Integrating the literature and social studies curriculum

Christa S. Lynch
*University of Northern Iowa*

Copyright ©2002 Christa S. Lynch

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarworks.uni.edu/grp](https://scholarworks.uni.edu/grp)

Part of the [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](https://scholarworks.uni.edu/cic) and the [Language and Literacy Education Commons](https://scholarworks.uni.edu/lile)

---

**Recommended Citation**


[https://scholarworks.uni.edu/grp/1122](https://scholarworks.uni.edu/grp/1122)

---

This Open Access Graduate Research Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Work at UNI ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Research Papers by an authorized administrator of UNI ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@uni.edu.
Integrating the literature and social studies curriculum

Abstract
This paper reviews the historical development of curriculum integration, examining the relationship between literature and social studies and offers an original instructional unit based on this research. The literature will illustrate how, throughout American history, Progressives argued for integration of subjects but under some opposition from their contemporaries. An examination of recent literature will then demonstrate how and why curriculum integration is currently used.

This open access graduate research paper is available at UNI ScholarWorks: https://scholarworks.uni.edu/grp/1122
INTEGRATING THE LITERATURE AND SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM

Submitted
In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Education

Christa S. Lynch
University of Northern Iowa
October, 2002
This Research Paper by: Christa S. Lynch

Entitled: Integrating the Literature and Social Studies Curriculum

Has been approved as meeting the research paper requirement for the degree of

Master of Arts in Education
Educational Psychology: Professional Development for Teachers

John W. Swope
Co-Director of Paper

John E. Henning
Co-Director of Paper

Thomas R. Berg
Advisor

Barry J. Wilson
Department Head

10/14/2002
Date Approved
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Chapter I

- Introduction ......................................................... 4
- Statement of the Problem ........................................... 4
- Significance of the Problem ......................................... 5
- Definitions of Terms ................................................. 6
- Organization of the Paper .......................................... 7

## Chapter II

- Historical Background ............................................... 8
- Henry Johnson .......................................................... 9
- Charles A. McMurry .................................................... 11
- John Dewey ............................................................. 13
- Progressive Agendas .................................................. 15
- English Teaching Perspective ....................................... 15

## Chapter III

- Current Research ...................................................... 23

- Studies ........................................................................ 28
  - Cotton
  - Bradley
  - Cunningham
  - McKinney
  - Lipson
Chapter IV

Principles of Good Integration ........................................... 33

Chapter V

Rationale for Literature ................................................... 39
Unit of Instruction ......................................................... 45
Discussion ................................................................. 48

Chapter VI

Summary and Conclusion ................................................ 52
Recommendations .......................................................... 54

References ......................................................................... 57

Appendix A ....................................................................... 61
Chapter I

Introduction

This paper reviews the historical development of curriculum integration, examining the relationship between literature and social studies and offers an original instructional unit based on this research. Chapter Two focuses on curriculum integration from the perspective of three separately motivated Progressive educators and philosophers at the turn of the century and will also examine the history of curriculum integration from an English education viewpoint. The tendency to pair literature and social studies is not a new phenomenon; in fact, some educators 100 years ago thought this combination to be "natural law." The literature will illustrate how, throughout American history, Progressives argued for integration of subjects but under some opposition from their contemporaries. An examination of recent literature will then demonstrate how and why curriculum integration is currently used. There exists an extensive amount of advocacy for integrating the curriculum, but questions about the validity of these claims arise due to the lack of a substantial body of evidence that proves integration increases student achievement.

Statement of Problem

The social, economic, and educationally altering 1983 publication *A Nation At Risk* presented America with its worst fear: our school systems were failing academically. Our curricula were attacked as being "cafeteria-style . . . in which the appetizers and desserts can easily be mistaken for the main courses"(1983). Educators began looking at practices that would increase student achievement in America. As a result of that report, the idea of joining two or more subject areas was examined by educators and
implemented into teaching practices. For example, Burke (1995) advocated that the curriculum must be connected in order to produce a “well-educated and functioning person.” He states, “Content and its applicability must have relationships with other essential knowledge categories across the curriculum. There should be no exceptions to this . . .” (Burke, 1995. P.147).

At the beginning of the millennium, curriculum integration has become a focus of professional development classes, university methods courses, and teacher inservices. A trend toward block scheduling and team-teaching, especially in the secondary schools, allows for flexibility in curricula and welcomes integration with open arms. The problem that educators must understand is that curriculum integration, particularly that of literature and social studies, must be applied in the most effective way possible. There are many advocates but little substantive evidence that it positively affects learning. The issues discussed in this paper will focus on the following questions:

1) What can history tell us about the integration of literature and social studies?
2) How can recent research help classroom teachers integrate these subjects?
3) What is an effective model for the integration of literature and social studies that teachers can directly apply to their classrooms?

Significance of the Problem

Why is this issue significant? Curriculum integration has saturated the literature for decades, advocating subject fusion as educationally sound. Today, a simple ERIC search for “curriculum integration” will yield thousands of articles and documents that refer to integration in some format, whether it be combining literature and social studies or thematically linking several subjects such as math, art, science, physical education, and
world languages. Academic journals, such as the *English Journal*, often devote entire issues to this topic. Numerous books aimed at teacher methodologies demonstrate ways to encourage integration. The claims are that integrating literature and social studies will increase student learning and motivation for both subject areas. The point is this: the impact of curriculum integration is significant and widely accepted by educators today. Unfortunately, like so many other "big ideas" in education, the area of curriculum integration lacks tangible evidence that student learning is improved in either or both subject areas, yet it is practiced daily and is taught in our teacher education programs. This issue is of great significance for educational reform; educators must conduct more assessments of certain practices before claiming they are good for children. This paper plans to present a review of literature that dates back to the late 1800s and continues into the millennium. This paper presents an array of information about curriculum integration that may help educators develop insights that can really benefit their students.

**Definition of Terms**

The following terms are commonly used when discussing integration of curriculum. It is important to differentiate among these terms for the most comprehensive understanding of the various forms of integration. The following is taken from "Education 2000 Integrated Curriculum" by Betty Jean Eklund Shoemaker (1991).

The *Infusion* approach integrates a particular subject across the curriculum. For example, a teacher might choose math to infuse into language arts, science, and social studies. The *Topics-within-disciplines* approach integrates multiple strands of the same discipline within the instructional setting, such as integrated language arts or integrated math programs. The *thematic* approach subordinates subject matter to a theme, allowing
boundaries between disciplines to blur. Topics can be narrowly or broadly focused. The interdisciplinary approach maintains traditional subject boundaries while aligning content and concepts from one discipline with those of another. All of these approaches may be modified or adapted to fit the needs of individual teachers and classrooms. The thematic and interdisciplinary approaches are commonly linked together in the research presented in this paper. For example, a unit on the Holocaust can be interdisciplinary because students read *The Diary of Anne Frank* as they learn about the war. At the same time, the teacher might choose the theme of racial oppression as a focus: this unit therefore becomes thematic.

**Organization of the Paper**

This paper is organized into six chapters. Chapter One introduces the issue, examines the problem and its significance, and offers definitions of terminology used in this paper and other similar literature. Chapter Two will examine an historical perspective of curriculum integration by analyzing the works of three prominent educators at the turn of the 20th century and present the history of English teaching, and how educators in this field viewed integration. Chapter Three will examine modern research and current literature that describes the practice and effects of integrating curriculum. Chapter Four will describe a set of principles for effective integration of literature and social studies, based on the research. Chapter Five will apply those principles to a description of an integrated unit of instruction. Chapter Six will conclude the information in this paper, and make recommendations for further studies.
Chapter II

Historical Background

As the United States neared the close of the 19th century, rumblings of monumental changes in society were audible. America's surge of immigration, a heavy lean towards industrialization, and a breakdown of fundamental institutions that were once the center of rural and urban communities increased pressure upon public schools. The drastic upheaval in home life, businesses, and religious beliefs whirled and tumbled around this one institution in the eye of the storm, and schools increasingly came to be seen as the panacea for all America's societal ills. At the turn of the century, issues within the public schools were being heavily debated by groups of people with a variety of agendas. The question of what curricula should be taught and how it should be taught became the focus of educational reform. Until this time, children who attended school learned their lessons mainly through rote memorization and drill. Subjects such as literature, history, geography, and science were taught separately using textbooks and lecture methods. It was then, amidst the debris of social change, that several reform movements surfaced. Among these was the push to integrate the separate academic disciplines in order to see the unity and relevance in knowledge. Integration of curriculum was a focus for several reformers in the philosophy, literary, and social studies fields of the early 20th century.

