Authentic instruction and assessment: the revision of a unit of study in social studies

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Authentic instruction and assessment: the revision of a unit of study in social studies

Abstract
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This paper includes discussion of the different types of authentic assessment and the different ways to perform the assessments. The advantages and disadvantages of each type of assessment are outlined for the reader. As a result of the review of the literature and the writing of a unit, the conclusion drawn is that authentic instruction and assessment can and should be incorporated in all subject areas.

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AUTHENTIC INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT: 
THE REVISION OF A
UNIT OF STUDY IN SOCIAL STUDIES

A Graduate Project
Submitted to the
Division of Middle Level Education
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
in Partial Fulfillment
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The purpose of education is to prepare students to complete life's relevant tasks and to use academic skills in order to complete those tasks (Avery, 1999). Students need to have the ability to communicate and apply knowledge and skill to everyday life situations. Acquiring new knowledge is no longer enough. The world outside the classroom depends on education to prepare students to use the skills and information learned in the workplace. Campbell (2000) in Authentic Assessment and Authentic Standards, states that "education is not memorizing facts but rather connecting information to achieve understanding. Such connection is accomplished by each individual; it is based on previous experience and not textbooks and causes" (p.405).

Education is beginning to move toward accomplishing the goal of teaching students to apply what they learn to "real-life" situations. Instruction and assessment are tied together to accomplish this goal. Both of these educational parts are guided by the same three fundamental principles: promote learning; use multiple sources of information; and provide fair, valid, and reliable information. This idea of
teaching to "real-life" situations is called authentic instruction and assessment (Schurr, 1999).

Many school districts around the country are implementing the idea of authentic instruction and assessment (Ryan, 1994). It is difficult to separate the two because they both help the student to acquire new information and learn to use it in the outside world. Authentic instruction is geared toward helping the student develop skills that require teamwork and problem solving skills (Forte & Schurr, 1996). The students are then able to apply knowledge and skills in the same way they are used in the world outside of school. Authentic assessment measures a student’s abilities and achievements in "real-life" contexts. "Authentic assessment efforts challenge the student with tasks that are potentially worthwhile, significant, and meaningful to both the student and others" (Schurr, 1999, p.3)

In some cases the term alternative assessment is used synonymously with authentic assessment. Alternative assessment can be meant to include only those assessments that differ from the traditional tests given to students at the end of a unit to determine a grade for the student. The term alternative assessment would then apply to any and all
assessments that differ from the multiple-choice, timed, one-shot approaches that characterize most standardized and classroom assessments (Schurr, 1999). Many times these traditional tests do not represent the true ability of the student to express the information that was learned. New forms of assessment can be both alternative and authentic.

The concerns of today's educators is that the current instructional strategies and assessments do not tap many of the skills and abilities that students need to develop in order to be successful in later life and schooling (Campbell, 2000). Needed instead is an education that prepares students to frame problems, find information, evaluate alternatives, create ideas and products, and invent new ideas to complex dilemmas (Avery, 1999).

The advantages and disadvantages, characteristics, planning, and evaluation of authentic assessment are important parts to understand as educators attempt to implement these strategies in the classroom. All of these parts of authentic assessment should be examined and considered when redesigning a curriculum that will encourage students to take what they have learned out into the real world. Authentic assessment is designed to reflect
real-world application of knowledge whenever possible (Forte & Schurr, 1996).

Authentic assessment designed to reflect application of "real world" knowledge is especially true in my field of social studies. As educators, we need to challenge students to take an interest in social studies. "In 1988, a study reported that students in all grade levels identified social studies as their most boring class" (Ryan, 1994, p.5).

One way educators are attempting to alleviate the perception of boring is to move away from simply reading the textbook and taking multiple-choice tests. The focus has shifted to supplementing the textbook with novels, projects, and cooperative work. By doing this learning we can change from memorizing facts to deepening the understanding of historical events. Teachers can motivate students by providing more authentic instruction and assessment (Ryan, 1994).

**Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to review and incorporate the information on authentic instruction and assessment into a unit on the United States Constitution. Schools are headed towards using more alternative and
authentic assessment instead of traditional assessment (Ryan, 1994). This trend is important as we continue to look at making education "come alive" for students, especially at the middle level. A goal at the middle school at which I teach is to incorporate authentic instruction and assessment into the content area that we teach. As I try to accomplish this goal, I find it necessary to rethink the way I teach and evaluate the information I give to my students in order to meet both their academic and social needs.

One of the most important ways we can meet the needs of our students is to make our subject matter relevant to the students (Avery, 1994). Adolescents want and need to see the importance of what they are learning. How will I use this information? When will I use this information? Why do I need to know this? Students, especially in social studies ask all of these questions. Studying about people and events that already happened is hard for adolescents to understand (Avery, 1994). By looking at this current trend of authenticity in instruction and assessment, I hope to be better equipped to help my students to answer some of these questions.
I chose to rewrite the unit on the United States Constitution as my project. Taking the information I learned from the literature search, both instruction and assessment were reviewed, evaluated, and revised.

**Definitions**

Throughout this paper, terms relevant to this topic will be used repeatedly. In order that all the terms are understood, the following definitions will be used:

**Assessment**

"the testing or grading of students according to a given set of criteria" (Schurr, Thompson, & Thompson, 1996, p.335)

**Alternative Assessment**

"assessment requiring students to use higher order thinking skills to show knowledge or newly learned information and ideas, and how to apply these in new and unique ways" (Combs, 1997, p.3)

**Authentic Assessment**

"assessing student achievement or performance in situations that closely match the standards and the challenges of the world outside the classroom" (Schurr, Thompson, & Thompson, 1996, p.335)
"Authentic Instruction\n\n\nAuthentic Instruction is defined as "teaching where objectives and methods of instruction relate to real-world situations and out of school applications (Schurr, Thompson, & Thompson, 1996, p.334)\n\n\n"
Chapter 2

Literature Review

Authentic instruction and assessment are ideas that are important to educators. When incorporated by the teacher into the subject, the benefits to the students are numerous. There is evidence to show that both authentic instruction and authentic assessment are helpful to students as they relate learning to real-life situations.

Authentic Instruction

Above every teacher's desk at school should hang a quote by Hilda Taba, "If you want students to think differently, you need to teach differently" (Geocaris & Ross, 1999). There is a wide range of learners in every classroom. A major part of every teacher’s job is to keep students from losing confidence in themselves as learners and to rekindle confidence in those students who have lost that confidence (Stiggins, 1999). Developing a style of instruction that makes the student see the relevancy of a subject can help a student achieve success. Achieving success brings confidence (Black & Wiliam, 1998).

Campbell (2000) states that real teachers seldom use the word "instruction", because they know that what they do is more closely related to modeling, coaching, and
organizing the thinking of their students. They create the conditions for education to happen. Real teachers make education a part of "real-life".

Middle level educators are aware that adolescents constantly want to know how the subject material will help them in life (Haertel, 1999). All teachers should start with their own curriculum in developing authentic instruction (Avery, 1999). A basic assumption by the Comprehensive Social Studies Assessment Project (CSSAP) is that assessments need to reflect the authentic content and activities that characterize good social studies instruction (Czarra, 1999).

Authentic instruction involves both the subject curriculum and motivation of students (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Creating a curriculum that helps students connect knowledge with beliefs and actions using thinking skills is an important step in creating authentic classroom instruction. A relevant, up-to-date curriculum can help to motivate students to want to learn. An authentic curriculum and positive motivation of students can go hand-in-hand in helping students achieve confidence and success.
Curriculum

"The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world" (Schneider et al., 1994, p.VII). This is part of the formal definition for social studies that the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) has adopted. The NCSS has determined standards to be used by teachers to specify what students should know and when they should know it. Social studies standards are important in developing a curriculum in which students are developing a core of basic knowledge, learning how to analyze their own and others' opinions on important issues, and becoming motivated to participate in civic and community life as active, informed citizens.

