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EDUC 5613- Methods in Elementary Social Studies

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# Strategies in Teaching

Strategies usually require action by students. You are asking students to do something.

* Biography Web
* Cinquain
* Clustered Web
* Chapter Tour
* Concept Map
* Cornell System
* Discovery Box
* Discrepant Event
* Entrance Slips
* Graphic Notes
* History Frame
* K.I.M. Chart
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* Many Media, Same Message
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* Read-Talk-Write (Read-Draw-Talk-Write)
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* Top 10 Commonalities
* Twenty Questions
* Venn Diagrams Get Big
* Word Splash
* Word Wall with Newspaper
* World Map in 3D
* Y Strategy

## Biography Web

Basic Function: Creating biography webs allow students to recognize the influences that individuals can have on historical contexts. Students work in pairs to research a historical figure and complete five activities including book covers, timelines, narrative accounts, photographs, and maps.

Materials:

Foam/Bristol Board  
Photographs  
Research Resources (internet, books, autobiographies)  
Glue  
Paper  
Scissors  
Markers

Time Required: 3-4 hours

Steps

1. A pair of students select a historical figure to research
2. The first activity in this five-step process, students design unique book covers, which evaluates the individuals significance in history. On the inside of the book cover they write an “I Am” poem, which provides the audience with a look into the life of the historical figure. On the other side of the book cover, students include a description of the significance of their book cover design.
3. The second activity involves students creating timelines, which identify the events in the individual’s biography. The pair make separate timelines, which they will later compare. Following this, a third timeline is created which involves a look into the life of another historical individual that either lived at the same time, or had an influence on the life of the individual that the biography web is about.
4. Within the third activity the students compare their timelines to find five commonalities to compose a narrative account of the individuals biography. This is done through story telling with artifacts. Five artifacts are chosen that represents the individuals life events. The artifacts are listed and described in a table.
5. The fourth activity involves the students finding photographs and images to represent the individual’s life and interactions. Students can also provide small captions describing the photographs.
6. For the last activity, students create maps that trace the individual’s movements to create a sense of historical place.

Ways you could use this in social studies/Example:

This strategy could be used in a social studies class by having the students’ pair up to research biographies of influential historical figures. In pairs the students would create a biography web together. Moreover, upon completion they could present them to their peers in the class.

The below photographs are two examples of biography webs: Louis Riel, and Rick Hansen. These are two Canadian figures that are studied in the upper elementary years within the Social Studies curriculum. Biography webs allow students to learn and reflect on events, beliefs, and attitudes that influenced their life in history.

End Result/Goal:

The end goal for this lesson is to allow students to work collaboratively to learn about historical figures. Moreover, students develop problem solving and decision making skills. This is an interactive approach to learning historical contexts while allowing the students use their individual creativity.

Article Reference:

Fertig, G. & Silverman, R. (2009). Creating Biography Webs to Investigate Individuals’ Historical Contexts. *Social Education, 73:5,* p. 244-246.



## Cinquain

Basic Function: Students become familiar with the cinquain form, and are able to draw out important facts about a given subject.

Steps:

1. Students are given a topic and resources regarding the topic.
2. They create a concept map of their information
3. From the concept map they gather words/ideas they could use in their cinquain.
4. Create a cinquain

Cinquain Form:

Line 1: Noun  
Line 2: two adjectives describing the noun  
Line 3: three verbs showing the action of the noun  
Line 4: Four-word statement telling about the noun  
Line 5: repeat the noun or use a synonym for the noun

Example:

The following is an example of a cinquain on Explorers. It follows the format of a cinquain as stated above.

Explorer  
Brave Determined  
Travels Helps Loves  
Explored the Canadian Arctic  
Discoverer (this cinquain was based on the explorer John Rae)

Ways you could use this in Social Studies:

* The use of a cinquain can be applied in the Social Studies classroom with any topic as a way for students to pull out important facts in a simplified poem.
* Specifically this can be used for a Grade 4 Social Studies classroom when studying explorers. It helps the students develop the ability to condense information, and determine what is relevant and what’s not.

References:

Composing Cinquain Poems: A Quick Writing Activity  
<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/composing-cinquain-poems-quick-51.html>

## Clustered Web

Basic Function: A brainstorming tool that seeks the participation of all individuals. Clustered webs are used to generate ideas about a specific topic. It can be done as a whole class, in small groups or individually. The main purpose is to engage students in the sharing of ideas problem solving and thinking critically.

Steps:

1. Write the topic, main idea or question in the center of a page.
2. Ask students to write down everything that comes to mind when they think of the main topic.
3. For each idea they come up with they draw a line stretching from the center.

Example of Activity:

Ask students to make a clustered web about things that they know about Asia. The finished product may look something like this:

rice

education

China

ASIA

Japanese

Over population

Ways you could use this in Social Studies:

* Assess students prior knowledge of a topic
* Use it as an ongoing forum where students can continuously add information about a topic as they learn more about it (very useful for enrichment projects)
* As a tool to brainstorm about what you want to know about a particular topic, place or event. Gives teacher an idea of what aspects of a topic interest students the most.
* As a starting point to get down ideas for a project (exploration for example)

References:  
Clustering as a study skill:

<http://www.brighthubeducation.com/middle-school-english-lessons/11376-teaching-students-to-use-clustering-in-the-writing-process/>

## Chapter Tour

Basic Function: Guide students through the reading of a chapter in a textbook. Provide students with step-by-step directions on how to successfully read each chapter of a textbook, drawing their attention to the important features of the text.

Steps:

1. Preview a chapter of a textbook, making note of important points and features that students may overlook and what you feel is important for the students to take away from the reading.
2. Create a chapter tour for students’ that highlights the important features of the chapter for the students to use as they complete the reading.
3. Have students read the chapter, following the directions on the study guide. This can be done individually or with a partner; by working with a partner, students will be able to express their findings orally and on paper.
4. Adapt your chapter tour for following chapters depending on what is essential for student learning in each chapter.
5. Eventually, students will be able to successfully read chapters in textbooks and create their own chapter tours without the step-by-step directions.