Based on the convictions of three prominent historical theorists and a look at the history of English teaching, I will explore this question: What have historians and philosophers contended regarding curriculum integration, particularly that of literature
and social studies? This chapter will examine the greater theories on integrating curriculum, particularly the connection between literature and social studies, based on the writings of three Progressive educators at the turn of the 20th century. Later, the chapter will look at a history of curriculum integration from an English teaching point of view.

Henry Johnson, a professor of history at Columbia University Teacher’s College wrote *Teaching of History in Elementary and Secondary Schools* in 1915. Johnson’s book explores the history of history teaching and offers an historical perspective on the teaching strategies and resources that encourage integrating history and literature. Johnson strove to add meaning to history instruction and to connect historical fiction and biographies to enhance the learning of social studies. As stated in Johnson’s book, “The teacher of history who awakens in his pupils a love of the literature of history and a love of the literature that constitutes so large a part of the subject-matter of history will not have taught in vain” (Johnson, 1916, p. xi).

An expansion of this notion is offered in Johnson’s Chapter 25, “Correlation of History With Other Subjects.” Here, Johnson contends that advocates of integrating history and literature can easily argue its merits. According to the *Report* (as cited by Johnson, 1916) by the Association of History Teachers of the Middle States and Maryland:

> Indeed, it is only by bringing [literature and history] together and comparing them-interpreting men’s feelings in the light of their deeds, and illustrating their deeds by their sentiments and feelings as they are expressed in literature-that the study of either literature or history can be made vital. (p. 400)

According to Johnson, the connection between the two disciplines is natural; quality
literature and a history textbook enjoy a symbiotic relationship, the literature enhancing comprehension of history and the history providing insight to the setting and place within the literature. “History contributes to literature. It furnishes material and inspiration to literary genius. It supplies the background of conditions and events contemporary with literary genius and . . . relates the times to the man” (Johnson, 1916, p. 405).

Johnson presents a comprehensive look at the history of history teaching, up to the early 1900s. Johnson (1916) explains that the importance of history as an academic subject rapidly grew in America’s schools: in 1826 six towns in New York required the History of the United States in their curricula, and by 1834 that number had risen to 104 towns. As colleges began to require history courses as prerequisites to entrance, the subject of history became an essential part of the curriculum. As early as 1895, teachers and educational leaders began to propose changes in the teaching of history. “Miss Emily J. Rice proposed the correlation of history and literature with such constructive activities as the building of models of primitive houses and the reproduction of primitive arts and inventions” (Johnson, 1916, p. 153).

Johnson’s opinions about integrating these subjects are clear, but he balances his argument by representing advocates of separate subject teaching. Those opposed to this harmonization of subjects have two major concerns: the over-romanticizing of history, and the inaccuracies found in historical fiction. Often, these inaccuracies go unchecked and form the basis of instruction in some classrooms. These concern voiced by Johnson almost a century ago have not been completely eradicated today. Misinterpretations of history for the sake of literary entertainment value still exist in many classrooms.

Johnson contributed an historical perspective of history teaching in the United
States. Johnson, a Progressive, was interested in making history engaging for the learner, and one way to do that was to integrate literature into the history curricula. Literature offers a human side to history, and history contributes to the understanding of time and place in a piece of literature.

Another early advocate of enriching history and literature through integration was Charles A. McMurry. In 1903 Charles A. McMurry wrote *Elements of General Method*, a publication that begins its narrative with the lofty question, “What is the central purpose of education?” It is clear that McMurry’s answer echoes the sentiments of many common school reformers at this time in history: McMurry and many of his contemporaries conjectured that morality is the underlying purpose for education, and all subject areas should teach morals within their own contexts. “All good schoolmasters know that behind school studies and cares is the still greater task of developing manly and womanly character” (McMurry, 1903, p. 6). It is this belief that drives his discussion on curriculum integration; the use of literature in social studies classes allows students to not only enjoy and derive meaning from their studies, but also to examine the morality of real and fictional characters within trade books and novels.

McMurry offers several examples of historical narratives that present characters with high moral values. *The Bible, The Iliad* and *The Odyssey, Pilgrim’s Progress, The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin, Robinson Crusoe*, and *Goethe’s Autobiography* give accounts of people of strong character. According to McMurry, works such as these would heighten moral values in the schools, since the secularization of public schools had deprived students of any religious education. McMurry applies the term correlation to describe the “connection between the parts of each study and such a spinning of relations
and connecting links between different sciences, that unity may spring out of the variety of knowledge” (McMurry, 1903, p. 162). Correlation not only refers to the integrating of curricular areas, but also to the merging of home life and school. One century later, McMurry would have been a strong advocate of programs like Character Education and a leader of similar programs that apply his exact philosophies.

McMurry (chapter titled, “Correlation,”) offers notions that are paramount to the argument for curriculum integration. He first distinguishes among the terms concentration, coordination, and correlation. Concentration refers to the teaching of separate subject areas without integration. This method reflects a “weakness which shows itself in a lack of retentiveness and of ability to use acquired knowledge by the ease with which it eludes the memory when it is needed” (McMurry, 1903, p.186). McMurry contends that in order to make sense of such fragmented education, “thoughtful” persons naturally seek a few central ideas to connect the confusion of isolated facts they have learned in this system. This theory is also echoed in McMurry’s term coordination, where subjects are taught separately but under the guise of a central theme. McMurry’s coordination is a forerunner to the recent practice of “thematic teaching,” where a theme such as “Holocaust” encompasses the content taught in each separate subject. Correlation refers to the associations among subject areas based on the mind’s natural tendency to make these connections and is essential to building character. “A careless education, by neglecting this principle, by scattering the mind’s forces over broad fields, and by neglecting the connecting roads and paths that should bind together the separate fields, can actually undermine force and decision of character” (McMurry, 1903, p. 184).
McMurry's (1903) final and strongest argument for curriculum integration is that real life mirrors these interrelations between subject areas.

The isolation of studies is a thing not found in the world outside of the schoolroom and of scientific texts. Nature everywhere mixes and tangles the sciences. Man, in his practical arts and activities, does the same. Nature does not put all the butterflies in one field, all the birds in another, all the plants in another, and all the sunshine in another. The druggist in his store does not deal with simply one isolated science; the farmer must know plants and animals, weather and markets, machines and soils. (191)

According to McMurry, it is natural to intertwine subject matter and to seek connections. Although McMurry's apparent mission at the turn of the century was to foster moral and character education, he effectively argues for curriculum integration. McMurry's primary contemporary, John Dewey, has a purpose and rhetoric of his own.

Dewey (1990) emphasizes children's need to connect learning with humanity. "If you observe little children, you will find they are interested in the world of things mainly in its connection to people, as a background and medium of human concerns" (Dewey, 1990, p. 48). This belief has implications for curriculum integration. Children are most interested in people and how they connect to the world. Children's curiosity about places in the world, for example, is magnified when they can read about the people who live there. When integrating literature and social studies, children can view history or geography through the eyes of a strong protagonist, someone to whom they can relate. Literature offers the opportunity to motivate learning about the world. Dewey stresses
the importance of making the study of history dynamic and moving, as history is itself.

"History must be presented, not as an accumulation of results or effects, a mere statement of what happened, but as a forceful, acting thing. To study history is not to amass information, but to use information in constructing a vivid picture" (Dewey, 1990, p. 151).

If children are inherently interested in people’s lives, it makes sense to marry literature and history. Dewey thought that historical fiction and biographies would enable children to understand an insider’s perspective of history, and “that historical material appeals to the child most completely and vividly when presented in individual form, when summed up in the lives and deeds of some heroic character, there can be no doubt” (Dewey, 1990, p. 154). Painting a colorful, meaningful picture of the human aspect of history can satisfy the interests of children.

Although Dewey argues that integrating literature and history is beneficial to the child, he also cites limitations to this practice. Dewey’s idea of “immersion” into history does not stop at the integration of literature. The best way to integrate history and literature is to make sure the literature presents history in a social context. “A consciousness of the social aim of history prevents any tendency to swamp history in myth, fairy story, and merely literary renderings” (Dewey, 1990, p. 154). If the child can picture the “social defects and problems that clamored for the man and the ways in which the individual met the emergency,’(p. 154) then the literature is worthy of integrating into a history class. Students must perceive the protagonist as a hero and they should experience situations through that character. History textbooks offer objective factual information about events, dates, and the significant people (mostly leaders) that helped to
create history. The literature must present these people, or “insignificant people” in a social context under the backdrop of an historical period. Literature allows readers to closely examine how events in history affected people.

It would be accurate to state that Johnson, McMurry, and Dewey each had his own agenda to promote; and they all used the idea of curriculum integration to achieve it. The reformers emphasized relevance in teaching; all three Progressives promoted this concept using curriculum integration in a key role.

