class socio-economic status, and zero students with exceptionalities, no second language learners and high parent involvement with a 9 out of 10 weekly parental involvement ratio. This then poses concerns for a class setting of more than 16 students, students of low-socio economic status families, students with learning exceptionalities or second language learners and low parental involvement. Projects in this handbook will inevitably need to be modified and enhanced in order to fit the needs of the classroom with specifications of the later.

Definition of Terms

The following are definitions which will help the reader to understand many educational terms used throughout the project.

Complex learning: “The acquisition of new content of skills that must be learned in multiple steps” (Jensen, 2009).

Constructivist Teaching: “Based on the belief that learning occurs as learners are actively involved in a process of meaning and knowledge construction rather than passively receiving information. Learners are the makers of meaning and knowledge.

Constructivist teaching fosters critical thinking and creates motivated and independent learners” (Gray, 1997).

Cross-Curricular: “Educational connections that exist between concepts, vocabulary, and skills from different subject areas, particularly those connections that lead to deeper understanding” (Kline, 2008).

Culture: “Explicit elements such as language, dress, food, artifacts, songs, symbols, and stories. It also includes interactional patterns such as customs, communication patterns, conversational styles, and gender roles. It also comprises the values, beliefs, norms, philosophy, and/or expectations of a cultural group” (Pang et al., 2011).

Extrinsic Motivation: “The motivating factors are external or outside, rewards such as money or grades. These rewards provide satisfaction and pleasure that the task itself may not provide” (Bainbridge, 1999).

Facilitator of Learning: “To provide circumstances that will enable students to engage with the learning opportunities and construct for themselves their understandings and skills. This role will interact with those of teacher as learner, colleague and community partner” (Tylee, 1992).

Intrinsic Motivation: “The motivation comes from the pleasure one gets from the task itself or from the sense of satisfaction in completing or even working on a task” (Bainbridge, 1999).

Learner-Centered: “A teaching methodology that emphasizes the importance of understanding and catering to the students’ needs, interests, and abilities” (education.com, 2006).

Reciprocal Teaching: “A dialogue between teachers and students in which participants take turns assuming the role of teacher” (Palincsar, 1987).

Thematic: “Curriculum that is interdisciplinary/integrated, organized around themes, with many hands-on activities and in-depth study of content” (Kline, 2008).

Zone of Proximal Development: “It is the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978).

Project Overview

Chapter One describes the background of this project. Chapter Two reviews the history of the content reviewed within this project. The background, procedure, development and implementation of the project are described in Chapter Three. Chapter Four contains a written description of the project and Chapter Five provides the summary, conclusion, implications and recommendations of the project.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF LEARNER-CENTERED EDUCATION

Jean Piaget reflects clearly within his theory of cognitive development that a child thrives when encouraged to learn through free exploration. His research supports that classroom learning should be learner centered accomplished through active discovery learning. He also states that the role of the teacher is to facilitate learning, rather than direct instruction (McLeod, 2009).

Vygotsky supports this idea within his discussions in *Mind in Society*, (1978), regarding the zone of proximal development. His theory suggests that learning happens when the child takes in new information; however, they must first have a concrete understanding of the prior knowledge needed to understand the newly learned concept. He affirms that this new information needs to be based on experiential learning rather than abstract concepts (Vygotsky, 1978).

According to Dewey (1897), freedom is allowing students to think for themselves, whilst the teacher facilitates the means to the child's education. The child is enabled by his/her surroundings and tools which are given to him/her by the teacher in order to enhance his/her educational experience. Dewey states that traditional education had teachers thinking that they needed absolute control without allowing children a voice. To do so would certainly unleash chaos while the teacher would never again gain control. However, experience indicated to Dewey that this manner of 'sit and git' education was removing the ability for the student to teacher relationship to happen. Teachers were only seeing the child that was 'supposed to be' and not the child who 'really was' (p. 77).

Dewey also indicates that outward freedom can enhance intrinsic motivation. He states that:

To prepare him (the child) for the future life means to give him command of himself; it means so to train him that he will have the full and ready use of all his capacities; that his eye and ear and hand may be tools ready to command, that his judgment may be capable of grasping the conditions under which it has to work, and the executive forces be trained to act economically and efficiently (p. 78).

Dewey says that the ideal aim of education is creation of power of self-control. He makes a point of relating the learning process to the scientific method. He states that this is paramount to the success of education in itself. Dewey indicates that students must be taught so that they may understand the process of learning and that they may use this process in other areas of their lives. He believed that a teacher ultimately teaches a student how to learn; therefore, the student can continue to learn once removed from the educational environment. By teaching what is within a child's present life-experience rather than teaching what a child may need in the future is the most meaningful mode of education. He clearly makes the point that by doing this the child will then keep their natural drive to learn and thus teach themselves what they need to know in the future because now the information will be relevant to them. He states that this is the secret formula to keeping alive that inner-desire to learn and discovery which humans are born with. Dewey concluded that this inner-desire is burned out so quickly by teaching children information that they will need to know "someday." This type of learning is cumbersome to the child and therefore unimportant (Dewey, 1897).

Bloom, et al., (2003) indicate that the instructor serves primarily to help students learn. It is believed that an ideal student-teacher relationship is impossible when the teacher also has the responsibility for judging and grading the student. Instilling intrinsic motivation by way of learner-centered education is not a new concept. Montessori (1967) advocated learner-centered methods by adjusting the environment to the physical needs of students. The classroom was set up so that all tables, shelves and teaching tools were at child level. Students moved through the materials according to readiness not age or grade level. The use of self-correcting educational materials was based on Montessori's belief that children acquired self-discipline and self-reliance by becoming aware of their mistakes and repeating a particular task until it was done correctly.

Skinner, et al., (2003) made a revolutionary find when they concluded what they believed to be the answer to intrinsic motivation among students. Zimmerman (2003) noted "his main contributions to (education) were a critique of standard educational practices and a constructive alternative" (p. 239). By critiquing the standard of educational practices, Skinner was in fact stating that there was indeed a crucial flaw in the immediate system. He then suggested educators look at the idea of taking a constructive alternative to education such as; having the teacher become a guide to assisting students to take responsibility for learning and for learning to learn.