The NCSS has developed this series of standards to help teachers move toward authentic instruction. These standards help to serve as a framework for social studies program design, function as a guide for curriculum decisions, and provide examples of classroom activities that guide teachers as they design instruction. As a result of these standards, a more coherent and integrated set of
objectives, benchmarks, and performance indicators are becoming evident in the curriculum.

These standards are built within the ten themes that form the framework for social studies. These same ten themes are used from kindergarten through grade twelve. Thus building a continuum for the student to follow on as he advances in his education.

As we move forward into the twenty-first century, educators will be faced with a more complex world for which to prepare students. They are being faced with an information, electronic, and biotechnological age (Schneider et al, 1994). Our teaching strategies should illuminate the essential connection among social studies learning, democratic values, and positive citizenship. All of the components of a social studies curriculum—not only its content, but its instructional approaches, learning activities, and evaluation methods—are included in the curriculum because they are viewed as means for helping students acquire important capabilities and attitudes (Alleman & Brophy, 1999). As we move toward achieving a new curriculum, students are developing skills to help them succeed in the “real world” as active, positive citizens.
Motivation

How do we get students to want to become active, positive citizens? This is a concern of all social studies teachers. Teachers have to motivate students to want to learn at the same time as they deal with their personal, emotional, and social pressures. Motivating students to become active and life-long learners can be a hard task (Stiggins, 1999). Most students see social studies as only learning about people who are dead or things that already happened. Classroom instruction should help students see the relevance of the past and how it affects the future.

One of the first things teachers need to know is the different needs of students (Schurr, Thompson, & Thompson, 1996). Teachers can find this out in a variety of ways, including observation and discussion in the classroom, and the reading of students' written work. After analyzing the needs of students, educators can begin looking at instructional materials that are used to supplement the traditional textbook. This can include different types of literature and primary sources. Use of these different supplements along with different activities can make social studies come alive for students (Schurr, Thompson, & Thompson, 1996).
As teachers develop strategies to motivate students, they should also evaluate their social studies program. Does the program support the curriculum? What are you teaching? Why are you teaching it? How are you teaching it? These questions could be answered by completing a self-evaluation, a thematic unit evaluation, and an activity assessment (Ryan, 1994).

**Authentic Assessment**

After restructuring the curriculum and motivating students the next step is to plan for assessment. Teachers are challenged to construct methods to measure individual effort by students (Alleman & Brophy, 1999). Using unique forms of authentic assessment can offer a dynamic view of the individual (Banks, 1994).

**Role of Assessment**

Authentic assessment is a type of student evaluation that attempts to make the testing process more realistic and relevant (Schurr, 1998). This type of assessment reflects a significant shift in what schools value and carries with it implications for content organization and classroom instruction. When combined with a restructured curriculum, authentic assessment can help schools to move away from a delivery-of-facts model to a new model where
students are active learners and questioning thinkers (Clark & Clark, 1998).

The method of assessment determines the way instruction is delivered. Traditional multiple-choice and true/false questions use a deliver-the-facts approach. This approach includes lectures and worksheets. Authentic assessment techniques, on the other hand, promote more in-depth instruction, which could include long term studies, cooperative learning, and problem solving skills. These techniques could include activities such as portfolios, journals, and exhibitions.

According to Forte and Schurr (1994), there are five characteristics of authentic assessment. They include the need of an audience, cooperative learning, metacognitive learning, multi-faceted scoring system, and accommodations to a student’s learning style, interest, and aptitude. Examples of authentic assessment should display these characteristics.

Developing authentic assessment tasks involves both teachers and administrators (Brousseau, 1999). Both are needed to design, administer, score, and analyze a process that offers educators the benefits of feedback on student achievement and professional development (Clark & Clark,
1998). Administrators must have the ability to empower their staffs to address change. They need to provide resources needed by teachers to create an authentic assessment task. When administrators and teachers work together to develop authentic assessment tasks the potential for student success increases (Black & Wiliam, 1998). This success includes more than just basic skills that students are often taught. The desire for students to graduate with more than basic skills has fueled interest in authentic assessment. A balance of both authentic and traditional measures are essential to the schooling process (Clark & Clark, 1998).

For authentic assessment to be effective, it should offer the students a genuine, authentic challenge (Eisner, 1999). Students are taught by their teachers to provide evidence of their own learning. Authentic assessment offers three ways of showing learning. They are product, portfolio, and performance assessment.

**Types of Assessments**

Product, performance, and portfolio assessment are the three forms of authentic assessment. All three of these look at a students' concept development in a sophisticated, detailed, authentic manner (Ryan, 1994). These types of
authentic assessment should: (1) require students to use basic skills in a meaningful way; (2) require students to use higher order thinking skills; (3) provide alternative formats that will meet the educational needs of diverse learners in a heterogeneously grouped setting; (4) encourage students to experiment with various media and technologies; and (5) provide an alternative to failure (Combs, 1997).

All three forms of assessment has its advantages and disadvantages, planning strategies, and evaluation criteria.

**Product Assessment**

Product assessment requires a concrete result as evidence that some skill has been learned. This concrete evidence can be written, visual, or aural products. These products can include videotapes, audiotapes, exhibits, scripts, manuals, or poems.

Students generate or create products either alone or in cooperation with others. This type of assessment is more likely to reveal student understanding. Schurr (1999) states:

Product assessment is well suited to assessing application of content-specific knowledge,
integration of knowledge across subject areas, and lifelong learning competencies such as effective decision making, communication, and cooperation. Students are often allowed to use their creativity and knowledge base to go beyond what has formally been taught. (p.5)

Schurr (1999) also states that product assessment can be used to motivate students. Students are more interested when the projects are stimulating, relevant, give a focus to efforts, and are something that can represent the student before an audience. This is especially helpful with reluctant learners or performers in school. Students find it easier to express their individuality than with standardized testing. Product assessments are positive, because they highlight what a student can do while also revealing what they need to learn or skills they need to improve.

These assessments can also reflect growth in social and academic skills that are not easily reflected in traditional testing. Integration of reading, writing, and speaking skills can also be allowed. Many of the choices for product assessment permit students to interact collaboratively with other students (Schurr, 1998).
Forte & Schurr (1994) indicate teachers find it easier to integrate assessments that will cater to students with varied learning styles. They can give students more time and more flexibility to do more thoughtful work. Higher order skills can be developed through this type of assessment. Product assessment goes along with authentic teaching, which stresses the future real-world application of in-class learning.

There are also concerns that product assessment present to educators. One concern is that of accountability. The "score" must satisfy the needs of parents, administrators and students. It can also be difficult for teachers to create a "scoring criteria" for each individual product. Often this scoring criteria does not measure the right or wrong of an activity but of the understanding of the concepts. "Teachers expect any activity in which success or failure is to be measured is to be accompanied by clear measure of success and failure; when it is not, we become uncomfortable, defensive, or frustrated" (Nickell, 1999, p. 354).

Developing product assessment takes organization and planning by teachers. Schurr, Thompson, and Thompson (1996) developed a chart that indicates product formats, and
thinking skills with Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Development (see Appendix B). Educators can use this chart when planning product assessment.

Teachers should analyze curriculum topics, themes, or concepts to determine which areas could best be measured by assessing student products. Students should be provided with a list of optional product formats. The teacher will need to help students devise a plan for creating their product. This is especially necessary the first time this type of assessment is used. As the students plan their product they should select no more than two major skill objectives and no more than two major concept objectives to use in the design of their project. Forte and Schurr (1994) created a list of possible options, skill objectives, and assessment criteria to be considered when planning product assessment (see Appendix C).

Teachers need to provide students in advance with a set of requirements for products. This should include due dates, materials available, class time allocations for working on the project, and assessment criteria. Time for help from the teacher and help from others should also be noted (Schurr, Thompson, & Thompson, 1996). When the products are completed and ready for assessment, students
should be given an opportunity to display their work. The final step in product assessment is the evaluation.