Henry Johnson’s examination of history stemmed from a strong conviction about the relevance of this fairly new subject area. His book, *The Teaching of History*, is a teacher-friendly theory and methods publication. Johnson saw the unity of history and literature as relevant in its own right; it was a natural fit and would increase students’ appreciation of history. McMurry, however, viewed education as a catalyst to higher moral standards within society. “The school will fail to leave an effective impress upon such a child unless it can get a closer hold upon the sympathies and thus neutralize an evil tendency” (McMurry, 1903, p.177). McMurry’s agenda was clear: when students studied highly moral pieces of literature in conjunction with history, history itself might seem more value-laden than it actually was. Therefore, students could study the facts of history but be influenced by the heroic, flawless characters encountered in literature. Dewey’s agenda was to promote a child-centered, social, active approach to teaching. In order to appeal to the immediate interest of the child, the teacher must make learning interesting; therefore, dull history facts are quickly brightened through engaging narratives and engrossing characters.

Curriculum integration was not only attempted and practiced to increase learning
in the social studies discipline, but it also had an impact on English teaching as well. As far back as the turn of the 19th century, reading materials were connected to particular fields of interest. Applebee (1974) describes a movement toward "content" readers "in which reading exercises were subordinated to the study of other subjects" (p. 4). For instance, The Christian Reader (consisting entirely of hymns) and The Farmer's School-Book offered how to "Make and Preserve Cheese", "Raising Calves," and "The Nature of Manure" (p. 4). Reading exercises were embedded within interest-stories that related to each child's life. This idea seems to be a precursor to Dewey's philosophy of "child as center," and possibly a forerunner of whole language, a philosophical stance about language learning that has pervaded language arts teaching in recent decades.

By the 1900s, literature was viewed as important in its own right. One justification for studying literature is an echo of McMurry's moral reasoning for curriculum integration. According to Applebee (1974), Sterling A. Leonard wrote, "the 'fundamental and central idea' of his discussion was that 'children's reading of literature should be always an achievement of realized, true, and significant experience" (Leonard, 1929, p. 5, 31). Children would live vicariously through the "good" characters and events that occurred in literature; therefore, literature was a catalyst for good moral behavior.

So successful curriculum integration depends on the literature chosen: it must provide a livable experience for readers and also focus on that content only. Once the "experience" theory of literature was established, classroom teachers put it into practice. "Some suggested units focused on a central reading, the experience of which would be enhanced by a plethora of other activities organized around it. Others focused the
experience instead on a single concept (e.g., liberty, patriotism) ...” (Applebee, 1974, p. 112). Educators also believed that literature not only lends increased “experience” to the study of social studies, but the geography and description of a place enables the reader to fully experience the literature. (Cited by Applebee (1974), Canby (1924) argued, “Historical studies received support from teachers who argued that in order to experience fully a work of literature, it was necessary to understand fully the social and cultural milieu in which it originated” (p. 705-709). The cultural background of a piece of literature was necessary for full literary experience, another idea that opened up opportunities for the integration of English and social studies.

In 1936, a subcommittee of the Curriculum Commission was formed to design a program for English in American secondary schools. The committee presented *A Correlated Curriculum*, a paper that introduced the fusion of different subject areas. The committee was thorough in examining the questions such a program might raise. Weeks (1936) states, cited by Applebee (1974), that “Among its lists of criteria for evaluating attempts at correlation was one that asked if the tested values of any subject would be lost” (p. 6-9). One of the driving forces for the correlation of subject areas was the theory of “gestalt,” or the psychological idea of unification of world patterns. Because of this psychological trend, teachers gladly supported correlation. Another reason for correlation was an administrative one. “The exigencies of the Depression economy had forced cuts in school budgets: it was hoped that ‘curricular consolidation’ through correlation would circumvent ‘curricular curtailment’” (Applebee, 1974, p. 123). In other words, due to budget constraints, teaching multiple subject areas together might prevent having to eradicate any of them. Despite support from the Progressives, psychology
trends, and budget cuts, some leaders of education still opposed the idea of correlation.

Franklin Bobbitt wrote that correlation was the wrong way to fix the problem with the English curriculum. He argued that the department of English had to focus on issues more important than correlation “before it can be ready to prepare anything more than a merely descriptive account of relatively unevaluated practices, such as the present investigation” (Applebee, 1974, p. 123). Clearly, the idea of correlation was assumed to increase learning, but was not yet tested. L.T. Hopkins also delineated similar problems with correlation, including the doubt that correlation would lead to sufficient learning in the subjects that are merged together. “The starting point remained English, and correlation remained a device to aid in the learning of that subject. There would be no fundamental change in the educational process” (Applebee, 1974, p. 123). The social studies curriculum was used to assist the learning of English; the skills and concepts learned tended to be that only of the English curriculum. Therefore, English was not correlated equally with social studies.

During this time, the English portion of college entrance examinations was a major focus and guided much of the curriculum in American secondary schools. In response to this emphasis on entrance exams, the Progressive Education Association designed the Eight-Year Study. The PEA appointed a commission to study thirty schools throughout the country, consisting mostly of private and laboratory schools but some large urban schools as well. The schools were not given specific curricula to teach. This new autonomy to choose curricula led to insights that were not associated with the original purpose of the study. Applebee (1974) cites Chamberlain (1942) by stating that, “the problems of mastering and using this new freedom that the original problem of
college entrance requirements was almost lost sight of and forgotten” (p. xviii). Instead, the commission found that one of the common threads within the thirty schools studied was the practice of subject correlation, particularly that of English and social studies.

Almost all of the schools in the study experimented with this fusion, but all dropped the practice after a few years. What caused its early demise? According to Applebee (1974), the original idea was to “juggle and reorder the original content in the two subjects, bringing the topics covered into line with one another” (p. 142). However, social studies had a tendency to dominate what was learned, and the “values of both subjects as traditionally taught seemed—as the NCTE committee has worried—to be lost” (p. 142). Instead, schools successfully implemented themes under which to study the subject areas, such as “Establishing Self in Society” and “Understanding Human Behavior.” The Eight-Year Study spanned the years 1932-1940, and gave educators insights into the curriculum of American high schools. Unfortunately, the results of the progressive study were published during World War II, and Applebee (1974) states that they “were largely ignored.”

In 1946, Mark Neville (as cited by Applebee, 1974) prepared a review of experiments with fused courses at the John Burroughs School in Clayton, Missouri. He found that teachers felt the “English skills, the responsibility of all teachers in the core curriculum, were hard to emphasize as they developed during the content work; . . . rather than achieving the integrated view . . . the program became stilted and artificial” (Neville, 1945, p. 368-372). This criticism of the implementation of correlation had been made before, but the main objections in this case “involved some large gaps between the theory of correlation and its actual working out in practice” (145). Teachers understood
the concept but were implementing it incorrectly. It was clear that some leaders in the field were rejecting curriculum integration during this time period. Applebee (1974) explains that in a study by U.S. Office of Education (1950), 3.5 percent of the “course offerings in the junior and senior high school represented even the least ambitious forms of correlation . . . Over 90 percent of the core courses she did find, however, involved some blend of English and social studies” (p. 146). Although some educators were rejecting curriculum integration, many were still inadvertently practicing a form of it in their classrooms.

According to Tyack, by the late 1950s, America was obsessed with international competition “Was American schooling too soft, too inefficient, too unselective to sustain the nation in its conflict with Russia?” (Tyack, 1974, p. 270). What should students be taught and what are the best ways to do so? Debates over curriculum and methodology were intense, but Tyack would argue that the 1960s and 1970s brought welcome change for many groups of people. “New strategies have popped up with astonishing speed: integration [of children], compensation, community control, vouchers, alternative schooling, etc” (Tyack, 1974, p. 289). It was at this time that pedagogical practices were again a focus, and the old but still living philosophies of Dewey, Johnson, and McMurry were once again being discussed.

One of the most significant courses to evolve was the Humanities course of the 1960s. “Originally, these courses emerged out of a much earlier concern with world literature as part of the ‘total heritage’ of the American student” (Applebee, 1974, p. 208). The Humanities program consisted of world history and correlating classic literature. These courses were interdisciplinary, taught by teachers from many disciplines,
particularly English and social studies. "Both of these aspects have deep roots in earlier progressive programs, a parallel that has been noted by some critics" (Applebee, 1974, p. 209). According to Applebee (1974), curriculum integration in the form of Humanities led to several dangers that had already emerged in the 1930s and 1940s: "superficial coverage, 'intellectual indigestion,' neglect of important skills, and a broadening of the course beyond the competence of the teacher" (p. 210). These were the same cautions voiced by educators from the correlation movement in the 1930s and 1940s and even Progressives like Johnson and Dewey. Despite the possibility of a soft curriculum and the use of under-qualified teachers, the concept of English and social studies integration continued to flourish throughout the field of education during the 1960s.