The constructivist approach to education supports intrinsic motivation in students. Montessori (1967) believed the motivation to learn derives from the child's interest. Teaching which corresponds to this motivation is functional in the child's development. The child loses motivation when the work is directed to an external goal.

According to Yang (2010), constructivists' state that the system of knowledge is not simply learned from other people, but instead constructed by the learners themselves. Human beings have the innate desire to learn once they understand that the content in which they are learning will in fact enhance their lives. This can be interpreted behavioristically (e.g. reinforcement), morally (enlightened self-interest or for the benefit of mankind) and suggests learner-centered learning may create a self-(intrinsically) motivated student.

Learner-centered learning can be simply defined as the process of students becoming actively involved learners, through reciprocal teaching. The idea of reciprocal teaching refers to learning dialogues in which teachers and students take turns leading the discussion....with each day of instruction, the students are encouraged to assume increasing responsibility for leading the discussion, while the teacher's role changes to one of coach, providing feedback to the students and stepping in to provide further support on the basis of need. Reciprocal teaching provides a model for learner-centered education and an outline of elements to be found in learner-centered project design (Brown, Brown & Palincsar, 1989; Palincsar & Brown, 1984; 1986; 1989). Teachers provide the students with the knowledge of state-mandated expectations, allow the students to choose from a few ready prepared, engaging activities, and then have the students discuss the grading requirements for the chosen activity, thus creating a cooperative rubric. Reciprocal teaching can be defined as; when students select themed activities and then discuss the rubrics for required course work as well as self-assessing with the assistance of the classroom teacher, thus the activities are learner-centered.

Carl Rogers (1967) described learner-centered learning by defining the function of the teacher. The function of the teacher is to concentrate on creating a classroom climate which will facilitate self-initiated learning. The chart shown on the following page, retrieved from Schiller, (2009), gives a clear distinction (in Table 1) between conventional teaching and learner-centered teaching by breaking these educational concepts into five distinct categories; balance of power, function of content, role of teacher, responsibility for learning, and purpose and processes of evaluation.

**Conventional Teaching
Teaching
(Teacher-Centered)**

Learner-Centered

Balance of Power

The professor's role is to be primary information giver and primary evaluator.	Power is shared by faculty and students. Faculties do not make all decision for students without student input. Power is usually redistributed to students in amounts proportional to their ability to handle it.
--	---

Function of Content

The lecture is the primary delivery methodology. Lectures determine the boundary of teaching and learning.	Content plays a dual function in learner-center teaching: establishing a knowledge base and promoting learning. Faculty should develop course content not to cover everything, but to develop learning skills and learner awareness.
--	--

Role of the Teacher

Instructors are the center of the teaching and learning processes. Students listen to the instructors and often follow orders. Faculties are conceived primarily as disciplinary experts who impart knowledge by lecturing.	Instructors guide and facilitate learning, not forcing the learning, by sometimes stepping aside from the center of classroom activities and empowering students to discover knowledge and learn from each other in an encouraging but controlled learning environment.
---	---

Responsibility for Learning

Instructors are agents who delivery knowledge; while students are viewed as passive vessels, ingesting knowledge for recall on tests.	Faculty should aim to create environments with fewer rules and requirements, which are conducive to learning, to encourage students to learn effectively, and to support the learning efforts of others. Students are motivated to build autonomy and responsibility in learning and receive timely feedback from faculty.
---	--

Purpose and Processes of Evaluation

Assessment is used to monitor learning. Emphasis is on right answers. Desired learning is assessed indirectly through the user of objectively scored tests. Traditional tests measure declarative knowledge: learned recitations and applications to small problems. They do not necessarily address depth of understanding or the skills the students have acquired.	Learner-centered methodology deploys a variety of assessment items. Instead of using a single grade as the sole evaluation tool, faculty should use evaluations to enhance students' potential to promote learning and to give them opportunities to develop self- and peer-assessment skills. Evaluations and assessment should be less stressful and motivate students to reinforce their knowledge.
---	--

Table 1: Comparison of Conventional Teaching and Learner-Centered Teaching on Five Key Elements (Saulnier et al., 2008; Weimer, 2002) retrieved from Schiller, S. Z. (2009) p. 370.

Egan (2002) informs educators that students can learn a great deal about the world and yet remain bored and unable to use the knowledge to enrich their experience. Learner-centered components within the classroom are needed in order to allow students to use their new found knowledge in an enriching manner. This enrichment fosters student motivation, and reduces behavior issues. Children thrive when they are allowed to explore and reason within their classroom environment regarding the implementation of academic requirements.

Opponents of Learner-Centered Education

Even though learner-centered education appears to be ideal, it is not without its skeptics. According to Norman, et al., (1996), the viability of learner-centered education is in question. They ask how much do students actually learn. Norman points out those traditional methods of measuring whether or not students have learned are based on the findings of test scores. These test scores measure declarative knowledge; they are not made to measure the depth of a student understanding or even specific skills a student has attained. Norman questions that although a student may be engaged in his learning, is the learning viable? He indicates that if it is found that the learning isn't viable, measurable or assessment effective, then this method of education has little value.

According to Jones (2007) although student (learner)-centered education allows for partner and group cooperation, it may leave some students feeling frustrated, nervous, embarrassed or some students may not be comfortable working in groups. Should students feel these inadequacies, their learning could be stymied. Jones also indicates that

the ideal class size for student (learner) centered education is twelve. Larger sized classes may not allow the teacher to assist students who need extra attention while working in groups.

McCombs (2000) points out; it may be awhile before the current educational standards are changed. Creating learner centered classrooms may be next to impossible for those schools caught up in the standardized testing movement. Another required aspect of student (learner) centered education requires teachers to possess a flexible classroom management design allowing students to choose what they learn as well as how they learn. Some teachers may be uncomfortable with the skills needed to allow this type of reciprocal learning to happen O'Neill, et al., (2005).