Example:

Chapter Tour: Japanese Traditions

Reading a textbook can be overwhelming for many readers, especially if you have no background information. Sometimes we can miss the main points of a text and get hung up on small details. Use this step-by-step guide when reading the chapter.

1. Write down the chapter title in your notebooks. Reflect on what you think the chapter will be about based on the title.
2. Write down one sentence describing the main topic of the reading (the title usually indicates the main topic).
3. Write down all headings found in bold, leaving space under each heading.
4. Write down at least 3 important points under each heading. This should be in point-form and in your own words.
5. Pay special attention to any words in the text that are italicized or in bold. Write these words down and provide a definition of explanation of each word. To find the proper definition for the words in bold refer to the glossary at the back of the book.
6. Look closely at the pictures and read the captions (bold and italicized) to find out more information about the picture.
7. Determine the heading each photo belongs under. Under the proper heading, write a short description of each photo (based on what you see and what you read in the caption).

Ways you could use this in Social Studies:

* This could be used to study another society that students read about in a textbook.
* This could be used for students reading any history textbooks.

References:

Chapter Tour  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJzVFvybOiw>

## Concept Map

Basic Function: A method of representing and organizing ideas into a web-like formation. Typically there is a key idea that is broken down into several small sub-topics. Forces students to reflect on everything they know about a topic.

Steps:

1. Write the topic or main idea in the center of a page.
2. Ask students to brainstorm different aspect that stem from the main idea.
3. To add further sub-topics to one of the stems, simply add other branches like is done in the example below:

Example of Activity:   
What happened in the 19th century?

1800’s

New technologies

1867

New ideologies

Confederation

Industrial Revolution

4 provinces

England

Ways you could use this in Social Studies:

* Introduce a topic and assess students prior knowledge of the topic
* Use it as an ongoing forum where students can continuously add information about a topic as they learn more about it.

References:

Ideas and templates to use  
<http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/concept_maps/>

Peer reviewed article on the benefits  
<http://suen.ed.psu.edu/~hsuen/pubs/conceptmap99.pdf>

## Cornell System

Basic Function: A guide for students to organize notes when reading a text.

Steps:

1. Students are given a text to read and a Cornell system note taking page to guide them through it and help students identify the key points.

* The guide is split into two or three columns
* The first column is where students record the key points/major ideas
* In the second column, ‘Explanation’, students explain the key points. In a two column system, the second column is used to add details.
* The third column is where students provide details about the key points.

1. Students divide paper into two or three columns depending on choice of system
2. Students label each column appropriately
3. Students read text and make notes
4. Students write down key points and details in the appropriate columns

Example:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Key Points | Explanation | Details |
|  |  |  |

Provide students with articles on famous explorers and give the class a set amount of time to read and create Cornell system notes on it. Teacher has the option to ask students to present their findings to the class or in groups.

Ways you could use this in Social Studies:

* As a review sheet
* As a way for students to organize thoughts
* As part of a research project
* A way to summarize texts
* As notes for a presentation
* To introduce students to note-taking
* For individual and/or small group work

References:  
  
Cornell System  
<http://www.montgomerycollege.edu/Departments/enreadtp/Cornell.html>

## Discovery Box

Basic Function: This is a resource that can be used as an engagement activity to introduce a new unit. It allows the students to explore new and exciting material independently as the discovery box contains engaging objects pertinent to the unit. The many clues contained in the box allow students to use prior knowledge and utilize critical thinking skills to evaluate how the objects fit into the unit.

Steps:

1. Choose Unit and read through the outcomes.
2. Based on outcomes in the unit pick 20-25 objects to place in the discovery box
3. For each object, write a clue or question that will help students connect the object to the unit ( write these on receipt card and be creative).
4. Find a box big enough to hold all the objects and decorate it appropriately. The box should be engaging and appealing to students’ curiosity.
5. Place all items in the box and place it in the class.
6. Explain to the students how they are to use the box and let them explore.

Materials:

Box

Objects

Notes for clues/ questions

Example of class activity: As a class, have the students read through the clues and use it as a station, therefore all students will have a chance to investigate the box in small groups. You can use this discovery box as either a learning center, or as a whole class activity. It is very versatile and can be accommodated to fit any class and be used in any grade.

Ways you can use this in Social Studies: The discovery box can be used at the beginning of a unit, or as an engagement activity to increase and encourage students’ curiosity of the upcoming unit. Furthermore, the discovery box can be a resource that students can refer to throughout the entire unit. This will allow students to make long-term connections over the course of the unit and enables them to have a deeper understanding of how the unit can be personally relevant to their everyday lives.

End Results/ Goals: The overall goal of this resource is to get students excited about the unit to come and allows them to use their background knowledge of the topic. It permits students to have a discovery-based approach which enables students to be independent in their learning. Furthermore, it introduces new concepts and sparks students’ natural curiosity for an upcoming unit.

References:

[http://www.worlddiscoverybox.com/edu](http://www.edmodo.com/link?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.worlddiscoverybox.com%2Fedu)

## Discrepant Events

Basic Function:  To engage students in a new area of study, to help them develop

hypothesis based on information, to solve a puzzle, to develop higher-order

thinking.

Steps:

1. Teacher generates a story or puzzle. Certain parts are omitted that creates mystery. Once created the teacher presents the story to the class. Usually the teacher asks a guiding question.

\*Example:

*In 1837, a young boy named John lived on a farm in a beautiful mountainous, wooded area in eastern Tennessee. His family planted corn and raised animals for meat, milk and eggs. His father participated in the legislative branch of government. His mother taught English in a local school. He had four brothers and three sisters. The family appeared happy and prosperous.*

*In 1839, the family moved to a treeless, dry, flat prairie, where it was barley able to raise enough food to survive, Two of John’s brothers and one of his sisters died. Unable to make a living farming, his father became a member of the legislature. His mother helped publish the local newspaper; John and his family missed their beautiful home in the mountains.*

1. Question: Why did John and his family leave their beautiful home in Tennessee and take such a hard journey to settle in a hot barren land?
2. Students Question the Teacher: Students make note of the facts and then they collect data by asking the teacher questions. The questions must be structured so they can be answered by a “yes” or “no”. Make clear that the questions should be structured so as to infer information and not as a guessing game. Getting to the “right” answer is not the specific goal.
3. Organize and Review Information: Pause and let students organize information they already know or have “discovered”. Process the ideas in a pair or small group.
4. Formulate a Response: At some point students will arrive at their best answer. Have students state their response along with the rationale for how they arrived at this decision.