In 1971, Alan H. Wheeler wrote an article entitled, "Individualizing Instruction in Social Studies Through the Use of Children's Literature." Even the title echoes the sentiments of Progressive educators expressed 70 years earlier. Wheeler (1971) states that in regards to social studies education, "It is helpful to know the facts, but it is imperative that children and adults understand the forces and issues behind the facts" (p.166). Wheeler specifically examines the use of trade books (story books) in elementary social studies classrooms, and asserts that a child acquires more knowledge and builds more connections when learning through a story that depicts particular facts from the social studies unit. "When a child learns facts in this manner the facts remain with him longer because he can fit them into a broad understanding of the knowledge studied" (Wheeler, 1971, p. 167). Cline and Taylor wrote the article "Integrating Literature and 'Free Reading' into the Social Studies Program" in 1978. They state that "Reading can help make events in history or concepts on topics such as prejudice come
alive and be unforgettable for the student” (Cline and Taylor, 1978, p. 27).

Research suggests that the progressive notion of curriculum integration has left a lasting mark on education. Maybe this mark is more visible at certain times than at others, but it remains nonetheless. Henry Johnson, Charles McMurry, and John Dewey were a few among many pioneers in progressive thought. Each had his own purpose for writing, his own mission to accomplish, but they all fought to influence the direction of education during a massive social and economic upheaval. The metaphoric pendulum seems to be swinging again towards changes in structure and methods to accommodate the integration of curricular areas. Workshops, teacher in-services, teacher education programs, conferences, and professional development courses are geared towards curriculum integration. Middle schools have adopted a philosophy for structuring schools and classes that encourages the fusion of subject areas. Despite a lack of substantial evidence that integration does increase knowledge and the cautionary words from education leaders, curriculum integration today is widely accepted by current leaders in education, teachers, administrators, and parents. The next chapter will examine the integration of literature and social studies from the 1980s to the beginning of the millennium.
Chapter III

This chapter will present literature by more contemporary researchers and educators that relates to teaching with integrated units within the fields of literature and social studies. The research should raise several questions in regards to the implementation and benefits of curriculum integration.

Social studies textbooks are very useful tools to relay facts and information. However, “Textbooks... may not provide sufficient depth of content to allow students to construct an understanding of events or phenomena, nor do they provide adequate explanations for promoting connections among sequences of ideas” (Beck and McKeown, 1991). Literature, however, can bridge that cognitive gap and help students to make connections. “[Literature] acts as a magnifying glass in that it provides the humanizing details frequently missing from even the most considerate of texts” (Smith and Johnson, 1995). If textbooks can supply the necessary facts and general information about a topic, reading related and engaging literature simultaneously allows students to peer closely into lives of people and how they interact with the environment. According to McGowan and Guzzetti (1991),

When students can correctly relate their ordinary-life experiences and prior knowledge to content concepts, their understanding of new information is facilitated. Trade books can assist students with this process by providing typical, real-world examples of concepts that students find familiar and can link to their own situations and literature (p. 17-18).

Bushman and Bushman (1993) state (as cited in Shaver, et al., 2001) that "integrating
quality contemporary young adult literature into the curriculum is one way to create rich literary communities where students have opportunities to read literature containing plots consistent with their experiences, [or] themes of interest to them" (p. 7). Students become engaged in literature in which the characters experience situations similar to their own. Strong protagonists or events in a story can "hook" students and create a motivation to learn more.

According to Levstick (1990), when students are engaged in the experience of narrative literature, they can read about characters that offer different perspectives of history. “The reader finds out how people felt about history, how they lived their daily lives, what they wore, how they spoke” (p. 849). Earlier in the paper, Dewey (1990) supported this claim when he argued that children are interested in the world through the experiences of other people (p. 48). Levstick’s (1986) naturalistic study examined the impact of literature on historical interest and understanding in a 6th grade class. Narrative literature was a central part of teaching in this classroom. The students associated themselves very strongly with the characters and were motivated to find the “truth” in history. Their connections to the characters raised moral and ethical questions about particular events or people in history. This elicited critical thinking and analysis.

“Narrative changes historical data by forming a story that implies certain things to the reader” (Levstick, 1990, p. 850). As the readers begin to associate their own values with those of the characters and story, the story begins to raise issues of morality that enable the readers to search for the “truth.” Also, the readers may begin to expect that history is interpretive. Bardige states (as cited by Levstick, 1990) that history instruction that emphasizes neutral, objective perspectives can increase students’ feelings of inadequacy
and inhibit them from thinking critically about their world” (p. 850-851). Students should learn to be critical thinkers; literature can offer a variety of perspectives about social studies and encourage them to raise questions about the world in which they live.

One major objective in teaching social studies, especially world geography, is for students to gain an appreciation for other cultures. The students begin to weigh the similarities and differences between unfamiliar cultures and their own, and come to natural conclusions about diverse ways of life. “Weaving together concepts, beliefs, values, and resources while immersing students in the time period, the location, and the culture of the people allows students to see history as real life” (Nelson, 1994). Learning the relevance of particular traditions in cultures from afar beget a shift from the ethnocentrism that dominates the thinking of many young American students.

According to Allen and Hoge’s Literature study for geographic literacy: grades 3 to 6 (cited by Doering, 1996), students must acquire “geographic literacy,” which consists of three elements: a specialized vocabulary and concepts, learning about relationships between people and places, and the geography within a region. In order to bring about the highest mastery of these features, literature must be used as the vehicle (Allen and Hoge, 1990). In 1989, in Levesque’s Integrating social studies with reading/language arts (cited by Doering, 1996), it was stated that when integrating literature with social studies, students “learn that all societies are bound by common interests and standards which distinguish specific cultures” (1989).

It can also be argued that background knowledge of geography, history, and culture of a particular piece of literature will also increase understanding of the literature. Knowing the social and cultural background before, or even during reading, will improve
comprehension of the characters and events within the story. Prior knowledge has been proven to be an effective tool to motivate readers and help students understand literature. According to Goodman (1996), readers sometimes make slight grammatical errors in reading because inherently, people read for meaning only. What readers bring to the text are their prior experiences and knowledge. “Readers and writers must bring meaning to language so they can construct meaning from language” (Goodman, 1996, p. 42).

Alvermann and Phelps state in Content reading and literacy: succeeding in today’s diverse classrooms (as cited in Ericson, 2001) that

They [students] connect what they know about language, decoding, and vocabulary to their background experiences and prior knowledge. They also take into account the demands of the reading task and reasons for which they are reading. However [readers run into trouble] when decoding is not automatic or when insufficient prior knowledge prevents readers from conceptually making sense of print (1998).

When students have prior experience or knowledge about what they’re reading, their interest and understanding increases. However, the opposite effect can occur when the reader has little or no prior knowledge of the literature content. Bushman and Bushman (1994) explore the concept of reading literature as a personal process. They explain that schemata are connected to the readers’ ability to comprehend literature. “When a reader is relatively familiar with a topic under study, it is easier for that student to understand material about the topic and less threatening to explore more difficult related material” (p. 143). Content schemata are relative knowledge that is learned prior to reading literature. For example, the reader possessing some schemata about Elizabethan England has a
much greater understanding of the literature of that time than the student lacking such schemata” (Bushman and Bushman, 1994, p. 144). Understanding the history, geography, or culture of a place makes the reading more understandable and enjoyable. Background knowledge in social studies enhances comprehension of literature.

Current cognitive and neuroscience research has recently provided educators with truly scientific reasons why students learn and how they learn. Caine and Caine contend, “organization of information in story form is a natural brain process” (1994). Parts of our brain record ongoing life experience moment to moment, and this system is constantly looking for meaning. “In essence, each of us is living a story, and one way in which we relate to others is through empathizing with their stories” (Caine and Caine 1994).

Integrating literature with social studies introduces students’ brains to a familiar story pattern. It allows learners to experience the passion, excitement, drama, mystery, and emotions that are familiar to our lives, our personal stories. One of our most fundamental needs is for narrative, and James Britton argued in Prospect and retrospect: selected essays by James Britton (as cited in Ericson, 2001) that “our need for a story started with gossip and moved deeper and more complexly into other genres without completely leaving the voyeurism and moral judgments of gossip behind” (1982). When paired with surface knowledge from textbooks, the human brain attaches meaning to factual information.

The information just presented rationalizes the effectiveness of integrating curriculum. Hundreds of educators have written articles, books, and documents contending that curriculum integration increases student motivation and even achievement. Early Progressives such as Dewey and Johnson advocated making learning
more “real,” and that integrating subject areas like social studies and English would accomplish that. However, there seems to be a lack of substantial evidence that proves students learn more in an integrated curriculum situation. “Most of the studies that have been completed are of such weak design and/or contain such ambiguous findings that their value for generalization is extremely limited” (St. Clair and Hough, 1992, p. 21).