Multicultural Benefits

Multiculturalism refers to how a teacher responds to students of differing cultures within the classroom (Pang et. al., 2011). According to Pang, teachers must be competent in cultural differences in order to enhance the education of students of different cultural backgrounds. He states that in the United States 45% of students in 2008 and 2009 were from various cultures. However, his research discovered that these students do not typically do well in school and this only widens the continually growing achievement gap between them and mainstream students. Pang concluded that this gap is due to culturally incompetent educators. He further concluded that educators display cultural competency when they are able to make learning meaningful and logical to these specific students.

Learner-centered education seems to make the largest impact in the areas of multiculturalism, diversity and tolerance among students (Salinas et al., 2009). Salinas et al., discovered through scientific inquiry, based on the comparison of six traditional

classrooms with six learner-centered classrooms, that the achievement gap between student groups can indeed be closed. This study found that learner-centered classrooms were able to close the performance gap between minority and non-minority students. Not only did the learner-centered classrooms close the academic gap, they also improved other areas of minority students' lives, such as; self-esteem, curiosity, self-efficacy, initiative in learning and mastery of content (Salinas et. al., 2009).

Multiculturalism indicates that students of all cultural backgrounds can be found in the average classroom Delpit (2006). This includes monolingual students; Jones (2007) brings up a good point when he suggests that when a class consists of monolingual students, it is ideal that these students be in a mixed group of students that speak their language as well as the culture's language. This way these students have the support they need for their learning to be successful. Learner-centered education requires that at times, students will need to work in partners or groups (Salinas et. al., 2009).

Delpit (2006) believes educators most adept at educating children of different cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds do not allow themselves to fall prey to the 'process or 'skills' trap. They instead allow their students to find their own voice that will produce skills needed in the larger culture. Delpit also suggests "that appropriate education for poor children and children of color can only be devised in consultation with adults who share their culture" (p. 45).

Delpit's point appears to be a good one until the realization that not every educator can relate to every students' background. She responds to this concern by indicating that educators need to at the very least, attempt to understand every student's culture through the basis of education that allows student voice.

Learner-centered education is just that. With a basis in reciprocal teaching Fisher, et. al., (2008), point to the fact that this type of educational strategy has been found to motivate students who would otherwise be considered at 'risk'.

Assessing Learner Centered Education

Nolan, et al., (2012) writes that a student (learner)-centered approach to education allows students to become active seekers of knowledge by exploring issues through analyzing text and multimedia sources. These students develop technology skills as well as a deeper understanding of the core content they are studying. This deeper understanding can be formally assessed because teachers have visual evidence of what their students level of understanding is based on what they are accomplishing within their educational project. According to Nolan (2012), when formal assessment is constructed within learner-led education, students quickly develop an understanding of their personal capabilities and thus expand on personal goals that will improve upon those abilities.

Authentic assessment is in place when students demonstrate skills that reflect real problems and solutions they come across in 'real' life. Saulnier, et al., (2008) support this idea based on the concept of an assessment template that they say creates a genuine approach to learner evaluation. Within these template requirements, students must be actively involved in the project ideas for learner content, they must incorporate information and complete authentic tasks based on real-world concepts. Students also need to review reciprocal rubrics and adjust their goals based on their accomplishments of that rubric. The template is made up of twelve steps, all based on frequent informal and formal assessments, student self-evaluations and student/teacher rubric content assessments, student goal-setting and the process of implementing those goals,

performance reviews based on both student and teacher evaluations, as well as final exam content.

Schiller, (2009) affirms the concept of authentic assessment by stating that, in regards to learner-centered learning, curricula must be focused on the process of learning rather than the content to be learned. He indicates that providing assessment in a learner-centered environment must center on the reciprocal learning method. Schiller also gives a clear comparison regarding the stark differences between traditional classroom assessment and learner-centered assessment:

(Traditional) Assessment is used to monitor learning. Emphasis is on right answers. Desired learning is assessed indirectly through the user of objectively scored tests. Traditional tests measure declarative knowledge: learned recitations and applications to small problems. They do not necessarily address depth of understanding or the skills the students have acquired. Learner-centered methodology deploys a variety of assessment items. Instead of using a single grade as the sole evaluation tool, faculty should use evaluations to enhance students' potential to promote learning and to give them opportunities to develop self- and peer-assessment skills. Evaluations and assessment should be less stressful and motivate students to reinforce their knowledge (p 370).

Schiller concludes, in regards to learner-centered learning, assessment should be defined as a process of information retrieval and collaboration by the way of discussion and project sharing from multiple and assorted venues. In this way, teachers may adequately assess the depth of student knowledge, understanding and content application over the course of the project. Schiller leaves educators with two questions that must be

reviewed when teachers assess learner-centered learning: 1) Have students adequately met the learning objectives and 2) how effective was the learning process.

Summary

Student motivation is clearly affected when learning becomes real to the learner. When students have a creative say in how they are to learn, education changes from direct instruction to learner-centered (McLeod, 2009). By changing the teacher's role to that of an educational facilitator, children will keep their desire to learn when the information studied becomes relevant to them (Dewey, 1897). Skinner recognized the need for constructivist education and suggested that teachers need to guide students in taking responsibility of their own education (Zimmerman, 2003). This construction happens when educators allow for reciprocal teaching; this can only happen when teachers allow students to become actively involved learners thus creating learner-centered learning (Yang, 2010).

The opponents to learning-centered learning are those concerned with viability, assessment, student comfort, and teacher willingness to be flexible. Norman, et al., (1996) brought up the point that traditional methods of assessment gave an adequate base as to whether or not a student has learned. He states that this can only be measured through test scores. Jones (2007) believes that learner-centered education requires students to work in groups and/or partners; this requirement leaves little consideration for those students uncomfortable with these types of classroom situations. Another issue regarding the constructivist approach to learner-centered education requires teachers to be flexible with their classroom management and student control, as well as to be educated

in this style of learning. O'Neill, et al., (2005) state that, for various reasons, some teachers may not be able to adhere to this style of education.