Example of Activity:

*In 1000 CE, the Netherlands, located in the northern Europe, had 8 389 square miles of land. The people of the Netherlands farmed 5 866 square miles. Today the Netherlands has 13 967 square miles of land, and they now farm 9 7776 square miles. The national boundaries of the Netherlands are the same as in 1000.*

Question: How is it possible that the people of the Netherlands expanded land base without changing their borders?

Ways to us in Social Studies:

* A discrepant event presents students with a puzzle, or event, or story at the beginning of a class. Students ask questions\, pose hypothesis, analyze and synthesize information and draw conclusions.
* Usually it is used to introduce a new topic of study and to engage students with the material.

Reference:

Yell, Michael M., Shceurman, Geoffrey, & Reynolds, Keith. (2004). A link to the past: Engaging students in the study of history. *National Council for the Social Studies*, Maryland.

## Entrance Slip

Basic Function: Form of formative assessments that reveals what students remember from previous classes, readings or homework. Typically entrance slips are not used to test students on their ability to remember minor details, but rather important concepts and large ideas. The purpose of this strategy is the check for understanding.

Steps:

1. Teacher hands out a piece of paper with a general question on it.
2. Students are given a couple minutes to complete the slip and return it to the teacher.

Example of Activity:

If students were assigned a reading for homework you may ask them to name three things they learned in the article. A teacher may distribute entrance slips asking which countries were involved in World War II the day after a lesson on the topic.

Ways you could use this in Social Studies:

* Assess students understanding; you could give them a map and ask students to name the continents
* After reading a passage give them questions the following day on that topic.

References:

Educational benefits for the students’  
<http://www.edutopia.org/blog/formative-assessment-exit-slip-rebecca-alber>

Comprehensions and Learning Strategy samples  
<http://www.nbss.ie/sites/default/files/publications/exit-entry_slip_-_comprehension_strategy_handout__copy_2.pdf>

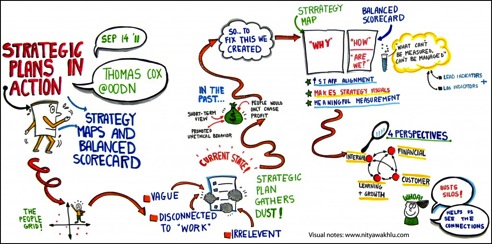
## Graphic Notes

Basic Function: Graphic notes incorporate the various multiple intelligences we will encounter in our classrooms and utilize a visual approach and incorporate text boxes and arrows from these text boxes in order to simplify the note taking process. Furthermore, graphic Notes can be used as a reference for review later in the unit.

Steps:

* + 1. Students are provided with a text and a rich visual that compliments the text.
    2. Using the visual as a prompt, students will pull the important points from the text.
    3. Students will create a text boxes that group the important points in the text into similar categories.
    4. The text can be written in point form and contain questions that arise from the reading.
    5. The student will draw an arrow from the visual to their shortened and simplified text, connecting their main ideas to the visual.

Example:



Ways you could use this in Social Studies:

* + - If students are learning about Ancient Egypt the Graphic Note strategy could be employed.
    - Provide students with a text about Ancient Egypt as well as a visual representation of this text.
    - Have students read the text and categorize the main points they take away from it.
    - Once students have decided upon their main points, have them connect these points to the visual representation using arrows.
    - Students can share their creations with the rest of the class in order to discover what classmates determined as important.
    - Students can keep their Graphic Notes in their binders to return to when studying later in the units.

References:

Graphic Organizer  
<http://www.readingquest.org/strat/graphic.html>

## History Frame

Basic Function: The basic function of a history frame is to help students extract key concepts in a block of text and then organize that information.

Steps:

Students are given a text to work with. They will read the text and then are asked to fill in the different parts of the history frame

* 1. They will fill in the title of the event (this is not necessarily the title of the book).
  2. They will then identify the participants and key players within the text. They will want to identify who played major or minor roles within the story.
  3. Students will identify where and when the event took place and what clues or hints the text provides to indicate setting.
  4. The problem or goal of the main character (or the motivating incident within the story). What set the main events in motion?
  5. Key episode or events, student will discuss some of the most important incidents or actions that influenced the story.
  6. Resolution or outcome, how was the problem resolved or the goal achieved (or was it?)
  7. Finally students will identify the main theme or lesson from the story. What have students learned from this story and what does it mean to them.

Example:



Ways you could use this in Social Studies:

* History frames are a great way to organize importation and simplify complicated event for students. We could use this in social studies if we were studying important events in history (wars etc.) to help students understand important aspects and the reasons why these events might have happened. Another way you could use this would be in a unit about explorers and the reasons why people came to settle in Canada. We could give them information packages and students could identify key players, motivating incidents etc.

References:

History Frames/Story Maps  
<http://www.readingquest.org/strat/storymaps.html>

## K.I.M. Chart

Basic Function: For students to synthesize and interpret new information and make it their own by writing a definition and drawing an image for key ideas in a topic.

Steps:

* 1. Students read, independently or in groups, the article being used to glean key ideas.
  2. Students create a three column chart with the headings “Key Idea”, “Information” and “Memory Clue” (hence the title K.I.M. Chart).
  3. Under the “K” column, students write a list of key ideas from the article or topic.
  4. Under the “I” column students write a definition for each respective key idea.
  5. Under the “M” column students draw a picture to serve as a memory prompt for the key idea.
  6. Students can share their ideas and/or use this activity as a review for the topic.

Example:

Grade 5 students studying the topic of ancient Egyptian civilization may read an article and glean the following key points from it:

Key Ideas Information Memory Clue

K- Pyramids

I- Large stone buildings built as a tomb for pharaohs when they die. They were often buried with the resources that could make their next life more comfortable.

M- Pyramid drawing

Ways you could use this in Social Studies:

* At the end of a unit to evaluate what students have learned about a particular historical events.
* Ideal in the primary years in You and Your World to help them grasp challenging concepts.