Students should know criteria for evaluation when the unit is started. They can then use these criteria in planning their product. Criteria can be developed, selected, and then incorporated into a scoring rubric or rating scale with characteristics listed for each score or level (Schurr, 1999).

Teachers need to include numerical ratings as well as comments, observations, and recommendations in the student’s final grade. While the process of product development may be assessed, the emphasis is on the final product (Forte & Schurr, 1994). Students can be encouraged to share their product with an audience and have an opportunity to explain. These products can then be included in a portfolio.

**Portfolio Assessment**

The second form of authentic assessment is portfolio assessment. Portfolio assessment is based on a meaningful collection of student work. The work should exhibit the student’s overall efforts, progress, and achievement (Schurr, 1998). The portfolio includes evidence of the student’s critical self-reflection and participation in
setting the focus of the portfolio, selecting the contents of the portfolio, and judging the portfolio content. The contents can range from a paper and pencil test or worksheets to creative writing pieces, drawings, or graphs.

The first step in beginning to use portfolios in the classroom is determining their purpose (Ryan, 1994). Ryan suggests six questions to help determine the purpose for the use of portfolios in the classroom:

1. Will the portfolio be a collection of work or a sample of the student's best work?
2. Will the portfolio house finished products only?
3. Will the portfolio be passed on to the next teacher?
4. Who will select what is included in the portfolio?
5. Who will have access to the portfolio?
6. How will students be involved with the portfolio?

After determining the purpose of the portfolio, the teacher should decide where to house the portfolio. Depending on the purpose, the portfolio can be housed in a file cabinet or a highly visible place in the classroom. In either case, each student should have a clearly marked file folder or notebook to hold the contents of the portfolio.
The teacher should also determine the organization of the portfolio. It can be by topic or subject, date completed, on-going or finished work, medium in which it is created, or rank in quality (Schurr, 1999). Students should know the way it is to be organized at the start of the process. The portfolio should show growth and development over time and emphasize the processes involved in accomplishing the end goals.

Social studies portfolio assessment is often described as an effective means for teachers to evaluate their students' progress (Milson & Brantley, 1999). The theme-based portfolio is found to be the most useful in social studies. In this type of portfolio, students select a theme from the social studies curriculum as their focus. Examples of some social studies themes are: revolutions, government, change, and freedom. As the year proceeds, the student is challenged to reflect on and apply to his or her theme new knowledge from course activities, class discussions, and readings. Students are given an opportunity to collaborate with classmates and the teacher.

Developing portfolios can produce several advantages for the educator. Portfolios can provide teachers with an idea of student growth and achievement. Educators can use
the content of the portfolio as a guide to instructional planning (Ross & Olsen, 1995). Care must be given to ensure that the teacher can utilize the contents to make professional judgments based on the information.

It is important that the portfolio be ongoing and reflect the daily learning activities of the student. The portfolio can be used as a tool for discussion. They can cater to alternative student learning styles and multiple intelligences. They make it easier for students to make connections and transfers between prior knowledge and new learning (Herbert, 1998).

Thompson, Thompson, and Schurr (1996) state that the portfolio offers a concrete way for students to learn to value their own work, and by extension, to value themselves as learners. Portfolio assessment tends to be qualitative, process-oriented, open-ended, long-term, and unlimited in its applications to real-life situations. They accommodate the developmental stages of young adolescents and allow for individual differences in their growth patterns. Portfolios are also more dependent upon self-discovering, self-motivating, and self-initiating behaviors than traditional assessments.
Portfolio development can also have disadvantages. Developing a portfolio can be complex and time-consuming. The results from a portfolio are sometimes difficult to make consistent, objective, or standardized (Schurr, 1999).

The final step in the portfolio process would be how to analyze and evaluate the contents. It is important to remember to have the criteria established before the students begin their portfolios. The students should be aware of the criteria from the beginning (Ryan, 1994). These criteria can then be fitted to a measuring scale or rubric. The assessment process follows authentic ideals in order to assess the students, allows students to assess themselves, evaluate and develop the curriculum, and evaluate the success of the instruction (Schurr, 1999).

Teachers can also include self-evaluation throughout the portfolio process. Peer evaluation can be used by students to share ideas and resources and to receive feedback from classmates. A portfolio conference is also useful in the evaluation process. Conferences should be done at least twice during the term, once at mid-term, and then again at the end (Milson & Brantley, 1999).

It is important at the end to celebrate learning, so that student, portfolio, and an audience are brought
together (Herbert, 1998). This event, such as student led conferences with parents would consolidate all discussions and concerns, and would communicate to both students and parents the value assigned to portfolios and the process of developing them.

**Performance Assessment**

The final form of authentic assessment is performance assessment. Performance assessment is based more on the processes the student uses than on the final product or outcome. It relies on the judgment of assessors who observe the student performing a predetermined task. Performances can range from oral reports or speeches to scientific demonstrations and poetry readings (Schurr, 1998).

"The factors of the virtual demise of behaviorism, the emergence of constructivism, the importance of meaning, the desire for concurrent and predictive validity are the ground for interest in performance assessment" (Eisner, 1999, p.55). Performance assessment requires students to create evidence that will enable assessors to make valid judgments about what they know and can do in situations that matter. An individual student's features such as creativity, confidence and organizational skills can be revealed through performance assessment. That information
can help improve the quality of both curriculum and teaching.

The desire to ensure that students graduate with more than basic skills — with the ability to use skills to solve problems, work cooperatively in groups, or synthesize knowledge across disciplines, has fueled interest in performance assessment (O'Neil, 1992). For example, in the area of modern language acquisition, O'Neil states, "You can't evaluate writing without asking students to write, and you can't evaluate whether a student has learned a foreign language without asking that student to speak" (1992, p. 15). More and more states are looking to performance assessment to get a more complete picture of students' abilities. Officials in more than one half of the states are hoping that performance assessment will be a powerful tool in pushing curriculum and instruction toward more complex outcomes (Haertel, 1999).

The first step in creating a performance task is to determine what content knowledge the teacher wishes to assess (Ryan, 1994). There are two types of content knowledge: declarative and procedural. Teachers will need to look at each type separately. Declarative knowledge requires that the student respond in some fashion to a
generalization. They will then respond according to the task using their knowledge of basic facts. If the student is responding to procedural knowledge they should be required to apply a strategy such as problem solving. In their application of this strategy they must apply their knowledge of basic skills.

All performance assessments should be authentic and meaningful. They should be judged by a scoring criteria, with points awarded for successes and points taken off for errors. Students should know from the beginning the criteria for scoring the assessment.

There are several advantages to using performance assessments. Performance assessments have helped refocus classroom instruction. These new forms of assessment promote active engagement both in learning and in demonstrating what had been learned. Expectations would rise as teachers saw concrete evidence that students could solve more complex problems (Haertel, 1999). Parents would come to value the kinds of learning that result when groups of children work together to design an experiment or investigate a topic they care about. As the line between teaching and testing becomes blurred, classroom time would be better employed (Haertel, 1999).
Another benefit of performance assessment, is its potential to draw teachers back into the heart of the assessment process (O’Neil, 1992). Most standardized tests are written and scored by an outside source. "Getting teachers involved in developing assessment tasks, devising criteria for rating student work, and scoring student work themselves can be a powerful form of staff development" (O’Neil, 1992, p.16). Staff development is an important step in getting teachers to become an integral part of the assessment process.

