SOCIAL STUDIES ALIVE

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PROJECT

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Department of Teacher Education
Abstract

of

SOCIAL STUDIES ALIVE

by

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This project is a collaborative project between Benjamin Crago-Schneider and Julie Pepper. The work for this project was shared equally by the two authors. This project is an Alternative Culminating Experience for a Masters of Art in Education: Curriculum and Instruction with an Elective Emphasis on Arts in Education. This project follows pathway III: Developing a curriculum, program, or performance related to arts education or arts in education. The authors developed a play with third, fourth, and fifth grade students with the purpose of bringing social studies alive through research, vignettes, and songs. Ultimately this play was presented to the school and the students’ families. The authors used journals, student research, and other forms of authentic assessments to track student success and growth throughout the project. The authors found that this was a meaningful and powerful way to teach the social studies and arts to their students.

_______________________, Committee Chair
Crystal Olson, Ed.D.

_______________________
Date
DEDICATION

I, Ben Crago-Schneider, dedicate this project to my family. My wife, Rachel, and my children, Teliz and Mischa, without whom this project and paper would not have been possible. They have been understanding with the time and dedication this has taken. They have been understanding with the time that this project has taken me away from them. They are the light of my life. I would also like to thank my parents for being very helpful throughout this whole process.
DEDICATION

I, Julie Pepper, dedicate this project to my husband, Asa. He was a sounding board for me when I came home late at night after long days of teaching and preparing after school for this project. His advice and input were extremely helpful during this process, and his humor kept me sane.
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I, Ben Crago-Schneider, would like to acknowledge several people for their help with this paper and production. I would like to thank my partner, Julie Pepper, for working on this huge undertaking with me. Julie and I worked hard on this production and paper and it was nice to have someone to commiserate with when things were rough, it was also wonderful to have someone to celebrate successes with. The one thing that was always positive when working on this project and paper was working with Julie. I always could depend on her. She is a friend and a great teacher. I would also like to thank our advisor, Crystal Olson, for all of her help. She was always available for us and would go out of her way to be very helpful. She visited Julie and I and helped with elements of the production and the paper. She is one of the sweetest people I think that I have ever met. Also, I would like to thank Sharon Glover, who was integral to getting this production done, and was invaluable when it came to the music portion of our performance, and the set. Vicki Plefka was instrumental with helping our students to learn how to research and helping find information. Paula Roach, our principal, was accommodating and understanding in letting us take on this huge endeavor. Finally, I would like to thank the students who drive me crazy at times, but ultimately give inspiration and are the reason I am in the teaching profession. Thank you, Room 9, the Spongites.
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Paula Roach, the principal at Rio Linda Elementary, also deserves our appreciation. Paula has a love of the arts, and always encourages teachers to use the arts in their classrooms. Paula supported this production, and it was nice to be at a school where we didn’t have to fight to teach the way we know is beneficial to students.

Another source of support and inspiration on this project was our advisor, Crystal Olson. During my credential program, I fell in love with the way Crystal presented social studies, and knew that when I became a teacher, I would follow her lead. Crystal has truly been a guide for us throughout this experience, and she has gone out of her way to make sure we stay on track, and meet our goals. She has been an amazing advisor, and has truly inspired me to do great things with my students.
The arts focus of our project was theatre based, and I therefore cannot leave out two people who have been integral to my love of theatre. First, I need to recognize, Giles Turner, my high school drama teacher. Giles expected the best from his students, and taught me how to take the craft of acting seriously. I would also like to acknowledge Louisa Moore. Louisa became my acting mentor when I travelled abroad in Italy studying Shakespeare. Her spirit and vitality onstage was and is an inspiration to me. These two people, without knowing it, have helped me see the importance of bringing theatre into my classroom.

Finally, I have to thank a bunch of kids I had the privilege of working with this year. The fifth graders of room #3, the AllStars, really took on quite the daunting challenge in a short amount of time. We laughed together, learned together, and all grew together as a classroom community during the course of this project. This experience with the AllStars helped me realize how powerful teaching in this manner can be, and I thank them for allowing me to take them on this artistic journey.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Organization of the Project

The write up of this project documents the development of a theatrical production that took place in the fall of 2009. This project was a theatrical production that included third, fourth, and fifth grade students at Rio Linda Elementary School. This production included historical vignettes from the third, fourth, and fifth grade California Social Studies-History standards, as well as historical American songs. The vignettes featured in this production were student-created.

Chapter 1 discusses the statement of the problem, the purpose of the project, the significance of the project, the projects limitations, and contains a glossary of relevant terms. Chapter 2 examines relevant literature to the arts in general, social studies, and arts integration. Chapter 3 discusses the procedures and the process of the project. Chapter 4 contains the reflections of the authors of the project. The final sections of the project write-up contain materials that were relevant to the production.

Statement of Problem

The authors are elementary classroom teachers who work in a third/fourth grade combination classroom and a fifth grade classroom. This project took place during the 2009-2010 school year at the Rio Linda Elementary School in the Twin Rivers Unified School District. Rio Linda Elementary School is located in Sacramento County and is unincorporated. This is a rural setting and considered on the fringe of a city. Rio Linda Elementary School is one of the oldest elementary schools in the district. The school has not been updated in many years. It has 20 classrooms and 17 teachers. Budget cuts at the state level have meant that class sizes across the district have ballooned and staff has been eliminated all in an attempt to stay within budget. The
students involved in this project were third, fourth, and fifth grade students. This project took place both during and after school hours.

The population that worked on this production is mostly from a low socio-economic status background. Approximately 65% of the students are receiving either free or reduced lunches. Rio Linda is a rural setting. Most of the students live in apartments or rental houses. Of Rio Linda Elementary’s 351 students, 71% are identified as Caucasian. The next biggest population of students is Hispanic or Latino at 16%. The school has a very small African American population and an even smaller Asian population. There are many English Learner students in the school as well as the classes involved in the project. Rio Linda Elementary School has a large enough population of English Learners that they are counted as a significant portion of our school’s population. This group did not make their STAR score targets for this year.

Another sizeable portion of the school’s population is socioeconomically disadvantaged (SED). Students who are considered SED are either students whose parents both have not received a high school diploma, or students who participate in the free or reduced-price lunch program. Many of the parents and grandparents raising the students of this school do not have high school diplomas which helps explain why over half of the school’s population is on free or reduced lunches. This is a large enough portion of the school’s population to be counted as significant and this population did not make its testing targets this year.

Rio Linda Elementary School has always made its targets since accountability through No Child Left Behind has been keeping track. However, this year the school is on the watch list. This is due to the fact that our English Language Learners and socioeconomically disadvantaged students did not make adequate growth this year. If goals are not made this year the school will go into Program Improvement. With Program Improvement comes restrictions on how to teach
the curriculum and added oversight from the state. Many schools are fighting to stay out of or get out of Program Improvement.

No Child Left Behind has meant that schools are under a lot of pressure to make adequate growth each year with a goal of having all students proficient across standards by 2014. This impossible goal has schools cutting out instruction time for subjects that are not considered essential because they are not tested. The two subjects that are tested and therefore receive an inordinate amount of teaching attention are English language arts and mathematics. Teachers feel they do not have time to teach science, social studies, or the arts because they have to get their students ready for the test. This deprives the students of a multifaceted and well-rounded education. Subjects that might really get students interested in their education are not taught because they won’t directly help with state testing. The non-tested subjects are pushed into the background to the detriment of the students.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project was to create a performance made up of many vignettes. These vignettes portrayed important people and events from California and American history and social studies. Students wrote scripts for these vignettes, made the scenes, and worked on producing this show. It was also the intent of the authors to give the students an integrated curriculum that allowed students to experience subjects that are not normally taught like social studies and the arts. The goal of this project was to make history visible through the arts, specifically, theatre, music, and dance.

Significance of the Project

Creating this show was extremely important, as are any endeavors that involve the arts in schools. Meaningful learning is true learning and it occurs when curiosity is stimulated. When learning is emotionally based, then there is permanence and it is meaningful. This learning will be
connected to the curriculum through art experience. Not only will students get to experience an engaging performance that involves the creation of art, they will also be learning content related to social studies.

This project will change how the curriculum is presented to students at Rio Linda Elementary in the future. Teachers will be more apt to put on performances with their students. Teachers will learn several new ways to present curriculum to their students and hopefully employ this method of teaching in other areas of the curriculum. These areas may include language arts, math, and science. This project will also help teachers reflect more on their teaching and their students’ learning. I hope projects like this will inspire other teachers to attempt endeavors like this as well as use the arts more in their own classes.

Definition of Terms

*Apron:* area downstage of the curtain line.

*Aside:* comment from an actor directly to the audience.

*Blocking:* an actor’s movement onstage.

*Cheating out:* positioning the actor’s body at an angle to be more visible to the audience.

*Curriculum adoption:* curriculum that is chosen by a school district for implementation.

*Downstage:* part of the stage closest to audience.

*Freeze:* improvisation game where two or more participants begin an interaction onstage. An audience member will yell “freeze,” come onto the stage, tap one of the participants on the back, and place him/herself in the exact position of the participant he/she replaced. He/she then begins a new interaction with the remaining members onstage.

*The house:* the audience portion of the theatre.

*Improvisation:* spontaneous, unscripted performance.

*Intermediate grades:* grades fourth through sixth.
**It’s a what?:** improvisation game where the leader hands an object to a participant, and they declare and show a different use for the object than what is the norm (i.e. someone may use a blanket as a bow in his/her hair). Another participant will ask, “It’s a what?” The response should be “It’s a ______,” naming the new use for the object. The participant who asked what it was will then reply, “No it isn’t, it’s a/an __________,” stating a new use for the object.

**Jigsaw activity:** technique of separating out a large amount of information among smaller groups. Each group focuses on one section of the information. Smaller groups then present their section to the entire group, as a means of teaching one another.

**Machine:** improvisation game where groups create a machine using their bodies. Other groups guess what the machine is.

**Pantomime:** performance without words or in place of physical props.

**Park bench:** improvisation game where one participant begins on a “park bench.” This can be a row of chairs lined up. Another participant comes in with a specific character and reason for being at the park. The person who started on the bench then needs to think of a reason for leaving the bench, and a new participant enters to begin a new interaction with the second participant.

**Primary grades:** grades Kindergarten through third.

**Projection:** to use the voice in such a way to reach the necessary distance.

**Prop:** small item that an actor can carry around onstage.

**Risers:** portable, stair-like staging where singers stand.

**Scenery:** larger, semi-permanent set decoration. Meant to determine location.

**Stage left/right:** location of left and right onstage is based on the actor’s perspective,

**Stage whisper:** using the voice to give the illusion of a whisper, but it has the ability to be heard by the audience.
Theatre: a creative performance activity which requires an audience.

Up stage: location on stage farthest from the audience.

Virginia reel: folk dance.

Wings: area immediately offstage.

Limitations

There are several limitations in this project. Obviously money is always an issue. There will not be a lot of money to put on this production. Currently, the state is in a budget crisis. There will be no extra money at the school to help defray the cost of this production. Very little money was spent to put on this production. Most of the items used to create this production were borrowed or created from recycled materials or school supplies. Time will also be a limitation. While there was time in the day to teach social studies, this production took quite a bit of time to produce and practice. A portion of the day was spent each day to practice various aspects of this production. While there was a dedicated time each day, the project still felt rushed up until the actual time of the production. To alleviate this problem, time was set aside after school but it was hard to coordinate between the three teachers involved in doing this production. It was also daunting to teach all the skills necessary to create and put on a production to students who have never done a production of this magnitude or a production at all.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Introduction

Today in U.S. society, public education focuses on standardized testing and the core subjects being tested. Subjects such as social studies, arts, and other areas of the humanities are receiving less and less attention in schools. These subjects help to develop well-rounded individuals and citizens, yet they are being neglected due to time constraints, pressure from administration, and in some cases, a feeling of lack of importance for these curriculum areas. In this paper the researchers review literature that focuses on the arts in education, social studies, and arts integration. In Arts in Education Theory the researchers show the importance of art for all learners. In social studies the authors show how social studies is under attack in the United States’ current system of education and how important it is for students as well as U.S. society. In Arts Integration the researchers show how the arts are very important in our education and how they should be incorporated into the curriculum.

Arts in Education Theory

Education is like a living organism. It grows and constantly is in a state of flux. It has evolved into its modern state since the early twentieth century in America. Originally education in a large mass public scale mirrored industrialization of the early twentieth century. Students were prepared to be workers in our society, and more importantly, factory workers. School was merely repetitive training for a highly repetitive workplace. Over time, thoughts on curriculum and the purpose of schools have changed. Several movements, sometimes conflicting, argued over what should be taught in schools, and ultimately what schooling was all about. In the early twentieth century several reform groups were about progressive education (Kliebard, 1982). The most noted member of these groups was John Dewey. These reformers felt that not only should
Schooling be about receiving an education, it should also be about promoting a democratic society that afforded opportunity to all. This would come from providing the masses access to a truly quality education.

Today, the belief is that all children deserve a quality education. However, the idea of what constitutes a quality education is debated. Should children be taught a traditional curriculum that stresses the three R’s, reading, writing and arithmetic, or should they get a rich education that includes social studies, science and the arts? This has changed because much has been learned about children and how they learn. Today students are dropping out of school in larger numbers. As these students drop out of school or fail standardized tests, policy-makers have decided only once again to focus on reading, writing, and arithmetic when what these students really need is active engagement and enrichment of their lives and minds. One area that can truly help students get engaged in their education is by enriching their education with the arts. This area of the curriculum needs protection. The arts are valuable in education because they support the multiple intelligences and engage students. The arts also help enable students to see the world aesthetically. Finally, they are important because the arts are intrinsically significant and worthy of study for their beauty.

Not all students learn in the same manner. Some learners can sit and listen to a lecture and understand the ideas conveyed. Others need this information represented in pictures. The best learning occurs when information is conveyed through several different forms, whether they be visual, auditory, or tactile/kinesthetic. Traditionally, students have been taught using two main modalities, aural or visual ways. For some students, this is very successful while for others it is not and they become lost.

Howard Gardner, a professor of education and psychology at Harvard University, researched learning for over the past 30 years. Seeing that the linguistic symbolizations, language
arts, and the logical mathematical symbolizations, math, were the only symbols used in schools upset Gardner (Gardner & Hatch, 1998). Language Arts and Math were the only curriculum areas used to assess intelligence and the only subjects that were seen as being valuable to teach. Many students were left out or deemed stupid. Gardner looked at a wide variety of human cognitive capacities. He investigated intelligence in different ways. Gardner stated (1983)

I argue that there is persuasive evidence for the existence of several relatively autonomous human intellectual competences, abbreviated hereafter as ‘human intelligences’. These are ‘frames of mind’ of my title. The exact nature and breath of each intellectual ‘frame’ has not so far been satisfactorily established, nor has the precise number of intelligences been fixed. (Gardner, 1983, p. 8)

There are several intelligences and all people have a range of these intelligences. Different people rely more on certain intelligences than others, but use all intelligences to different degrees at different times. The number of intelligences is still being debated, but at least eight different intelligences have been described.

Acknowledging Multiple Intelligences is significant for education, more specifically for arts in education for several reasons. Having Multiple Intelligences in the classroom allows teachers to look at students as individuals. They look at educating them and assessing them as individuals according to their intelligences. Acknowledging the Multiple Intelligences lets teachers teach to students’ strengths. Some students will be more spatial learners, others musical; still others will be more bodily-kinesthetic. This in turn ties into arts because the Multiple Intelligences can be addressed through the arts. By teaching through the arts one can not only address the “non-traditional intelligences,” one can also help teach the linguistic and logical mathematical intelligences. Music can be used to teach math through song and at the same time help cultivate the musical intelligence in students. Art is a way of reaching all students and giving
them a truly holistic education. Arts in education help create well-rounded citizens. Gardner (2006) warned about what may happen when children do not receive a well-rounded education

Earlier, I introduced the five kinds of minds that we need to cultivate the future, if we are to have the kind of managers, leaders, and citizens needed to populate our planet... No one knows precisely how to fashion an education that will yield individuals who are disciplined, synthesizing, creative, respectful, and ethical. I have argued that our survival as a planet may depend on the cultivation of this pentad of mental dispositions. (Gardner, 2006, p. 18-19)

If teachers don’t cultivate the different intelligences they will not only create a society of uneducated children, but also create individuals who are undisciplined and do not contribute to a greater society. Including the arts is essential because they are a big part of Multiple Intelligences and a well-rounded education.

Elliot Eisner (1998), a prominent professor of art and education at Stanford University, said that not teaching the different styles of learning is detrimental. He said, “Not to do so is to create an epistemological parochialism that limits what people can experience, and, therefore, what they can come to know” (p. 16). Eisner was saying that if teachers do not teach to different intelligences or literacies, they are actually limiting what students can know. This pushes students away from education. This also holds true for what curriculum is taught in schools. Eisner (1998) warned, “Make no mistake, the curriculum we prescribe for schools and the time we allocate for subjects show children what adults believe is important for them to learn” (p. 77). The strong emphasis on language arts and math is simply stealing away opportunities for students to develop their natural abilities and curiosities. If society wants well-balanced future productive citizens, a narrow-minded approach to curriculum focus is not the answer. In order to make sure that
students are engaged in their learning and society truly believes that well rounded citizens are important, the arts need to have a prominent role in schools.

Donald Arnstine (1967), another professor of education, said, “…it follows that, unless knowledge and skills are presented in a context in which appropriate dispositions have been formed, or are in the process of formation they will not be acquired by students in any meaningful sense” (p. 340). A disposition, according to Arnstine, is “one’s tendency to act.” If teachers do not engage students, they will not really acquire the knowledge that is trying to be conveyed in a meaningful way. For students to truly understand what they are learning and want to continue to learn, they need to be active agents in their own education. They can do this when they have a disposition to learn. We need to teach in meaningful ways so that that knowledge is lasting. Gardner (1999) suggested that the arts were an entry point that helps engage students and they can use these entry points to engage students across the curriculum. Engaging students will also help get them interested in their education and help foster life long learning. One major way to engage students is through using the arts.

Another reason that the arts are essential in education is to create students who see the world aesthetically; students need to see the world using their senses. Traditionally in education, the senses were thought of as lowly when it came to experiencing the world. The senses were based on emotion, and emotion was believed to diminish. Great thinkers like Plato felt that irrational thought was base and had little importance in thinking. This is why they are often relegated emotion to a lower position in schools.