Learner-centered education proves to have a positive impact on students of other cultures (Pang et al., 2011). This style of education creates a cultural competence in the classroom and has proven to close the performance gap between minority and non-minority students as well as enhanced student livelihood in other areas of their lives (Salinas et al., 2009).

Using reciprocal education, the teacher works with the students to create a project with an agreed upon rubric that matches the state's core standards. The teacher begins with an informal pre-assessment, has students work in large groups and then smaller groups as she roams the room checking for understanding. Students are eventually expected to work independently as the teacher meets with them and checks for understanding by the way of conversation, and informal assessments. Upon project completion, the teacher evaluates student understanding by giving a formal assessment of the course content.

According to Nolan, et al., (2012), authentic assessment must be constant and with student involvement. Students must set personal goals and, with the teacher acting as facilitator, create a plan to develop those goals to fruition.

As stated earlier, instruction is meaningful to students when students are provided with choices regarding how their educational goals are implemented. The teacher can create a learner-centered environment by applying instruction that supports multiple intelligences, different modes of learning, and learning styles (Turner, 2011).

CHAPTER III

BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

Learner-centered projects enhance student motivation, student voice and over-all student educational success. Simply studying this fact is not enough to improve the way teachers' implement curriculum. Having a handbook full of prepared, learner-centered projects is ideal for teacher success. The idea of this handbook was inspired by the results discovered during the five years of implementing the said projects and watching student achievement and motivation increase. The subject of Social Studies became the base for these projects due to its diverse content and the ability to add a cross-curricular element to the course content that would encompass a definitive project. The projects within this handbook could be implemented using all types of educational subject matter.

Project Development

This handbook was developed because of the creation of three unit based learner-centered projects. These projects were teacher facilitated over the course of several school years. During this time, lesson plans, rubrics, tests and student samples were collected. These collections were put together in a handbook that will provide thematic, learner-centered projects for fifth grade, social studies curriculum. These projects are based on the Washington State Common Core Educational Standards for 5th Grade. The projects are organized into three core units based on Bob Jones Heritage Studies 5; a 5th Grade social studies curriculum. Project resources have an introduction explaining the connection to the core themes as well as standard-based lesson plans. Student samples are included based on said projects. Each project concludes with assessment rubrics defining

final product expectations as well as a template that will allow for educators to plug in alternate subject matter into the said project.

Project Procedure

This handbook, which consists of three projects, took the course of five school years to create. These three projects were chosen from a selection of units based on their ability to cover a large amount of Washington State Common Core Standards of both Social Studies and Language Arts, as well as their cross-curricular content. However, the most important purpose for these particular projects being chosen was because of student motivation, interest and enthusiasm towards these particular projects. Once the projects to be used were chosen, the projects were put in the order in which the curriculum is presented throughout the school year. These projects were constructed with full lesson plans that support the particular unit. The Washington State Common Core Standards are included with the over-all unit. A class-constructed rubric is provided in an effort to give an example of how a teacher may construct one with his/her class. A project example is included with each project displaying details of how the project met the standards and rubric criteria.

Project Implementation

Before the project-

Before learner-centered projects can be implemented successfully, the educator must prepare his/her classroom environment as well as the students. These projects require at least two, 45 minute blocks per week. The educator needs be confident in his/her student's ability to work in groups, pairs and independently. Students need to have good time management skills and self-control. The educator must have a keen

awareness of individual learning needs, should he/she need to modify certain aspects of the projects to accommodate students.

Setting Up the project-

1. The class reads the text pages together and formulates an understanding of the course content. Have students complete corresponding workbook pages as the class reads through the course content.
2. Post the Washington State Core Standards listed on the next page.
3. The class determines what type of project would best implement the needed standards. The projects within this handbook have materialized based on conversations such as these.

Creating a Rubric

1. Once a project has been determined the teacher initiates a cooperative rubric. The teacher leads the class in formulating a rubric which will indicate a measurable understanding of the core standards based on the course content.
2. The teacher also attempts to add as much cross-curricular content as possible during this time. For example, should the project involve writing, the class may use Language Arts blocks to work on this element of the project thus increasing the project work time.

Pre-assessment

1. Once a rubric and project have been created, the teacher has the students complete a pre-assessment of the subject matter. This will give the teacher a basis on which to compare student progress.

Looking for Student Understanding in Groups

1. The class is then broken into small groups; here they begin the projects by supporting one another's ideas and understanding of the expectations through shared conversations, diagrams and discussions.
2. The teacher roams the room checking for understanding by answering any questions and correcting any misconceptions.
3. Students begin working on pieces of the project such as; reading, writing or diagraming.
4. This project 'set up' time typically takes two class periods in which to get students ready to work independently of one another.

Project Work in Pairs

1. The second week, students are put into pairs, here they share their current project with one another and discuss and attempt to help each other work out any issues which may have been presented within the infancy of the project.
2. The teacher once again roams the room checking for confusion, questions or issues students may have.
3. Students continue to work on different aspects of the project whether it be, reading, writing, drawing or laying out pieces of the project.

Independent

1. After the second week, students are asked to work independently. This allows for the teacher to see what students understand regarding content of the learned topic independent of student partners or groups.

2. The teacher sets up short meetings with students during the next few weeks. During these meetings the teacher evaluates student skills, student understanding and makes informal assessments.
3. The teacher watches student progress closely and only determines a due date based on the majority of the class being able to reach a particular due date.

Nearing the Completion of a Project

1. Once a project due date is determined, the teacher passes out the class-created rubric for students to refer to while making the final touches on their project.
2. Each project takes anywhere from 2 weeks to 1 month to complete.
3. Upon completion of the project, the teacher gives a formal assessment of the course content and then corrects the projects according to the cooperative rubric.