With performance assessments, it is anticipated by Haertel (1999) that average scores would be more nearly equal among a diverse population of students. It is thought that, given a chance to demonstrate directly what they really knew and could do, traditionally lower-scoring student groups would perform as well as any others. Furthermore, performance assessment tasks and techniques stress higher-order thinking skills and not right or wrong answers. They feature hands-on or "learning by doing" instructional activities. Finally they rely on student exhibits and displays of knowledge and skills (Forte & Schurr, 1994).
Performance assessments also have several disadvantages. The main one being that it is based totally on observation and professional judgment about student performance. The problem has been in developing appropriate and valid ways to assess these observations in a reliable manner (Clark & Clark, 1998). Another disadvantage is that of competition. Present day schools support a competitive mode of education. "There are too many education reformers who wish to liken schooling to business" (Eisner, 1999, p. 58). The final disadvantage of performance assessments is that it is time-consuming for teachers and students.

The purpose of the performance assessment and its relation to educational goals should be clearly understood by the students. Performance assessments requires judges to decide what level of quality a performance has reached in relation to set criteria using rubrics, checklists, or similar assessment tools (Schurr, 1999). These criteria are usually set up as a rubric. Interrater reliability is an essential ingredient for the validity of the evaluation to carry weight as students compare performance quality among themselves.

When using performance assessments, educators must determine how to interpret the results. They can be
compared with other students or compared to the student's own work. Teachers should consider using a system that gives students a range of points for each task (O'Neil, 1992).

Overall performance assessment should be broad enough to evoke complex thinking, yet narrow enough to enable measuring evidence of learning. The tasks should fit with important educational objectives to justify the time and effort they require on the part of the students and teachers. It is also important that students recognize that learning is a process, and that improving one's self is an ongoing task (Richardson, 1999).
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The project I did was the rewriting of a unit on the United States Constitution using authentic instruction and authentic assessment techniques. This unit is intended to be taught in three weeks to eighth grade social studies students and uses sources other than the textbook and activities. I chose this particular unit because I felt it was one of the most important taught during the year.

The students in my classes are all eighth graders from various achievement levels and ethnic backgrounds. Many of my students say that they study the Constitution because they "have to". But one of the best reasons to study the Constitution came from Thomas Jefferson who once said that a nation cannot be both ignorant and free. In other words, if students do not know what freedoms they have and why they have them, then they are helpless in preventing their freedoms from being taken away.

The Constitution defines and protects our freedoms and states how our government operates on these freedoms. To know our government, students need to understand how their lives are affected by it, and with this knowledge they can make more informed decisions in our democracy.
After deciding on the unit to revise, I began gathering articles on authentic instruction and assessment. I went to my principal and media specialist for help in finding these materials. The media specialist directed me to a site on the Internet (Proquest) that contained educational resources. I limited my search to those articles that were written from 1997 to the present because I wanted the most recent findings.

Once I found articles on my topic, I broadened my search to include books. The curriculum facilitator at our school was helpful in this search. She had several books to loan me and then helped me order others. I then began reading. I did extensive reading on this subject. After reading all the articles I had found, I decided which ones would be appropriate for my project.

After researching the articles and books and gathering the information I felt I needed, I was ready to write my unit. My next step would be to choose the unit that would best incorporate the strategies I found in my research to support the ideas of authentic classroom instruction and student assessment.
The eighth grade social studies curriculum deals with American History from the beginning through 1840. I knew I wanted to begin with a unit that would hold the students' attention and help them connect history to the real world. This would incorporate the ideas of authentic instruction and assessment. I chose the United States Constitution.

Next, I thought about what I wanted the students to learn. My district does not have district standards and benchmarks, so I looked at those set up by the National Council of Social Studies. I found a copy of the National Standards book and began to look at which ones fit with my particular unit.

After deciding the appropriate standards, I needed activities to accomplish the objectives. I searched different books and the Internet to come up with activities. I used many books by Sandra Schurr, a leading author in middle school issues. I chose activities that would address the different learning styles of my students. I included both written and hands-on activities. My class meets every day for forty-five minutes, so I chose activities that could be done in that amount of time.
Since we do meet every day, I can rearrange the activities if one goes over one class period.

The final step in the project was organizing the activities. I knew I wanted to start with the Preamble of the Constitution and conclude with the Amendments. I found activities and lessons that covered all the information I wanted to include. I developed both assessments and the instruction that would help the students connect the Constitution with the world outside the classroom (see Appendix E for unit).

The project was now complete and ready to use in my classroom. I plan to use it this year when we cover the Constitution. This unit is one of the most important ones we cover during the year. Because of that fact I feel I chose the appropriate unit to revise.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The United States Constitution is an important part of the eighth grade American history curriculum. We spend time concentrating on the reasons for the writing of the Constitution and then on the document itself. This spring will be the first time I will incorporate my revised unit on the United States Constitution in the classroom.

My unit previously has been lecture, worksheets, discussion, and memorization. I lecture to the students about the Constitution itself and then assign worksheets to be completed by the students individually. The students have no problems completing this type of work but find it very boring. The students get involved in discussion when we begin the amendments. They find this the most interesting part of the Constitution. In the spring of 2000 I had the students memorize the Preamble, the articles, and all twenty-seven amendments. This was their final test.

When revising this unit I decided to make major changes in the presentation of the unit. I started by eliminating most of the lectures. Instead I have the student doing activities in groups where they read, discuss, and then answer critical thinking questions. I
hope by doing this the students will take more of an interest and tie the concepts to their everyday life.

Another change was the memorization. I am not asking the students to memorize in my revised unit. I felt that the majority of student could recite the Preamble, articles, and amendments but failed to understand the meaning. I replaced memorization with activities from the book *With Liberty and Justice for All*. I have a class set of this book, a total of thirty-five copies. These activities involve the students in critical thinking about the amendments and how they apply to them.

The next change was the assessment process. I completely eliminated the standard test and replaced it with product and performance assessments. The students are given a choice of different products and performances to complete. These cover the different learning styles of students. I established the criteria for grading by creating rubrics. The students will get copies of these criteria at the beginning of the project. I did not include portfolio assessment because of the time limit of the unit. A portfolio would be hard to complete in just three weeks.

I also decided to use the textbook only for the copy of the Constitution. I have incorporated different sources
to implement in the unit. I have obtained class sets of With Liberty and Justice for All and Bill of Rights: 200 Years, 200 Facts. I believe these books will give the students information about the Constitution that they can apply to situations in the real world.

I believe my revised unit will be interesting to the students, therefore motivating them to want to learn more. One of the most important goals of social studies is to produce active, informed citizens. I hope my unit will help students reach that level.
Chapter 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

Authentic instruction and assessment is a new trend in middle level education. The articles and books I read showed evidence to support this trend. The expectations of teaching are that students should be taught to function in the world outside of school. Authentic instruction and assessment demonstrate how teachers can reach this goal.

Conclusions

There are several conclusions that can be made from the research on authentic instruction and assessment. One, authentic instruction is more difficult to implement than authentic assessment. There were not as many articles or books that dealt with this topic. I found it difficult to decide how to create lessons using authentic instruction because there is not as much information available.

Another conclusion deals with choosing a unit to revise. I learned that teachers should choose a unit that will hold the students' interest. If the students find the subject interesting, it is easier to help them connect it to the world outside the classroom.
Third, the articles included in the literature review show that many of the tools associated with authentic instruction and assessment provide a valuable means of capturing student learning in a multimedia-based learning environment. These instructional and assessment methods allow teachers to move beyond the traditional barriers and provide a more authentic way of looking at changes in students' academic and social growth over time.

Fourth, there are many resources available for teachers to help teachers move beyond the traditional methods of teaching. I learned that there are resources available for teachers to use that will help revise any unit in any subject to help develop authentic instruction and assessment.

Finally, I found that this is a good way to begin changing teaching strategies. To help students succeed in life outside the classroom, teachers need to look at what they teach and how they teach. Teachers need to remember Hilda Taba's statement, "if we want students to think differently, we need to teach differently" (Geocaris & Ross, 1999).
Recommendations

After completing this research project, I concluded that authentic instruction and assessment is a valid teaching strategy. It is important for educators to incorporate authentic learning in their classroom to evaluate both the processes and products of the learning environment in an effort to gain a more complete view of the ways their students are progressing in the classroom (Schurr, 1999). Authentic assessment is an integral part of making learning relevant to the students.