Art was once part of everyday life. The Greeks had dance and visual arts embedded in all aspects of their lives (Dewey, 1934). Over the centuries art was reclassified, removed from the masses, and put in museums, theatres and galleries. No longer was art seen in everyday life. The aesthetic was taken away from the common man. It is important that people are able to see the
aesthetic not only in “fine” works of art, but also in their everyday lives. Dewey (1934) lamented this problem “…that of recovering the continuity of aesthetic experience with normal process of living” (p.10). He felt it was important for people to have aesthetic experiences in their everyday lives and to have a love for everyday art. Dewey wanted people to be caught up in an experience of the aesthetic world. Having an aesthetic experience would be self-driven and would be full of emotion. Dewey wanted to give art and the aesthetic experience back to the masses. Eisner (1998) also related to this point when he said, “As I suggested, the student’s sensibilities should not be limited to what we call the fine arts. They should be applicable to the qualities of the general environment” (Eisner, p. 98). It is important to teach art in schools so that students can identify the qualities of fine works of art as well as the qualities in their general environment and world.

The ability of the common man and students to experience the world in an aesthetic way is important because it gives the arts back to the people. Being able to experience the world in an aesthetic way also creates imaginative thinkers who think about what could be instead of what is. Eisner felt that helping students become attuned with the aesthetic and the outside world could have lasting effects outside of art in the classroom and on the larger world. Becoming attuned to the aesthetic would help students become more imaginative. For example, they would not form preconceived notions, would be better problem solvers, and respect multiple perspectives (Eisner, 1998). Students who could experience the aesthetic world would be better able to solve the big problems that our nation and world face. Eisner was very clear on how to develop this aesthetic awareness, and this was through the arts. The arts cultivate imagination and imaginative thinkers are needed to solve the multitude of problems that the nation and world now face and will face in the future.
Change in Education

Change needs to happen in our educational system in order for students, once grown, to be productive, analytical, thoughtful and moral members of society. How can the theories of these philosophers be put into practice so that this change can occur? Some current practices include Waldorf Education, interactive theater, and applying the theories of Multiple Intelligences into the classroom. Often in public schools students do not receive an education that values the arts. The number of arts classes at the secondary level continues to dwindle, and art in elementary schools is disappearing.

This is not the case in Waldorf classrooms. Waldorf Education, a pedagogy that was developed by Rudolf Steiner (2003), has the foundation of giving, “…particular attention to the individual characteristics of the child” (p. 28). Therefore, there is a complete disparity between Waldorf methods and the current standardized education system. With individual characteristics of the child in consideration, the arts are an essential part of a Waldorf Education. Steiner also claimed that, “As teachers, we must be capable of forming instruction so that the child does not simply receive something intellectual in the instruction, but enjoys the instruction in an aesthetic way” (p. 28). This philosophy mirrors Dewey’s (1934) thought on having an experience. Dewey noted in regard to the esthetic quality of having an experience, “…esthetic cannot be sharply marked off from intellectual experience since the latter must bear an esthetic stamp to be itself complete” (p. 40). In a Waldorf classroom, intellectual instruction and aesthetic experiences are intertwined.

Waldorf classrooms utilize several modalities and intelligences. Rist (1979) defined learning in Waldorf education as, “Learning is interdisciplinary, integrates practical, artistic, and intellectual elements, and is coordinated with ‘natural rhythms of everyday life’” (p. 150). For Waldorf classrooms art is paramount in teaching all areas of the curriculum. Not only do they
teach dance and movement, they also will use movement to teach and aid in other areas of the curriculum. Steiner (2003) said, “…human beings are fundamentally predisposed to view both science and art as two aspects of one and the same truth” (p. 115). Art and science go hand and hand. The beauty of science can be represented in art. These two seemingly different disciplines aid one another, and this relationship is embraced in the Waldorf classroom. After a main lesson, which is a subject lesson that typically occurs at the beginning of the day for one to two hours, an art project usually follows. These projects help solidify learning in a child’s mind while also developing a love of art and art skills.

Another way in which to incorporate arts into the classroom is through interactive theater. Out of Friere’s (1970) philosophy of the oppressed grew Augusto Boal’s Theater of the Oppressed. Boal, a Brazilian activist and artist, began the Theater of the Oppressed as a reaction to the poverty and oppression that he saw in Brazil (2005). Boal felt that there should be a dialogue between the audience and the performers and that interactive theater was a way to produce solutions for the oppressed. These methods, or games, can be used in a classroom setting to help students think beyond single-solution answers, and begin facilitating solutions to social ills in the world today. Boal’s (1992) book, *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, could be used to incorporate this type of theater into the classroom immediately. By providing students the opportunity to mirror the issues in society, they will, in turn, be able to have a dialogue and begin to see possible solutions to these issues, without violence.

In addition to Waldorf’s methods and Boal’s interactive theater, Gardner’s theory of Multiple Intelligences also leads pedagogy in a new direction. Like Steiner (2003), Gardner (2006) believed that the individual child needs to be considered. Gardner stated, in response to the standardized school system,
I would like to present an alternative vision—one based on a radically different view of the mind, and one that yields a very different view of school. It is a pluralistic view of mind, recognizing many different and discrete facets of cognition, acknowledging that people have different cognitive strengths and cognitive styles. I introduce the concept of an individual-centered school that takes this multifaceted view of intelligence seriously.

With teachers thinking in this pluralistic way, they will be able to drive the current curriculum in a direction that will benefit each student individually. While it may be more taxing on the teacher at first, students in a classroom that considers Multiple Intelligences will be allowed the freedom to drive their own learning and creativity. This freedom will allow the teacher to become a facilitator of learning, rather than to continue the “banking” (Freire, 1970) structure of the classroom.

Arts are important for many reasons. They teach through Multiple Intelligences and enhance student learning. The arts have importance in developing an understanding of the aesthetic. Finally, the arts have value in themselves. Too often in education the arts importance has to do with how they enhance other areas of the curriculum or understanding. Several studies and researchers have explored the positive effects of the arts on other areas of the curriculum. Teachers sometimes forget that the arts have an intrinsic value of their own. Studying a painting and experiencing its beauty, or getting caught up in the movements of a folk dance has value in its own right. There is joy in experiencing the arts. Students get to experience this joy, and it should not have to be attached to higher test scores or to a way of reinforcing other content areas. Students should be able to experience art because it has its own value. Arts enable one to see, feel and hear the beauty in the surrounding world. Eisner wanted to make it clear when he said, “my claim, at base is that arts education and the several art fields that constitute it ought to give
pride of place to those unique contributions that only the arts make possible…” (1998, p.98). The arts should be valued for what they contribute without being attached to other areas.

The arts are integral in schools. They serve many purposes. They are imbedded in the multiple intelligences, and support students learning in a range of ways. The arts also help enhance other areas of the curriculum and they help create problem solvers who can see the world using their senses and aesthetics. Finally, the arts are important because of the emotions and feelings that they evoke. They have an intrinsic value that should not have to be attached to other areas of the curriculum. The arts need to be protected in our schools.

Social Studies

Social studies has come to mean a lot of things. It is often associated with history; however, history is only a portion of what social studies actually is. Social studies is actually the study of history and the social sciences. There are actually five different social sciences that comprise social studies. These disciplines include history and the social sciences of political science, anthropology, sociology, geography, and economics. While in high school and beyond the focus is on studying these disciplines or subject areas in an almost exclusive manner, in elementary school and junior high school the focus is on studying all of these social sciences as social studies.

Social studies was not always a part of the American curriculum. Social studies emerged at a time when all of education was undergoing a great transformation. While the universities were highly specialized and professional in their approach to teaching different subjects and going beyond the three R’s, this was not the case for most of lower education. High schools were adopting this model, but up until the turn of the nineteenth century high schools were seen as higher education. At this early time in the twentieth century the idea of going to high school was becoming more common and more were entering this level of education. High school and more
specifically earlier education had to change. Elementary education would have to mirror what was going on in the later grades and in the universities. Education at the elementary level needed to become more professional and specialized (Keels, 2009).

High school becoming more specialized was not the only reason for the emergence of the subject of social studies. While school was undergoing a fundamental change as to how specialized it would be, there was also a shift in philosophy as to what the goals of education were to be. The idea that the goal of education was to teach the three R’s was no longer enough. At this same time leading educators and philosophers of education were debating the purpose of schooling. Was education merely intended to teach basic facts, and the three R’s or was there a greater purpose? Educators like Francis Parker and John Dewey felt that education was meant to do a lot more than teach the three R’s. Professional organizations like the National Education Association (NEA) were also debating these questions. In 1916 the NEA made it known that they felt that the role of education was more important than just teaching a few subjects,

The NEA proposed that the work of our schools was to guarantee social efficiency by educating students to understand and resolve social problems; readying students for the job market in a changing world of business and industry; and developing in students’ practical skills related to health, hygiene, and nutrition. The committee recommended that school subjects should be practical. (Maxim, 2003, p.13)

The idea was that schools teach practical subjects that educate a student to be a productive and contributing member of our society. This idea was especially important in 1916 when the NEA created social studies because of the hopes of educating the many new immigrant children who were becoming a part of American society. Many felt that teaching social studies, and preparing the American youth for constructive participation in society, was so important that the survival of American society depended on it. Educators would no longer just read biographies of great
Americans to instill a sense of patriotism; they now would actively educate their students on becoming better citizens (Maxim, 2003).

Social studies is an important subject in the curriculum because its main goal is to help sustain our participatory democracy. Our nation thrives by having an informed electorate and educating our youth throughout their school years facilitates this. As George Maxim states, “We want our future citizens to respect our past as a modern America a free and powerful nation” (Maxim, 2003). The major goal expressed above of social studies was to instill values and beliefs in our young Americans. Social studies is meant to instill civic and democratic values such as justice, individual rights, the common good, and diversity in our children (Maxim, 2003 p.16). The California State Standards on History-Social Science state that one of the goals of social studies is to “…convey the rights and obligations of citizenship” (The California Department of Education, 2000 p. v). While social studies has this very noble cause it is also invaluable to students for learning in general.

Besides teaching our students to become better citizens and people, social studies contains a lot of valuable information and that is good for education in general. Social studies requires critical thinking when analyzing history and the social sciences. Also, often social studies is studied through research projects. When students work on these projects they develop valuable skills that they will use throughout their schooling and throughout their lives. Skills like researching through texts and the Internet are always valuable and are better taught in a context rather than in isolation. Students learn to read atlases and maps through geography and these skills are important in our daily lives. Also, the knowledge learned through social studies such as history, civics, and economics is important to be able to function in our society and live successfully. Social studies is not only as important as subjects like math and language arts, but is
even more important because while instilling knowledge social studies is helping to create good citizens.

Social studies is very important, but is there a certain way in which it is taught? While there is not one way to teach social studies there are some important things that should be considered when teaching social studies. We know how important social studies is not only to school success, but also to success in life. If we merely teach facts and promote memorization we are doing our students a great disservice. Memorizing facts and dates has little impact on students (Sunal, 2008). In order for social studies to be truly powerful curriculum it must be taught in a way that is constructivist, is inquiry based and takes multi-culturalism into account.

Constructivist theory of teaching is when the learners take what they have learned and they construct their own meaning and knowledge from what they have learned. Telling our students what to believe will not help them after they leave school. While they might do well on tests it does not help them develop skills that will make them successful in their later lives. Students must construct knowledge in their own minds for it to be meaningful to them (Sunal, 2008). We want students to become citizens who retain what they learned and extend that knowledge into their own lives. The main goal of social studies is to develop self-reflection and the ability to solve personal problems. We want citizens who ultimately can influence public policy (Banks, 1999). Constructivist teaching can help this goal. When teachers give students the tools to construct their own knowledge and meaning teachers are not only helping them to be successful in school, but rather throughout their schooling and later in their lives. When we are teaching our students social studies we should be doing it in a constructivist way that promotes students who can construct their own meanings from what they have learned.

Constructivist teaching promotes students making their own meaning from what they have learned. Inquiry based teaching can help achieve this goal. Inquiry based teaching is based
on teaching what the students want to learn. Inquiry based teaching sets out to answer questions that students are asking. This gives students choice in their education, which is essential in creating a rich learning environment (Farris, 2007). In an authentic inquiry based learning environment students develop ideas on their own often times using experiences in their everyday lives. In an inquiry based learning environment a problem is identified and then students gather data, analyze that data and reach a conclusion (Zarrillo, 2008). This form of teaching keeps students interested in their own education. This form of education is also essential for our students outside of school and in their adult lives. Careers and lives are often inquiry based. Problems arise and need to be dealt with in a rational and methodical way. Inquiry based teaching will enable students to become future leaders who solve the problems that are plaguing the nation and world. Social studies lends itself to inquiry-based learning.

Finally, a social studies curriculum should be a multi-cultural education. This means that social studies should be geared towards a diverse population of students as well as teach with many perspectives. The United States is a diverse nation and almost all teachers, especially those teaching in urban areas, will have diverse classes. Students will come from many different cultures, religions and socio-economic backgrounds. Americans from all cultures need social studies to solve everyday problems (Sunal, 2008). We need to be sensitive to the needs of all of our students. When we deny a group a social studies curriculum that is meaningful to them we limit their ability to solve everyday problems and the problems of the country and world. A curriculum needs to be developed that is a meaningful curriculum for all students to understand and respect the history and perspective of many groups (Chapin, 2009). Often the social studies that is taught to students is very one-dimensional. Students are taught about the pioneers in the west and how Indians tormented them. There are two sides to this coin. The Indians and the pioneers had totally different perspectives. The Indians saw a people who were taking their land
and destroying their resources. A multi-cultural curriculum provides a perspective of people who frequently have been silenced or relegated to margins of social studies programs (Zarrillo, 2008). A multi-cultural education does not only enable students to respect cultures that are often not studied in curriculums, they also allow students to respect one another. Multi-cultural education is for all students and it teaches that diversity is a strength and that students need to respect one another (Chapin, 2009). A multi-cultural education allows students to see multiple viewpoints and to appreciate their own heritage. A powerful social studies curriculum will be a curriculum that is also multi-cultural in scope.

One would surely believe that social studies is so important that it would be valued in our schools and is would be given adequate time during the school day. Sadly social studies is not receiving a lot of time, if any, in our schools today. How could this happen to a subject that the NEA felt was very important, so important that it could protect our democracy? The major factor in social studies not being valued in our schools and getting very little time in our classrooms could be answered with one word-testing. Testing has threatened many subjects like arts, the humanities and social studies. The major reason for this is that these subjects are not tested.

In 2002, President George Bush signed No Child Left Behind (NCLB) into law. This law was meant to hold schools accountable for the education of all students with a special emphasis on those students who traditionally did not do well in school. Those are the students who mostly are seen as being part of the achievement gap. NCLB required schools to show progress every year in the percentage of students scoring proficient in state achievement tests. NCLB focused on certain subjects. Math and reading along with science were to be monitored in states across the nation. Subjects like social studies, writing, arts, and the humanities were absent from this legislation. Those subjects that were targeted by NCLB received the most attention and funding because those were the subjects that were being tested. Social studies was not tested and therefore
not seen as a valuable subject to test. In fact, prior to NCLB about 27% of states tested social studies. After NCLB was passed this small number of states that tested dwindled farther to 19% (Pederson, 2007). Prior to NCLB teachers were spending about 75% of their instructional time on reading and math, leaving inadequate time for the remaining subjects (Cawelti, 2006). Now with high stakes testing, what little time social studies had has now decreased even further. Teachers are focusing their time and resources on those subjects that are being assessed.

Social studies helps create good students and citizens and it is important that it is universally taught and given time during the school day. Testing and NCLB were created to close the achievement gap. Test show that students from minority backgrounds as well as low socio-economic backgrounds tend to do poorer on assessments and have higher drop out rates. Testing was meant to close this gap, but testing as we have seen has led to less time being spent on social studies and in turn opening a civic achievement gap. Good citizens need to be knowledgeable and informed. Citizens need to be involved in their communities and country and feel that they can make a difference. This empowerment comes with a social studies education. When poor Hispanic and African American students take standardized civics and social studies test they score lower than white, Asian and middle-class students (Levinson, 2009). When students do not get a good social studies education they are a lot less likely to develop a civic attitude that would lead them to believe that they could affect change through participation in voting. We see that there is a large disparity in voting rates between different races and classes. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, newly immigrated groups participated in their communities in large numbers. Minority groups and the poor need to once again feel empowered to participate (Levinson, 2009). This will come through a good civics and social studies curriculum. It is important that we empower all students to do well in school, become life-long learners, and to be
empowered to be good citizens. Teaching a strong social studies curriculum is important to achieving all these outcomes.

Arts Integration

As the nation’s education system focuses on high-stakes testing and accountability, many teachers feel pressure to spend more time and effort on core curricula such as math and English language arts. This, in turn, leaves little room for non-assessed areas such as visual and performing arts. While there are national visual and performing arts standards, they are often times neglected in lieu of standards that are tested. The emphasis on testing, rather than the whole child, is robbing the country’s children of chances to imagine, explore their own creativity, and partake in higher-level thinking. With the inception of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2002, the arts are finding less importance among the core subjects that are assessed.

In order for America’s children to regain a sense of wonder, discovery, imagination, and hands-on problem solving, the arts need to be included as an integral part of the elementary classroom. The strong focus on each impending test leaves little room for educators to allow children to be children: experiencing the world with their eyes, hands, bodies, and emotions. Gardner’s (2006) theory of Multiple Intelligences promotes a well-rounded approach to education, which takes into account the different capacities of intelligence that each person possesses, as well as diverse styles of learning among students. The arts most certainly need to be included in this type of approach.

Schools that use standardized assessments may, on the surface, seem fair; however, these systems are completely inequitable, as they work well for specific types of minds, and not for others (Gardner 2006; Winner & Hetland, 2008). Where does this leave the others: the students who are not blessed with these specific types of minds? For one, the arts can be used as another means of displaying growth and understanding, in addition to the mandated standardized tests.
While there is no way around these assessments, elementary schools need to get creative in order to provide students with alternative ways to express their knowledge. The arts are an enriching way to allow children to learn and convey meaning (Lynch, 2009; Eisner, 1998).

Eisner (1998) believed that school is one of the primary cultures that develop the minds of students. He therefore felt that decisions made regarding what should be taught to students are essentially decisions about the types of minds that will be developed by children. What is it that America finds important to develop in the minds of its children? If one judges this importance based on what is heavily tested, then English language arts and math would be the answer.