CHAPTER IV

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

As so eloquently stated by Fisher et. al., (2008) students' attention, in this present day of rapid technological change, is under attack. Students are concerned about their academic success, the hostile political climate in which they live, their social world and the basics; peer pressure, family responsibilities and that little thing called their uncertain future. In this day and age, it is more important than ever to initiate quality instruction. According to Jensen (2009), quality instruction institutes complex learning that takes both time and devotion and necessitates previous knowledge of learned information in the learner. Complex learning encompasses a combination of previous and current knowledge as well as engages the learner in metacognitive application in ways that transform student academic behaviors. Supporting this is the very concept of complex learning as stated by Helm et. al., (2011), who say:

One of the many benefits of project work comes from the carefully planned, purposeful, and definite culmination of the work. In culminating activities, children begin to see themselves as learners, and gain confidence in their ability to undertake investigations and solve problems (p. 61).

This handbook has been constructed to assist teachers with implementing learner-centered projects that will create meaningful academia in the lives of children. These projects were organized based on the order they were presented in the 5th grade school year.

These projects were created specifically to support the 5th grade Bob Jones, Heritage Studies curriculum; however, the projects within this handbook could quite easily be converted to enhance a number of curriculums and subjects alike. This handbook consists of three units that come from three specific chapters within the 5th grade, Heritage Studies textbook. A lesson plan for each activity relating to each chapter, the student project guide and corresponding rubrics are provided along with explanations of how and why these activities meet the corresponding state standards. Student samples are also provided by the way of pictures. This handbook was put together over the course of two-years. During this time data were collected regarding what was working with the activities and elements that were not working were removed. Student samples were collected to display the completed activities in an effort to make them more understandable to the outside educator. Because these projects were originated by way of students over the years, there was the responsibility of keeping the activities to the learner-led, constructivist goal as stated in the thesis.

The handbook begins with a particular project that is introduced in January and completed by mid-February. This project is titled “You are the Teacher” and is presented at this time because students must be ready to take control of the class, construct a lesson plan, create a power point presentation, present the presentation without notes, create a worksheet to assess classmate’s understanding of the presentation content, correct classmates completed worksheets and make an assumption based on classmate’s scores as to whether or not students understood the content presented. Students need to have a basic ability to type and understanding of power point is a prerequisite to this project.

The next project begins immediately after Spring break (mid-March). The class studies two particular chapters regarding WWI and WWII. In groups, students act as journalists, their group becomes like a real newspaper company. Information from the chapters is assigned to the groups, the groups then assigns one another particular jobs within the newspaper company; one student may be an editor, another cartoonist, yet another journalists. Students learn to read, discuss and regurgitate information in their own words. They debate historical issues and learn how to write in an editorial manner and without bias. Students edit one another's stories, locate pictures on the internet and construct a newspaper layout. Upon completion of this project, the teacher prints out copies of the completed papers, burns the edges (for a historical look) and laminates them.

The last project in this handbook tends to be a class favorite. Students put themselves in the lives of young children based in the times of three infamous world leaders. As a class the chapter content is studied, the workbook lessons are completed and students select a country based on the places these particular world leaders were controlling. They give themselves fictitious names, families, lives and experiences based on the readings from the chapter. Students then create a journal and write from the viewpoint of their created character. They also research more information on the internet and collect pictures of buildings, places, people and any facts that may help them to create a sense of realism to their journal. Assessments, and student meetings are conducted throughout the phases of the projects and a final formal assessment is given at the end.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

“to prepare him (the child) for the future life means to give him command of himself; it means so to train him that he will have the full and ready use of all his capacities; that his eye and ear and hand may be tools ready to command, that his judgment may be capable of grasping the conditions under which it has to work, and the executive forces be trained to act economically and efficiently”

Dewey (1897, p.78)

Each project, You are the Teacher, Newspaper, and Journal require students to incorporate higher-level thinking skills, time management, comprehension of content, conflict resolution and a sense of responsibility to self. The teacher acts as facilitator and mentor as students navigate through the various elements of the projects phases. Upon completion of each project, students have real, products to share, evaluate, and remember their accomplishments.

Conclusion

At the conclusion of this project, teachers will have tangible unit projects that enhance the social studies curriculum, align with state standards and create a hands-on, learner-centered environment for the classroom. The units are all-encompassing and ready for classroom use and require little teacher preparation time. Students leave a unit with a project developed through ingenuity and creativity, enhancing the love of learning. Because students used metacognitive skills, students quickly develop a desire to repeat the process of learner-centered education once again. Aspects may be added to these

projects in an effort to challenge higher-achieving students as well tailoring the projects for students with special needs.

Implications

Whenever a teacher attempts to teach outside of the 'norm', there are implications. The fact that these unit projects have cross-curricular elements to them lets teachers know that he/she needs to consider how much class time each subject area will require away from the standard curriculum. Allowing students to work across allotted subject times may cause some teachers stress regarding what subject matter may be missed. Other implications that need to be considered are; class size, special needs or gifted students, structured blocks or 'periods', school officials and absences. In regards to class size, these projects may prove difficult to pull off in their current format to a class of over twenty students. These projects take time and space, group work, partner work as well as individual aspects that may make it difficult to control a large class under these needed conditions. Special needs or gifted students may have pull-out requirements causing them to miss certain aspect of the projects and the projects may need to be modified to accommodate these students as well. Structured blocks or 'periods' may make structuring these projects difficult due to some of these projects need space to lay out as they are being worked on. Students may have a difficult time starting and stopping these projects. School officials, such as the principal may find that the lack of structure to the classroom 'appears' to be non-academic in nature. Some teachers may have a hard time finding support from their superiors while attempting to accomplish these projects. Student absences make these projects difficult as well, so many elements require large

group, small group and partner work in order for the projects to advance. Frequent absences prove to be problematic.