School districts need to look at their present curriculum and decide if it is preparing students to function in the world outside of school. We are still teaching students information for facts and not for critical thinking. Consistent with Black & Wiliam (1998), I found that administrators must have the ability to empower their staffs to address change as learning teams rather than as individuals working in isolation.

In particular, Davenport, Iowa middle level teachers need to move away from teaching just their subject matter. It is hard to change, especially when that change requires hard work and cooperation among teachers. I agree with Lewin & Syfert (1998) that we need to look at our
curriculum and begin the changes needed to bring about a new, more helpful curriculum for students. At this time, the social studies curriculum is undergoing changes to develop a curriculum that requires higher level thinking skills in students. We tend to be fact-based, and find it hard to go forward to prepare students to analyze, think critically, evaluate, synthesize information, communicate more effectively, solve problems, learn how to learn, and in general, learn more actively than traditionally as receivers (Campbell, 2000).

The rewriting of this one unit leads me to want to rewrite all of the units that I teach during the school year. I have not taught this unit since I rewrote it, but I hope to implement it in the spring of 2001. Upon completing this unit, I hope to see students understanding the relevancy of what they are studying and therefore want to learn more. Providing more authentic activities and assessment for students should be the goal of all teachers.


Appendix A

Ten Themes of Social Studies
Ten Themes of Social Studies

1. Culture
Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of culture and cultural diversity.

2. Time, Continuity, & Change
Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ways human beings view themselves in and over time.

3. People, Places, and Environments
Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of people, places, and environments.

4. Individual Development & Identity
Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of individual development and identity.

5. Individuals, Groups, & Institutions
Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions.

6. Power; Authority, & Governance
Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create and change structures of power; authority, and governance.

7. Production, Distribution, and Consumption
Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people organize for the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.

8. Science, Technology, & Society
Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of relationships among science, technology, and society.

9. Global Connections
Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of global connections and interdependence.

10. Civil Ideals and Practices
Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship in a democratic republic.

(Curriculum Standards for Social Studies, Expectations of Excellence, 1994)
Appendix B

Product Format Options
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bloom Category</th>
<th>Optional Product Format</th>
<th>Optional Thinking Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KNOWLEDGE</td>
<td>Flash cards, rebus story</td>
<td>Define, draw, identify, label list, locate, match, name recite, select, state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>scrapbook, drawing, puzzle, tape recording, mobile, collage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPREHENSION</td>
<td>Puppet show, picture dictionary, pamphlet, news story/report, diagram, essay, bulletin board, diary, cumulative stories</td>
<td>Classify, demonstrate, describe, explain, generalize, give examples, group paraphrase, put in order, retell, rewrite, show, summarize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPLICATION</td>
<td>Chart/graph, model, peep show, display, interview, survey, experiment, magazine, directory, post cards, satire, documents</td>
<td>Apply, compare/contrast construct, debate, diagram, draw conclusions, discover, examine, interview, investigate, keep records, make, predict, product, prove, track, translate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANALYSIS</td>
<td>Textbook, transparency, oral report, movie, scroll, collection, guest speaker, letter, data sheets</td>
<td>Analyze, compare/contrast deduce, determine, examine, infer, relate, uncover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SYNTHESIS</td>
<td>Poem/song, game, speech, play, gallery/museum exhibit, choral reading, encyclopedia entries, monologue, puppet show, vignettes, spoofs</td>
<td>Combine, create, design, develop, imagine, invent, make up, perform, prepare, present (an original piece of work), produce, revise, tell, synthesize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVALUATION</td>
<td>Written report, scroll, book cover, poster, project, cube, photo/ picture essay, advertisement, editorial, debate, persuasive letter, speech</td>
<td>Argue, award, choose, criticize, critique, defend, grade, judge, justify, rank, rate, recommend, support, test, validate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(Teaching at the Middle Level, 1996).*
APPENDIX C
TEACHER PLANNING FORM:
A GUIDE FOR PRODUCT ASSESSMENT
MULTIPLE PROJECT FORMATS

- Tape recording
- Diagram or flow chart
- Pamphlet
- Newspaper
- Bulletin Board
- Scale model
- Display
- Exhibit
- Learning center
- Movie scroll
- Mini-textbook
- Scroll
- Collection of charts/graphics
- Shoebox picture shows
- Gallery/museum showcase
- Choral reading
- Book Cover
- Project cube
- Photo-picture essay
- Television script
- Editorial
- Editorial presentation
- Position paper
- Series of commercials/advertisements
- Video tape
- Brochure
- Commemorative plates/stamps
- Movie Script
- Music video
- Memoirs
- Slide show
- Time capsule
- Children's book
- Computer program
- Shadow box
- Timeline
- Newsletter

POSSIBLE SKILL OBJECTIVES

- Classify
- Predict
- Synthesize
- Compare and contrast
- Translate
- Argue
- Generalize
- Analyze
- Criticize
- Summarize
- Deduce
- Critique
- Describe
- Infer
- Defend
- Demonstrate
- Uncover
- Judge
- Apply
- Combine
- Justify
- Draw Conclusions
- Design
- Recommend
- Discover
- Develop
- Test
- Examine
- Invent
- Validate
- Investigate
- Produce

POSSIBLE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

- Knowledge of concept
- Design of project format
- Application of skill
- Use of multiple resources
- Organization of information
- Documentation of information
- Presentation of information
- Use of higher order thinking skills
- Correct use of grammar
- Flow of information
- Correct use of punctuation
- Topic of interest to others
- Creative format
- Quality plan of action
- Creative presentation of ideas
- Use of fact versus opinion
- Creative use of information
- Ability to follow directions

(TEACHING AT THE MIDDLE LEVEL, 1996)
Appendix D

STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS USED IN PROJECT
STANDARD V - INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, & INSTITUTIONS
Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions, so that the learner can:
  f. describe the role of institutions in furthering both continuity and change;
  g. apply knowledge of how groups and institutions work to meet individual needs and promote the common good.

STANDARD VI - POWER, AUTHORITY, & GOVERNANCE
Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create and change structures of power, authority, and governance, so that the learner can:
  a. examine persistent issues involving the rights, roles, and status of the individual in relation to the general welfare.
  b. explain and apply concepts such as power, role, status, justice, and influence to the examination of persistent issues and social problems.

STANDARD VIII - SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, & SOCIETY
Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of relationships among science, technology, and society, so that the learner can:
  a. examine and describe the influence of culture on scientific and technological choices and advancement, such as in transportation, medicine, and warfare;
  b. explain the need for laws and policies to govern scientific and technological applications, such as in the safety and well-being of workers and consumers and the regulation of utilities, radio, and television;
  d. seek reasonable and ethical solutions to problems that arise when scientific advancements and social norms or values come into conflict.

STANDARD X - CIVIC IDEALS & PRACTICES
Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship in a democratic republic, so that the learner can:
  b. identify and interpret sources and examples of the rights and responsibilities of citizens;
  c. locate, access, analyze, organize, and apply information about selected public issues - recognizing and explaining multiple points of view;
  d. practice forms of civic discussion and participation consistent with the ideals of citizens in a democratic republic;
  h. analyze the effectiveness of selected public policies and citizen behaviors in realizing the stated ideals of a democratic republican form of government;
  i. explain the relationship between policy statements and action plans used to address issues of public concern.

(Curriculum Standards for Social Studies, Expectations of Excellence, 1994)
APPENDIX E

PROJECT: THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION
UNIT: United States Constitution

DURATION: 2-3 weeks

OBJECTIVES:

Student will know:
1. the meaning of democracy
2. why the United States Constitution was written
3. what is a constitution
4. the organization of the constitution

Student will understand:
1. what freedoms they have and why they have them
2. how our government works and how their life is affected by it
3. how are the rights as a teenager addressed in the United States Constitution
4. why is the United States Constitution important today
ACTIVITY 1 - INTRODUCTION TO THE CONSTITUTION

THE CONSTITUTION IS A LIVING DOCUMENT

STANDARD AND BENCHMARKS: V. f

RATIONALE: The students will see that the Constitution is as important today as it was over 200 years ago.