Studies have shown that since the inception of the No Child Left Behind Act, the time given to assessed subjects has increased, while time dedicated to non-assessed subjects such as art, has decreased (Pederson, 2007; “Instructional Time in Elementary Schools,” 2008; Spohn, 2008). The Center on Education Policy (CEP) delved further into 2006-2007 survey data regarding the amount of instructional time allotted to specific subjects since the ratification of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). The 2007 report found that,

…since school year 2001-2002, when NCLB was enacted, 62% of all school districts had increased the amount of time spent in elementary schools on English language arts (ELA) and/or math, while 44% of all districts had increased time for ELA and/or math while also cutting time for elementary school science, social studies, art and music, physical education, lunch, or recess. (p. 23)

The minds that are currently being developed in school appear to be completely off-balanced, and heavily favoring those students with strong linguistic and mathematic capabilities.

Eisner (1998) also argued that the arts are the most powerful form of thinking, and yet it is the most neglected form. The NCLB is proving to be a major obstacle in the way of this form of thinking. According to the CEP’s study, of the 349 responding school districts from CEP’s
nationally representative survey conducted between November 2006 and February 2007, there was a total decrease in arts and music of 16%, or an average of 57 minutes per week, while English language arts and math received increases of 58% (141 weekly minutes) and 45% (89 weekly minutes) respectively (pp. 23-24). Lessening the arts is in no way beneficial to the development of a child. Rather, it limits the child’s expression and development of meaning.

Integrating the arts into other subject areas has been cause for debate. It has been argued that the arts should be respected in their own right, and that using the arts to simply improve other areas of academic achievement strips away the arts’ importance and value (Eisner, 1998). While there may be truth to this argument, some fear that if the arts are to be taught in isolation, they may be disregarded altogether, due to the importance placed on tested subjects and accountability (Mishook & Kornhaber, 2006; Gardner, 2006). While teaching art for arts’ sake would be wonderful for students, the current education system does not respect this philosophy. In order for most children to have any experience with the arts in America’s schools, integration is essential.

Since standardized testing is required in the public school system, those involved in teaching children need to take the necessary steps toward finding ways for students to express their knowledge beyond filling in a bubble on a multiple choice test. Gardner (2006) stated, “…the broker [teacher] should help the student find the best presentation of the curriculum. Everyone should study history and mathematics, but these topics need not be taught and assessed in a single way to all students” (p. 57). This is not an easy or time freeing task for teachers. For one, a teacher needs to fully understand a student’s strengths and struggles. From there, opportunities need to be created for students, based on their intelligences, to learn through different modalities, and show what they know in a variety of ways. Art needs to be a fundamental part of this make-up.
An Indianapolis K-6 school based on the principles of Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence (MI) theory has taken strides to create an environment where this type of learning can take place (Gardner, 2006). The Key School had different aged students working in groups that worked on real-world skills. In these “pods,” students would engage in thematic, project-based learning (pp. 114-115). Gardner believed artistic learning to be a major component of project based learning, which lends to motivation and interest for students (p. 154). Students were guided by teachers, community members brought in to discuss real-life applications, as well as each other. Self reflection and analyzation of their work was continuous, and students were engaged in their learning as they created and answered their own questions that were developed throughout the duration of these projects. Like the Key School, Gardner’s (2001) work with Project Zero and the Reggio Emilia schools of Italy also embodied teaching to the whole child. In Reggio Emilia schools, students are encouraged to explore their surroundings, create their own questions and solutions, and exhibit what they have learned through many artistic forms. This exploration is done throughout the curriculum, and the child is able to experience learning, rather than simply be the recipient of information. These types of learning environments are far from what can be seen in many of the schools today. Instead of teaching to the whole child or even to every child, the district, state, and national mandates pressure an off-balance approach toward tested material, and those with high levels of memorization skills.

What direct instruction cannot do, the arts can. Arts integration allows for deeper and broader understanding for students, and a connection to curriculum through experiences that cannot be found when given a list of facts or mathematical equations to memorize. A study involving an arts-magnet school in Chicago with a diverse population revealed that art-integration supported a child’s learning in a variety of ways: “…the whole child is involved…the arts require children to assume greater responsibility for their own learning…arts integration are
inclusive experiences that invite all students to participate in the learning process” (Lynch, 2009, p. 34). This cannot be said of teaching to the test, or simply assessing students with the standardized scantron tests. Multiple choice testing is not a skill that has real-life applications, nor do most standardize tests allow for the type of thinking and problem solving skills society needs from its future leaders (Eisner, 1998; Gardner, 2006; Winner and Hetland, 2008). However, the arts develop thinking skills that are necessary for a productive society (Eisner, 1998; Winner and Hetland, 2008). These skills include, “visual-spatial abilities, reflection, self-criticism, and the willingness to experiment and learn from mistakes” (Winner and Hetland, 2008, p. 29). It is important for the education system to include the arts, as they have the ability to reach children in a way that other methods cannot.

Yet another positive outcome of learning through the arts is self-efficacy. James S. Canterall and Kylie A. Peppler (2007) conducted a research study in Los Angeles and St. Louis involving 103 inner city 9-year-olds who received continuous visual arts instruction. Their results indicated that for these underprivileged children, the arts helped increase their own self-efficacy. Over half of the students involved in the art classes showed significant growth in this area, while one-third of the comparison students made comparable gains. Similar findings were observed through a small scale research study in Melbourne, Australia within a primary school of students from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds (Grant, Hutchinson, Hornsby, & Brooke, 2008). The study focused on reading and writing, and the results of teaching these subjects using “art-full” approaches such as role-playing and sculpting prior to delving into the reading. Teachers involved in this study found that, “through play and story, underachieving students became more socially confident and articulate” (Grant, et al., 2008, p. 68). Again, this is not something that would show up as measured on any standardized test; however, as a student gains
more confidence through the arts, the implications towards other subjects and life experiences may be equally as positive.

If classrooms are able to integrate the arts into other subject areas, students’ will have yet another way to become motivated in their learning, display their knowledge, and develop a positive self worth. Society also needs creative problem solvers for the future, and teaching to have students perform successfully on standardized tests is not to go about it. The arts have the capability to develop these types of thinkers.

While arts integration can enhance, engage, and develop learners, there are many obstacles to overcome in order for the arts to be alive in classrooms across America. It should be noted, however, that according to Paula Purnell (2004), a Teaching Artist, the value teachers place on the arts is not one of those hindrances. Purnell surveyed 75 third, fourth, and fifth grade teachers in Pennsylvania. 100% of those surveyed felt that the integration of the arts into other curriculum, “either improves, or greatly improves the teacher’s ability to meet their students’ multiple learning styles” (p. 157). Teachers understand the value and benefits the arts can bring to students. So what else is standing in the way of integrating art into the school day?

As previously mentioned, high-stakes assessments put a substantial amount of pressure on teachers to focus mainly on subjects being tested. With this comes loss of anonymity in the classroom, and leads to the teacher feeling he/she no longer has the ability to teach in the method that is best for students (Oreck, 2006, pp. 14-15). Not only is there pressure from the top down, but there is also resentment between teachers when alternate methods are used. As one teacher described it, “Whereas you used to get [from colleagues], ‘I loved how you did that; I want to try that,’ now you get more resentment that you tried something. I think a lot of people resent when certain people do better than others. There’s not as much camaraderie.” (Oreck, 2006, p. 15). This type of pressure and lack of support among teachers is yet another obstruction of successful
arts integration. Teachers need to put students first, and work together to alleviate some of the stress generated from the top-down requirements. Teachers must also support and collaborate with one another regarding art experiences in the classroom, in order to ensure positive student development.

Not only is there pressure from above and among teachers, David E. Gullat (2007) also contended that the lack of arts in our schools reflects the sentiment of voters in school districts. Gullat argued that until parents and guardians fight to restore the arts into their students’ school day, little effort will be made in supporting the arts. Those who understand the importance of the arts must therefore have their voices heard. Teachers can discuss with parents the importance of the arts, and encourage them to contact their board members to show their disapproval with the direction of education. Those who also value the arts must also be committed to becoming advocates for the arts: speaking up at board meetings, calling and email local representatives, and being involved in campaigns to increase the arts in education.

Without support from voters, money becomes another impediment of quality art education. Funding is necessary not only for supplies, but also to support teacher education programs and staff development in the arts. Since many schools no longer have funding for highly trained art teachers, it is up to the classroom teacher to teach and integrate art into the curriculum. However, without proper support, lack of confidence in artistic abilities may lead to exclusion of the arts in certain classrooms.

If the arts are given more importance in the school day, the child will once again be able to experience a more well-rounded approach to learning. Art has the ability to touch students in ways that other subjects cannot. Furthermore, students who struggle with standardize test formats will be able to have another path in which to demonstrate what they have learned. With so much time and emphasis placed on standardized testing, it is up to districts, administrators, principals,
and essentially teachers, to find ways to integrate arts into other curriculum areas. There are many obstacles to overcome in the fight to reinstate the arts into our schools. Nevertheless, for the sake of the students and the future of our nation, it is imperative that those who understand arts’ value keep trying.

Conclusion

The researchers have shown the significance of subjects such as social studies and the arts, and the neglect these subjects are receiving in the existing school system. The beliefs of John Dewey, Elliot Eisner, Donald Arnstine, Howard Gardner, and Paulo Freire are in sharp contrast to the current model in America. These philosophers, through lectures, writings, and personal experience, have developed theories of the importance of arts in education. An analysis of their theories exposes the need for reform of the current education system to more thoroughly include the arts in curriculum and practice.

In Chapter 3, the researchers will use the information they have gathered from these prominent arts in education theorists and researchers, as well as the understanding of the importance of social studies for a quality education to support an arts integrated social studies production and experience. The researchers will lay out the procedures necessary for the project, as well as discuss a project, which brings together the arts and social studies in a meaningful way that is powerful for students.
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Narrative Inquiry

The authors’ *Social Studies Alive* project is an Alternative Culminating Experience for a Master of Arts in Education: Curriculum and Instruction with an Elective Emphasis on Arts in Education. It follows Pathway III: Developing a curriculum, program, or performance related to arts education or arts in education. The authors have chosen to document their research through narrative inquiry. “Narrative inquiry has been considered as an alternative mode of thinking and learning. Narrative inquiry is a way of understanding, organizing and communicating experience” (Heo, 2004, p. 230). The authors realized early on in this process that all members involved in *Social Studies Alive* would have individual as well as shared experiences that would best be examined through the narration of those experiences. To place quantitative measures on such personal events would not benefit the authors’ intentions of developing professionally, as well as creating an arts integrated social studies experience for students at Rio Linda Elementary.

Narrative inquiry is grounded in storytelling, but goes well beyond simply retelling specific occurrences. The narrative process also requires an active reflection of those experiences. Researchers LaBoskey and Lyons noted

As inquiry, narrative involved an intentional reflective process, the actions of a group of learners interrogating their learning, constructing and telling the story of its meaning, and predicting how this knowledge might be used in the future. We came to see that narrative was fundamentally an activity of mind, a way of gathering up knowledge of practice, simply, a way of knowing, and of knowing that one knew. (LaBoskey & Lyons, 2002, p. 3)
It is therefore the reflections of what one has experienced that leads to further understanding. This knowledge, in turn, will lend itself to future additions and or changes of that which was studied. Narrative inquiry is a legitimate approach to education research. As such, the authors will be using this method in both Chapters 3 and 4, writing from their perspectives in the first person.

Responsibilities

When going about this project as well as the paper, Ben Crago-Schneider and I decided the best thing to do was to approach the workload the way we approach our students: working toward our strengths. Ben has more technology experience; therefore he worked on the formatting of the paper. In college I wrote for our school newspaper, and editing and revising was a main component of that experience. I used this experience during the course of writing this paper, to make additions and changes to what Ben and I were producing. Beyond these two specific areas, the writing of the paper itself was a collaborative and equal process.

Originally Ben and I were writing two separate papers for this project, so we each had our own abstracts, proposals, and Chapter 2 Literature Reviews. When the decision was made to come together on the writing of the paper, we worked closely to pull the best information from both of our work to develop a stronger paper than what we each had done individually. The collaboration process led to more ideas as well as the deletion of unnecessary information that did not coincide with our intentions for this project. While it did take extra time to join the two papers together, it was also an opportunity for us to discuss our project further and with more focus, using the information gathered in our separate researching of prominent figures in education and the arts as our foundation.

While collaboration was the primary means of writing this paper, Chapter 4 allowed us to individually reflect on our personal experiences. While we are both teachers working on the
same project, there was no way our experiences would be completely equal. We used Chapter 4 as a way to display how this process affected each of us personally.

Some had mentioned to us that writing this paper together may be harder than writing individually, especially if writing styles and time management differed between us. However, I have to say that Ben and I really worked closely and efficiently with each other, which made this experience even more worthwhile than if we had each approached it alone.

Setting the Stage

Our project started in the fall semester of 2008 when we first began the Master’s program at California State University, Sacramento. Our cohort was told that there were several pathways that we could choose from when completing the requirements for our Master’s degree. We were very excited to learn that we could do a project at our school site. During the course of the fall semester of 2008, we read many texts on the arts and their importance. We knew the arts were significant, but we learned over the course of that semester how integral the arts were and read research that showed us how impactful the arts could be on students. Our degree was to focus on the arts and we decided we wanted to do a theatrical performance that would expose our students to as much of the arts as possible, while also integrating other key content standards. We knew that this project would be time consuming and we knew that we would cover most, if not all, of the language arts standards for the third, fourth, and fifth grades. We also realized that we wanted to incorporate another non-art subject into our performance. We wanted a subject that, like the arts, is being pushed out of our schools because it is not assessed and therefore not seen as important. From this standpoint we decided our project would be centered on the social studies curriculum. We also knew that we wanted to do a theatrical performance in which the students would research specific events in history and develop vignettes related to these events in order to enhance their learning experience.
Throughout the fall of 2008 and the spring of 2009, we learned about the arts and took classes that would help us to produce children’s theatre productions. In the spring of 2009 we were required to create a proposal of our project that was to be turned in to graduate studies. We were required to tell the importance of our project, research relevant literature, include a list of terms that were pertinent to our project, and create a timeline that would help us stay on task and complete our project on time. At this point we were each working on these written elements separately, as our decision to collaborate on the writing came later in our program. In order for us to finish the Master’s program on time, our project would need to be done and turned in by April 1 of the following year.

To put on a successful production, we knew that we were going to have to immediately start our project once the new school year began. We also knew that we would need to have our production completed by the winter break of 2009 in order to give us enough time to thoughtfully write up our project. This meant we were going to need to start the preparation for our production in the summer of 2009. Prior to going on summer break, we agreed to meet and in the meantime accomplish certain tasks.

June

In June, we decided that when school was on break we were going to look through our social studies standards and curricula and choose what we wanted our students to study. We examined our social studies texts from cover to cover. During that time we identified what the key time periods and subjects within our curriculums that should be deeply studied, and what would provide the most information for research and vignettes. We also decided to look at the California State Standards for History/Social Sciences for our prospective grades and get an idea what they key standards were. We planned to meet in July to discuss what we had found and
come up with a more detailed plan for implementing our project and starting the production once
the school year began.

July

Having a class in July made meeting a lot easier. When we met, we discussed what we
had found from examining the standards and our social studies texts. The third grade standards
that we decided to study and produce for our play had to do with Native peoples, the regions of
California, and our school’s community, Rio Linda, over time. While there are many standards
for the third grade social studies curriculum, there are not many that are conducive to creating
vignettes for a stage production. This is why there were only three areas that were to be closely
studied for the third grade. There were a lot more areas that would lend themselves to a school
production in the fourth grade curriculum. We would have students study Native Americans, the
missions, pioneers, the gold rush, California statehood, and the Trans-Continental Railroad. The
fifth grade social studies curriculum covers United States’ history and goes all the way from
explorers to immigration in the early 20th century. There were many topics that were to be
covered by the fifth graders and others that would have to be taught after the production, as the
curriculum was too vast. They were going to study the early famous explorers, the first
Americans (Native Americans and settlers), the American Revolution, the Northern and Southern
Colonies, slavery, immigration to the United States, and government.

During this meeting we also talked more about what exactly we wanted in the production.
We knew that we wanted the students to create their own vignettes after studying the curriculum
as well as outside sources. While we were confident the students would be creative and come up
with good vignettes, we also wanted other elements in our production. Singing was something
we both wanted in this performance. We discussed how daunting a task this was going to be with
all the preparation that was to go into creating the vignettes, when we realized that there were a
lot of good American folk songs that had been around for many years, in some instances centuries. To transition between skits, the students would sing folk songs from throughout American history. These songs would be really relevant because they would have to do with the subject matter of our vignettes. They were also pertinent because they were written during the historical periods we were going to study. Right away we could recall songs like, “I’ve Been Workin’ on the Railroad,” and “Clementine.” We decided that we would use the songs as the glue to hold the production together. This was a good decision because singing would include all of the students at various times throughout the performance, rather than having them only perform during their vignette. We talked about a few songs, but decided to wait and pick the actual songs for the performance at the very beginning of the new school year, with the help of Sharon Glover, our Student Learning Coach, another collaborator on this project.

The last thing that we discussed at this meeting was what we would physically need to put on this production. We knew that we would have to build or find sets, props, and costumes. Initially we thought that we would be making some of the costumes with help from parents, and planned on enlisting this help at the beginning of the school year.

August

The 2009/2010 school year began very early and the first day back for teachers was August 10th. Students returned to school on the 12th. While the idea of the performance was introduced to Mrs. Pepper’s class this first week back, Mr. Crago-Schneider was out on paternity leave, and we really began working on the project starting the week of August 17th.

That Monday we decided that we would go back to our students and list their options. We would tell them a little about each time period/subject and have them choose their top three. We tried to get each student one of his or her top three choices. When placing students into groups we had to consider several different factors. These groups were to be a heterogeneous
mixture of students. Although we were only beginning to know our students, we felt that it was important for the students to start thinking about their topics, as well as begin bonding with their group members. In constructing these groups, we wanted to place academically high students with lower students to help scaffold them. We also wanted more outgoing students to be with more introverted students, so that we would have interesting vignettes and enable some students to shed some of their shyness. In the end, we were able to give students one of their choices. Within two days of students picking their top three choices we told them their research groups and entered the next phase of our project.

Knowing that perfect songs would take some time, we wanted to start the students singing as soon as possible. An added incentive was that having them sing together would help them get interested in the project, make them more cohesive, and give us time to learn about our students and plan our production. To help students perfect their singing as individuals and as a group, we got started with them singing on August 24th. Initially we had them singing everyday during our dedicated social studies time of 12:15-1:00. We began by having them sing five songs. Several of these songs were completely new to the students. None of our students had ever heard, “Follow the Drinking Gourd.” The students quickly took to the songs and sang them well. While we were having the students sing and in those first couple weeks, we were getting to know the students and their strengths.