Recommendations

The most important factor for teachers wanting to implement these unit projects is he/she needs to quickly develop an ability to be flexible. Be ready to modify these units as needed based on class size and demographics before beginning a project. Carefully select large, small and partner groups based on a mix of special needs, gifted and mainstream students to create a well-balanced group. Analyze past absences and make sure to separate, into dispersed groups, those students who are frequently absent and make an effort to lighten their work load so the group can continue easily without them. Create an area in your classroom where projects 'in process' can be kept without damage. Students will feel more secure about starting and stopping a project if they know that it will be safe in their absence. If learner-centered education is a new concept to the school, make sure to communicate openly with school officials regarding intentions to teach in this manner. Communicate the classroom management plan and show the cross-curricular element of the projects. Make sure to display the state standards being covered and the assessments which will follow. Invite the principal in for an observation around the third week of the project process. This allows the teacher time to train the class well in the project process.

REFERENCES

- Bainbridge, C. (2013, January). Extrinsic Motivation. About.com Gifted Children.
Retrieved from <http://giftedkids.about.com/od/glossary/g/extrinsic.htm>
- Brown, A. L., & Palincsar, A. S. (1989). Guided, cooperative learning and individual knowledge acquisition. In L. B. Resnick (Ed.), *Knowing, Learning, and Instructions: Essays in Honor of Robert Glaser* (pp. 393-451). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2010). *The Flat World and Education: How America's Commitment to Equity Will Determine Our Future*. Teachers College Press.
- Demir, K. (2011). Teachers' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as predictors of student engagement. *e-Journal of New World Sciences, Vol. 6 (2)*.
- Dewey, J. (1897). *My pedagogic creed*. The School Journal. LIV (3), 77-80.
- Dewey, J. (1910). *My Pedagogic Creed*. Chicago: A. Flanagan Company.
- Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2007). *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Content area strategies at work*. NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Garr, J., Salinas, F., M. (2009). Glossary of Education. (2006). *Learner-Centered Instruction*. Retrieved from <http://www.education.com/definition/learnercentered-instruction/>
- Grantmakers in the Arts. (2008). *Individual Terms Relating to Curricular Approaches*. Retrieved from <http://www.giarts.org/article/glossery-arts-and-education-terms>
- Gray, A. (1997, January). The Road to Knowledge is Always under Construction: A life history journey to constructivist teaching. *SSTA Research Centre Report. (#97-07)*. Retrieved from

<http://saskschoolboards.ca/research/instruction/97-07.htm>

Helm, J. H., & Katz, L. G. (2010). *Young Investigators: The Project Approach in the Early Years (Early Childhood Education Series) Early Childhood Education* (2nd ed.). Teachers College Press.

Jensen, E. P. (Ed.). (2008). *Fierce Teaching: Purpose, Passion, and What Matters Most*. Corwin.

Jones, L. (2007). *The Student-Centered Classroom*. Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press.

McCombs, B. L. (2000). Proceedings from the Secretary's Conference on Educational Technology 2000. Denver, CO: University of Denver Research Institute. Retrieved from http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/tech/techconf00/mcombs_paper.html

McLeod, S. (2009, January). Jean Piaget. *SimplyPsychology*. Retrieved from <http://www.simplypsychology.org/piaget.html>

Montessori, M. M. Jr., Lillard, P. P., & Fuller, B. (1987). *Education for Human Development: understanding Montessori*. Schocken.

Nolan, J., Preston, M., & Finkelstein, J. (2012). Can you DIG/IT? *Phi Delta Kappan*, 94 (2), 42–46.

Norman, D. A., & Spohrer, J. C. (1996). Learner-centered education. *Commun. ACM*, 39(4), 24–27. doi:10.1145/227210.227215

O'Neill, G., McMahon, T. (2005). Student-Centered Learning: What Does it Mean for Students and Lecturers? *AISHEReadings*. Retrieved from

http://www.aishe.org/readings/2005-1/oneill-mcmahon-Tues_19th_Oct_SCL.html

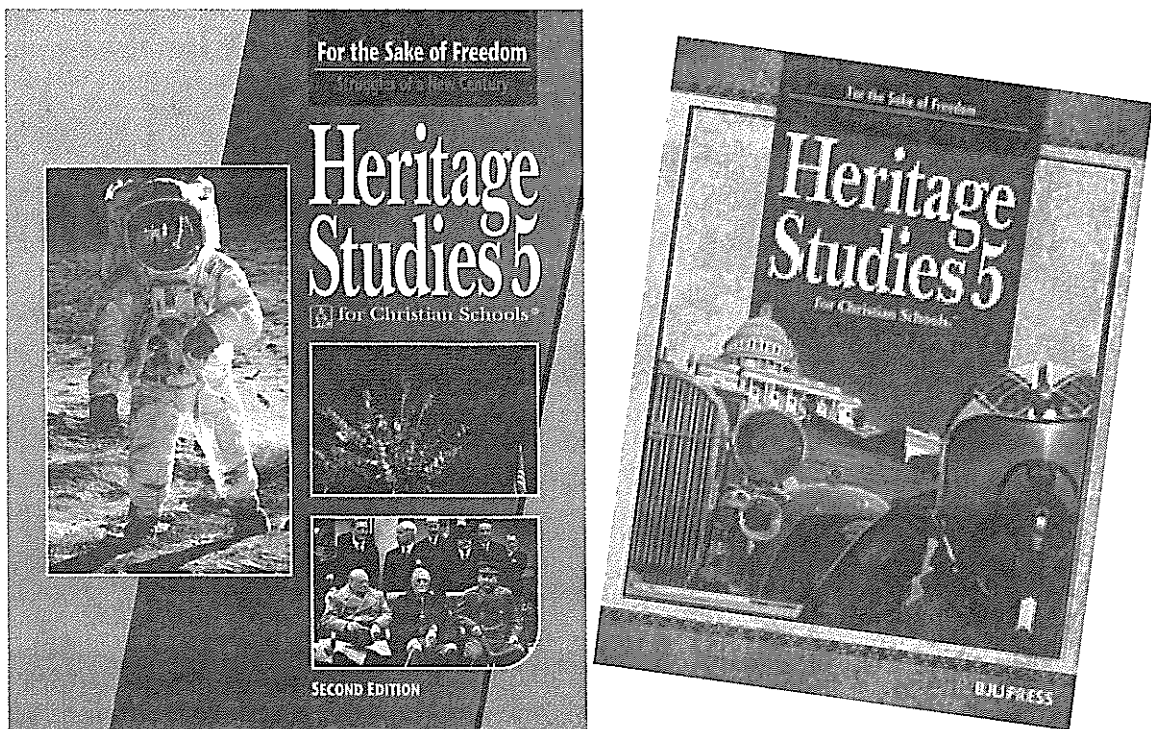
- Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. (2013). Social Studies. Retrieved from <http://www.k12.wa.us/SocialStudies/default.aspx>
- Palincsar A. S., & Brown, A. L. (1984). Reciprocal teaching of comprehension-fostering and monitoring activities. *Cognition and Instruction, 1*(2), 117-175.
- Palincsar A. S., & Brown, A. L. (1986). Interactive teaching to promote independent learning from text. *Reading Teacher, 39*(8), 771-777.
- Palincsar A. S., & Brown, A. L. (1989). Instruction of self-regulated reading. In L. Resnick & L.E. Kloefer (Eds.), *Cognitive Research in Subject Matter Learning*. (pp. 19-39). Washington, DC: The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Pang, V., Stein, R., Gomez, M., Matas, A., & Shimogori, Y. (2011). Cultural Competencies: Essential elements of caring-centered multicultural education. *Action In Teacher Education, 33*(5-6), 560-574.
- Pereira J. K., & Smith-Adcock, S. (2011). Child-centered classroom management. *Action in Teacher Education, 33*, 254-264. Association of Teacher Educators.
- Rogers, C., & Stevens, B. (1967). *Person to Person: The problem of being human*. Boulder, CO: Real People Press.
- Salinas, M. F., & Garr, J. (2009). Effect of learner-centered education on the academic outcomes of minority groups. *Journal Of Instructional Psychology, 36*(3), 226-237.
- Saulnier, B. M., Landry, J. P., & Wagner, T. A. (2008). From Teaching to Learning: learner-centered teaching and assessment in information systems education. *Journal Of Information Systems Education, 19*(2), 169-174.