St. Clair et al. (1992) reviewed studies that attempted to provide empirical evidence regarding curriculum integration. They concluded that two major measurement problems occur when designing studies on the impact of integration with student achievement: “(1) unclear definition of the term interdisciplinary teaching, and (2) inabilities to isolate interdisciplinary teaching from other, closely related, variables that affect learning” (p. 21). The following will explain several studies and their results, as cited by St. Clair et al. (1992).

In 1982, Kathleen Cotton (as cited by St. Clair and Hough, 1992) examined thirteen studies and three large-scale reviews to determine students’ achievement during interdisciplinary units. “Of the seventy-five programs reviewed, forty-four found no significant difference between interdisciplinary and traditional teaching, twenty found differences favoring team teaching, and twelve found differences favoring a traditional approach” (Cotton, 1982). It was also discovered that some programs included a team of teachers but was not interdisciplinary in any way. The term “interdisciplinary” in this study meant a teaching team that represented each subject area. This study indicates the ambiguity in terminology, which leads to ambiguity in research and no conclusive effect on education.

St. Clair and Hough (1992) also argue that another reason for the lack of strong
evidence is the number of instructional variables in these studies. For example, Bradley's (1988) study (as cited by St. Clair et al., 1992) examined a comparison of the effectiveness of interdisciplinary and departmentalized curriculum in a chosen seventh grade. The students who experienced the interdisciplinary approach were given three extra periods per week to use for a study hall, teacher resource help, make-up classes, and enrichment activities. The students were also grouped heterogeneously, and the students who were not receiving interdisciplinary instruction were grouped homogeneously. The author concludes, "interdisciplinary teaching, by its nature, may be a function of more than one teaching technique" (St. Clair, et al., 1992, p. 230). What constitutes interdisciplinary teaching? Should enrichment activities or teacher resource help be a part of this practice? The results of this study were inconclusive because the teaching techniques received by the interdisciplinary group were absent in the control group. This problem should have been taken into consideration before designing the experiment.

Cunningham and Gall (1995) studied the effects of expository and narrative prose on achievement and attitudes towards textbooks. In this study, five classes of secondary students read a history textbook chapter written in conventional, expository style. Another five classes read a narrative version of the same chapter in which the subject matter covered was the same as the textbook. The researcher's hypothesis was that achievement and motivation would be higher in the group that read the narrative. This study was fairly controlled: the teachers each taught two classes with the expository chapter and two with the narrative chapter to control for instructional approach. Both chapters and teacher's guides read were developed using a specific process that "included an extensive review of the literature on textbook design, instructional design, and the
subject matter of the proposed textbook chapter" (p. 168). The texts were also tested for readability level using several different formulas. In the end, the researchers found students' motivation increased similarly in both groups, but the majority of students preferred the narrative version in a face-to-face interview. However, the two groups did not differ significantly on the achievement posttest.

One of the possible reasons for lack of achievement differences is the "narrative bias" effect explained in 1978 by Graesser, Higgenbothan, Roberson, and Smith (as cited by Cunningham and Gall (1995). The researchers found that students "retained more narrative-type information (e.g., actions by characters) than static information (e.g., names, definitions) but only under a free-choice reading condition. Retention of the two types of information was similar when students knew they would be tested" (Cunningham, 2001, p. 174). Since the students knew they were in a testing situation in Cunningham's study, both groups attended to the content information in both texts.

C. Warren McKinney and H. Joa Jones (1993) conducted another similar study. These researchers were studying the effects of a children's book and a traditional textbook on students' motivation and achievement in social studies class. The researchers chose three fifth grade classes that were taught a two-week unit on the American Revolution. One of the classes received instruction based on their social studies textbook only. Another class received instruction based only on a children's trade book, and the third class received instruction based on the textbook, but were encouraged to read the trade book at home. The same teacher taught all three classes and used the same activities. The students took a pretest and posttest that assessed their knowledge not only on the American Revolution but their attitudes towards social studies. The results were
equivocal: children did not learn "content that was common to both books any better if they were taught with the children's book. The attitude posttest yielded a general increase in attitude among all three groups, but a significant increase in the textbook only group. The teacher was unable to do all the activities with this class because of misbehavior during the two-week unit. The researchers concluded, "the dramatic shift in attitudes, especially for the textbook only group, was primarily due to the activities rather than the book used" (p.61).

Educators have been advocating curriculum integration for a century. However, based on the small body of research conducted, results for academic achievement have been largely indeterminate. A misunderstanding of terminology, ill-constructed studies, and a general confusion about how to integrate may have caused this inconsistency.

Lipson (1993) studied fifteen professional materials and commercially published instructional materials to determine the information that teachers are receiving on how to teach integrated curriculum. She found that "Approximately half of the books reviewed either did not discuss the concept of integrated teaching or thematic units or else approached it through a general discussion of the importance of integration (p. 256). Lipson also discovered that the half that did discuss integrated teaching provided very little direction for implementing an integrated or thematic unit. Most of the books provided lists of activities or resources, but did not link student learning outcomes or goals to these activities. "The best way to characterize these units of instruction is as a collection of activities that are more likely to fragment than to integrate students' understanding of the general theme" (Lipson, 1993, p. 260). The teacher materials provided general thematic units that do not explain how to use the activities and resources
presented. "The apparent assumption is that pre-and inservice teachers will know what outcomes are best taught through each of these activities, that they will know how to provide explicit instruction in the important outcomes, and that they know how the important learnings can be applied across activities and content" (Lipson, 1993, p. 257).
The rationale and philosophy on why curriculum integration is effective is clearly articulated in many professional resources, but information on how to make good decisions about themes, activities, and teaching is lacking. "It is likely that without the support of well-coordinated instructional materials or very careful, intensive planning, the implementation would be difficult and the instruction unfocused" (Lipson, 1993, p. 257).

So, what are the characteristics of good integration of English and social studies? Based on the literature, this paper will describe characteristics of literature that, when integrated into a social studies unit, should increase students' achievement in both English and social studies. The first set of characteristics will explain what to teach, and the second list of characteristics will describe how to integrate them. After the characteristics are described, they will be modeled in an instructional unit.

*Identify Goals and Objectives for Both Subject Areas*

Before choosing materials to teach, goals for learning must be clearly articulated. The literature chosen to accompany social studies content must include teacher-chosen objectives, or objectives based on the existing curricula. For example, a unit about India might involve this objective: *the student will understand the five themes of geography and how they relate to India.* The Joint Committee of Geographic Education of the National Council wrote the themes--location, place, human/environment interaction, movement, and region--in 1984 for Geography Education and the Association of American Geography. Everything studied within the field of geography falls within these five categories. The integrated literature must cover one or more of the five themes of
geography in relation to India. If the goals and objectives are not expressed as a part of the planning process, the curriculum will become "stilted and artificial," as Applebee (1974) described the correlated program at the Burroughs school in 1946. Literature that does not advance learning goals serves no purpose.

**Simple Plot and Strong Protagonist Voice in the Literature**

The meaning of "simple" should not be taken as low-quality or low-level reading. Simple in this light means that the plot should not be too complicated. The reader should not be overwhelmed or confused by layers of subplots or numerous, complex characters. However, the protagonist should speak to the audience well, or students may lose interest. Cai (1992) states, as cited by Smith and Johnson (1995), "The protagonist’s perspective helps the reader feel the poignancy of the character’s thoughts and feelings, confusion and frustration, fears and hopes" (p. 60). The protagonist should draw in the reader and hold interest; but the reader should also absorb the geographic or historic knowledge without interference from a complicated plot line.

**Quality Literature**

Despite a less complicated plot and characters, the literature should be enjoyable to read and should be targeted at the appropriate level of the audience. Classic literature may be used for older adolescents, but few "classics" have been written from a world culture perspective. Young adult literature, on the other hand, speaks from a teenager’s point of view and has been written in many multicultural points of view. This genre has been attacked in the past for lack of quality, but Bushman and Bushman (1994) point out that young adult literature has "universal themes for students to work with: strong character development; many literary techniques such as flashback, foreshadowing,
imagery, and many others" (p. 110). They believe that "Perhaps the most powerful curriculum material that can turn young people on to reading is young adult literature" (Bushman and Bushman, 1994, p. 110). Quality young adult literature involves fresh points of view to which students can relate, and should engage and motivate them as readers and learners.

*Use a Variety of Literature*

It is important to choose a variety of literature to accompany social studies content. As stated by Bosma and Guth (1995):

> Each genre [of literature] makes a distinctive contribution. Poetry has a place in the classroom every day. Well-written realistic fiction complements all subject areas and adds a personal dimension that makes learning memorable. Historical fiction ... provides a more interesting medium through which students can become more involved in their study of history. Nonfiction and biographies furnish a personal context in the discovery of information (p. 8-9).