Reference:

K.I.M. Chart  
<http://www.ehow.com/how_4556526_use-kim-chart-vocabulary-study.html>

## Lists

Basic Function: A strategy in which students write down, in no particular order, what comes to mind when they hear a topic or idea. There are no wrong answers, the purpose of this activity is to get students think about a particular concept.

Steps:

1. Teacher makes a general statement, or asks and simple questions.
2. Students are given a couple minutes to write down everything that come to mind on their piece of paper.
3. When students have had sufficient time to list all their ideas, students will typically discuss what their answers with a partner or in small groups. Occasionally a full class discussion about students’ lists will follow this critical thinking exercise.

Example of Activity:

What did the Darwin bring on the Beagle with him?  
 - Lots of food  
 - Books about animals and plants  
 - Clothes  
 - A hammock to sleep in etc.

Ways you could use this in Social Studies:

* Introduce a topic and assess students prior knowledge of the topic
* Build students problem solving and critical thinking abilities
* Make observations/assumptions about what they see in a picture

References:

Brainstorming and Listing Exercise in Student Instruction  
<http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/teaching/gentopic/pop4d.cfm>

## Media KWL Chart

Basic Function: Activate students’ background knowledge on a particular topic prior to the formal lesson. It requires students to think critically and record what they know, and what they want about a topic. The final column on the charts asked students to reflect on what they have learned.

Steps:

1. Show students a picture, or announce a topic and ask them to write down in the KWL chart under the “Know” column everything that they know. Ensure that students do not write assumptions in this column…the “Know” column should only include facts related to the topic.
2. After a couple minutes ask students to formulate questions and things that they want to know on the topic.
3. At this point the KWL Chart can be completed in one of two ways

* Students may put their charts to the side while the teacher delivers a formal lesson on the topic. At the end of class students would have a couple minutes to go back to their charts and fill on what they have learned.
* Collectively as a class you could discuss some of the questions that students wrote down on their chart.

Example of Activity:

Show students a picture and ask them to write down facts about what they see in the picture. After a couple minutes ask them what they want to know about what is going on in the picture. The final step of the KWL chart would be for the teacher to give students some background information about what is actually going on in the picture.

Ways you could use this in Social Studies:

* As a way of assessing students prior knowledge and assumptions and comparing it to what that have learned about a topic.
* Can be used to introduce a topic such as the Vikings or the Bluenose.
* Show students a picture and as then to describe what they know about the picture, what they want to know and what they have learned.

References: Teaching tips and KWL template:  
<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plan/kwl-chart>



## Media Timeline

Basic function: For students to actively engage in creating a timeline of events using objects alongside of the text. By using actual objects or pictures students are able to creatively come up with ideas of different things to represent the different stages of the timeline.

Steps

* 1. Decide on a topic and the time period if they choose to create a timeline of historical events
  2. As a class (or individually) come up with different objects, pictures, or creative statements to represent the different topics on the timeline. (If students come up with ideas that do not characterize that topic well do not put down their idea but rather elaborate or direct the idea in a different direction.)
  3. Create the objects as a class (or individually)
  4. Place the objects on the timeline
  5. If it was an individual project give the students the opportunity to present their timeline to the class.

Materials:

Paper

Markers

Artifacts

Household supplies

Wall Space

Tape

Glue

Example of class activities:

* The class (or individual) can create a media timeline of the events in a book they are studying or reading in class.
* Students can create a media timeline of the Class Schedule. This would be a fun activity for the first week of school.
* Students can create a number media timeline for math by creating the numbers using different materials.

Ways you can use this in Social Studies:

You can use the media timeline to help students explore a variety of topics pulled from the social studies curriculum and to help students understand that timelines can be fun. The following topics are some examples that students can explore using the times line.

* Create a timeline of the life and explorations of Samuel de Champlain.
* Create a media timeline of the invention and evolution of the telephone.
* Create a media timeline of the Prime Ministers of Canada.
* Create a media timeline of when each of the Provinces and Territories of Canada joined Confederation.
* Have each student create a mini media timeline of these different events.

Goal: For students to produce either individually or as a class a visual timeline with objects and creative texts to help them remember the different events, but is also visually appealing and interactive.

Reference:

[http://www.educationworld.com/a\_curr/strategy...](http://www.edmodo.com/link?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.educationworld.com%2Fa_curr%2Fstrategy%2Fstrategy033.shtml)

[http://teachinghistory.org/teaching-materials...](http://www.edmodo.com/link?url=http%3A%2F%2Fteachinghistory.org%2Fteaching-materials%2Fteaching-guides%2F24347)

[http://www.ehow.com/way\_5233301\_creative-ways...](http://www.edmodo.com/link?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ehow.com%2Fway_5233301_creative-ways-make-timeline.html)

## Mock Trial

Basic Function: Students embody a character to discover and learn the ins and outs of a court proceeding. Students will learn new terminology and the introduced to various aspects of legal and criminal trials.. The purpose of this strategy is to force students to think critically and examine both sides of a debate and be introduced to the concept of conflict resolution.

Steps:

1. Teacher gives students information about a particular topic that is controversial. At this time review legal terminology to ensure all vocabulary is understood by the students. Ensure that all students understand the content of the information before taking the next step.
2. Assign students the character, person or perspective in which they will represent during the trial. Possible characters may include:
   * + Judge
     + Jury
     + Defendant
     + Prosecutor
     + Lawyer
     + Witnesses etc…

\* Depending on the grade level the teacher may want to assign all students to either be a defendant, prosecutor or jury member.

1. Students are given time to read more in-depth about the character/perspective that they are embodying for the trial. The teacher must provide necessary resources on the topic.
2. All students come together and act out the trial as a class.

Mock Trials can also be done using a scripted trial in the primary years. Many mock trials are available online and there is also one in the reference section of this section.

Example of Activity:

In a grade 3 class you may divide students into defendants, prosecutors and jury members. A good topic for a mock trial to meet the curriculum outcomes at this level would be whether Fundy Provincial Pack should be a National Park or a Provincial Park. This topic would force both side to discover more about how the decision is made and what the differences are between National and Provincial Parks. While the defendants (those who believe it should be a National Park) and prosecutors (those who believe it should be a Provincial Park) develop their cases, the jury members would focus on gaining genera knowledge about current National/Provincial Parks and develop questions to ask the defendants and prosecutors.