In about 7,000 words, the United States Constitution outlines a constitutional-federal plan for government that has been flexible enough for over 200 years to allow our nation to survive these many turning points: a farming-based to factory-based economy, from horses to trains and cars, the Civil War, two World Wars, the advent of nuclear and computer technology, and the civil rights movement. As you read about the Constitution, you will develop an understanding of why the Constitution is a living document today. The framers knew it was not perfect and, consequently, designed it to meet the needs of future generations through change (amendments). Each amendment has a history behind why it was needed, often to guarantee people’s individual rights or protection from abuses of power. The original language of the Constitution was drafted with this in mind. Having just fought a cruel, abusive, and oppressive king, the framers were fearful or creating a national government with too much power and knew that our nation could only survive future abuses or power with a system of checks and balances and separation or powers. Despite its current and historical flaws, you will further develop the sense of why many believe the United States Constitution is one of the greatest documents of all time and that through this document, the United States has risen to become one of the greatest nations in human history.

1. Read to class.
2. Divide students into groups of 3-4 students. Each group will answer the following questions.
   1. Do you agree that the Constitution is a living document? Why? Why not?
   2. Name other historical documents that you would consider a living document.
3. Discuss as a class.
ACTIVITY 2 - HOW THE CONSTITUTION IS ORGANIZED

STANDARD AND BENCHMARKS: V. g, and VI. B

RATIONALE: Students will know the organization and content of the Preamble of the Constitution.

The Constitution has seven articles and 27 amendments. Articles separate major topics, and amendments add or change the original Constitution's intent. Articles are further divided into sections, which list separate ideas with an article's topic. The first part of the Constitution is the Preamble. It is an introduction to the Constitution and tell two important things:

1. The Constitution was created by "We the people" and, therefore, serves the people.
2. It lists six reasons or purposes for the existence of the Constitution.

Preamble
We the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

1. Read the Preamble together as a class.
2. Discuss the Preamble and decide what it means.
3. Ask students if they can think of words today that would make it easier for everyone to understand. i.e. to make a peaceful community, to serve the people's needs, to have more cooperation between the states, to defend the nation, to make certain all future Americans are free to choose, and to have justice.
4. Handout out sheet for understanding the Constitution.
HANDOUT FOR STUDENTS
UNDERSTANDING THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES

PREAMBLE
We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

ARTICLE I
Divides the legislative branch of government into two houses, the Senate and the House of Representatives, lists the duties of each house and set out the rules for Congress.

ARTICLE II
Establishes the Electoral College and describes procedures for electing the President. Lists the President's power and duties.

ARTICLE III
Establishes the Supreme Court as the highest court in the land. Defines the duties of the court. Defines and sets out the penalty for treason against the United States.

ARTICLE IV
Lists the responsibilities states have to each other and their citizens. Grants Congress the power to admit new states to the Union.

ARTICLE V
Sets out the steps for amending the Constitution.

ARTICLE VI
States that the Constitution "shall be the supreme law of the land." Requires all federal and state officials to take an oath to uphold the Constitution.

ARTICLE VII
Requires nine states to ratify the Constitution of 1787 in order for it to be considered in effect.

AMENDMENTS 1-27
Describes the changes that have been made to the Constitution beginning with the Bill of Rights.
ACTIVITY 3 - THE UNITED STATES SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS: V. g, X. b, c

RATIONALE: Students will know how our system of government works together. They will gain an understanding of the ideas of separation of powers and checks and balances.

FEDERALISM
After having experienced first hand the failures and problems with a confederate form of government in which independent states had granted limited power to the central government, the framers realized they needed a stronger central government but not so strong that it would erase state and local government identities or threaten individual rights and freedoms. To preserve an acceptable level of local governments' independence and people's liberty, the framers decided on a federal system of government, a system in which a constitution defines how governmental powers are shared and divided between a national government and state governments. Both governments pass laws that operate on the same people and territory at the same time. However, unlike a confederate government, the national or federal government is stronger in power than the state or local governments.

SEPARATION OF POWERS
The United States Constitution lists and divides the national government's powers, limits, and responsibilities among three independent but coequal branches: the Legislative (Article I), Executive (Article II), and Judicial (Article III). Each branch has its own job, but all three must work together to keep things running smoothly. Having just fought for independence from a government who gave too much power to one person, a king, the framers wanted to prevent one branch from having too much power through its system of checks and balances.

CHECKS AND BALANCES
The framers wanted to achieve a balance of power among the three branches. To prevent one branch from controlling the other two branches and the national government from abusing its power, each branch uses its own powers to check the actions and powers of the other two branches. Thus, the
powers of one branch are checked/limited/restrained by the powers of the other two.

1. Review and discuss these ideas with the students.
2. Divide class into groups and provide the following exercises.

**ACTIVITY 3 (CONTINUED)**

SEPARATING, CHECKING, AND BALANCING THE POWERS

Place each letter from the following powers in its correct column on the diagram. Notice that the location of the space and the arrows indicates how each branch uses its powers to check another branch. So, the D (remove federal judges through impeachment) in column 1 is a legislative power that checks the power of the judicial branch.

A. Carry out, recommend, veto laws
B. Decides how to spend money
C. Declare law or treaty unconstitutional
D. Remove federal judges through impeachment
E. Appoint federal judges
F. Approve federal judge appointments
G. Remove president by way of impeachment
H. Declare executive action unconstitutional
I. Approve treaties, presidential appointments
J. Can remove own appointments
K. Overturn president’s veto
L. Create lower federal courts
M. Interprets laws without executive approval
N. Grant pardons and reprieves
O. Declare war, create armed forces
P. Call special meetings of Congress
ACTIVITY 3 (Continued)

LEGISLATIVE
OVER
EXECUTIVE

EXECUTIVE
OVER
LEGISLATIVE

LEGISLATIVE
OVER
JUDICIAL

CONGRESS

PRESIDENT

EXECUTIVE
OVER
JUDICIAL

JUDICIAL
OVER
EXECUTIVE

COURTS

JUDICIAL
OVER
LEGISLATIVE
ACTIVITY 3 (CONTINUED)

LIMITING THE POWERS

As provided in each article, the framers also wanted to limit the powers of each branch with term limits, requirements, and responsibilities. Place an (L), (E), or (J) next to each statement to indicate whether it is a Legislative (L), Executive (E), or Judicial (J) limit, responsibility, or requirement. Also write whether a legislative requirement is a Senate (S) or House of Representatives (R) limit as shown in the first example.

1. ___ At least 30 years old
2. ___ At least 35 years old
3. ___ Settles arguments of law
4. ___ 2-year term, at least 1 per state
5. ___ 14-year resident in United States
6. ___ United States citizen for 7 years
7. ___ 6-year per, 2 per state
8. ___ 4-year term
9. ___ Makes laws
10. ___ Lifetime appointments
11. ___ United Citizens for 9 years
12. ___ Carries out laws
13. ___ Natural-born United States citizen
14. ___ At least 25 years old
ACTIVITY 4 - ARTICLES I-VI OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS: VIII. a, c, d and X. b, c

RATIONALE: The students will understand how to take what the articles of the Constitution say and use that information in everyday situations.

YOU BE THE JUDGE
Five fictional situations are described below. You decide whether the Constitution allows each situation, or not. Circle your answer. Then in the blank provided, write which article and section of the Constitution supports your decision.

SITUATION 1
You are running for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. You immigrated to the United States ten years ago, settled in the state of Idaho, and applied for citizenship. You have been a citizen for eight years. On your next birthday, you will be 27 years old.

Allows Does Not Allow ____________________________

SITUATION 2
You were born in the United States 36 years ago and have lived here all your life. You decide to run for president of the United States.