Levstick (1990) argues that learning history not only involves "narrative moralizing," but also "weighing evidence and holding conclusions to be tentative pending further information" (p. 851). It is important that students are exposed to several genres of literature, and several points of view. Teachers must encourage students to question facts that don't make sense, or hold out on a conclusion until all perspectives are examined. A variety of literature in conjunction with social studies content can encourage critical thinking.

*Focus on Goals or Objectives, not Activities*

Levstick's (1993) study of fifteen professional methods materials demonstrated
that there exists very little information on how to integrate curriculum. The publications that did offer some information gave lists of activities that might work. As cited by Levstick (1990), Routman (1991) observes, “Unfortunately, many of the thematic units teachers buy and create are nothing more than suggested activities clustered around a central focus or topic. The units incorporate some elements of math, science, social studies, art, and music, but there is often little or no development of important ideas” (p. 277). In order to avoid creating a unit based on a plethora of disconnected, surface-level learning activities, teachers must choose or create activities that are tied to at least one of the goals or objectives for the unit. For example, one of the objectives for a unit on Russia might be the student will describe the physical characteristics of Siberia. The activity could be to write a personal journal based on a convicted felon living in Siberia. It would be natural, for example, to write about why that person is a criminal, but students must also include details about the harsh environment in which the character lives.

**Balance Learning in Both Subject Areas**

A teacher who has been extensively trained in one curricular area but not in the other may struggle with integration of both. For example, teachers who are strong in English may find themselves using English as a medium to learn social studies. The Eight-Year Study in the 1930s reported on an unbalanced curriculum when integration was attempted. Many schools experimented with a social studies and English integration, but ended these experiments after a few years when “social studies tended to dominate, and many of the values of both subjects traditionally taught seemed . . . to be lost” (Applebee, 1974, p. 142).
English and social studies enjoy a symbiotic relationship: the awareness of this should be indicated in the methodology when integrating the two. A teacher should be focused on all objectives to be reached, and lessons should reflect an “integrated knowledge base” in both subject areas. For example, knowing about the culture and physical geography of a place should improve understanding of setting in literature. Conversely, the narrative setting embedded in a story should increase interest in learning more about that culture or place. “An integrated knowledge base generally results in faster retrieval of information, more flexible problem-solving, and better concept transfer across content areas” (Lipson, 1993, p. 254).

View Curriculum Integration as an Instructional Tool to Increase Learning

Levstick (1990) concluded that educators are confused about the terminology and methodology for integrating curriculum. Some think “interdisciplinary teaching” involves several teachers across disciplines teaching the same students. Others have included study halls, enrichment activities, and tutoring as part of integrated programs. Some programs involve teaching subjects under themes, and some have used children’s books to actually teach content. In this paper, curriculum integration refers to the joining of two or more subject areas and balancing learning objectives. Teachers must sift through the terminology and figure out what works for them. Because of the vast array of definitions for these terms, one can logically conclude that what is comfortable and effective is what will work. By this point, teachers should not be restrained to terminology but rather see integration as an autonomous teaching tool that may be unique to each teaching style, preference, or group of students.
The primary goal of integrating literature and social studies is to increase student learning in both subjects. Student achievement should be the main focus of education today, and certainly the focus of such a broadly recognized and implemented concept as curriculum integration. All too often, as was illustrated by the studies that were discussed, the degree of student "enjoyment" or "attitude" is measured as a determinate of motivation and therefore achievement. The principles outlined in the paper were based on the research presented, with a close examination of the "missing" links that led to equivocal results. These principles are based on the notion that curriculum integration should lead to elevated student learning.
Chapter V

The following unit of instruction is based on the principles of good curriculum integration outlined in the last chapter. The unit has been constructed for a seventh-grade language arts and social studies (world geography) classroom in a middle school. The school practices block scheduling and team teaching; the teacher instructs each group of students for a 90 minute period of time. This structure allows for flexibility and is ideal for an attempt to integrate curriculum. This particular unit is presented in a specific, day-by-day format that has been tailored to the needs of an individual teacher. Since there is a lack of specificity in the literature about what integration really looks like, the unit is detailed and precise. The rationale for choosing the literature will first be presented.


Chapter 27, section 1 in this textbook is divided into following subcategories: Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. Under each subcategory, the information is divided into a discussion on the landforms, the climate and economy, and the past and present. The content of this section includes the names of each island, the landforms that help create the climate of each area, and the agriculture and other aspects of their economy. The textbook also includes information on the history and culture of the island countries. The vocabulary words are: continental island, copra, high island, low island, atoll, phosphate, and trust territory.

The textbook is an excellent source of content knowledge and valuable to the
learning of Oceania. Textbooks have been criticized for being dull and containing only surface knowledge, but the information is solid, factual, organized, and dependable. It offers basic information that is essential to know; this core of knowledge is then enhanced by meaningful activities and integration of a variety of quality literature that enables students to dive deeper than what the textbook offers.


In the summer of 1842, Herman Melville sailed from New York to the South Pacific islands and recorded his experiences in this work, one of his first successful writings. The piece is told from the point of view of fictionalized “Tommo,” a character based on Melville. Melville’s descriptions of the physical landscape are intense and the interactions with the “Typee” people on these islands offer a powerful look into the pre-industrialized, primitive, colorful world of the Typee. This book, or excerpts from this book, will be an essential piece of this instructional unit for several reasons.

First of all, Herman Melville is one of America’s quintessential authors. Although *Typee* is one of his first highly acknowledged works and not as polished as his later writings, it is of high literary quality. Seventh grade students may find some vocabulary and sentence structure challenging, but also rewarding as they begin to comprehend the text and apply it to their prior knowledge of Oceania. Because of the difficult syntax, the students will be reading only teacher-selected excerpts of this novel. Hopefully, students will gain an appreciation for the art of literature while acquiring knowledge about the islands.

*Typee also represents several literary genres. At first glance it is an*
autobiographical account of Melville’s experiences. The detailed perspective from his alter ego Tommo allows the reader a personal insight and immersion into the author’s experience. Typee is also a travelogue; it offers extremely vivid pictures and remarkable and surprising encounters. The reader is left with a lasting impression of this primal yet in some ways strangely progressive culture. Typee may also be perceived as a satirical piece; it is a criticism of western civilization’s forced influence on a primitive yet self-sufficient society. The latter genre is subtler, and the teacher may choose to point it out.

Armstrong Sperry. (1940) Call it courage. Simon & Schuster.

This winner of the 1941 Newbery Award is a richly descriptive heroic tale based on an ancient Polynesian folktale about the courage of a fifteen-year-old boy named Mafatu. Ever since the sea took his mother’s life and spared his, the people of his island have branded Mafatu (oddly meaning “stout heart”) as a coward. This story is about Mafatu’s journey across the sea to prove his courage to his father and people.

This book is also a beautifully written pictorial about the lush grandeur of the Polynesian islands. Throughout Mafatu’s adventurous journey, the author offers stunning images of the vegetation and animal life he encounters. Call it Courage is used for this unit because of the detailed descriptions of the landforms, as well as the simplistic tale of heroism and survival. The protagonist is likeable, but not complex. The plot is straightforward but satisfying. An uncomplicated plot and character in conjunction with vibrant descriptions of the place equals a piece of literature that can be integrated quite effortlessly with social studies curriculum.

York: G.P. Putnam's Sons.

This modern travelogue takes us on a journey to islands in Melanesia and Polynesia. Paul Theroux writes thorough and colorful descriptions of the landforms, people, economy, and history of these islands. His writing style is quite different than that of Melville's, and students may find Theroux easier to comprehend. However, because of the length of the book, teachers will select passages to read. It will be evident to readers that Theroux's tone and voice in the book is darker and more negative than Melville. Students can compare not only the changes in the islands over 150 years, but the tone, voice, and writing styles of the two authors. This comparison should prompt discussion on an author's voice in writing, and prepare the students for writing their own travelogue. It will point out that travel writing does not mean perfunctory facts presented in an objective fashion, but this writing could be a slanted version of the place visited through the unique voice of the author.


This National Geographic article describes Fiji's landforms and economy with phrases such as, "low coral or limestone hideaways of palm trees . . . volcanic towers cloaked with rain forests and sugarcane fields." The author gives detailed accounts of what Fiji looks like, as well as how its landforms came to be. Vaughan also discusses the intriguing history of the islands, including information about Abel Tasman and Captain James Cook. The main idea of this piece is the unique culture of the two major ethnic groups living there: the Fijians and the Indians. The culture, in general, is described as "life in the languid lane." The people are secure, friendly, and relaxed; some visitors
have remarked that they're almost lazy, in fact. However, they are not lazy. They work hard when hard work needs to be done, and they relax when nothing else needs to be done. According to this article, there is some racial tension between the Fijians and the Indians. The author illustrates this by explaining one of the traditions to both ethnic groups: walking on fire. The Indians are more strict and reverent about this practice, and the Fijians view it more as a game.