Ways you could use this in Social Studies:

* Explore political (national, provincial or school elections) campaigns to determine what each representatives strengths and weaknesses are
* Learn about a commercial or criminal trial that has had a lasting impact on society
* Study critically a controversial topic

References:

Journal, Wayne et at. (2012). Scaffolding classroom discourse in an election year: Keeping a cool mood in a heated seat. *Social Studies and the Young Learner* 25 (1), 6-9.

Kids Court- Gold E. Locks Mock Trial Script

<http://kidscourt.law.utah.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/Mock-Trial-Gold-E.-Locks-final-pdf.pdf>   
\*Very good site with a scripted Mock Trial- would be valuable to use to introduce terminology and engage students at the primary level.

Teacher Resources- Mock Trial Information  
<http://19thcircuitcourt.state.il.us/services/pages/mock_trials.aspx>

## Many Media, Same Message

Basic Function: Students are given a topic and asked to represent what they’ve learned using five different forms of communication: a written factual description, map or diagram. pictogram or comic a written puzzle, mystery or quiz and a pantomime or dance.

Steps:

1. Students are given topic
2. They write a factual description about the topic.
3. They create a map or diagram concerning the information they learned.
4. Next, students produce a pictogram or comic about the same topic.
5. Students get creative and write a puzzle, mystery or quiz.
6. Now it’s time perform a dance or pantomime.

Ways you could use this in Social Studies:

This strategy could be utilized in many different ways in the Social Studies classroom. Educators could use it to teach geography, culture, explorers, etc. Its possibilities are endless.

## Newspaper- Front Page

Basic Function: Students organize and synthesize main events in time into an appropriate newspaper format. The completed product will be a newspaper front page based on knowledge of a past, present, or possible future events. This will actively help students to grasp the purpose of the newspaper format as well as summarizing, pulling out key events, and doing historical research. Students are given the opportunity to examine the context of the event they choose, such as other issues at that time, the weather, etc. If students are predicting future events they learn to base predictions on current knowledge and synthesize their ideas using higher-order thinking.

Steps:

* 1. Students are given, or choose a key event of the past, present, or possible future to headline in their newspaper. This can be done in groups or as individuals.
  2. Students are given newspaper examples, possibly historical, but also may be current, to use for formatting ideas.
  3. Have them look for key elements of the front page of the newspaper. These may include a headline, images, date, newspaper title, articles, weather, etc.
  4. Students create their own newspaper front page, by hand or digitally, that highlights relevant information and style for the time/event they have chosen.

Materials:

Newspapers for each student or group, research materials/technology access, Exemplar of a front page (see attached), crafting materials for handmade products.

Example of class activities for Social Studies:

• Present students with a question (ie: “Who was the first Canadian in Space?” or “Who was the first Prime Minister of Canada and what day were they elected?”) Students find the answer to the question and present this as the first page article (project).

• Have students explore possible futures by taking a current issue and creating a future newspaper presenting a possible outcome. Students may explore a current issue such as “Riots in Egypt” and write a possible future where rioters take power or the current government calms talks. Issues of poverty, media, environment, etc. could also be addressed.

Goals:

• Students create a front page of the newspaper that shows their understanding of the newspaper as a media form and the issue or event they are exploring.

• Students will understand the value of building previous subject knowledge and contextualizing various events and biases of those involved.

References:

[http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-pla...](http://www.edmodo.com/link?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.scholastic.com%2Fteachers%2Flesson-plan%2Ffront-page-news)

[http://teacher.scholastic.com/LessonPlans/Tit...](http://www.edmodo.com/link?url=http%3A%2F%2Fteacher.scholastic.com%2FLessonPlans%2FTitanic_SampleNews.pdf)

For Exemplar

[http://www.asc-csa.gc.ca/eng/astronauts/past....](http://www.edmodo.com/link?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.asc-csa.gc.ca%2Feng%2Fastronauts%2Fpast.asp)

[http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/m/m...](http://www.edmodo.com/link?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.brainyquote.com%2Fquotes%2Fauthors%2Fm%2Fmarc_garneau.html)

[http://www1.sympatico.ca/cgi-bin/on\_this\_day?...](http://www.edmodo.com/link?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww1.sympatico.ca%2Fcgi-bin%2Fon_this_day%3Fmth%3DOct%26amp%3Bday%3D05) [http://padresteve.com/2013/01/28/challenger-2...](http://www.edmodo.com/link?url=http%3A%2F%2Fpadresteve.com%2F2013%2F01%2F28%2Fchallenger-27-years-later%2F)

Newspaper as a Resource – Looking at Different Careers

## Newspaper as a Resource

Basic Function: Have students become familiar with looking through and reading the newspaper to find information. Have students think about different job options and the training they require.

Steps:

1. Look through newspapers for images showing 5 different careers.

2. Read the caption and article related to the image.

3. Cut the image out and glue it onto a large poster board.

4. Write a short summary about what each job entails under the pictures.

5. Predict the training required for each job, include this in the summary under the pictures.

6. Title the poster and present to classmates.

Materials:

Newspapers

Poster board

Scissors

Glue

Markers

Example of Class Activities:

Have students find 5 careers that interest them the most and write about the job and the training it would take to get such jobs. Students could also write about why they are interested in these jobs.

Ways you could use this in social studies:

In social studies, this project could be narrowed down, by having students look for jobs related to specific fields such as politics.

By looking through old newspapers, or online newspaper archives, students could learn about jobs from the past and compare them to similar to jobs in the present.

This project could even be changed to finding different events and writing about these events and having students think about why these particular events are important.

Reference to articles and web sites:

“Newspaper Activities Support Children’s Learning in Many Ways”

[http://kidbibs.com/learningtips/lt40.htm](http://www.edmodo.com/link?url=http%3A%2F%2Fkidbibs.com%2Flearningtips%2Flt40.htm)

“Newspaper in Education: A Guide for Weekly/Community Newspapers”

[http://www.americanpressinstitute.org/docs/Fo...](http://www.edmodo.com/link?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.americanpressinstitute.org%2Fdocs%2FFoundation%2FTraining%2Fweeklyguide.pdf)

End Result / Goal:  
Poster board with images of 5 different jobs, and descriptions of these jobs and the training required for them.