September

Singing was going really well in August, but we knew we had to quickly move to research to stay on our strict timeline. In the beginning of September we devoted the first three days of the week to singing. The students were getting really good with some of the songs. The last two days of the week, when our Library Media Teacher was at our site, were to be spent on research. Mrs. Plefka, our Library Media Teacher, showed us a new tactile/kinesthetic way for
our students to do their research. She had the students use a file folder with pockets and index cards to record their research. Students would record their research findings on index cards, and place them in six little pockets within the file folder. Five of these pockets were to become paragraphs in a research paper they were going to do. The sixth pocket was for bibliographic information. This was an effective way to have the students record their research because it allowed them to become accustomed to note-taking, and provided a means for easy access to their research, and practice maintaining good bibliographic records as well.

Students from both rooms were able to meet with Mrs. Plefka once a week. Thursdays were devoted to the third and fourth graders while Fridays were reserved for the fifth graders. When one class was in the library the other class was researching in their own room. During this time the students were using various forms of research. Textbooks as well as books from our library, encyclopedias, and online sources were used to find information. This process was very new for the students, especially the third graders, and took a lot of time on the part of both on the students and teachers.

Also, during September the students were learning some drama games and were also using Reader’s Theatre to develop their acting skills. Students really seemed to like Reader’s Theatre and drama games. We were early in our production; however, things always seemed rushed.

October

The same schedule that began in September continued throughout most of October. Researching proved more difficult and therefore more time consuming than initially anticipated, which resulted in script writing being pushed toward the end of the month. On Monday, October 26, we allowed students who were ready to begin outlining their ideas for their vignettes. Some groups still needed more time researching, but those who had a firm understanding began to
present their ideas to us for approval. This was also the point in which Sharon Glover took groups from both classes to help provide more individualized attention to each vignette. Ms. Glover worked with the third grade group on California regions, the fourth grade group on statehood, and the fifth grade groups of colonies, slavery, and immigration. Even with Ms. Glover’s help, we, as teachers, struggled to find a balance between helping those who needed it, especially since each group was working at a different pace.

During the month of October we also invited our advisor on this project, Crystal Olson, to teach our kids the Virginia Reel. We felt this folk dance would be a great highlight to our production, and would allow another element of the arts to be included and experienced with our students. We were fortunate enough to have Ms. Olson take the time to come out to Rio Linda Elementary and teach, and in some cases reteach, our students this lively dance.

November

November’s focus was on script writing and practicing, as students began to move away from research. We only had three weeks available to us this month, as we had a week off for the Thanksgiving holiday. These three weeks needed to be highly efficient and worthwhile, as the performance would soon be upon us. At this point the songs were well known by the students, so we were able to reduce the amount of days we practiced. We went from three days a week to once a week on Fridays. Also, when schedules permitted, we got our classes together to dance the Virginia Reel, counting the time as a portion of our P.E. minutes that are required by the state.

As mentioned, the script writing process began with the students outlining their ideas for their vignette with our approval. From there, the students were asked to make “skeletal” scripts, putting in important factual information they learned from their research. We then worked closely with the groups in editing and revising, in order to help them present the most relevant information, in an interesting manner. From the beginning we presented this project to the
students as a way of teaching each other, as well as their friends and family who would be viewing the performance. We wanted to emphasize with the group that what they placed in their vignettes was highly important, as they would be mini-lessons on their topics.

December

December was a time of reorganizing and planning for our performance on December 17th. We used the two and a half weeks before the show to have the students build props, make touch-ups to backdrops that had been used by Ms. Glover in prior shows, as well as have students begin trying on costumes. Our plan of having the students and/or parents help create some of the costumes had to be abandoned, as attention needed to be placed elsewhere. Fortunately, Ms. Glover had collected and created a wide variety of costumes throughout her years of teaching, and we were able to use those items for this production.

While we originally assumed that all students at this point would be able to help with these final tasks, some students still needed support with their vignettes. We reorganized and Mr. Crago-Schneider worked with those still needing support with vignettes, Mrs. Pepper worked with students and props, and Ms. Glover worked with others on backdrops and costuming.

During these first weeks of December we also had to make arrangements to give more time to the production. This, of course, led to decisions regarding what other subjects would be receiving less attention. We felt that this was completely necessary in order for the students to put on a performance of which they would be proud.

On December 14th, we were able to finally begin running through the show onstage and on the risers. While this was later than what we had hoped, it our reality. The next three days were spent rehearsing the production, focusing on the use of props, and transitions. We also had to recruit three sixth graders for being stagehands and working with spotlights. They were students with prior experience in these areas, and became a great asset to this production.
On December 17th, we rehearsed in the morning, and our school performance took place at 12:50. Unfortunately, due to the length of the show, the final three vignettes were unable to be viewed by the school. However, we knew that they would have the opportunity at the night show to perform for friends and family.

That evening, students returned at 5:00 p.m. to get costumed and prepare for their final performance. The students were excited, as they were still thrilled with what they had done during the school presentation. The show began at 6:00 p.m. and lasted until 7:40 p.m. While the performance was much longer than we had wished, the students did an amazing job, and the audience was appreciative and engaged throughout.

Conclusion

*Social Studies Alive* was an enormous, yet thoroughly worthwhile undertaking. This process evoked a variety of feelings for all involved in this experience. Chapter 4 details those emotions from the standpoint of the authors of this paper, Ben Crago-Schneider and Julie Pepper.
Chapter 4

REFLECTIONS

Introduction

Overall this process was time consuming, stressful, yet very rewarding. Throughout this process we saw our students gain immensely from the experience. Our students learned how to research a topic. They also learned how to write scripts and work with dialogue. Specifically, they worked on fluency and intonation when working on dialogue. Finally, when we think about all of the different subjects of the curriculum and different standards and strands that were covered in the course of this project, we are in awe of all that was accomplished. We covered standards that dealt with third, fourth, and fifth grade English Language Arts, Social Studies, and the Visual and Performing Arts. We saw our students enjoying the learning process while they learned about theatre and Social Studies. The authors both learned a great amount from this process and had an enjoyable time overall doing the performance, Social Studies Alive.

Reflection: Author, Ben Crago-Schneider, Third/Fourth Grade Teacher

Expectations

I had many expectations for this project. My research partner, Julie Pepper, and I started preparing for this project in the spring of 2008. We knew that it would take focus, planning, and following a rather strict timeline. However, I did not really know what to expect. While I have been a teacher for five years and have worked on short music and dancing performances with students, I have never done a full production with students. I do have colleagues that have done productions with their students and I saw what an endeavor those had been. I thought what my partner and I were trying to do was probably overly ambitious as my colleagues had always used programs that were already prepared and had been purchased. These performances came with ready-made scripts and recorded music.
The performance was set for just before our winter break, the reason being that we were going to need ample time to write about our project prior to April first of the 2010 spring semester. We were going to start from the beginning with only our social studies curricula as guides. Students would have to do their own research regarding the different events in history, write their own scripts, and be able to practice them. Students would have to be taught drama terms and how to act. They would need to be able to deliver their lines and not sound like robots. On top of that we were going to have to learn some dancing and several songs. I knew it probably would not be easy; however, I had no idea how difficult it was going to be.

Collaboration with Colleagues

Being new to doing theatrical performances and a performance of this magnitude, it was crucial, and I was very fortunate, to have people working with me and supporting me who were well versed in putting on theatrical performances, preparing musical performances, and teaching students how to go through the research process. This project was definitely a collaborative process and would not have come together without the help of several different people. The people who were instrumental in getting this project completed were Mrs. Pepper, Ms. Glover, and Mrs. Plefka. Without these people, we would not have accomplished this project, or done it with such success.

Mrs. Pepper and I have been teaching at Rio Linda Elementary for the past four years and have similar views on education and both highly value the arts. We both believe that education should not be limited to those subjects that are heavily tested. While the English Language Arts and Math are crucial subjects, we also realize that subjects like the social studies, science, and the arts are equally as valuable and deserve a place in our society, schools, and classrooms. We both decided to enter the Master’s program with the goal of the arts having a more prominent role in our classrooms. When we learned all of the different paths we could take in our culminating
project, we were excited about the many opportunities. We talked and decided that the best way to use our project to bring the arts into our classrooms was to do a theatrical performance. More importantly we would put on a theatrical performance that integrated another under-appreciated subject, social studies.

I worked closely with Mrs. Pepper, the co-author, and relied on her a lot. We were both in the same situation. We were both teachers in a self-contained classroom trying to create an ambitious, original, theatrical performance. We met a lot during the course of this project to discuss a litany of things. We would meet to discuss how the project was going and make adjustments to our plans when the students were not working as fast as we had hoped they would. I would also meet with her to discuss how the project was coming along, when it was going well, to celebrate, and when it was not going well, to commiserate. Both groups of our students struggled with the same issues, and it was nice to know that it was not necessarily my students or me, but just the process. It was invaluable having someone in the same position that I was in to talk with and implement this project.

Ms. Glover was also valuable to our project. Sharon Glover is our Student Learning Coach and she is a support teacher whose schedule was more flexible than a teacher in a self-contained classroom. Ms. Glover was a classroom teacher for many years prior to being a Student Learning Coach. In the time she was in the classroom, Ms. Glover put on many theatrical performances with her classes. Ms. Glover had experience with teaching students the correct way to sing and harmonize. She also had experience with building sets and costuming students. Ms. Glover’s help in the last two weeks, when our performance was coming together, was especially invaluable.

We started this project with merely the social studies standards as our guide, which meant that not only were our students writing the scripts for their individual vignettes, they were also
going to have to research their particular topics in order to write their scripts. I have done research
with my students in the past and it has always been so hard for students to cull the most important
information from sources. Researching with my fourth graders in the past was always a painful
process for both my students and for me. This year I have both third and fourth graders. If it was
hard for my fourth graders, how was it going to be for my younger third graders? Luckily for
Mrs. Pepper and me, we have a part-time Library Media Teacher, Mrs. Plefka, at our site.

Mrs. Plefka offered her help at the very beginning of the year. She was very excited about
helping teach our students how to research, and also how to decide what information was
important and what was not. She helped teach them to summarize and take meaningful notes.
Mrs. Plefka used a very creative way to record student research and I plan on using this method in
subsequent years. Her method of recording research used a graphic organizer that was very kid
friendly.

Collaboration is very powerful in teaching. Teaching is a profession that is very tough
and time consuming, and having people to work with who offered strengths that I did not have
helped support me in this experience. However, there were some limitations created by
collaborating. While Mrs. Pepper and I have the same schedules, our other collaborators had very
different schedules. Also, there were certain times during the day when we could not meet. Ms.
Glover has many commitments and has to be available to our whole school site. There were
several times during this process where she was unable to meet with us due to other
responsibilities. There were also several times when we had to change what we had planned due
to meetings or other responsibilities of her position. In addition, Mrs. Plefka is a part-time
Library Media Teacher at our school. She is only at our school site two or three days a week. Mrs.
Plefka was not exclusively working with Mrs. Pepper and me. She needed to be available to all
the teachers at our site. Both Mrs. Pepper and I had to take our students to our library media
center to research. We usually would get one hour a week with Mrs. Plefka which meant that we had to make sure our students were focused and on task during that time.

Another major limitation to collaboration had to do with the structure of our school day. There were times when our collaborators could meet with us, but we were unable to meet with them. Our school day is heavily structured. We have math in the mornings along with guided reading, which means that there was really no time for research until after lunch. After lunch we have about two hours before the end of our school day. Not only did we have to use that time, and only that time, to collaborate, we also had other mandated responsibilities like scheduling physical education. While our collaborators made themselves available as much as possible, there were limitations of time when we could work with them.

The Process

Mrs. Pepper and I stayed pretty true to our timeline prior to starting the 2009/2010 school year. At the end of the 2008/2009 school year we met in June and looked at the third and fourth grade standards in history and social science. We pulled the major topics out of these standards that we wanted our students to study and make vignettes for our performance. In July, we met again and discussed the specific points in history to be studied and finalized the topics that our students would research. We also met with our Student Learning Coach and discussed the songs that we were going to sing. Once we decided exactly what we wanted our students to research, I remember thinking that the curriculum would be more manageable. Combining the adopted curriculum of three grades in a performance is a daunting task. Once we had narrowed the topics down to the most important aspects of the curriculum, it seemed like something that would be attainable.

When Mrs. Pepper and I planned this project, we knew that we were going to have to start right at the beginning of the school year. We set aside every day from 12:15-1:00 p.m. to
work on our performance. We let our students know right away that they would be doing a performance based on their social studies curriculum. We first started talking to our students about the performance on August 17, 2009. Many of my students were excited to do a theatrical performance. Some of my third graders had done a performance as second graders and were excited to do another performance. My fourth graders had not done a performance for many years, if at all, and many of them were uneasy about performing in front of the whole school and their parents. The performance was in December, so while some students were apprehensive about performing, the date seemed very distant.

The next day, August 18, 2009, we introduced the topic choices the students would have. We wanted the students to choose three possible topics and then Mrs. Pepper and I would make groups according to students’ strengths. We wanted to heterogeneously group our students in order to make all the groups as successful as possible. In retrospect, it would have been good to quickly go over the curricula so that students would have had a better idea about what they would actually be studying. None of our students had studied any aspects of the third, fourth, and fifth grade social studies curricula. While some students may have heard of the Gold Rush, no one in our classes had a real grasp on what they were going to be studying. If time had not been such a factor, we would have really let our students get an idea of possible choices. The next day, August 19th, we told the students which topics they would be studying and who was in each group.

We knew we had to get right into research, but we also knew that we had to teach the students the songs they would be singing during the performance as soon as possible. We knew that as the performance got closer we would have less time to focus on the songs for the performance. We wanted to give ample time for our students to learn the songs and learn them correctly, so we spend a lot of time early in the school year just practicing our songs. We had
students singing our songs every day from August 24th to August 28th. This was good because we were able to introduce five songs and the students learned them well in that second week. What was also really promising was how enthusiastic the students were singing the songs. The students loved when Mrs. Glover would come to our classrooms and sing with them.

In September we dedicated Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays to singing during our social studies time. We did research with Mrs. Plefka on Thursdays and Fridays. Mrs. Pepper worked with Mrs. Plefka one day and I would work with Mrs. Plefka on the other day. The days we were not in the library media center with Mrs. Plefka, we would do research in our own classrooms. One thing that I distinctly remember about this time period is how much slower the research went than I initially thought it would. Mrs. Plefka was very thorough and made sure that students knew how to research before they actually delved into their topics. I totally had not thought about including these vital lessons, and we lost about two weeks to this process. It was important for our students to learn how to research; we just had not planned for this in our timeline. After the students learned how to do research, it seemed to take a lot longer for them to finish than I had expected. A lot of times I found myself getting frustrated because I felt that they were not focusing or were choosing to focus on minutia. However, now I know that they were just so new to researching and so young that they had not yet developed the skills to really discern what was and was not important for their topics.

During this same time I was working a little with Reader’s Theatre with my students. I was doing this, so they could work on fluency while also seeing what a script looked like. In addition, we were doing some drama games that the children really enjoyed.

We continued researching throughout September and October. This whole process was a lot harder than we had initially thought it would be. In the future I would have my students do
another research project prior to this one, so they could begin the project already knowing how to do research.

At the very end of October and through November, we were writing our scripts and practicing. This too was a lot harder than I had thought it would be. We initially wanted them to use improvisation to act out their vignettes and then write their scripts based on what they had acted out. I thought that I would not have to be too involved in this step of the process, but I was very necessarily involved. While some groups quickly came up with creative ways to show what they had learned, there were several groups who just stalled. I had to sit down with quite a few groups and come up with ideas for their vignettes. Again, this was not the fault of the students. Going into this project we assumed that the students would be more capable than they actually were. They had never created a vignette before or written a script. They just needed more time and more help from us than we anticipated. During the month of November we continued to practice singing every Friday.

The two and a half weeks we had in December prior to our performance were dedicated to getting in the cafeteria and on the stage. We were building our props, getting our backdrops ready, and practicing our performance.

We did not start practicing the performance until the week of the performance. It was not until we started practicing the performance that we realized how long the performance was going to be. The first two days of the week we did not get all the way through the production in one sitting. One day we did about half of the production and the next day we did the other half. Right away Mrs. Pepper and I realized that we had to cut something out of the performance. We decided to cut the Virginia Reel from the program. Much to the chagrin of our students and to us, we had to cut this great dance to cut down the time on our performance. It was not until the morning of the performance that we got all of the way through our performance. We still did not
have an idea of how long the actual performance would be because we had to stop on several occasions and make adjustments. This first full run-through took over three hours. We knew the performance would go more quickly, but were still worried about the length. Ms. Glover told us that the longest performance that she had ever done was around one and a half hours long and this was pushing the limits of what students and an audience could enjoy in terms of length. As the performance approached we were very concerned.

When we practiced the performance it was so long that students would get off task when they were not on stage. Mrs. Pepper and I were really concerned about the quality of the performance as well as how the students would behave during the performance.

The Performance

The dress rehearsal for *Social Studies Alive* was scheduled for the day of the performance on December 17, 2009. We asked the rest of the school to join us in the cafeteria from 12:50 to 2:00. As we practiced the performance we realized that there was no way that we were going to get through the performance in the allotted time. We also had no real idea of how long the performance would be and which vignettes and songs would be seen in the dress rehearsal.

The afternoon dress rehearsal went well; however, three of our groups did not get to perform. Our Trans-Continental Railroad group, California Regions group, and Rio Linda Over Time were unable to present. This was sad for those groups, especially because they had some really good vignettes. What was promising was how well the students as a whole performed. I was very proud of how they sang, acted, and behaved throughout the hour and ten minute time. I definitely felt more confident in the students and the performance following the dress rehearsal.

The evening of the performance was filled with anticipation and excitement. I wanted the parents to see all of our students’ hard work. I was also nervous because while the students had to come to the daytime performance, there was no guarantee that they would show up for the
evening performance. All but two students showed up to the performance, and we were able to put students into their places with no major disruption in the performance. We ran through the whole production and the entire performance took one hour and forty minutes. The students did a great job and the audience enjoyed the performance. We received a lot of positive feedback from those who attended the production. The students were extremely proud of the work of musical theater they had created and performed.

**Overall Feeling and Things To Change Next Time**

I really enjoyed doing this performance with my students and with Mrs. Pepper and her students. Throughout the process I observed my students learning much about California and United States history. I also saw my students having fun working with the arts and performing. I think that my students grew as researchers and as performers throughout this process. While this process was stressful for Mrs. Pepper and me, I feel that it was very rewarding and the positives far outweigh the negatives. That being said, there are a few things that I would do differently if I were to take on this project again.