This article offers a refreshing point of view about Fiji that includes historical, geographical, and especially cultural information. Vaughan’s writing style is very straightforward and smooth. Students may struggle with the vocabulary, but not to the extent that the meaning of the writing is lost. This article integrates well because the vivid descriptions of the two Fiji islands and their inhabitants provide the reader with a clear image. The Progressives argued that when information is made real and interesting, students would be more motivated to learn. Hence, this article is a perfect example: students not only read this article for information but also to have a near genuine experience with the content.


This popular myth explains the formation of the South Pacific islands. The demigod (not a true god because he could not defeat death) Maui was a clever young man. His father was a guardian of the heavens and his mother watched over the netherworld. Maui’s brothers were bigger than he and chastised him for his lack of fishing skills. Maui acquired a magical fishing hook from his father, and instructed his brothers to row his canoe while he fished. He began reeling up land from the bottom of
the ocean, and while his brothers rowed, the land came higher and higher out of the water. Suddenly, one of the brothers tired of rowing and dropped his oar, which resulted in the formation of thousands of small islands instead of one big continent.

This myth is a classic Polynesian story that contains information about the Polynesian culture and economy. Students will be learning that mythology is an important part of history, and can provide readers with more insights into different cultures and their beliefs. This myth can be compared to Call it Courage, which is based on a Polynesian folktale. A focus question might be: between the two stories, what conclusions can be made about this culture? In this unit, the myth will also serve as a motivator to research other myths from this region, or other versions of this myth.

Other literature considered but not used for this unit:

*Omoo* by Herman Melville

*Kon-Tiki* by Thor Heyerdahl

*In the South Seas* by Robert Louis Stevenson, edited by Neil Rennie

*South Sea Tales* by Jack London

*The Trembling of a Leaf: Little Stories of the South Sea Islands* by W. Somerset Maugham
An integrated unit of instruction: Oceania

Social Studies Topics: Oceania (Melanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia)

Language Arts Topics: Setting, Character, Folklore, Nonfiction, Using Voice in Writing, and Using Descriptive Word Choice in Writing

Resources/materials:


Armstrong Sperry. (1940) Call it courage. Simon & Schuster.


Access to computer lab and Internet

Travelogue procedure sheet (Appendix A)

Goals/Objectives: The student will

1. Identify the geographic areas that make up Oceania.
2. Understand how the land and climate of Oceania affects the economy.
3. Know what groups have settled in Oceania and their lifestyle.
4. Analyze how setting affects literature.
5. Apply knowledge of characterization to literature.
6. Examine the genre of folklore and its connection to Polynesian culture.
7. Explore the genre of nonfiction and its connection to Polynesian culture.
8. Demonstrate the usage of descriptive words in own writing.
9. Discover and express individual voice in own writing.
10. Practice using the writing process.
11. Synthesize all material into a final project and presentation.
Day 1:

Introduce elements of fiction: setting. What is it? What are some examples?
Hand out note-taking sheet
Students begin reading Call it Courage. Write down examples of setting found in the reading.
Discussion: What region of the world does this novel take place? Describe what it is like there.

Day 2:

Students read call it Courage. Write down more examples of setting found in the reading.
Discussion: What else do we know about this region? How would you dress in this region? What food might you eat?
Hand out article, “The Two Worlds of Fiji” by Robert Vaughan. Read silently, then discuss in groups. Add new insights to note-taking sheet.
Discussion: How was the article similar or different than the novel? Which is easier to read? From which can you learn the most?
Video depicting the land and climate of Oceania.

Day 3:

Introduction to characterization: protagonist/antagonist, static/dynamic, hero/heroine, villain
Discussion: Why are characters so important in a story? Describe the characters in Call it Courage. Has the setting affected the characters or the characters affected the setting?
Students read Call it Courage
Discussion: Based on what you’ve read, how do you think Polynesians make a living? How does the climate or environment affect their lifestyle?
In groups, create a poster that depicts Mafatu in his environment.

Day 4:

KWL chart on board: what do you already know about Oceania (based on prior knowledge and what you’ve just learned), what you’d like to know, and what you learned after the unit.
Students begin reading from Geography: The World and Its People, Chapter 27: Oceania
KWL chart as a whole class
Read excerpts from Typee: read aloud in groups and write down any more insights on sheet
Day 5:

Introduce the form of nonfiction called “travelogue”
Explain descriptive writing (writing trait “word choice”): show examples using Call it Courage, Typee
Activity: give students “boring” words and phrases, students then rewrite using exciting and vivid words/phrases
Students write a short description of a place they’ve been to (a mini-travelogue)

Day 6:

Students continue reading Call it Courage
Introduce folklore: myths and legends
Discussion: What myths and legends are presented in the novel? What do these myths say about the Polynesian culture?
Students read about the Polynesian myth of the god Maui.
Students research a Polynesian myth or legend in the library.

Day 7:

Students use research to create a clay statue of the god or goddess in the myth they explored
Students present statue and information about the myth. Answer the question “What values does this culture have based on this myth or legend?”
Review vocabulary for setting, character, nonfiction, folklore, and geographic terms

Day 8:

Call It Courage: finish novel together
Discussion: Who were the protagonists, antagonists, heroes, etc. in this novel?
What is the relationship between characterization and culture?
Explain how your knowledge of Oceania helped your understanding of this novel.
If this story took place in another part of the world, how might it have been different?
Explain.
In groups, create a timeline that depicts the history of Oceania: include the groups of people who settled there.

Day 9

Vocabulary Test
Students read excerpts from Theroux’s travelogue: compare to Melville’s travelogue
Discussion: Which travelogue is more effective at descriptions and why?
What is the major difference in writing technique between the two authors?
Introduce the writing trait “voice.” Explain that travelogues are not just informational, but
usually involve the author's personality.
Activity: Have students write a short essay about a topic, and then teacher reads them out loud. The students then guess who wrote what, based on the personality of the piece.

Day 10:
Discuss Personal Travelogue project (see Appendix A)
Begin Research

Day 11:
Research/Writing

Day 12:
Writing Process: Peer and teacher revising/editing

Day 13:
Final draft due today
Put together writing, pictures, graphics, etc. for travelogue

Day 14:
Present Personal Travelogues to class

Discussion:

It is essential to recognize prior knowledge when integrating curriculum. In fact, curriculum integration makes this easier: the teacher can teach certain material to instill prior knowledge before students read a novel or are presented with new material. During this unit, students were not introduced to new social studies material from the textbook until day four (after 270 minutes of instruction). This allowed the teacher to teach new material in a unique way—through literature. It was hoped that by the time the students read the textbook, they had enough prior knowledge to guide them through the textbook information and were possibly motivated to learn more because they could then apply
that knowledge to the literature. A balance of knowledge between the two disciplines was already at work.

It was previously discussed that integrating curriculum requires a balance of learning goals from both subject areas, and that those goals are consistent throughout the instruction. Throughout this unit, the direct instruction and activities tightly adhered to at least one of the learning goals. In the past, when attempting curriculum integration, teachers frequently emphasized one subject (typically social studies) over the other. In order to balance the goals and instruction between the two subjects, the teacher should be well prepared by taking time to organize the materials. Almost every activity or discussion in this unit included questions or concepts from both subject areas. For instance, when comparing the travelogues of Melville and Theroux, students are not only analyzing what geographic information is presented, but also the tone, attitude, voice, personality, and even vocabulary of each writer. They are then expected to apply that analysis to their own final authentic assessment. The subjects were taught simultaneously and completely integrated.

The assessment (personal travelogue, see Appendix A) is a blend of every concept learned in social studies and language arts. Students will be designing their own travelogues of Oceania based on all the literature read and knowledge learned. Some of the specific concepts will be applied directly to their own writing and are as follows: elements of fiction including setting and characterization, the writing traits of word choice and voice, understanding of folklore and its importance to a culture, the comparison of different literary genres and the value in reading a variety. It is important when designing an integrated unit that not only is the content balanced, but the
assessment must also reflect that equilibrium.

It is evident that the variety of literature included in this unit offered different perspectives and fresh insights about Oceania. The students were also learning about different writing styles and genres, and even analyzing the differences. The students learned about setting and character in the novel; they were exposed to a nonfiction, journalistic voice in the magazine article; the students were also able to compare Melville and Theroux’s very detailed descriptions of Oceania, written one and a half centuries apart.