Allows Does Not Allow ____________________________

SITUATION 3
The current size of the U.S. House of Representatives is 435 members. This number was set by Congress in 1929. However, the population in your state has grown by 40% over the past two years. Your state legislature recently passed a law that added one additional representative to the U.S. Congress. Your state court judges approved the law. A statewide election was held, and your friend was the winner of the new seat.

Allows Does Not Allow ____________________________

SITUATION 4
A member of a neighbor's family was found guilty of treason. Next week the judge will announce the punishment and has ordered all family members to be present to receive their consequences too.

Allows Does Not Allow ____________________________

SITUATION 5
Both state legislatures and 95% of all citizens of New York and New Hampshire decided to form one large state and call New Yorkshire. The elections for the first governor of the new state will be held next week.

Allows Does Not Allow ____________________________
ACTIVITY 5 - U.S. CITIZENSHIP - POWERS AND DUTIES OF EXECUTIVE BRANCH

STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS: VIII. c, X. I

RATIONALE: The student will understand what is a citizen and what it takes to become a citizen of the United States.

SCENARIO
The office of Attorney General is vacant and President Clinton is in the process of appointing a candidate. Both of those whom he initially proposed found themselves in an awkward position because they had hired illegal immigrants (undocumented workers) to serve as babysitters for their children while they worked. Students should focus on the question “Who is a citizen and what does it take to become one?” Student should work in small groups to discuss possible answers.

Activity
Who is a citizen? How do you know?
1. A baby is born in Mexico while her parents, who are U.S. citizens, are on vacation. What is her citizenship?
2. A Jamaican woman has worked for many years in this country but has never applied for citizenship. This past year she married a U.S. citizen.
3. Refugees flee an oppressive, non-democratic government with which the United States has no diplomatic relations. The president tells the people of that nation that they can seek political asylum here. Are the refugees citizens? If not, are they eligible for citizenship?
4. Refugees flee an oppressive, non-democratic government with which the United States does have diplomatic relations. The president discourages these people from immigrating to the United States, saying that they are merely fleeing for economic purposes. Are these refugees citizens? If not, are they eligible to become citizens?
5. You emigrate to France. You have no intentions of returning to the United States. You no longer file U.S. income tax returns. Of which country are you a citizen?
6. A husband and wife have been undocumented workers in the United States for seven years. They have a baby. Is the baby a U.S. citizen?
ACTIVITIES 6-18

All of the following activities deal with the amendments of the Constitution. They can be done as it fits in with the time left and classroom make-up.

STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS: VI a, b, VIII c, d, & X b, c, d

RATIONALE: The students will learn and understand the rights stated in the Amendments and understand how they apply to them as teenagers.
ACTIVITY 6 – AMENDMENTS

The teacher begins class by having everyone stand up. Then he/she gives them directions: "Everyone who does not own property, sit down. Everyone who is not male, sit down. Everyone who is a part of a religion that is not Protestant or has no religion at all, sit down." When he/she has gone through a list that comprised the qualifications for voting in the 1788 election, no one is standing. He/she should then divide the class into seven groups and send them on a treasure hunt through the amendments to the U.S. Constitution to find all the amendments that have to do with voting and choosing a government. When they find Amendments 12, 15, 19, 22, 23, 24, and 26, the teacher should give each group one amendment to analyze and to report their explanation to the whole class. They then consider how various groups of people have gotten the right to vote. Finally, each group of students writes an amendment that will extend the right to vote to groups still not included, such as migrant workers and the homeless.

As a follow-up, the class selects the constitution of four countries, and each group finds out how and when people secured the right to vote and how elections are held there.

Students should complete
1. Report on amendment assigned
2. Timeline showing when various groups were included in the vote
3. Amendment included certain groups not already included
4. Chart comparing the U.S. Bill of Rights and rights statements from another country

Assessment
When assessing the students' performance, the teacher should consider the completeness of the reports on the amendments, the accuracy of a timeline they prepare showing when various groups were included, the extent to which the key factors are explained in their amendment for the future inclusion of a group not yet included, and the accuracy of information on their chart comparing the U.S. Bill of Rights and rights statements from another country.
ACTIVITY 7 - AMENDMENTS TO THE U.S. CONSTITUTION
ESTABLISHED AMENDMENT PRIORITIES

It has been decided that the Bill of Rights should be shortened. Choose five amendments to keep and five that you might discard. A summary of the rights in each amendment has been written below. Indicate which amendments you would keep and which ones you would discard. Be prepared to discuss your reasons for keeping or discarding each amendment.

FIRST AMENDMENT
Citizens have the right to freedom of religion, speech, press, getting together in a peaceful group, and to ask the government to correct any injustice.

SECOND AMENDMENT
Citizens have the right to refuse soldiers being lodged in their homes.

THIRD AMENDMENT
Citizens have the right to refuse soldiers being lodged in their homes.

FOURTH AMENDMENT
Citizens have the right to privacy for themselves, their homes, and their belongings. Any search must be reasonable and must be done according to a search warrant that tells the place and what is being searched for.

FIFTH AMENDMENT
Citizens have rights in court. They cannot be tried twice for the same crime, do not have to testify against themselves, and cannot lose life, liberty, or property without due process of law.

SIXTH AMENDMENT
Citizens in court have the right to a speedy and public trial, a jury in a criminal case, the right to face accusers, and the right to call witnesses.

SEVENTH AMENDMENT
Citizens have a right to a jury trial in a civil case.

EIGHTH AMENDMENT
Citizens have the right to reasonable bail, fines, and punishments.

NINTH AMENDMENT
Citizens have rights not listed in the Constitution.

TENTH AMENDMENT
Powers not listed and given to the federal government belong to states or people.
**ACTIVITY 8 - AMENDMENTS TO THE U.S. CONSTITUTION**

**CATEGORIZING YOUR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS**

Think about the rights that are guaranteed to you as an individual by the Constitution. Then, decide how you could categorize or group these rights. As a group, decide which categories to use and then how they apply. You do not have to use all of the categories suggested. You can add one of your own. Have a reason for your choices. Place the number of the agreed-upon category beside each amendment.

1. Right to do something  
2. Right to have something  
3. Right to be something  
4. Rights when accused of something  
5. (Your choice)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amendment</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1ST</td>
<td>freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2ND</td>
<td>right to bear arms and form a militia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3RD</td>
<td>no quartering of soldiers in your home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4TH</td>
<td>no unreasonable searches and seizures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5TH</td>
<td>right to due process, no self-incrimination</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6TH</td>
<td>right to be represented by a lawyer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7TH</td>
<td>right to jury trial in civil cases</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8TH</td>
<td>no unfair punishment, bail, fines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9TH</td>
<td>have rights no listed in the Constitution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10TH</td>
<td>powers not listed belong to the state or people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13TH</td>
<td>no one can be held in slavery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14TH</td>
<td>guaranteed due process and equal protection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19TH</td>
<td>women have the right to vote</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26TH</td>
<td>can vote from age 18</td>
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</table>
ACTIVITIES 9-16 SHOULD BE COMPLETED USING THE BOOK WITH LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL: THE STORY OF THE BILL OF RIGHTS

ACTIVITY 9 - WHERE ARE LEGAL PROTECTIONS OF YOUR RIGHTS FOUND?

CRITICAL THINKING EXERCISE
IDENTIFYING LAWS THAT PROTECT YOUR RIGHTS
PAGES 5-7

Each of the following imaginary situations involves a possible violation of a legal right. Work individually or with a study partner to review each situation and to answer the questions that follow. Then be prepared to discuss your answers with the class.

1. You buy a stereo set that fails to work after a week. Although it has a one-year warranty, the store from which you bought it claims you were responsible for breaking it. Despite the warranty, the store refuses to repair the stereo or to give you a new one. You claim you have a right to have the stereo repaired free of charge or to be given a new one.