The first thing that I would do would be to move the performance to the second half of the year. We scheduled this performance for the first half of the year because we needed it to be done before our winter break. This was done to make sure that we had ample time to write up our project before the end of the 2010 spring semester. Scheduling the performance this early in the year meant that we had to teach students how to research, have them write their scripts and create the whole performance in a very short amount of time. If we had done the performance in the second half of the year, we could have done a research project in the first half of the year and the students would have had that knowledge to work with when it come to the performance. It would have been nice to practice drama games, learn about research, and practice singing prior to starting a project of this magnitude. If time had not been a factor, I definitely would have done a
performance like this in the spring. To start a new school year and immediately start a production like this was very difficult.

Another thing that I would do differently in the future is limit this project to two grade levels. We had to tackle third, fourth, and fifth grade social studies because I had a combination class. Without that last grade-level we would have had a much more manageable production and would have been able to include many more songs and dances.

Reflection: Author, Julie Pepper, Fifth Grade Teacher

Expectations

This is the second time I have worked with a class on a musical performance, so in certain aspects, I knew what to expect. For example, I believed that for most students the terminology of the theater would be new to them, and they would need much practice in “cheating out” and developing character. I also believed that the experience would be rewarding artistically, academically, and socially for the students. Social Studies Alive, however, had one major difference from my prior musical performance: it was using original scripts. This prospect was as equally terrifying as it was exhilarating. Mr. Crago-Schneider and my hope for what our students could produce exceeded any other project I had done in my four years of teaching, yet I firmly believed our vision would be accomplished.

While I expected my fifth graders to be able to research their events in history thoughtfully, develop the foundational scripts for their vignettes, and perform with enthusiasm, there was a sense of the unknown looming over this production. With the performance set right before the winter break, would the teachers involved be able to scaffold enough to allow for a meaningful learning experience in the areas of Social Sciences, the Arts, and Language Arts? Would the students have enough foundation to create an original production in the time allotted?
As I came to realize, many of my expectations were not met as quickly as I had expected, and challenges I never contemplated required adjustments to our original timeline and process.

**Collaboration with Colleagues**

When working with curriculum outside the state and nationally tested core subjects, it is very important to have a supportive principal. Luckily, at Rio Linda Elementary School, our principal, Paula Roach, understands the value of all curriculum, and is an advocate for the arts. Never once did I question whether or not she would be in favor of this type of project. While I knew I needed to remain focused on the heavily tested areas, I also took comfort in knowing that Ms. Roach supported project-based learning. After speaking with many teachers in the Master of Arts in Education Program at Sacramento State, and other teachers around my school district, it became very obvious how rare it is in our current education system to have a principal who is so supportive of the arts. While I feel fortunate to be teaching at a more balanced school, I am also disheartened to learn that this type of education is no longer the norm. It is one thing to research and read about the disintegration of the arts throughout the nation, but it is another to hear first-hand accounts and struggles in this area. I am very proud of Rio Linda Elementary, and the fact that this community still can enjoy the many benefits of teaching students through the arts.

With a project of such magnitude, it was important to collaborate with colleagues beyond the principal to accomplish the goals Mr. Crago-Schneider and I wanted for our students. It was great to work with Mr. Crago-Schneider, as he understood the distress and joys that were faced at each step of the process at the classroom level. It was also beneficial to work with our Student Learning Coach, Ms. Glover, as she has much experience in music and school productions, and was able to add her expertise to help meet our objectives. Another pleasant contribution to this project was Mrs. Plefka, our school’s part-time Library Media Teacher. Mrs. Plefka was new to our school this year, and so I was not sure what to expect in terms of support with research. I was
so thrilled and encouraged by her enthusiasm toward this project, and her willingness to help in any way possible. Mrs. Plefka’s lessons on researching skills were wonderful, and she was always willing to debrief with Mr. Crago-Schneider and me after lessons taught. There was so much value in gaining knowledge from each of these collaborators, and I am quite sure the results would have been much different, had I tried to go about this project alone.

While there were many positive aspects to the collaborative effort, there were also struggles throughout the process. To begin, there are times during the day that are pre-set, or mandatory minutes of instruction that needed to be reached. For example, in the intermediate grades, we have a protected reading time (PRT) between 10:00 A.M.-11:00 A.M. where the students are reading books at their own level, and receiving guided instruction from their own teacher, or another intermediate teacher. All intermediate teachers must have this block devoted to leveled-reading, as many students switch classrooms during this time. Math, on the other hand, does not require a specific time block, however our new math adoption calls for teachers to devote 75 minutes to instruction. Finally, the California Education Code requires 200 minutes of P.E. each 10 schooldays. These are the requirements for the teachers involved in the project. Ms. Glover, the Student Learning Coach, had a variety of other duties which caused time challenges for the project: from intervention reading groups for both primary and intermediate students, to handling behavioral issues when the principal was unavailable. The collaborators agreed upon setting aside time for this project from 12:15 P.M.-1:00 P.M. daily from the beginning of the project, but we knew there would have to be additional time added as the production date neared.

While there were some timing issues involved in the collaborative process, the benefits truly outweighed these problems. I have learned a great amount professionally from each of the colleagues who took part in this production, and I will use this new knowledge as I continue to grow as an educator.
The Process Itself

With the conclusion of our production set for December 2009, right before the winter break, it was imperative that Mr. Crago-Schneider and I stayed as true to our timeline as possible. We met in June of the 2008/2009 school year to review the history and social studies standards for third, fourth, and fifth grade. It was at these meetings that we extracted the major topics we wanted to focus on during this production. This alone proved to be challenging and stressful. This is my fourth year teaching fifth grade, and while I love the social studies curriculum at this grade level, there is so much involved in U.S. History. To decide upon only a few major topics from so many significant events was difficult.

In July, we met again to finalize these topics and confirm what our students would be researching. We also met with Ms. Glover, the Student Learning Coach, to discuss song choice. It was comforting to know that Ms. Glover had much experience with music, and was able to provide us with options in regard to traditional folk songs. However, it was also during this meeting where the realization of what we were about to embark upon became more of a reality. While we were presenting the students with historical event options, it was up to the students to research, write scripts, learn about the performing arts, as well as display their learning of social studies concepts through performance, learn and sing songs, and learn and perform dances. All in all, I was beginning to see this project as a truly intimidating, while exciting, task.

The 2009/2010 school year began on August 12th. It was during this first week that I informed my class about the project, and discussed the dedication and time commitment involved. Many students were excited about performing, while others shared their thoughts on feeling scared or in some cases simply not wanting to do it. These mixed emotions were to be expected, especially considering that some students had very little singing and performing experience.
The following week, on Tuesday, August 18th, I presented my fifth graders with their topic choices. I gave them a brief explanation of each topic, and asked them to choose the top three of interest to them. As the production continued, it became very evident that I had missed a crucial step in the process: lessons on the overall timeline of U.S. History prior to the introduction of the topics (see Recommendations). Mr. Crago-Schneider and I sat down with the students’ choices to place them in groups according to strengths. Mr. Crago-Schneider had many of my students for fourth grade, so I was confident in assigning groups. However, it was during the course of the process that I learned another valuable lesson in teaching: do not group students for long-term projects before getting to personally know those students. While Mr. Crago-Schneider was able to give me wonderful advice on student capabilities as well as behavioral concerns, a teacher does not really know students until she gets to know them for herself. Also, some of my students did not come from Mr. Crago-Schneider’s class, and I was grouping these children based on what I knew of them from interactions in previous years, and only five actual school days with me as their teacher. Even reflecting on it now, it seems like such an absurd thing to do; but at the time I was grouping them, I never questioned it for a moment. The good news is that I know how to handle a situation like this in the future.

The following day, August 19th, I let the students know what topics they would be researching, and who the members of their group would be. I then broke the class up into their groups to work on a graphic organizer, filling out the portion about “what they would like to know” about their topic. This was the first time I realized how many of the students did not have much or any knowledge of U.S. History, as this task proved difficult for all groups.

As Mr. Crago-Schneider mentioned, the first few weeks were dedicated to singing. We figured this would be a good way to get the students engaged in the different time periods to be researched, and we were well aware that as we neared the performance, other portions of the
production would take precedence over singing. Ms. Glover taught the songs, and Mr. Crago-Schneider and I would support the students as well as address behavior management.

The students looked forward to the days we sang. For instance, I had overhead a few of my students singing the songs at recesses. I also had a student, after Ms. Glover taught the children, “Follow the Drinking Gourd,” come up to me with a book he found in our class library. On August 27th, 2009, the student proclaimed, “Look Mrs. Pepper, this is the biography of Harriet Tubman, just like Ms. Glover taught us!” I encouraged this student to read the book and he did. He also came up to me many times during the course of his reading to tell me events in Harriet’s life. It was great to see his enthusiasm extend beyond singing a few times a week.

The students’ eagerness for singing was illustrated even further when Ms. Glover was out with illness or had other professional obligations to attend to, and the children were visibly upset by having to change plans. While I am unable to read music and am not well-versed in the vocabulary of music, I have been singing my entire life. I have been in school and church choruses, and performed in musical theater productions throughout high school and into college. Once Ms. Glover taught the songs, I was able to handle taking over rehearsing with the students, when needed.

While the last week of August was completely dedicated to singing, we added in research beginning in September, scaling back the singing to Monday through Wednesday. The students would research Thursdays and Fridays, either in our own classrooms, or with Mrs. Plefka in the Library and Media Center at our school. Mrs. Plefka first began with lessons on the research process, something well needed, but much more time consuming than we had originally planned. Even after her instruction, Mr. Crago-Schneider and I realized how difficult the researching process was for our students. This was a difficult time for the collaborators involved, as we had to handle behavioral concerns, which were more than likely due to personalities within groups, as
well as uneasiness with pulling out main ideas from a large amount of information. Beyond behavioral issues, it was also hard to support everyone who needed it. I was only one person working with nine different groups with varying topics. Fortunately I had Ms. Plefka one day a week to support me during this time.

Researching proved to be a struggle for our classes in September, but a major highlight during this time was drama games and instruction. Every day my class had either a morning meeting or a class meeting (in the afternoon). It was during these meetings that I introduced drama games such as It’s a What?, Park Bench, Freeze, and Machine. While there were some students eager to participate, my more shy students and most of my English language learner students experienced some trepidation. Improvisations like Machine, however, required whole-class involvement, and it was through activities such as this that the more shy students began to take more chances.

I also had the opportunity to participate in the Education Through Music (ETM) International Summer Colloquium held at Sacramento State from June 28th-July 3rd, 2009. I wanted to include some songs and games I learned with my students, to get them used to moving, singing, and working together as an ensemble. The students learned Oats Peas Beans, Puncinella, and some greeting songs. They enjoyed the ETM songs and games, and would request to sing and play them throughout the week. It was wonderful beginning to see my class come together in a joyful way.

Like Mr. Crago-Schneider, I also introduced Reader’s Theatre to the group, as a way of teaching the basics of theater. As a class, we discussed the differences of how plays are written with other forms of writing, charting and referring back to these elements throughout the process. (Fifth Grade Literary Response and Analysis Standard 3.1: Identify and analyze the characteristics of poetry, drama, fiction, and nonfiction…). I modeled and the students practiced
using emotion and intonation when developing character. We also did activities involving stage positions, so the students could familiarize themselves with downstage, upstage, etc. These activities were also well received by the students, and they were always excited when theater lessons were on the day’s agenda.

October was spent following the same schedule as September. Mr. Crago-Schneider and I shared in our anxiety of researching, as we realized we would have to begin script writing later than we had intended. During October, I also introduced Tableau to the students, as an informal assessment of what they were learning regarding their topics. The students were asked to get into their groups and come up with three poses that depicted the most important points in their historical events. I was skeptical of what would be produced, after the many weeks of worry about the progress of the students’ research. My skepticism proved unwarranted, as all groups demonstrated a true understanding of their topics. It was also pleasing to see that other students in the class were able to figure out what event was being performed, and they were now beginning to connect these periods of history through a visual timeline.

I did not want to see this momentum decelerate, so I quickly developed a lesson on the U.S. History timeline to share with the students. I also looked online to find some sort of video that would help further the students’ understanding of U.S. History. After doing some research, I found a brilliant series, Liberty’s Kids, which focused on important events building up to and during the American Revolution. These twenty-minute episodes added another layer of meaning for the students, and were springboards for further discussions and research. The students were highly engaged in this program, and we continued to view episodes, even after the conclusion of our production.

Script writing finally began at the end of October, and continued on throughout November. As groups finished their scripts, they would begin practicing. This piece of the
production also had more complications than I originally envisioned. For example, while some groups had an obvious leader come forward and lead the group through the scriptwriting process, other groups needed steady guidance from me in turning their research into a vignette. It was during this time where I saw some groups having more personal issues and not using problem-solving strategies taught in class. Sadly, one group of mine, Government, had to be pulled from the production due to lack of effort, and continual arguments with one another. I had worked with this group closely to help them resolve their issues as well as encourage them to put their best into their work. As we progressed, I eventually had to warn them that they would not be able to perform if they could not step up and put in the work I knew they were capable of doing. Unfortunately they did not commit to their work, and I felt I had no other chose but to remove their vignette from the production. The students were still allowed to be in the chorus and earn other responsibilities with the show, in fact, one student turned his behavior around and became the Master of Ceremonies for the production, but it was still heartbreaking to see the group’s demise.

As December approached, I became more and more concerned about the quality of the production. While some groups were ready to perform at the beginning of December, others needed much more practice in character development as well as memorization. Also, I never took into account the difficulties that would be involved when students were absent due to seasonal illnesses. It definitely became a hindrance for groups such as The Causes of the American Revolution, as they seemed to have a member out almost daily.

In the couple of weeks prior to our performance, students whose groups were well prepared began working on props and backdrops. Mr. Crago-Schneider and I decided to break the groups up, so that those needing more practice would work with him, and those working on backdrops would work with Ms. Glover, and those creating props would work with me. In the
previous year I had done pop art with my students using cardboard and paper. It was during that
unit that I witnessed how creative students can be, when given an idea and some materials to
build. With this knowledge, I assigned people and groups certain props, and let them free to
figure out how to create the pieces. This was a fabulous time in my class, full of creativity and
energy as students helped one another, gave suggestions, and produced some very creative props.

It was also in December that we made it into the cafeteria and began having students on
the stage. With two classes in one multipurpose room, behavioral management became a
challenge. We came in with the assumption that while a vignette was working on the stage, the
other students would be able to sit and listen as an audience would. Working with individual
groups became yet another task that would require more time than we would have liked, and the
students who were not practicing obviously needed activities to keep them focused, as they
became restless. We knew we had to change something. We decided to have the other groups
spread throughout the cafeteria to continue to practice their scenes, however, the acoustics in the
room made the noise level an issue for those working on stage, and the teachers working with
those students. While this was not the perfect solution, it was what we had to do.

Another decision we made was cutting the Virginia Reel from the program, due to time.
As rehearsals continued, we realized how long the show was going to be and knew that we would
have to let something go. Learning the Virginia Reel was a great experience for the children,
however, we came to the conclusion that there was already enough music during the section of
the performance where it would have been included. Mr. Crago-Schneider, Ms. Glover, and I
discussed, and since there was only space for a few students were to perform the Virginia Reel,
and all students performed the songs, it was the Virginia Reel that had to be cut. It was very
difficult letting the students know, but they took it very well, and though they were disappointed,
they continued to work hard on the show.
We began running through the show on December 14, 2009, only three days before the actual performance. I was still unconvinced that everything would come together. I had never done a production with so few run-throughs, and the length of the show did not help the students to maintain their composure. Many students were only in one scene, and standing on the risers for over an hour at a time was very difficult for some students. Again, this is quite understandable. However, we were hoping the group would give it their best, even if it was beyond their comfort zone.

The Performance

Building up to the performances, the quality of what we were going to present was my major concern. I felt some of the students were not taking their roles seriously, which was negatively affecting the group’s mentality. I do believe, however, that the process itself was the major learning tool, and not the final performance. I needed to take a step back the morning of the performance and evaluate whether or not I felt the students had grown in their knowledge of social studies, the visual and performing arts, as well as language arts. After contemplating this, I realized how much my students had grown in all of these areas, especially in social studies. This experience helped to develop students who questioned specific choices in U.S. History, had an honest desire to learn about the birth of their country, and who felt confident in sharing what they had learned with others. Even if the performances did not go as planned, I knew my students had gained a wealth of knowledge, and that is what this program was intended to do.

While I was becoming more at peace with how the students would perform, I transferred my stress into my role of stage manager. Performing in high school and in community theater, I never envied the job of the stage manager. The job required extreme multi-tasking abilities, on top of complete attention to detail. I was anxious that I might end up jeopardizing the production with my inexperience in this area. I just had to convince myself to do my best, and not to let the
worry overtake me. I still needed to remain calm so that the students backstage could do the same.

The day performance for the school went from 12:50 P.M. until 2 P.M. Unfortunately, this did not give enough time for the entire show to be performed. The Transcontinental Railroad, Regions of California, and Rio Linda over Time vignettes did not get a chance to be shown. The students knew this was a possibility, but it still saddened me that all groups would not get the chance to perform twice. I was pleased, however, with how well the students came together and gave 100% to the production. They did an amazing job onstage, backstage, and in the chorus. The students themselves recognized what they had accomplished, and this seemed to energize them for the night performance.

The night performance went as well as the day performance. Two students were unable to attend, but some very willing children were ready to take their places, and they took pride in knowing they were helping out the entire production. While the performance was long, parents and friends offered wonderful praise to the students as well as the collaborating teachers involved. One parent stopped me on my way to helping with costumes and said, “I never realized until tonight how much work the students put into this. It was wonderful.” Another parent mentioned, “There were some things my kid taught me tonight!”

On December 18th, the day after the performance, there was a new feeling in my classroom. We were now only slightly into the second trimester, and I still did not feel we were at the point of being a true classroom community. I always felt that bond among my students came sooner than that in previous years. However, on that day, I felt we had finally come together. We held an extended class meeting, and I offered the following discussion question to the class: “Please share about your experience, positive or negative throughout this whole social studies-arts process. Remember to explain your thoughts.” Many students wanted to share.
However, the best comment I heard was from the student who had his Government vignette pulled from the production, but worked hard to earn back some responsibilities, ending up as the Master of Ceremonies. He said, “I really liked learning social studies this way, because I think it will be with me awhile. It’s like I experienced it myself. It’s a fun way of learning.” I could not have said it better myself.