The novel *Call it Courage* is a vividly detailed story that presents a vast amount of setting information. However, the plot and character Mafatu were simple: a young boy tries to prove his courage and succeeds. Students should be able to relate to the themes of survival, bravery, status in a society, growing up, and family. The plot and characters are uncomplicated and do not interfere with the rich description of Mafatu’s surroundings. This novel is engaging because of the simplistic storyline and sympathy for the protagonist, yet its colorful descriptions leave a stronger impression. This is one of the learning goals of this unit: that students will learn about the landscapes of Oceania. Armstrong Sperry did a superb job of educating young people about this wondrous place in the Pacific.

The literature used in this unit was carefully chosen because of its quality. Not only does it provide accurate information and splendid mental images of Oceania, but it also has a high degree of literary quality. For example, *Call it Courage* was written in 1940 for children, and subsequently won the Newbery Award in 1941. The stunning imagery and colorful verbiage contributes to the novel’s literary merit. *Typee* was not
originally written for young adults; some of the content is very straightforward and brutally honest. However, when broken into excerpts that are appropriate for students, the strong images of Oceania’s culture will provide students with a realistic portrayal of the people. Melville’s and Theroux’s descriptions of the same place, 150 years apart, are vulnerable to comparison and contrast. These two written works provide the opportunity for detailed analysis not only about the content, but the voice, tone, and personality of each piece.

The activities in this unit were designed around the goals and objectives. This unit of instruction was presented in a detailed, step-by-step fashion for one reason: there is a lack of understanding of what true integration really looks like. The unit was created based on the review of literature and the few studies that have been conducted. The next chapter will conclude this paper with a summary and a recommendation for further research.
Chapter VI

Advocates of English and social studies integration have, for over a century, been successfully persuading educators to practice integration in their classrooms. However, the number of books and articles that rationalize the benefits of integration far outweighs any quantified studies that prove these claims. As cited by McGowan, Erickson, and Neufeld (1996), McGowan and Sutton (1988) state, “From 1929-1988, various educational journals included 164 articles exploring the association between trade books and social studies teaching” (p. 203). McGowan et al. (1996) declares, “only 4 percent of these citations were data-based examinations of the nature and/or effectiveness” (p. 203). An examination of the history of curriculum integration as well as recent research seems to concur these percentages. This chapter will present a brief summary of the findings in this paper and recommendations for further studies.

The philosophies of three theorists—Johnson, McMurry, and Dewey—were examined. Each theorist supported the integration of literature and social studies, but that support was driven by individual agendas. Johnson believed that using literature would enhance the study of history. McMurry’s argument for curriculum integration was morally driven: through literature, children would read about heroic characters and learn how to act appropriately in real life situations. Dewey supported a child-centered curriculum, where children had the opportunity to experience history to the fullest. This, he argued, could be accomplished through good literature. Due to the thesis of this paper, it is also important to note that Dewey and Johnson recognized some limitations to integration: incorrect historical information and an overly romantic perception of events or people in history.
The history of English teaching was also highlighted. The integration of literature and social studies was not as favorable from this point of view. The 1936 paper *A Correlated Curriculum* yielded critics like Frank Bobbitt to argue the need for more testing and to address the issue of insufficient learning with integrated curriculum. The Eight-Year-Study from 1932-1940 exposed curriculum at the secondary level: many of the thirty schools in the study integrated English and social studies, but not for long. Teachers complained that the value of each subject was decreasing, and social studies tended to dominate the integrated classes, using the literature as a means to accomplish social studies knowledge. Mark Neville’s 1946 study of the John Burroughs School in Missouri produced teachers’ concerns about the difficulty of putting theory into practice. This demonstrates that by mid-century, teachers were still at a loss about what curriculum integration was and how to implement it.

Despite the lack of support and the cautionary words of Dewey and Johnson, educators continued to naturally integrate English and social studies, and rationalized the practice of curriculum integration. The evidence of this can be found in the volumes of articles, books, and professional materials that rhetorically support the integration of literature and social studies. The arguments are clear, powerful, emotional, and make sense. Many advocates contend that integration will engage students more, offer a human side to history, and allow students to examine a topic in depth, rather than depend on facts found in textbooks. Teachers have integrated subject areas for years, and write about its success on the achievement of their students. The concept of curriculum integration has become more prominent since the implementation of block scheduling in secondary schools. The block schedule allows for more flexibility in planning an
This paper examined several studies aimed at demonstrating an increase in learning or attitude towards social studies when using literature. The studies were mainly inconclusive, as were studies reviewed by St. Clair and Hough (1992). However, St. Clair et al. concluded that these studies lacked 1) differentiation between terminology, and 2) too many variables that affected the outcomes of the studies. It is this author's conclusion that curriculum integration is a wonderful opportunity for teachers and students, but needs to be measured and proven as effective in order for more educators to use it correctly. Teachers also need to know how it's done, and what it looks like. Many articles and professional books offer lists of activities, themes, and objectives but no examples of what an integrated unit is. Therefore, Chapter 3 offered a list of characteristics for good curriculum integration based on the research, and Chapter 4 provided a specified unit of instruction using those characteristics.

Recommendations

There are several recommendations for further studies regarding the integration of literature and social studies: 1) a qualitative study that utilizes the unit presented in Chapter Four, 2) a focus on the different perceptions of curriculum integration between language arts and social studies fields, 3) integrating curriculum with multiple teachers and its effects on staff collaboration.

First and foremost, researchers should use the outlined characteristics in this paper to design a unit and assessment. It is suggested that the researcher use a control group that does not receive the integrated instruction as established in this paper, but rather a
deviation from the characteristics. For instance, the control group might do more activities that are not tied directly to the goals and objectives, or receive instruction based on only one piece of literature. The final assessment will determine which group learned more of the goals and objectives.

Another study might focus on the different perceptions of curriculum integration among social studies educators and English educators. Based on the research, the number of social studies educators who advocate using literature is plentiful. However, Hellenbrand (1988) has argued that when integrating literature into social studies, literature is used as a means to learn a social studies concept. The issue of literature as "art" must be examined. Hellenbrand’s sentiment is an echo of a result of the Eight-Year-Study in the 1930s, when educators of English denounced integration because social studies tended to “dominate” the curriculum when integrated with literature. The differences in perceptions and opinions might provide insight into the ambiguous state of curriculum integration.

Lastly, a study involving curriculum integration through collaboration of teachers across disciplines might prove to be beneficial for educators. This paper examined the integration of two subject areas taught by one teacher; it could be interesting to look at integration taught by two or several teachers. Which method is more effective for teachers? Which is more effective for students? Would this encourage teacher communication or just increase frustrations?

After researching the development and implementation of curriculum integration from the last century, it is evident that much research is yet to come. Integrating literature and social studies seems to be a natural occurrence, and possibly very effective
in motivating students to learn in depth about a concept. Proponents of the literature-social studies connection offer compelling arguments for integration, but offer no tangible evidence that it works. When the few studies conducted yield equivocal results, questions must be raised about this practice. Advocates say that curriculum integration should work, but until the “should” becomes “does,” integration will continue to be misconceived and incorrectly overdone. It is up to researchers to devise studies that measure students’ achievement levels and prove that integrating literature and social studies is an exceptional way to increase knowledge and foster a deeper understanding of concepts in both language arts and social studies.
References


Appendix A

Name ___________________________ Date ___________________________

Personal Travelogue: a guideline to writing your own

You will be writing your own personal travelogue, based on what you’ve learned during this unit and what you’ve learned from your research. A travelogue is a thorough description of a place you’ve been to. The description includes the categories of landforms, climate, government, economy (agriculture, standard of living, resources, etc.), cultures (language, religion, education, customs, etc.) and history. The goal of a travelogue is to allow your reader to experience everything you’ve experienced in detail. The American Heritage College dictionary defines “travelogue” as: 2. a narrated travel film. Your descriptions of this place should be so vivid; it would be like watching a movie.

Another characteristic of travelogues is that they reflect the author’s personality and impressions of a place. Therefore, your voice should be clear in this writing and you are free to discuss your thoughts, opinions, and perceptions of the place or people you’ve visited.

Format:
Your travelogue will be based on a chosen island country in Melanesia, Micronesia, or Polynesia. You will be describing this place based on class work and research. The travelogue will be 8 pages minimum. Here are the requirements:
- At least 2 pictures on each page (drawn or printed)
- Your original graphics throughout the travelogue
- Clearly written descriptions (typed)
- A cover page and back page (not included in the 8 pages requirement)

Procedure:
- Research: you will spend two days (4 periods) finding information and pictures
- Writing: during these days, you will also begin writing and typing your travel adventures
- Edit/Revise writing
- Create Travelogue

Grading:
- Correct Format / 25
- Research / 30
- Writing Process / 25
  Use of Voice
  Use of Description
- Creativity / 10
- Neatness / 10

Total: /100 points  Letter Grade: __________