## Paired Questions

Basic Function: This strategy is used to engage students and get everyone participating in discussing a topic.

Steps:

1. Each student is paired up with someone in the class.
2. The teacher poses a question and students are given about a minute to discuss the topic.
3. Partners are each given a chance to voice their opinion.
4. This process can be repeated with the same partner, or partners can switch after every question.

Example of Questions to Ask for this Activity:

If you could take a trip anywhere where would go?  
What would be the best planet to live on?  
Which animal do you think is the biggest in the world?  
What did dinosaurs eat?

Ways you could use this in Social Studies:

* This strategy could be used on a daily basis to involve students daily in the topics that are being covered, but this strategy is particularly valuable in terms of getting students to orally problem solve abstract problems.
* Could be used as an informal debate about opposing perspective of historical events.
* Students could study a historical figure and then the class could do this activity and answer various questions from the perspective of the person they studied.

References:

Think, Pair, Share  
<http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/DE/PD/instr/strats/think/>

## Picture Activity with Newspaper

Basic Function: To help students better understand the pictures they see in the newspaper and to get them involved with the news. This gets students to read the paper imagine a different way to represent an article by adding a picture, or by taking a picture and adding a new title.

Materials:

Newspapers

Scissors

Chart Paper

Glue

Markers/crayons

Time required: For a pair of students this would probably take two classes of 60 minutes, this would give them time to do all of the drawings and create titles.

Steps:

1. Take a newspaper, find 3 articles without a picture and find three pictures.
2. With the 3 articles, students must draw new pictures to add to the article (in doing this, students must read the article to understand what it is about.)
3. Students must then take a piece of chart paper and then glue the pictures with the articles.
4. Once students have completed that they are to take the 3 pictures and create new titles for them (Students must analyze the pictures so that they can come up with new titles for the pictures)
5. Students must the glue the pictures and new titles to a piece of chart paper.

Ways to use this in Social Studies: You can use this to keep students up to date on current events. It gets students read articles, understand what they are reading, it gets them to be creative and think critically about what they are reading.

End Goal: The end goal is for students to get started on creating their own paper. Students will have created 3 new titles for pictures and create 3 new pictures for articles.

References:

For changing the title of a picture: Luke, D., & Ann, W. (2007). The saffron scourge: Society, politics and disease. Social Educaiton, 71(1), 40-43. Retrieved from publications.socialstudies.org/se/7101/71010740.pdf

For adding new pictures to an article: Abbott, J. (2001). Newspaper in education: A guide for weekly and community newspapers. Newspaper in Education Service Providers, Retrieved from http://www.americanpressinstitute.org/docs/Fo...

## Points on a Continuum

Basic Function: Allows students to examine and understand real world issues; stimulates rich and powerful discussion; students learn to develop a point of view and defend it; stresses the importance of research.

Steps:

1. The teacher gives a reading or a scenario to the students, which offers different positions or viewpoints.
2. As they read their scenario or story, the students use post it notes to record the different positions present.
3. Students draw a continuum line and as a class they discuss where to place their post it notes (there will be two extremes, one at each end of the line, and then the resulting in-between positions).
4. Once the line has been created, the students debate which position is correct in their own opinion. They must provide evidence to support their point of view.

Example:

This strategy could be used in an elementary social studies classroom when students are looking at how to be a responsible citizen. A scenario is developed (by the teacher) about the importance of voting. Students read the scenario and identify the extreme points as possibly “voting is not important, responsible citizens do not vote” and “voting is the most important thing for a responsible citizen to do.” At this stage they would develop their points in-between, and then a debate could occur. Students could further improve their research   
abilities by using outside sources to support   
their point (books in the classroom, internet   
if available).

Ways you could use this in Social Studies:

* Assess students understanding of the   
  chronology of historical events.
* Evaluate students reading comprehension if basing their continuum line off of a book.

References:  
Stimulating Moral Reasoning in Children through Situational Learning and Children’s Literature  
<http://publications.socialstudies.org/yl/1603/160317.pdf>

## Process Drama

Basic Functions:Process Drama enables students to explore curriculum and experience the content through using scripted and unscripted drama. Process Drama forces students to think critically, build problem-solving skills, and participate in higher order thinking. It presents an outlet for students to understand novel and complex themes/concepts. The pedagogy of Process Drama utilizes imagination and creates an extensive variety of learning possibilities. In upper grades, students can be asked to improvise to a certain extent, which promotes mental agility, spontaneity, and cooperation with others. Furthermore, it can span across subject areas, and it employs the use of multiple intelligences.

Steps:

1. Introduce topic area to students
2. Explain the concept of Process Drama
3. Assign roles (or decide as a class)
4. Allow students to explore roles, and learn through the process of investigation
5. Prompt students to make connection between roles, which will hopefully lead to the understanding of larger themes/concepts within the curriculum.
6. Discuss the outcomes of the activity as a class.
7. Students can re-act their scene after the discussion, changing aspects of their role if necessary.

The steps can vary, depending on the goals and objectives of a particular class.

Implement Process Drama in Social Studies:  
This strategy can be used in social studies in many different ways. Students could re-enact a moment of history or create a skit based on historical facts about ancient times. These historical skits do not have to be specific things that actually happened in history; instead they could just consist of historical components with a story line that was created by your students.

Implement Process Drama across curriculum:  
This strategy can be used across the curriculum for many other subject areas such as language arts and science. For language arts, students could act out a scene from a text they are reading, and the teacher could use this to check for understanding (formative assessment). If students display the incorrect passage of the text, then the teacher can see that the student does not understand the text. Process drama can be used in science as well. Students in grade 3 could make skits about how photosynthesis works or about the growth of a plant. Process drama could even be used in math to talk about math strategies. These skits may be shorter, but they are still beneficial for students to create because it reinforces that math strategy in their head.