2. Your bike is stolen. You learn from a friend the identity of the person who has stole it. You want the bike returned and the person arrested and punished.

3. You participate in a demonstration that becomes violence. Although you are not involved in the violence, you are arrested and jailed. The police fail to inform you of your right to a lawyer and question you about all the people you know who were involved in the demonstration.

1. What laws protect your rights?

2. In which of these situations might your rights be protected by the Bill of Rights? From whom would they be protected? Explain your answer.

3. In which situation might the Bill of Rights not protect you? What laws might protect you in those situations? Explain your answer.
ACTIVITY 10 - HOW CAN STUDYING THE HISTORY OF RIGHTS HELP YOU DEAL WITH CONTEMPORARY ISSUES?

WHY SHOULD CITIZENS HAVE THE RIGHT TO KNOW WHAT THEIR GOVERNMENT IS DOING?

WHAT ISSUES OF RIGHTS WERE INVOLVED DURING THE PERSIAN GULF WAR?

Pages 8-11 in With Liberty and Justice for All: The Story of the Bill of Rights

1. Read pages 9-11.
2. In a group answer the Critical Thinking Exercise on page 11.
3. Be prepared to discuss answers with class.
ACTIVITY 11 - HOW DOES THE FREE EXERCISE CLAUSE PROTECT YOUR FREEDOM OF RELIGION?
1. Read pages 92-95.
2. In a small group answer and discuss the Critical Thinking Exercises on pages 92-93 and page 94. Be prepared to discuss answers with class.

ACTIVITY 12 - HOW DOES THE FIRST AMENDMENT PROTECT YOUR FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY, PETITION, AND ASSOCIATION?
1. Read pages 103-107
2. In a small group answer and discuss the Critical Thinking Exercises on pages 105 and 107. Be prepared to discuss answers with class.

ACTIVITY 13 - HOW DOES THE FIFTH AMENDMENT PROTECT YOU AGAINST SELF-INCRIMINATION?
1. Read pages 119-123.
2. In a small group answer and discuss the Critical Thinking Exercise on pages 121-122. Be prepared to discuss answers with class.

ACTIVITY 14 - WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF PROCEDURAL DUE PROCESS?
1. Read pages 109-112.
2. In a small group answer and discuss the Critical Thinking Exercise on page 111. Be prepared to discuss answers with class.

ACTIVITY 15 - HOW DOES THE SIXTH AMENDMENT PROTECT YOUR RIGHT TO A FAIR TRIAL?
1. Read pages 124-128.
2. In a small group answer and discuss the Critical Thinking Exercises on pages 124-125 and 126. Be prepared to discuss answers with class.

ACTIVITY 16 - HOW DOES THE FIFTH AMENDMENT PROTECT YOU AGAINST SELF-INCRIMINATION?
1. Read pages 119-123.
2. In a small group answer and discuss the Critical Thinking Exercise on pages 121-122. Be prepared to discuss answers with class.
ACTIVITY 17 – WHAT ARE YOUR RIGHTS?
The questions and answers help students understand what rights and liberties are protected by the Bill of Rights.

This activity involves the use of the booklet The Bill of Rights: 200 years, 200 Facts

1. In class read pages 32-36.
3. Discuss as a class the rights of teenagers.
Firearms have long been a significant part of American life. They have been used as weapons in wars, as instruments for citizen soldiers, as a means for handling disputes, as tools for settling the western frontier, and as symbols of national strength. The use and misuse of guns, however, has become a major national concern, and many feel that the availability of guns has contributed to the rising rates of crime and violence. Many suggestions have been proposed for the control of guns, including:

1. Registration of all guns by gun buyers, including buyer’s name, address, serial number of gun, and reason for purchase.
2. Application for permit to carry a gun by all potential gun buyers, including background check on buyer and wait period of from two weeks to three months for approval of permit.
3. Ban on owning guns by general public.
4. Mandatory prison sentences for all gun-related crimes.

The Second Amendment states:

A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.

This amendment lies at the heart of the gun control debate, because it is the only reference to gun possession in the Constitution. Two other popular arguments against gun control are based on the right of citizens to protect themselves from loss of individual liberties and tyrannies and the right to privacy as a potential gun buyer.

Use this background information on gun control to answer these questions and to share with your partner. Be sure to record some of your partner’s ideas from the sharing session as well as your own.

1. How would you explain the following statement made by a famous historian? “Guns are at the very core of the American way of life. From the first settlers to present-day soldiers, firearms have played a vital role in the nation’s history.”

Your Thoughts:
Your Partner’s Thoughts:

2. Which of these gun control measures has the most merit? Why?
   Option 1: Registration of all handguns
   Option 2: Application for permit and wait time
   Option 3: Ban on owning guns
   Option 4: Mandatory prison sentences for gun-related Crimes

Your Thoughts:
Your Partner’s Thoughts

3. Do you feel the Second Amendment to the Constitution is a valid argument in favor of citizen ownership of guns? Explain

Your Thoughts:
Your Partner’s Thoughts:

4. Do you think gun control laws would actually reduce crime? Would criminal comply with these laws? Give reasons for your answers.

Your Thoughts:
Your Partner’s Thoughts:
PRODUCT ASSESSMENT

CHOOSE ANY TWO OF THE FOLLOWING TO COMPLETE.

1. Create a collage depicting the many different freedoms protected by the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

2. Make an original diagram of how a bill become a law.

3. Summarize a minimum of three news articles - one about each of the three branches of government. Include copy of article.

4. Rewrite the Preamble to the Constitution in your own words.

5. Make a list of 10 rights and privileges you feel you have, plus 10 matching responsibilities. Include a short explanation of why you chose these rights and responsibilities at the end.

6. Write a letter to your Congressperson or U.S. Senator on an issue of importance to you.

7. Create a timeline titled "Getting the Vote". Research important dates and events that are relevant to voting rights of Americans.
RUBRIC FOR PRODUCT ASSESSMENT

Student’s name: ____________________________________________
Type of Product: ____________________________________________
Beginning date of product: ___________________________________________________________________
Completion date of product: ___________________________________________________________________
Topic/theme/subject area of product: ____________________________________________________________
Criteria for judging my product: 
Off target Near miss Very close Bull’s eye

1. Manageable topic _______________________________________
2. Evidence of quality research _____________________________
3. Contains factual information _____________________________
4. Logical scope and sequence of ideas _______________________
5. Well written ___________________________________________
6. Elements of creativity ________________________________
7. Application of higher order thinking skills ________________
8. Adequate length _______________________________________

Starter statement for me to complete
1. I enjoyed creating this product because _______________________
2. The most interesting thing I learned about this topic was ________________________________
3. A problem I had to overcome in completing this task was ________________________________
4. The resources I used in gathering information to do this work were _________________________

Signed ___________________  Student’s signature

Signed ___________________  Teacher’s signature
PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Choose any two of the following to complete.

1. Create a song/poem on the Constitution.

2. Prepare a short position paper on The Death Penalty—Cruel and Unusual Punishment? You can take either side in the paper. Read the paper to the class.

3. Prepare a short talk on what the Constitution means to your today.

4. Prepare a debate, taking the affirmative or the negative. "The Electoral System Should be abolished and replaced by a direct election of the people." Read position statement to class and be prepared to give reasons for choice.

# PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student’s Name</th>
<th>Topic/Theme/Subject Area of Performance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<th>Rating Scale Used in Assessing Performance</th>
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<tr>
<td>Outstanding</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria for Rating Performance</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Choice of topic/theme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Depth of research</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Organization of ideas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Quality of information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Actively engaged in delivery</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Of material</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Use of voice, diction, gestures</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Rapport with audience</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Evidence of creativity</td>
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</table>

If I were rating this performance I would give myself a(n) ______ (letter grade) because ________________

Signed ___________________________

Student’s signature

Signed ___________________________

Teacher’s signature
REFERENCES FOR PROJECT