- Schiller, S. Z. (2009). Practicing Learner-Centered Teaching: Pedagogical design and assessment of a second life project. *Journal Of Information Systems Education*, 20(3), 369-381.
- Schunk, D.H., Zimmerman, B.J. (2003). Ann L. Brown: Advancing a theoretical model of learning and instruction. *Educational Psychology a Century of Contributions*, 459. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Schunk, D.H., Zimmerman, B.J. (2003). Maria Montessori: Contributions to educational psychology. *Educational Psychology a Century of Contributions*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Turner, S. L. (2011). Student-Centered Instruction: Integrating the learning sciences to support elementary and middle school learners. *Preventing School Failure*, 55(3), 123-131. Taylor & Francis Group.
- Tylee, J. (1992). Teacher as Facilitator: One of the face to face teacher roles.
Retrieved from
http://www.education4skills.com/jtylee/teacher_as_facilitator.html
- Vygotsky, L. S. 1978. *Mind in Society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wiener, B. (1979). A theory of motivation for some classroom experiences. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 71, 3-25.
- Yang, X. (2010). The globalization and localization of “learner-centered” strategy from an international horizon. *English Department Qingdao University of Science and Technology*, Vol. 6,(9).

Yilmaz, K. (2008). Social studies teachers' views of learner-centered instruction.

European Journal of Teacher Education, Vol. 31, (1), 35-53.

A HANDBOOK OF LEARNER-CENTERED
PROJECTS TO SUPPLIMENT FIFTH GRADE,
SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM



CharRe Burnum

2013

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	38
Project Implementation.....	39
You are the Teacher	43
Common Core Standards.....	44
Unit Plan.....	45
Rubric.....	48
Student Sample.....	51
Handouts.....	52
Assessment.....	57
Newspaper.....	67
Common Core Standards.....	68
Unit Plan.....	69
Rubric.....	73
Student Sample.....	75
Handouts.....	76
Assessment.....	81
Journal.....	88
Common Core Standards.....	89
Unit Plan.....	90
Rubric.....	92
Student Sample.....	93
Handouts.....	96
Assessment.....	97

Introduction

This handbook has been constructed for a 5th grade classroom and to support a learner-centered environment as well as to enhance the Heritage Studies Curriculum. Educators must first consider whether or not learner-centered education fits into their teaching philosophy. The projects within this handbook require; student input, teacher flexibility, time management skills, and strong classroom management in order to be successful. These projects have been tailored for a classroom of mainstream 5th grade students and for an average class size of twelve. These projects will require adequate modifications if they are to be used for students with special needs or for a class size larger than twelve students.

Learner-centered components within the classroom are needed in order to allow students to use their new found knowledge in an enriching manner. This enrichment fosters student motivation, and reduces behavior issues. Children thrive when they are allowed to explore and reason within their classroom environment regarding the implementation of academic requirements Egan (2002). This handbook will help teachers to organize fifth grade expectations into thematic, learner-centered, intrinsically motivated projects that will allow for a well-planned, teacher facilitated, and educational experience. This is more than just a how-to manual; it includes the theoretical and empirical basis thesis for using thematic, cross-curricular projects to enhance student retention, motivation and independent learning.

Project Implementation

Before the project-

Before learner-centered projects can be implemented successfully, the educator must prepare their classroom environment and their students. These projects require at least two, 45 minute blocks per week. The educator needs be confident in his/her student's ability to work in groups, pairs and independently. Students need to have good time management skills and self-control. The educator must have a keen awareness of individual learning needs, should he/she need to modify certain aspects of the projects to accommodate students.

Setting Up the project-

4. The class reads the text pages together and formulates an understanding of the course content. Have students complete corresponding workbook pages as the class reads through the course content.
5. Post the Washington State Core Standards listed on the next page.
6. The class determines what type of project would best implement the needed standards. The projects within this handbook have materialized based on conversations such as these.