Resources:

[www.teachingheart.net/readerstheater.htm](http://www.teachingheart.net/readerstheater.htm" \t "_blank)

<http://digitaldjs.info/joomla/index.php/process-drama>

<http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators/how-to/from-theory-to-practice/process-drama.aspx>

**Quote Without Commentary**

Basic Function: Using literature to stimulate critical thinking and reasoning skills in a non-threatening environment. Strategy that focuses on the identification of issues and students provide reasons to support, or not to support particular actions/issues in a book. Helps to promote clear communication and provoke critical thinking. This strategy removes peer pressure and is a respectful approach to situational learning. It is best used in large groups in upper elementary classes.

Steps:

1. Students sit in an open circle, facing each other. This allows students to have equal participation to be seen and heard.
2. Before reading the story, students listen to a brief description of a conflict and record their initial thoughts and feelings
3. After reading the story, each student has 5-10 minutes to write down a statement about the conflict. The students can focus on the characters, plot or the dilemma.
4. Beginning at any point in the circle, one at a time the students share their statement, other students are not allowed to comment or respond. This is repeated until everyone in the circle has shared his or her statement. No one is allowed to pass.
5. The teacher starts a group discussion, and a second round is started following the same format as the first round. Students are allowed to pass in this round. In this round around the circle, students are allowed to react to a previous students statement, or respond. This round continues until the students have nothing left to comment on.
6. After completing this, students make a list of commentaries for group members, or they can write a self-assessment statement.

Example:

Ways you could use this in Social Studies:

* Facilitate discussion about different explorers and their motivations for coming to Canada.
* Ensure that all students actively participate in discussion- could be done in K-2 to address needs vs. wants.

Reference:

Fabbi, J. And Gallavan, N. (2004) Stimulating Moral Reasoning in Children Through Situational Learning and Children’s Literature. Social Studies and the Young Learner 16(3), pp 17-23.

## Read-Talk-Write (Read-Draw-Talk-Write)

Basic Function: Students are able to read a text, formulate questions based on this text and discuss with a partner. It also gives the students an opportunity to draw what they read in the text and to write about it.

Steps:

1. The students read the text given to them by the teacher
2. Pair up students, have them each discuss what they have read without repeating what their partner has said (also practicing not interrupting their partner)
3. Students write down what they remember from their discussion and what they have read.
4. The students reread the passage they wrote to see if there is anything that can be added (after speaking with their partner)
5. This should be timed so that students get to work right away and don't waste their time reading too much and missing out on the discussion portion.

\*Variation: Students can draw what they have read and formulate questions to discuss with their partner based on this drawing.

Example:

Reading a passage about the people of ancient Egypt. Read a passage of a primary source story instead of a factual passage (the deportation of the Acadians)

Ways you could use this in Social Studies:

* Allows students to explore diverse perspectives of a passage
* Builds on comprehension
* Collaboration with their partner
* Good tool for building memory
* Learn how to revise a text and build on a text
* Easy to differentiate
* Help students to put information into their own words
* Increase listening and speaking skills
* Engage students more deeply in the text
* Learn how to paraphrase

## RAFT

Basic Function: To develop students’ understandings of different points of view, as students are asked to form a viewpoint of a historical character. Keep in mind that as a teacher it is important that you include historically accurate details to help the reader better understand their character, write clearly, strive for creativity and pay attention to the format. This activity will help develop students writing skills.

Steps:

1. Give students a RAFTed assignment. RAFTs can be prescribed or left open for students to choose. The general outline for a RAFT is as follows:

* R-ole: Which role form the historical past will you play?
* A-udience: Who will you be writing to? [This relates to the format below and you have many choices. You could write to yourself in a diary entry, the public speech or newspaper article, a loved one in a letter or poem, etc.)
* F-ormat: What type of format or writing style will you use? [Remember, you can write a song, newspaper article, journal entry, letter, public speech, or poem.]
* T-opic: What important event will you be writing about? [Think about the most significant time in your character’s life.]

1. Assign students to complete a specific RAFT. As students gain more experience and familiarity with this writing strategy, they can be given more freedom. If students are assigned a RAFT of a topic that has not already been discussed at length in class, ensure that you give them sufficient information to base their ideas off of.
2. Students are given time to complete their RAFTs.

Example:

Guided RAFT for students after learning about the water life cycle.

R- water droplet  
A- water vapor in clouds  
F- travel journal  
T- the water cycle

Open-ended RAFT for students after learning about the Alamo:

R- Observer/ participant in the battle  
A- Any relevant audience based on format  
F- A newspaper article, a letter, a diary entry, dialogue, etc.  
T- The events of March 6, 1836, the final stage of the Alamo

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Role Role**  *What is the role of the author?* | **Audience**  *To whom is the author writing?* | **Format**  *What is the format of the writing?* | **Topic**  *What is the focus of the writing?* |
| Examples:   * Historian * Reporter * Father | Examples:   * Students * Readers of 1920’s * Self | Examples:   * Newspaper Article * Letter * Speech | Examples:   * Inform students * Women’s rights |
|  |  |  |  |

Ways you could use this in Social Studies:

* One way that I would consider using this strategy in a Social studies class would be in Grade 3 at the end of the unit on explorers. Students could chose an explorer and write a journal entry from that persons perspective.
* In You and Your World in grade 2, one of the outcomes is to understand animal growth and development; it would be interesting to use the RAFT strategy after learning about various animal lifecycles. This would encourage students to see growth from the viewpoint of an animal. The creativity at this age is remarkable, so I can only imagine the responses that would be developed. This is a great activity to integrate Social Students with Language Arts as well- potential Daily5 writing center.

References:

[www.docsouth.unc.edu/classroom/lessonplans/RAFT.html](http://www.docsouth.unc.edu/classroom/lessonplans/RAFT.html)

[www.vrml.k12.la.us/graphorgan/18strat/strat.State\_18/statehtm/raft\_state.htm](http://www.vrml.k12.la.us/graphorgan/18strat/strat.State_18/statehtm/raft_state.htm)

## Scavenger Hunt

Basic Function: This is an exercise to get students up and moving around the room seeking to complete a task or gather items on a list. The purpose it to complete all the tasks on the questionnaire distributed by the teacher.