Recommendations

If I were to put on a performance similar to this, there are many adjustments I would make as a result of what I have learned from this experience. While the overall process exceeded certain expectations, I can now reflect and see how to improve the quality of learning for the students.

To begin, it is necessary to give fifth grade students a timeline with explanation and discussion of the major events of U.S. History before beginning a jigsaw type of activity. It was my error in thinking that the students would be able to teach each other the timeline through their vignettes. It became quite obvious that the lack of scaffolding led to many questions and a disconnect between their research and what their time period actually entailed. For example, the students in the Native American group, when researching, pulled information from modern day Native American events. In addition, some students have simply not been exposed to use of timelines, and therefore were unable to see much of a difference between the 2000s and the 1600s. Having the students choose topics in isolation created much confusion that required more time to clarify than if we had gone over the timeline more clearly from the beginning.

A project of this magnitude would also benefit from many more months of study and preparation. I would like to see the project extend throughout the year, and the culminating performance would be toward the end of the year, with the inclusion of other supporting projects for an Open House showcase of learning. I believe a deeper understanding of even more of the
fifth grade standards such as government, the 50 states, Lewis and Clark’s expedition, would be
developed, and the students would benefit from going further with the curriculum.

Conclusion

*Social Studies Alive* took place in the beginning of the 2009/2010 school year, but the
learning extended beyond the production for the students. To begin, Mrs. Pepper’s fifth graders
went to see the world premiere of Jerry R. Montoya’s “The Conductor: Harriet Tubman and the
Underground Railroad,” after their interest was piqued by studying this event in U.S. History.
They also continued to view the series, *Liberty’s Kids*, and discuss major events involved in the
American Revolution. In addition, both Mrs. Pepper’s and Mr. Crago-Schneider’s students
became highly interested in the performing arts. Mr. Crago-Schneider’s class demonstrated more
confidence in the arts since the production, and developed a greater interest in singing. Mrs.
Pepper’s class continued to work on improvisation during morning and class meetings, and began
planning on showcasing their poetry in a presentation for the school toward the end of the year.
They also attended a lecture by the conductor of the Sacramento Philharmonic Orchestra at Rio
Linda High School, and some became interested in learning how to play an instrument.

Not only did the students grow from this process, but the authors of the project also
developed professionally as a result of this experience. For instance, they have a newfound
appreciation of the collaborative effort that can benefit both their teaching practice as well as
students’ learning. Sharing expertise with one another can only help each individual grow in the
process. In addition, while the experience was time consuming and there were periods of stress,
the authors now, more than ever, see the value of integrating the arts in the school curriculum. In
order for our students to have well-balanced learning experiences, it is up to teachers to ensure
that the arts are not forgotten, even if the arts may not be a priority in our current educational
system.
APPENDIX A

Third Grade Scripts

California Adventures

(Samantha Lucky-Ziegman, Christina Popadiuc, Sade Ocasio, Kendra)

Scene 1: The setting is a fancy California travel agency. It is called California Adventures. Samantha and Sade are travel agents. They are worried about their business because people aren’t traveling as much as they did last year due to the poor economy. They are eager to promote California and get some sales.

Samantha: Do you think we are ever going to get any business? No one ever travels anymore. I think it is because everyone is having money problems. A lot of people have lost their jobs, you know.

Sade: I know. It does seem like our business is in a slump. Surely, someone will come in this morning. And when they do, we will make sure they book a vacation with us! After all, California is the most exciting state in the country! I love California!

(Sade puts her arm around Samantha’s shoulders and they sing the first verse of “I Love You, California”)

Samantha (pointing at the door): Look! There’s someone at our door! Remember to put your brightest smile on, Sade!

(Christina and her daughter walk in smiling. They come up to the counter.)

Samantha (shakes Christina’s hand vigorously): Good Morning! Welcome to California Adventures, the best travel agency in the state! How can we help you?

Christina: I would like to book a vacation for my family.

Samantha: What part of California would you like to visit?
Christina: Oh, gee, I am not sure. I don’t know that much about California.

Samantha: Well, California is divided into four regions: The mountains, the central valley, the coastal area, and the desert.

Kendra: We have a week off for vacation. Could we see all of the regions in a week?

Samantha: No, California is a very big state. I think you should try to visit one region at a time. Why don’t you visit the coastal region? It is beautiful this time of year. You could drive through the Coast Redwoods. Did you know that some of the trees grow as tall as 360 feet? The 3000 year old redwoods are so big, you can even drive your car through one! Right next to the redwood forests are the pygmy forests where the world’s smallest trees grow. Don’t you think that’s funny?

You can visit famous cities like:

- San Francisco - where you can ride a cable car, see the Golden Gate Bridge and the Transamerica Pyramid
- Monterey - where you can visit the Monterey Bay Aquarium
- Carmel – where Clint Eastwood lives. You can see some of the fanciest car shows in the country here, too!
- Los Angeles - where there are 80 stage theatres, 300 museums, and Hollywood
- San Diego - where you can visit the San Diego Zoo and Sea World.

On the coast you can eat yummy seafood, whale watch, scuba dive, and surf. You can even visit Hearst Castle and the Winchester Mystery House. Disneyland is just off the coast in Anaheim, too.

If you like sports you can go to a 49ers game, see the Lakers play, or watch the Giants or Dodgers play ball. Well, what do you think? Should I book your vacation in the coastal region?
Christina: Oh my! I feel like my head is spinning!

Kendra: I really don’t like chilly beaches or seafood. The winding coastal highway would probably make my mother car sick. That would really be a mess! Is there somewhere else we could go?

Sade: Well, I think you would love the Desert region. It doesn’t have any winding roads. Just flat desert and of course excellent golfing and spas in Palm Springs! You will never get cold in the Mojave or Colorado Desert.

In Death Valley, the temperature is often over 100 degrees F. You can see beautiful cactus and the strange twisted Joshua Trees. At night, you can watch the sun set. Jack rabbits, bobcats, coyotes, desert tortoises, rattlesnakes and tarantulas come out at night to hunt.

In the high desert, you can see Manzanita shrubs, mountain lions, hawks, eagles, scrub jays, roadrunners, and even bighorn sheep! If you love bird-watching, California has over 600 species to see. You can ride dune buggies over the huge sand dunes if you want some thrilling adventures!

Along the Mexican border, you can eat the best homemade Mexican food in the country. It is also the home of the Imperial Valley. Alfalfa, cotton, fruit, sugar beets, and lettuce are grown there.

How does that sound?

Christina: I’m not sure I can take the heat. I get hot flashes just thinking about it. (Christina fans herself and pats her forehead with a Kleenex.)

Kendra: My mother is deathly afraid of rattlesnakes and tarantulas. I don’t know if you noticed, but I wear contact lenses. You know the dust storms in the desert would simply kill my eyes!

Don’t you have a region that is, well, less gritty?
**Samantha:** What about the Mountain region? It is never gritty! You would love the Sierra Nevada Mountains or even the Cascade Mountains which are to the north! In the Sierra Nevada Mountains, there are more than 500 peaks taller than 12,000 feet! Mt. Whitney is 14,495 feet above sea level.

The Cascades are really a string of volcanoes. You can visit Mt. Shasta or Mt. Lassen. You can go downhill skiing, snowboarding, snowmobiling, backpacking, hunting or camping. There are lots of lakes and reservoirs for waterskiing, too. You can fish or whitewater raft in the mountain streams.

In the foothills, you can mine for gold or explore caves. At Lake Tahoe you can kayak or canoe. You can see deer, bears, raccoons and lots of other wildlife in the forest. I am sure this would be fun for your entire family!

**Kendra:** It would if you enjoyed sports. It would be dangerous to do all those water sports since my brother can’t swim yet. Mom would be so worried he would drown. She’d be a nervous wreck! She needs to vacation somewhere that is a little less adventurous, so she can really relax.

**Sade:** I know just where to send you! The Central Valley! It is so peaceful. It is 400 miles long and 50 miles wide right in the middle of our state. The mountains form a ring around the valley. You can look at the mountains or the coast from a distance. The lakes are beautiful, but very salty so you don’t need to get in them.

There are lots of rivers to see like the Yuba, Feather, and American River. You can go salmon fishing in the Sacramento River.
The California Aqueduct carries water down the middle of the farmland. The farms grow grapes, nuts, fruit, rice, vegetables of all kinds, and olives. There are cattle and poultry ranches, too. The Central Valley never gets snow.

You can see mineral, oil, and natural gas refineries that look like giant windmills, too. You can visit the Capital in Sacramento and the Old Sacramento State Historic Park. It will be safe and enjoyable for everyone!

Christina: That sounds perfect!

Kendra: What a wonderful state! I’d like you to book us right away! I think I love California!

(Christina and Kendra turn and walk away.)

Samantha (throwing her arms over her head): Yipee! We are back in business! I love California!

Sade: Me too!

(The girls put their arms around each other and sing, “I love you, California!”)

“I Love You, California”

I love you, California, you’re the greatest state of all

I love you in the winter, summer, spring, and in the fall.

I love your fertile valleys, your dear mountains I adore.

I love your grand old ocean and I love her rugged shore.
Rio Linda Over Time

Characters

Mr. Twiss (historical society member): Devin
Ms. Dovganyuk (historical society member): Danielle
Brieanna: Brieanna
Sidney: Sidney

Scene One

Scene one takes place in a home in Rio Linda

Sidney: I am new to Rio Linda and I want to know more about the community I live in.

Brieanna: I know where we can go. We can go to the historical society. They know all about Rio Linda and its history.

Sidney: Okay let’s go.

Scene Two

Scene two takes place in the Rio Linda historical society.

Mr. Twiss: Hi, my name is Mr. Twiss. How can I help you?

Sidney: Do you know about Rio Linda and its history?

Mr. Twiss: I sure do. Come over here and I will tell you more about our great community (walk over front stage right). Is there anything in particular that you want to know about Rio Linda?

Brieanna: I think Sidney wanted to know a little about Rio Linda’s history first.

Sidney: Yeah, I was wondering who the first settlers to this area were.

Ms. Dovganyuk: Well I actually know a lot about that. The first settlers or people who lived in this area were actually the Miwok Indians that lived in this area. If you mean white settlers then the earliest settlers came to this area in the 1850s.
Sidney: White settlers have been living in this area for that long? Were there as many people here back then as there are now?

Mr. Twiss: Oh no, in fact there were very few people living here back then. This area was originally part of a Mexican Land Grant and in the 1850s only one or two families lived in this area. These families had large amounts of land all to themselves.

Ms. Dovganyuk: People didn’t start moving into this area in larger numbers until after 1900. There were only about fifty families here in 1918. In the early 1900s this area was purchased by the Sacramento Suburban Fruit Company to grow fruit, but they found out soon that this area was not good for growing fruit.

Mr. Twiss: They quickly learned that raising poultry in this area was pretty good money, and this area was known for raising poultry.

Brieanna: I don’t see hundreds of chicken coups around here. What happened to those jobs?

Sidney: Yeah what did people do after that?

Ms. Dovganyuk: In 1937 the Sacramento Air Depot was created and this later became McClellan Air Base. Many of the residents of this area found jobs just down the road at the air base.

Brieanna: But McClellan closed down the air base. What do the people of this area do for jobs now?

Mr. Twiss: Well many of Rio Linda’s residents work in the surrounding areas still. They work in areas like North Highlands, and Sacramento. This area has become a bedroom community where most of the people who work leave the area to do their jobs.

Sidney: The history of this area is really interesting. I have one more question. What do people do around here for recreation?

Brieanna: Well I can answer that question. There are lots of things to do in Rio Linda for fun. We have a great baseball, softball, football, and cheerleading programs.
Sidney: What if I don’t do any of that.

Brieanna: Do you like to ride BMX bikes or horses? What about water skiing or swimming?

Sidney: I love all of those things.

Brieanna: Well right around Roy Hayer Park you can do all those things. There is a water skiing park right over there. There is a BMX track as well as a horse rodeo area right over there. If you want to go swimming the high school has a great pool that is open when it gets warmer.

Mr. Twiss: If you explore Rio Linda you will find a lot of neat things to do. You said that you liked riding horses. We have several trails around here. We even have a bike trail that runs into Sacramento.

Sidney: This sounds really exciting. I can’t wait to explore Rio Linda more.

Ms. Dovganyuk: Remember, if you have any questions come to use and we would be more than willing to help.

Brieanna: Thanks for answering our questions. Bye

Sidney: Yeah thanks, I really appreciate it.

Mr. Twiss and Ms. Dovganyuk: Goodbye and have a great day.
This story takes place in a living room in a home. Our couch potato is watching TV when suddenly the channel changes.

**Couch potato:** I wonder what is on TV tonight

**TV announcer:** Tonight on Family Guy Peter runs for President (The couch potato sits on the remote control and the channel suddenly changes.)

**Indian Narrator:** Tonight on the wonders of native California we explore the four regions of California and the different types of Indian groups that made their lives in these different areas. First we look at the desert Indians. They lived in the south eastern portion of California in the deserts and made their homes in this harsh environment.

**Dessert Indian:** I live in the harsh Mojave desert. It gets very hot in the place where I live in the summer. My people built our houses out of bushes and wood. We built part of our homes underground to protect us from the hot sun. In the winter, when the temperature got colder, we packed mud on our homes to keep us warm. My people ate foods such as corn, gourds, beans, bighorn sheep and insects. Cactus was an important food for many of us. As far as clothing goes
many of the women who lived in the desert wore aprons made of tree bark. We wore sandals made of fibers from yucca plants. It gets cold in the winter and we wore robes made of rabbit skins. We were good at making pots from clay. We also made baskets from reeds and grasses. My people use the land and the resources around them to survive in a very harsh environment.

**Indian Narrator:** Now we move away from the deserts to look at the coastal Indians. These are the Indian groups that lived along California’s long coast. They used what was around them to adapt and survive their environment.

**Coastal Indian:** I live along the water on the coast of California. My people lived in homes made of plants and wood. Indian groups made houses in this area using the resources they had in the area. We made the frames our houses using wood in the area and used branches to make the walls. My people ate foods like fish, shellfish, sea birds, antelope, seals, whales, grapes and honey. We made our clothing out of feathers and fur. In the winter we wore clothes made from feathers and animal skins. We made the skins into roves and blankets. My people were very resourceful and made bowls out of wood, purses out of elk horns and seashells, and made rope from milkweed. My people used what they had in their area and were able to survive very well.

**Indian Narrator:** We see that these two groups of Indians were very different in what they wore, ate, and what they lived in. Now we are going to look at the valley Indians. These people lived California’s huge central valley.

**Valley Indian:** I lived in the Sacramento valley. My people lived in homes made of grass. There is a large wetland area in the valley and large grasses grew in these places. We would use these grasses when we built our homes. We would dig a shallow ditch and then make a frame out of poles. Next we tied bunches of dried grass was tied in bunches to the branches. The roof was made out of cedar or pine trees. Valley Indians ate foods like acorns, shellfish, plants, roots, grasshoppers, elk, birds and antelope. Most of our clothes were made from grass and skins. We
used the reeds of grass and willow bark. We also used animal skins to make our clothes. We too made great tools. We used wood, rocks and plants for fishing and hunting tools. We made our spear points out of rock called obsidian. We lived in the fertile central valley and used what we had around us.

**Indian Narrator:** So far we have seen three very different Indian tribes that lived very different lives in very different places. The fourth kind of California Indians that lived in our fourth region were the mountain Indians.

**Mountain Indian:** I lived in the mountains that surround the valley region. My people lived in houses that helped them fight the cold in the mountains. Mountain Indians dug their homes deep into the ground to keep in the heat. Our houses had fire pits in the middle to cook food on and to stay warm. The walls above the dirt and ceilings were made of boards from cedar trees. We ate foods like grapes, elk, raccoons, squirrels, quail, ducks, grasshoppers, and seeds. Many of our women wore skits woven from bear grass and shells. Headdresses were decorated with feathers from birds like owls and woodpeckers. We also made tools from what we had around us. We made nets to fish with. When it was summer and the water-level was low we built dams to fish from.

**Indian Narrator:** All of these Indian groups lived in different environments using what they around them. They were really resourceful and lived with nature.

**Couch potato:** That was AWESOME!
Narrator: In the 1700s Spain’s leaders wanted to own land in what is now called California. They decided to set up missions there. A mission is a community run by teachers of religion. To quickly get people to live in their communities, Spain planned to have Native Americans move in.

In 54 years, Spain set up 21 missions in California under the direction of Father Junipero Serra. A dirt road called El Camino Real connected the mission. Supplies, soldiers, and missionaries traveled from Mexico by ship and on foot. The first mission in San Diego was built in 1769 and the last mission was built in San Francisco in 1823.

Father Serra: We have given the savages a new religion and have saved their souls

Indian: We had our own beliefs before you came here that we were quite happy with

Father Serra: We have given you a new home, the mission, to live in

Indian: We had our own homes before you came and you do not allow us to leave and go home now that we are here. You make us live in dorms and you separate us from our families. If we run away you send soldiers after us. You separate us from the men in our tribes and make us do your customs.

Father Serra: We have taught you how to farm and how to use forks and spoons
**Indians:** You have taught us many things like to farm and Catholicism but we were surviving with nature and doing well before you came. You make us work on your buildings and you make us knit and weave.

**Father Serra:** We have taught you how to be human beings

**Indian:** What were we before?

**Narrator:** While the missions did teach the native people many new ways and did change their lives forever, they did not always change their lives for the better. Families were separated by the missions and while many missionaries were kind to the Indians, there were those missionaries who truly felt that the Indians and their ways were evil. Today the missions are some of the oldest buildings in California and are some of California’s most visited historic monuments.
Pioneers

Characters

Narrator: James
Sally: Kendra
Peter: J.J.

Scene One

Narrator: Sally and Peter have been walking in the rain for the past week. They are walking from Independence, Missouri to California. They are travelling overland.

Peter: I wish we could have brought all of our things with us to California. We only can bring a few things because everything won’t fit on our wagon. I know things will be better once we get to California. I just hope we have enough supplies to make it to the next outpost in Santa Fe. Our supplies are getting low.

Sally: Sometimes this walking is easy, but most of the days are very hard. My feet and legs ache everyday. I really do not like how long and boring the walking is, but I know it will be better when we get to California.

Peter: We have been walking for three and a half months and we still have about one and a half months to go if we keep going at this pace.