Creating a Rubric

3. Once a project has been determined the teacher initiates a cooperative rubric. The teacher leads the class in formulating a rubric which will indicate a measurable understanding of the core standards based on the course content.
4. The teacher also attempts to add as much cross-curricular content as possible during this time. For example, should the project involve writing, the class may use Language Arts blocks to work on this element of the project thus increasing the project work time.

Pre-assessment

2. Once a rubric and project have been created, the teacher has the students complete a pre-assessment of the subject matter. This will give the teacher a basis on which to compare student progress.

Looking for Student Understanding in Groups

5. The class is then broken into small groups; here they begin the projects by supporting one another's ideas and understanding of the expectations through shared conversations, diagrams and discussions.
6. The teacher roams the room checking for understanding by answering any questions and correcting any misconceptions.
7. Students begin working on pieces of the project such as; reading, writing or diagraming.

8. This project 'set up' time typically takes two class periods in which to get students ready to work independently of one another.

Project Work in Pairs

4. The second week, students are put into pairs, here they share their current project with one another and discuss and attempt to help each other work out any issues which may have been presented within the infancy of the project.
5. The teacher once again roams the room checking for confusion, questions or issues students may have.
6. Students continue to work on different aspects of the project whether it be, reading, writing, drawing or laying out pieces of the project.

Independent

4. After the second week, students are asked to work independently. This allows for the teacher to see what students understand regarding content of the learned topic independent of student partners or groups.
5. The teacher sets up short meetings with students during the next few weeks. During these meetings the teacher evaluates student skills, student understanding and makes informal assessments.
6. The teacher watches student progress closely and only determines a due date based on the majority of the class being able to reach a particular due date.

Nearing the Completion of a Project

4. Once a project due date is determined, the teacher passes out the class-created rubric for students to refer to while making the final touches on their project.
5. Each project takes anywhere from 2 weeks to 1 month to complete.
6. Upon completion of the project, the teacher gives a formal assessment of the course content and then corrects the projects according to the cooperative rubric.

“You are the Teacher” project-

Heritage Studies Chapter 2, “Getting There Faster”

This project is introduced in January and completed by mid-February; however, it can be presented any time of year. This project is titled “You are the Teacher” and is presented at this time because typically by this time students are ready to take control of the class, construct a lesson plan, create a power point presentation, present the presentation without notes, create a worksheet to assess classmate’s understanding of the presentation content, correct classmates completed worksheets, and make an assumption based on classmate’s scores as to whether or not classmates understood the content presented. Students need to have a basic ability to type and a remedial understanding of PowerPoint is a prerequisite to this project.

Washington State Common Core Standards (OSPI, 2013) for

“You are the Teacher” project.

Social Studies-

- 4.2.1 Understands and analyzes how individuals caused change in U.S. history.
- 4.2.3 Understands how technology and ideas have affected the way people live and change their values, beliefs, and attitudes.
- 4.3.1 Analyzes the multiple perspectives and interpretations of historical events in U.S. history.
- 4.4.1 Understands that significant historical events in the United States have implications for current decisions and influence the future.
- 5.2.1 Understands how essential questions define the significance of researching an issue or event.

Language Arts-

Comprehension and Collaboration

- 2. Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

Key Ideas and Details

- 1. Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- 3. Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text.

“You are the Teacher” project

Unit Plan

Please note: Text and images were redacted from pages 46-103 due to copyright concerns.



























C

C

C

“Newspaper” Project

Introduction to Project:

The next project begins immediately after Spring break (mid-March). The class studies two particular chapters regarding WWI (chapter three) and WWII (chapter ten). In groups, students act as journalists, their group becomes like a real newspaper company. Information from the chapters is assigned to the groups, the groups then assigns one another particular jobs within the newspaper company; one student may be an editor, another cartoonist, yet another a journalists, etc. Students learn to read, discuss and regurgitate information in their own words. They debate historical issues and learn how to write in an editorial manner and without bias. Students edit one another’s stories, locate pictures on the internet and construct a newspaper layout. Upon completion of this project, the teacher prints out copies of the completed papers, burns the edges (for a historical look) and laminates them.

Washington State Common Core Standards (OSPI, 2013) for “Newspaper” project.

Social Studies-

4.2.2 Analyzes how people from various cultural groups have shaped the history of the United States.

4.2.1 Understands and analyzes how individuals caused change in U.S. history.

4.3.1 Analyzes the multiple perspectives and interpretations of historical events in U.S. history.

5.3.1 Engages others in discussions that attempt to clarify and address multiple viewpoints on public issues based on key ideals.

Language Arts

3. Use Knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

a. Expand, combine, and reduce sentences for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style

Comprehension and Collaboration

1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

a. Come to discussions prepared having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation and other information unknown about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.















C

C

C











“Journal” Project

Students put themselves in the lives of young children based in the times of three infamous world leaders. As a class, the chapter content is studied, the workbook lessons are completed and students select a country based on the places these particular world leaders were controlling. They give themselves fictitious names, families, lives and experiences based on the readings from the chapter. Students then create a journal and write from the viewpoint of their created character. They also research more information on the internet and collect pictures of buildings, places, people and any facts that may help them to create a sense of realism to their journal. Assessments, and student meetings are conducted throughout the phases of the projects and a final formal assessment is given at the end.

Washington State Common Core Standards (OSPI, 2013) for “Journal” project.

Social Studies-

4.2.2 Analyzes how people from various cultural groups have shaped the history of the United States.

4.3.1 Analyzes the multiple perspectives and interpretations of historical events in U.S. history.

5.2.1 Understands how essential questions define the significance of researching an issue or event.

5.4.1 Researches multiple perspectives to take a position on a public or historical issue in a paper or presentation.

Production and Distribution of Writing

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose and audience.

5. With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning , revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

Text Types and Purposes

3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, descriptive details, and clear event sequences. (a-e)



C

C

C