Narrator: There were two main ways to get to California. One way was to travel by boat from the east coast all the way to the west coast. If a boat sailed all the way around South America it would take eight months. If a traveler cut across the isthmus of Panama they could cut their trip considerable. The other way to get to California was by walking. A traveler could go overland in between three and six months. What made this especially dangerous is if a group got behind schedule and got caught walking in the mountains during the winter.

Scene Two
**Narrator:** Sally and Peter are just days away from arriving in the Central Valley. They have narrowly escaped crossing the Sierra Nevada mountains before winter set in.

**Peter:** When are we going to there?

**Sally:** We can’t just stop here. We want to get to the lush valleys that we have been hearing about. Remember how you were going to farm? We can’t farm very well in these hills. Stop complaining. I am older than you and I’m not even complaining.

**Peter:** You are right. I am just glad that we got over the mountains before it started to snow. I would hate to have ended up like the Donner Party.

**Sally:** Oh you worry too much, besides you are way to skinny to eat. You never were in any danger.

**Peter:** As soon as we get through winter I will be able to plant crops and we will be able to start our new lives in California.

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**Scene Three**

**Narrator:** Peter and Sally have been living in their California shelter for several months now. They have survived the winter and have started their new lives. Their crops have been planted and they are growing well.

**Sally:** Just think, less then a year ago we were living on the other side of the country. Now we are farmers in California.

**Peter:** The land is so fertile. It is so easy to grow crops. We are doing well. I am so glad we made the hard journey to California.
Gold Rush

Characters

Clem: Parteek
Nelly: Angie
Nelson: Vance

**Scene One**

Scene one takes place at a panning site. The scene opens with Clem panning and his wife working on cleaning up their camp.

*Clem:* I’ve done it. I have found gold! We will be rich… I mean we are rich. Darlin’ I have found our meal ticket. Don’t worry about cleaning up this piece of garbage camp. We’ll be livin’ in a mansion very soon.

*Nelly:* What ever Clem. You say that everyday and everyday we are stuck in this gosh forsaken place. “Leave Boston, “ he said, “come to California with me and we will be rich.” If I knew then what I know now I would have told him to take a hike. First we sell off our house and everything we own, and then we travel across this country for four months. I gave up a home in Boston for a tent in California. I gave up the civilized world for this camp.

*Clem:* I am serious this time. No more credit from the store. We will be able to pay off our bill and retire. I am staking my claim here and we can mine this mother lode. Clean yourself up Nelly because we are goin’ into town.

*Nelly:* All right Clem. (Nelly spits on her hand and wipes her face.) I am ready now.

**Scene Two**

Scene two takes place at Nelson’s Mercantile. Nelly and Clem have come to have their gold weighed and to get their cash, and pick up supplies.
Clem: Alright Nelson, I have come to settle my tab, buy some supplies, and collect my fortune. Have a look at this rock. What do you have to say about that?

Nelson: I have to say that that is a nice looking nugget. Let me weigh it and see how much it is worth.

Meanwhile Nelly is shopping in the store. She is grabbing several food items off the shelf.

Nelly: Clem dear, what am I allowed to get?

Clem: Darlin’ you get anything you like.

Nelson: Alright Clem, after weighing this here nugget I find that it is worth $200. Now you owe me $100 from the supplies that I sold you before.

Clem: That can’t be. I just bought a few food items and some diggin’ supplies.

Nelson: Well you know that a shovel, panning equipment, and a pick axe cost $75. Then there were the eggs, bread, and other food supplies. That quickly gets up to $100. Nelly comes over with a lot of food, and puts it on the counter.

Nelly: Alright Clem I got some supplies.

Nelson: Well these eggs, bread, and fabric come to $35. That leaves you with $65 on your account.

Nelly: We only have $65 left? What happen to us being rich? I should have listened to my mother and father who wanted me to marry P.J. Kennedy. I would have been rich and back in Boston.

Clem: This does not make sense. It seems to me that it is impossible to get rich panning for gold. I think that the people who are really getting rich are the storeowners. You charge a lot for your store items and we can never get ahead.

Nelson: You are right. I am getting rich off you miners. Sure a few of you strike it rich, but shop owners, the business people in these boomtowns, and the large companies that mine, make most of the money.
Clem: Don’t worry Nelly; I know that we will get rich.

Nelly: That is what you have been saying whole time. Why, oh why did I marry this guy? (Nelly and Clem walk off the stage as Nelson looks at their gold nugget)
STATEHOOD
(Ali, Ethan W., Steven D., Andrew L., Daniel, Johnny)

Scene 1: Ali is in bed. She can’t sleep because she has to write a big report on California Statehood the next day at school. She is dreading the day.

Ali: Oh, I can’t sleep. What am I going to do?! I don’t understand statehood. There is just too much information to sort out. How will I ever write this stupid paper! Who cares about how California became a state anyway. I just won’t write the paper, that’s all…(Yawn) Or maybe, I’ll just rest a bit and I will feel better in the morning……………………………

Ali falls asleep. She begins to dream. She sits upright in her bed and opens her eyes. She throws off her covers. She can’t believe it. She is dressed like a grown woman from the 1850’s! She looks up and sees that she is actually in the 1850’s. Right before her eyes are six important men who helped California become a state.

Scene 2: John C. Fremont, John Sloat, General Stephen Kearney, John Bidwell, and Missouri Senator Henry Clay are seated at a table eating dinner.

Clay (Daniel): This is quite a day, gentlemen. California has finally become a state in the Union. Who would have ever thought that we would be dining on September 9, 1850, in San Jose, the capital of California! This is a day to remember, gentlemen. But, we must never forget that this day did not come easily. It has been a long battle. Fremont, you really had a lot to do with getting this whole thing started.

Fremont (Ethan W.): Yes, I guess I did. (Fremont sees Miss Ali and invites her to the celebration). Miss Ali, come join our celebration! Like I was saying, in 1821, California became a province of Mexico. I was the leader of the rebels then. We didn’t want Mexico running California any longer. So in 1846, I got 30 of my friends together. We stormed Governor
Vallejo’s home and took him as our prisoner. We raised a flag with a picture of a grizzly bear on it and declared this the beginning of the California Republic. Everybody called this the Bear Flag Revolt. I can’t believe how much everyone loved that flag. We declared ourselves as an independent republic.

**Sloat (Steven Darby):** Well, as usual, you weren’t to well informed, Fremont. You weren’t aware that the United States was already at war with Mexico. You were shocked when I arrived on the scene in July. My troops and I took over Monterey.

**Miss Ali (Ali):** Don’t brag too much, Sloat. You were only in charge for a few months yourself. Stockton replaced you, organized the troops and took control of Los Angeles. Then he took over the rest of the province. The Mexican governor’s people didn’t put up much of a fight because they didn’t have a lot of supplies or leadership.

**Kearney (Andrew Ly):** When I heard what was going on I marched my troops in from Nevada. I got stuck fighting the Californios at San Pascual. I was surprised that they were able to trap me so easily. It was one of the largest battles ever fought in the history of California. I lost 22 men. So, I called Stockton to come help me. Together we recaptured Los Angeles. Eleven days later, Mexico and the United States signed a peace treaty. Mexico received $15 million dollars for California and seven other states. The Mexican-American War was over.

**Bidwell (Johnny):** Don’t forget that at the same time, gold was discovered at Sutter’s Mill. People came from everywhere to try to get rich. Silver was discovered as well. The people wanted to mine the gold and then go back to their country with the profits. It got so bad, we had to pass the Foreign Miners Tax. We charged foreign miners $20 dollars per month tax. These miners pushed hard for California to become part of the Union.
Clay (Daniel): You’re right, Bidwell. It became an even bigger problem because the states were fighting over slavery, too. The southern states wanted to own slaves, while the northern states wanted to be free states. The northern abolitionists wanted to ban slavery altogether. California wanted to join as a free state. This meant that there would be more free states than slave states represented in Congress. Southern politicians did everything they could to stop California from becoming a state so that Congress wouldn’t pass laws against slavery. Someone had to end all of the fighting. So, I came up with the Compromise of 1850. This compromise said that California would be a free state. But it also said that runaway slaves could be captured and returned to the south. Congress argued for 8 months before they agreed to it. What a battle!

Miss Ali (Ali): Let’s not forget that the delegates writing the state constitution gave women the right to vote and determined where the eastern border of California would be. So, here we are. It is September 9, 1850 and we are now the state of California. Gentleman, let’s toast to becoming a state in the union! Hip, hip, hooray! Hip, hip, hooray! We are now a state!

Ali lays back down and falls asleep. In the morning, she wakes up refreshed.

Ali: I must have been dreaming. I seem to remember everything about statehood. It will be so easy to write this paper. I can’t wait to get to school!
Trans-Continental Railroad Script

Characters

Narrator/Railroad Magnate- Andrew
Worker 1- James
Worker 2- Vance
Worker 3- Ethan
Boss- Elijah

Scene One

Narrator: Prior to the 1870s people who wanted to cross the United States had to go by boat or ride in and walk next to wagons. Walking could take anywhere from 3-6 months and was extremely dangerous. This all changed with the completion of the trans-continental railroad. This rail system connected the Central Pacific from the west coast to the Union Pacific in the east. This track bridged 2,000 miles and it now took an overland traveler six days to cross the country. This railroad also changed the American west coast greatly.

Up in the Rocky Mountains these three workers are working on the trans-continental railroad.

Worker 1: Go blow a hole in that rock wall Joe. We need to make a tunnel to the other side.

Worker 2: Be careful, remember what happened to Bob… I mean one-armed Bob.

Worker 1: Remember Joe there are three steps to setting up the charge. Number 1- Light the fuse. Number 2- Get out of there! Number 3- Boom!!!!!

Worker 3: I know what I am doing I will be fine. There is no way I am losing my arm. (Worker 3 lights the fuse and the charge blows up too quickly. He is thrown to the ground and showered with falling rocks. He lies on the ground still)
Worker 1: Oh my god! He’s dead! (Gives Ethan a little nudge with his foot) Well at least he has both arms.

Narrator: This is just one of the dangers of working on the railroad.

Scene Two

Narrator: After a long day of working on the railroad, laying up to ten miles in a day, the workers finally get their pay.

Boss: Here is your pay (hands money to both our workers)

Worker 1: Yes! I earned $5

Worker 2: Oh man, I only got $3. I worked the same amount of time and we did the exact same job.

Boss: Of course you did not get the same pay. In case you did not notice, he’s white and you are not. This guy is funny (laughs). Get the same pay. You could always go find another job that pays this well… oh wait, you can’t. (walks off laughing).

Narrator: Workers from other countries like the Chinese and workers who were not white were paid less than white workers.

Scene Three

Narrator: After six long years of work the two rail lines finally meet in Promontory, Utah on May 10th, 1869. To commemorate this historic event a golden spike is hammered in to show the completion of the line. (James and Vance hammer in the golden spike)

Railroad Magnate: It has been six long years and we finally finished the railroad. Now the east coast and west coast are linked. Let the celebration begin!
Appendix C
Fifth Grade Scripts

Interviews with Old Time Explorers

Host: Hello, and welcome to…

ALL: “Interviews with Old Time Explorers”

Host: I’m your host, Lon G. Tude, and with us today we have the Italian explorer for Spain and Portugal, Amerigo Vespucci…

Vespucci: This is cutting into my social life a bit, but whatever.

Host: Great, great. And the man behind everyone’s favorite pool game, Marco Polo…

Polo: Glad to be here, Lon.

Host: And finally, one of the most popular explorers in history, direct from Spain, the man who thought the Bahamas was the East Indies-

Columbus: Hey!

Host: Chris Columbus!

Columbus: I prefer Christopher, Lon.

Host: Sure, Chris, sure. Now let’s get talkin’. Hey Marco…I keep hearing about this Silk Road thing. Silk, huh? Sounds pretty fancy. Could you give the audience some details?

Polo: Sure thing, Lon, but fancy it wasn’t! Basically, the Silk Road was over 5,000 miles of many interconnected trade routes by land between the Mediterranean and China. And let me tell you, it was not a friendly route. Much of it is desert, which means hot, hot, HOT, and sandstorms galore. You have to be one super awesome explorer like me, to travel that road. However, it was nice to trade goods for silk with the Chinese.

Host: Great stuff, Marco, just great. You also wrote a lot about your travels, correct?
**Polo:** That’s right. As I travelled, I wrote in a journal the accounts of what I observed. I ended up living in Mongolia and China for 17 years. I had gone farther into Asia than any other European at that point. When I got back to Italy, fighting was going between Venice and Genoa, and I was thrown in prison. The good thing that came out of it was that in prison I told the stories of my travels to a writer and he published my book, *The Travels of Marco Polo*. On sale now for $11.28 at Amazon.com!!! *(Show thumbs up sign to audience).*

**Host:** And what about you, Amerigo? Where did your travels take you?

**Amerigo:** Well, let’s just say this. #1, Chris over here couldn’t have made his second and third voyages back to the New World without my help. I had moved from Italy to Spain, and I helped him prepare his ships for his voyages. #2, I was one of the first explorers to figure out that Chrissy boy didn’t reach the West Indies like he thought…he landed on an island off of what is now North America. Which brings me to point #3, if “Christopher Columbus” was so important, why did they name America after **me**?

**Host:** #1, you never answered my question, and #2, why did they name America after you?

**Amerigo:** *(silent)*

**Host:** Well?

**Amerigo:** *(silent…Columbus is giggling)*. Well…this German cartographer…

**Host:** This what?

**Amerigo:** A cartographer, a map maker, read about my travels and how I realized the continents of what are now North America and South America were separate. In honor of my findings, he named South America, America.

**Host:** Well, that’s wonderful…why were you so shy to share?
Amerigo: Because a few years later he wanted to take the name back. It was too late. The name stuck. Another cartographer labeled the two continents North America and South America on his map. Many maps were printed, and well, the rest is history.

Columbus: Hilarious! You make fun of me because I mistook the Bahamas for the East Indies…a simple mistake…and the dude who named America after you wanted to take it back, realizing you weren’t such an important explorer after all. Just another explorer who wanted to be like me. Besides, there are tons of cities in the United States named after me, plus the nation’s capital: D.C. The District of Columbia (pointing to self).

Polo: You’re funny. Thinking the Bahamas were the East Indies…a simple mistake? You were totally off about circumference of the earth!

Columbus: Quiet, Marco…it’s not like they had GPS in those days.

Polo: True, that would have made my life easier.

Vespucci: Yeah, me too.

Host: Let’s get back on track. Chris…why did you ask King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain to sponsor a voyage to the East Indies?

Columbus: Well, after reading about Marco’s explorations, I thought I could find a shorter route westward to Asia. Obviously I was wrong.

All: Obviously!!

Columbus: Hey…at least I have a cool rhyme with my name in it to help the kids remember when I explored:

All: In the year of 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue!

(All ad-lib that it is a good rhyme)
Host: Well, that’s about all the time we have today, folks. This has been one enlightening experience. Let’s quickly recap our time together…each explorer, give me one reason why Old Time Explorers risked their lives on these voyages…Amerigo-

**Vespucci:** To find new trade routes!

**Host:** Marco-

**Polo:** To explore new lands!

**Host:** Chris-

**Columbus:** Christopher…it’s Christopher!!

**Host:** Chris-

**Columbus:** For fame and glory!

**Host:** There you have it! Join us next time as we sit down and chat with American explorers, Lewis and Clark. Thanks for watching…

**All:** Interviews with Old Time Explorers!!! (Blow kiss, wave to audience)

*(Explorers begin arguing about who is better/why)*
The First Americans

Narration: Long before explorers and settlers set foot on American soil, Native Americans, or Indians, resided in North and South America. In 1607, 214 English businesspeople were granted approval by King James I to set sail to America, and settle in this new land. The native tribe, the Algonquins, were not happy to see these new settlers, and attacked the English, trying to drive them out of their land. However, the English were able to drive off the Algonquins, and built forts to protect their new colony.

Relations between settlers and American Indians were not always negative. The colonists needed help from the Indians in order to survive. Adapting to their new life in a foreign country was difficult, and settlers depended on the Indians for food. The English colonists and the American Indians were both able to learn from each other.

Indians are on stage working as colonists enter.

Colonist 1: Hello. We have travelled far on ship to come to this land to start a new way of life. We come to you because we have had many hardships. This land is so new to us, and we are starving and in need of food.

Colonist 2: (Sickly). We don’t know where to hunt or fish, and we have had trouble growing our own food.

Native 1: Do not worry. We will teach you the ways of our people and our land. We will help you grow tomatoes, corn, potatoes, and tobacco.

Colonist 1: (Whispering to Colonist 2) Once we learn how to grow these crops, we’re going to make a fortune!!

Native 2: (To Colonist 2) I see that you are very ill. We know of many plants that can be used as medicine. We will show you how to use these plants to make you well again.

Indians mime farming, giving the colonists food, plants, etc.
Narrator: Trade was also an important interaction between the two groups. Soon, the American Indians became dependent on the goods and resources provided by the Europeans, changing their way of life.

Colonist 2: I notice you have warm fur. What can we give you for that fur?

Both Natives: (Look at each other, then back to the Colonists) Your axes and knives!

Colonists look at each other, shrug their shoulders, and hand over their items. Head off stage.

Narrator: In 1620, about 100 English separatists, known now as Pilgrims, travelled 3,000 miles across the Atlantic Ocean to settle in the new land, looking for a new home where they could freely practice their religion. Their destiny was the Jamestown settlement, however, their ship, the Mayflower, steered off course and remained in the Massachusetts Bay. They named their colony became known as the Plymouth colony.

(Enter Pilgrims, some terribly sick, others helping) The first winter was harsh, and only a little over half of the settlers survived. It was after this horrific winter that the Wampanoag Indian tribe help the Pilgrims learn to adapt to their new environment by teaching them farming, just had the Powhatan had done for the Jamestown Colony settlers. (Enter Indians w/ blanket, and food)

It was here in the Plymouth colony that the First Thanksgiving took place. (Everyone sits around the blanket).

Native 1: You have had quite a journey, and a very hard first year. Let’s feast on all the food that your first harvest has produced!

Pilgrim 1: I am so thankful for all of your tribe’s help.

Pilgrim 2: Yes! Those of us who lived through the winter would never have survived the year without your kindness.

Pilgrim 1: We are so thankful for all of your help!
Native American 2: Let us also give thanks to the earth, for providing us with such a feast. Let’s eat!

(Everyone begins to eat, then 2 Indians grab one of the Pilgrims and show them a traditional dance...continue feasting/dancing throughout the rest of the narration).

Narrator: While the Europeans and American Indians were cooperative at times, they never really trusted one another. When the Indians realized the Europeans wanted control over their land, they began to fight back. The Europeans fought back even harder, pushing the Natives off land their ancestors had lived on for thousands of years.
Town Hall Meeting

Everyone ad-libbing lines, depending on their characters. Neutralists: “I’m still not sure…”

“Why is there all this conflict?” “I can’t decide who is right.” Loyalists: “I am loyal to the king!” “You are nothing but traitors!” “We stand, devoted to England!” “Why rebel? Support the king!” Patriots: “Liberty now!” “Down with the king!” “No more taxation!” “We aren’t represented in Parliament” etc.

Mediator: Order! Order! (pounding gavel). Silence is necessary to carry on this town meeting. I know that tensions are high, following the Boston Massacre of 1770 and the more recent, Boston Tea Party. However, it is important that we discuss if and why Americans should become independent of King George III and British rule.

Everyone ad-libs again, shouting their points.

Mediator: Silence! I will give everyone an opportunity to speak. On one side we have the Loyalists, who support the British governing the colonies.

Loyalists: Long live the King!

Mediator: We also have the Patriots, or rebels, who feel America needs to separate from Britain, and create their own independent government.

Patriots: Down with the Crown! Freedom now!

Mediator: Also present are Neutralists, or those who are still unsure whether or not to remain loyal to the King, or to support the Patriots, and fight to become an independent nation. Patriot, Samuel Adams, let’s start with you. Please introduce yourself and explain your position.

Adams: Thank you. My name is Samuel Adams and I once was a tax collector myself. However, it was extremely difficult for me to collect from those too poor to pay. Once I realized Britain was unfairly taxing the colonists, I made it my duty to let as many people as possible know. The
Stamp Act and the Townsend Acts were unfair, and the colonists shouldn’t have to pay! We aren’t even represented in Parliament, the government of Britain who we are paying taxes to!

**Oliver:** Wait just one minute, Sam! Your rebellion, as well as all the other Patriots, is a horrid crime! Your dislike of the British imposed taxes resulted in the Boston Massacre!

**Adams:** Maybe you’re right, Peter. When Britain sent over many soldiers to harass the colonists to pay their taxes, I rallied Bostonians to hear me speak about how unfair it was. Perhaps my encouragement led the fine Patriots to harass British troops that night in 1770. However, we only fought with words and snowballs. It was the British troops who fired and killed 5 of our men!

**Oliver:** That is true, but many weren’t paying taxes, which just isn’t right. The French and Indian War was very expensive, and it is only fair that we pay taxes to Britain to help with the debt. Plus, in 1770, Parliament took away most of the taxes passed in the Townsend Acts.

**Adams:** Except the tax on tea!!!

*Everyone ad-libs again, shouting their points. Patriots: ”Not fair!” Loyalist: “The debt needed to be repaid”*

**Mediator:** Order!! (pounds gavel). As we are all aware, this led to the Boston Tea Party, where Patriots dressed as Mohawk Indians, took over British ships in Boston Harbor, and dumped all the tea into the water in protest.

**Adams:** And we’d do it again if we had to!

**Oliver:** You are very mistaken if you think the British Empire will allow the colonies to break away and become its own nation. God supports the British government, and all you rebels will be punished!

**Mediator:** For those undecided about which side is right, are there any questions?

**Neutralist #1:** For the Loyalists…could you please state for me why we should stay under British rule?
Oliver: Certainly. It is only fair that we pay taxes to the British. They are protecting the colonies, and there is no reason to go against them.

Neutralist #2: And for the Patriots…why do you feel we need to separate from Britain?

Adams: There should be no taxation without representation. The colonies are being heavily taxed, but we have no say in the government. This is not right. We need our freedom from Britain in order to start our own government where we have a say. We have tried to work with the King, but he will not listen. This is our only option.

Mediator: Thank you to Mr. Samuel Adams and Mr. Peter Oliver. You have given us a lot to think about tonight. While we may not know which way things will go at this point, one thing is certain: we cannot live peacefully when two sides in total disagreement. This meeting is adjourned.

All groups begin arguieing again.
Underground Railroad

(Barry, Jayden, Deja, Nick)

Narrator (Barry): This is story about Harriet Tubman. Harriet’s grandparents were captured in West Africa and brought to Maryland to work as slaves against their will. Harriet’s parents were born as slaves. Harriet, her brothers and sisters were born into slavery, too. They all worked on a large plantation.

Harriet was five when she started working. She went to work at a neighbor’s plantation taking care of the babies. (Behind the screen.) (Deja rocks a baby singing, “Rock-a-bye baby, in a treetop. When the wind blows the cradle will rock. When the bough breaks the cradle will fall. And down will come baby cradle and all.”) Then she puts the baby to bed and picks up her sewing.

At six years old, she could weave and make clothes. As a teenager, she worked long days in the fields. She was strong but she often got into trouble with her master. Her master would beat her for punishment. (Deja makes motions like she is picking cotton behind the screen. She cries out, “My fingers are raw from picking this cotton. They are bleeding so badly, that I cannot bear to pick another cotton boll. I have worked from sunup until sundown. I won’t work no more!”)

(Behind the screen)

Nick pretends to whip her. Nick shouts, “You will do exactly as I tell you. You are always causing trouble. I have half a mind to sell you at the next auction.

Now get back to work!”

One time a man left the field without permission.
(Behind the screen) (Jayden says, “I am headed to the store. I don’t think anyone will see me. Wish me luck.”)

The overseer saw him and quickly followed him.

(Nick, the overseer, yells, “Yeh you! Stop or you will get the beating of your life!”)

Harriet chased after them.

(Harriet screams, “Don’t hurt him. He was coming back. He wasn’t running away!”)

The overseer caught the man.

(Nick orders, “Harriet, you hold him down now so I can beat him!”)

Harriet refused.

(“NO! I won’t let you. Get up and run, Run!)

The man got up and ran away while Harriet blocked the overseer. The overseer threw a heavy weight at the man, but hit Harriet in the head instead. Part of her skull was crushed and she fell to the ground. Harriet never fully recovered from the hit. She would suffer from sudden blackouts the rest of her life.

Harriet got strong again and went back to work in the fields. She worked like a man. She learned a lot about the woods from her father as they chopped wood together. Harriet saw many slaves badly beaten in her life. She vowed to free her family.

Harriet got married. She learned that she might be sold at the auction. Harriet made plans to escape. Her husband wouldn’t go with her. He didn’t want to risk getting caught and beaten.

(Jayden and Deja come to the front of the screen.)

So, Harriet took her brother with her. They ran through the woods at night. She was very afraid. At night, they met with a woman who was part of the Underground Railroad. This was a
group of people who helped slaves escape to the North or Canada. She told Harriet and her brother to Follow the Drinking Gourd. There would be a conductor at the river to take them to freedom. The song was filled with directions on who to meet and how to follow the North Star.

(Choir sings Follow the Drinking Gourd.)

Jayden tells his sister, “**Look there is the North Star and the drinking gourd. We are on the right road. We must travel only at night and hide during the day. You know if we get caught master will beat us for sure. He will sell one of us too.**”

At the river, the conductor hid her brother in a wicker basket on the raft.

Conductor (Nick) “**You get up on in here, boy. Don’t you make a sound. Even if we get stopped, you don’t speak. Got that? You’re going to be in there a long time, but when I let you out you will be free. You hear me, free! Harriet, you are tall enough to wade across the river. You go on now. Follow the river bank. Hide behind the trees until I say it is safe.**”

Harriet crossed the river on foot. On the other side of the river, they were in safe country. They were free.

Harriet Tubman died at age 93. She was a famous and respected American. She went back and helped over 300 slaves escape to freedom. She was a spy, nurse, and scout in the Civil War. In her later years, she opened her own home up to former slaves who were old and needed care. She was a courageous leader who helped change the lives of many people in America. She spent her entire life fighting for freedom.
Fireside Chats – Immigration Stories
(Tamara, Kelsey, Felipe, Diana, Betty)

**Scene 1:** The setting is a home with a fireplace. Mrs. Kelsey, an old woman, is knitting in a rocking chair and two children are playing marbles at her feet. The old woman is humming an old Romanian song as she knits.

**Felipe:** What are you humming, Mrs. Kelsey?

**Mrs. Kelsey:** I am humming an old song I learned when I was a child. I had a couple of Romanian friends that I played with in New York. They played this song on their violins. They lived in the same tenement that my family did.

**Tamara:** What’s a tenement?

**Mrs. Kelsey:** The tenement buildings were like today’s apartments, except that they had only three tiny rooms: a kitchen, a bedroom, and a parlor. Gaslights lit the rooms. There were no bathrooms in the tenements. We used a chamber pot which we kept under our beds. In the morning we would empty the chamber pot in the privy outside. The privy was a little shed outside that had a hole in the ground. Everyone in the tenement used the same privy. Every family had to dump their garbage in the middle of the street. The garbage fed the rats and people got sick a lot. There was poor ventilation in the tenements, so sickness spread quickly from family to family. The death rate was high. You must remember jobs paid very poorly then. Parents and children had to work in the factories just to get by. The three rooms we lived in housed families with 8 or more children. Children did not go to school because they didn’t speak English and they had to work.

**Tamara:** It must have been tough, then.
Mrs. Kelsey: Yes, it was. We were just glad to be in America. Anyway back to the song….. the walls between our rooms were very thin. There were no TV’s then. Families didn’t have lots of toys. They sang or told stories at night. When I went to bed, I would lay awake and listen to my friends playing their violins. They would play songs from their homeland. I fell asleep each night listening to wonderful songs from Romania. When I close my eyes, I can still hear the songs as I did then.

(Mrs. Kelsey closes her eyes and listens as Diana and Betty play the Romanian tune. The children quietly play marbles. Mrs. Kelsey hums with the music.)

Felipe: Are you from Romania?

Mrs. Kelsey: No, dear child. I am from Ireland. Over 40 million people immigrated to America between 1800 and 1970, you know. My family came to America when Ireland’s potato crop failed in the late 1840’s. In Ireland, over a million people died. We came in search of a better life. The boat was very crowded. Many people got sick and died on the ship. We were happy when we got to America.

Tamara: Was it just Romanians and Irishmen that came to America?

Mrs. Kelsey: No, the tenement across from us was the home for many Italian families. A lot of people from Europe came to America during that time. For instance, the Russian Jews came to America because of violent attacks on the Jews in Russia during the mid to late 1800s. The government supported the attacks, so the Russian Jews were not safe in their own country. Some immigrants came because of religious or political persecution. Some immigrants came to escape plagues and poverty. Everyone had their own reason for wanting a new life in America.

Felipe: My teacher says people had to go to Ellis Island before they could come to New York. Is that true?
Mrs. Kelsey: Yes it is. Later, in 1892, immigrants had to stop at Ellis Island before they could enter America. They had to go through checks on their immigration papers and then quarantine for anyone the officials thought was not healthy enough. It was pretty scary for them. Sometimes families were split apart because one member had gotten a disease during the boat trip. That person would be sent back to their homeland without their family.

Tamara: My teacher says I am a modern immigrant. My family moved to America because we wanted to have a fresh start. We were invited to come to America by our aunts. I came to America with my mom, dad, brother, and sister. We flew in an airplane from Moscow, Russia to Maine. From Maine we flew to California. I remember that the plane was huge. My mom held me in her arms. I imagined how big America would be.

Felipe: I am an immigrant too. I was born in Tijuana, Mexico. My family came to America when I was three years old. A couple of years later, my friend Jose came to America. I was so excited. We would all have a new start in this country. Me vusta America por que en escuela.

Tamara: I guess most of the people living in America today were immigrants or had ancestors who were immigrants.

Mrs. Kelsey: Yes. We are truly a nation of many people and cultures. Now, you children play quietly and let this old lady rest for a bit.
APPENDIX D
Performance Narration

MC (CASEY)

(After “Sleeping Sailor”)

#1 Explorers: Welcome to Social Studies Alive! Sit back and watch history unfold. Let’s begin with those brave adventurers who risked their lives to discover new lands: the EXPLORERS!

#2 (Native Americans): After much exploration, many heard of the “new land” of America. While the land may have been new to the Europeans, it was far from new from its first Americans, the Indians.

#3 (Town Hall Meeting): As years went by, more of the British moved to America. However, tensions between the British government and the colonists grew. Let’s see what went on in one of the town meetings that led up to the American Revolution.

#4 (Amer. Rev. Poem): The Patriots decided it was finally time to revolt and become independent of Britain.

#5 (Wax Museum): As America’s population grew, so did the differences between the Northern and Southern states.

#6 (Slavery): The controversy over slavery became such an issue that it divided the country; this division lead to the Civil War. Because African Americans were free in Canada, the Underground Railroad emerged to get slaves from the south to the free north.

#7 (Immigration): America is a nation made up of many ethnicities. Watch as some children find out about the many cultures of our great country.

#8 (Native Amer Video): We have already looked at Native Americans on the east coast. Now we move west to look at California Indians.
9 (Missions-puppet): In the late 1700s, California was colonized by the Spanish empire. The Spanish wanted to control California and found they could do this by setting up missions.

10 (Pioneers): The gold rush, rich fertile lands and other opportunities caused many people to flock to California. Those first settlers who traveled to California were called Pioneers.

11 (Gold Rush): Striking it rich was the dream during the gold rush. Unfortunately, for most, it was only a dream. Many who rushed to California in search of gold, ended up discovering heartache instead.

12 (Statehood): And before long, California became a state.

13 (Railroad): Now that people were settling in the west, there was a need to move people safely and quickly across the nation. The transcontinental railroad was created to solve this problem.

14 (Regions): People who don’t live in California know how good we’ve got it. Many travel from all over the world to visit our great state. Let’s visit a travel agency to see all of the wonderful things California has to offer.

15 (Rio Linda): We’ve learned a lot about American and California history. However, it’s also important to learn a thing or two about our own community and home: Rio Linda. Let’s take a peek at Rio Linda over time.

17 (finale): We hope you’ve enjoyed watching social studies come alive. Please join us in our final song, “This Land is Your Land”
APPENDIX E

Songs

“What Would You Do With a Sleepy Sailor?”

What will we do with the sleepy sailor?
What will we do with the sleepy sailor?
What will we do with the sleepy sailor?

Earlye in the morning?

Chorus

Way, hay up she rises,
Way, hay, up she rises,
Way, hay, up she rises,

Earlye in the morning!
“Follow the Drinking Gourd”

When the sun comes back,

and the first Quail calls,

Follow the drinking gourd,

For the old man is waiting

for to carry you to freedom

If you follow the drinking gourd.

Chorus:

Follow the drinking gourd,

Follow the drinking gourd,

For the old man is waiting for to carry you to freedom

If you follow the drinking gourd.

The riverbank will make a very good road,

The dead trees show you the way.

Left foot, peg foot traveling on,

Following the drinking gourd.

The river ends between two hills,

Follow the drinking gourd,

There's another river on the other side,

Follow the drinking gourd.

When the great big river meets the little river,

Follow the drinking gourd.

For the old man is waiting for to carry you to freedom

If you follow the drinking gourd.
“Clementine”

Oh my darling, Oh my darling,
Oh my darling, Clementine,
You are lost and gone forever,
Dreadful sorry, Clementine.

In a cavern, in a canyon,
Excavating for a mine

Dwelt a miner forty niner,
And his daughter Clementine.

Oh my darling, Oh my darling,
Oh my darling, Clementine,
You are lost and gone forever,
Dreadful sorry, Clementine.

Drove she ducklings to the water
Ev'ry morning just at nine,

Stubbed her toe against a splinter,
Fell into the foaming brine.

Oh my darling, Oh my darling,
Oh my darling, Clementine,
You are lost and gone forever,
Dreadful sorry, Clementine.

Then the miner, forty-niner,
Soon began to peak and pine,

Thought he oughter join his daughter,

Now he's with his Clementine.

Oh my darling, Oh my darling,

Oh my darling, Clementine,

You are lost and gone forever,

Dreadful sorry, Clementine.
“Sweet Betsy From Pike”

Did you ever hear of

Sweet Betsy from Pike,

Who crossed the wide prairies

With her husband, Ike,

With two yoke of cattle

And one spotted hog

A tall Shanghai rooster

And an old yeller dog?

Sing toorali, oorali, oorali ay

Sing toorali, oorali, oorali ay

They swam the wide rivers and crossed the tall peaks

They camped on the Prairie for weeks upon weeks

Until one day they stood on a very tall hill

And looked down in wonder at Old Placerville

Sing toorali, oorali, oorali ay

Sing toorali, oorali, oorali ay
“Oh Susanna”

I come from Alabama With my banjo on my knee

I'm going to Louisiana,

My true love for to see

It rained all night The day I left

The weather it was dry

The sun so hot, I froze to death

Susanna, don't you cry

Oh, Susanna,

Oh don't you cry for me

For I come from Alabama With my banjo on my knee

I had a dream the other night

When everything was still

I thought I saw Susanna A-coming down the hill

The buckwheat cake Was in her mouth

The tear was In her eye

Says I, I'm coming from the south

Susanna, don't you cry

Oh, Susanna,

Oh don't you cry for me

For I come from Alabama With my banjo on my knee
“I’ve Been Workin’ on the Railroad”

I've been workin' on the railroad,
All the live long day.
I've been workin' on the railroad,
Just to pass the time away.

Don't you hear the whistle blowing?
Rise up so early in the morn.

Don't you hear the captain shouting

"Dinah, blow your horn?"

Dinah, won't you blow,
Dinah, won't you blow,
Dinah, won't you blow your horn?
Dinah, won't you blow,
Dinah, won't you blow,
Dinah, won't you blow your horn?

Someone's in the kitchen with Dinah.
Someone's in the kitchen, I know.
Someone's in the kitchen with Dinah
Strumming on the old banjo.

Fee, fie, fiddle-e-i-o.
Fee, fie, fiddle-e-i-o-o-o-o.
Fee, fie, fiddle-e-i-o.

Strumming on the old banjo.
“This Land is Your Land, This Land is My Land”

This land is your land, this land is my land

From California, to the New York Island

From the redwood forest, to the gulf stream waters

This land was made for you and me

As I was walking a ribbon of highway

I saw above me an endless skyway

I saw below me a golden valley

This land was made for you and me

This land is your land, this land is my land

From California, to the New York Island

From the redwood forest, to the gulf stream waters

This land was made for you and me

I've roamed and rambled and I've followed my footsteps

To the sparkling sands of her diamond deserts

And all around me a voice was sounding

This land was made for you and me

This land is your land, this land is my land

From California, to the New York Island

From the redwood forest, to the gulf stream waters

This land was made for you and me
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