Steps:

1. Teacher hands out a questionnaire with tasks to complete.
2. Students must complete the task by searching around the room or discussing with their peers the answers.
3. The first student to answer all the questions successfully is the winner. Traditionally scavenger hunts end when the first person is done, but the teacher may decide to give students extra time to complete the scavenger hunt.

Example of Activity:

We used this strategy in class as a get to know your classmates activity. For example we were challenged to find someone who:

* Has been to Portugal.
* Watched the Canada/Russia game at the World Juniors.

Ways you could use this in Social Studies:

* In the beginning of the year as a means of developing camaraderie within the class (and to achieve You and Your World Kindergarten outcome- students as individuals)
* Have items hidden within the class that students have to find and identify to which culture they belong.
* If you were discussing landmarks in which students were asked to research and find a landmark in different countries. For example you could ask students to find landmarks in France, Egypt, China, the Netherlands etc and find what year it was built.

References:

Kid scavenger hunt: An outdoor scavenger hunt   
<http://everythingmom.com/activities/kids-scavenger-hunt-an-outdoor-scavenger-hunt.html>

10 person scavenger hunt  
<http://www.lifetreelearning.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/2e_Scavenger_Hunt.pdf>

## Sponge

Basic Function: An extra activity usually used for those students who finish the main task early. An enrichment activity that is not essential but definitely enjoyable. Sometimes they can be used as “time fillers”

Example of Activity:

Have an exit slip ready for the end of class with a question or get students to ask a question.

* What questions do you currently have about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?
* Write 3 sentences describing what you learned about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ this week.

References:

Time Filler Ideas: Timesaving "Sponges" for Substitute Teachers and Homeschoolers at <http://voices.yahoo.com/time-filler-ideas-timesaving-sponges-substitute-291726.html?cat=25>

Sponge and Transition Activities

<http://tips.atozteacherstuff.com/407/sponge-and-transition-activities/>

StoryPath  
Basic Function: StoryPath uses the components of a story: the scene, characters and plot (critical incidents) to organize curriculum into meaningful and memorable learning experiences. This strategy uses and inquiry strategy where the teacher asks key questions to guide students along the pathway of learning.

Materials:

Chart Paper (multiple pieces taped together)

Story that is about Social Studies or that can be tied to the Social Studies Curriculum or Historical Document

Paint

Markers

Paper

Scissors

Glue

Pencils

Purpose:

Storypath offers both a structure for organizing the curriculum and an instructional strategy for teaching.

Application in a Social Studies Classroom:

StoryPath applies to the Social Studies classroom as it gives students an organizational way to pull our critical incidents in stories (Social Studies Themes) or historical events.

Steps:

1. Pick a story or historical document to present to the class.

1. As a class, pick out the critical event that takes place.
2. Students create a mural (the backdrop) of the setting of critical event.
3. Characters that are present during the critical event are created. Ensure that characters coincide with the mural presented.
4. Present critical incident using the characters and the mural.
5. Teacher poses a question to the students about the critical event. This question ensures that students critically evaluate the situation that was highlighted. This is a great way to get students thinking on their own about themes in Social Studies.

Example:

Social Studies Outcomes:

K.1.1: Demonstrate and Understanding of themselves as unique and special.

K.1.3: Identify needs and wants that are common to all children.

K.1.7: Communicate effectively, solve problems and demonstrate conflict resolution skills.

Title: Amazing Grace

Critical Event / Script for StoryPath:

“Amazing Grace” by

Narrator:

Grace was a girl who loved stories.

She didn’t mind if they were read to her or told to her or made up in her own head. She didn’t care if they were from books or on TV or in films or on the video or out of Nana’s long memory. Grace just loved stories.

And after she had heard them, or sometimes while they were still going on, Grace would act them out. And she always gave herself the most exciting parts.

But most of all Grace loved to act pantomimes. She liked to be Dick Whittington turning to hear the bells of London Town or Aladdin rubbing the magic lamp. The best characters in pantomimes were boys, but Grace played them anyway.

One day at school her teacher said they were going to do the play of Peter Pan. Grace put up her hand to be…Peter Pan

Raj:

“You cant be called Peter! That’s a boy’s name!”

Narrator:

But Grace kept her hand up.

Natalie: whispers

“You can’t be Peter Pan. He wasn’t black”

Narrator:

But Grace kept her hand up.

Teacher:

“All right, lots of you want to be Peter Pan, so we’ll have to have auditions. We’ll choose the parts next Monday.”

Mural: Tape four pieces of chart paper together lengthwise; create the backdrop for the StoryPath. In this case it is a classroom setting.

Create characters from the critical event: Grace, two students who were whispering and a group of the surrounding students in the classroom.

Present critical event to the class through the StoryPath.

Teacher will ask the thought-provoking question at the e

## Sum It Up

Basic Function: Sum it up is used to organize key ideas within a text. It has two main parts, space for students to list main ideas, words and phrases as well as a space for students to write their actual summary. The summary must be limited to 20 words. The purpose of this strategy is to give students a snapshot of the larger text. It’s also to help students find the main idea of the text.

Steps:

1. Teacher gives students a text such as an article, short story or a non-fiction information book, etc.
2. Students read the text and write key ideas, important words and phrases
3. Students pick the most relevant information and create a short summary of the text using 20 words to underline the main facts

Example:

Book given to the students was “Down the Nile” and they were to focus on the Sahara section. For part one student wrote key ideas such as: largest desert in the world, many droughts, farmers became Nomads. For part two, students wrote: “The Sahara, world’s largest desert, has many droughts. Once farmland, farmers became Nomads travelling with their animals searching for food,” as their summary.

Ways you could use this is Social Studies:

* A tool to teach students how to pick out the most important facts when reading a non-fiction text
* As a means of summarizing what students have learned in a unit and pick out the most important parts

References:

Sum It Up  
<http://publications.socialstudies.org/yl/1702/HTDI-E02.pdf>

## T-Chart

Basic Function: To compare and contrast ideas and perspectives about a topic. This is a simple strategy that demands that students critically think about the qualities of both side of a situation. This activity can be done individually or in small groups.

Steps:

1. Give students a T-Chart form (see attachment)
2. The teacher announces a topic.
3. Students are given a few minutes to work individually or in small groups to complete their t-chart. In some situations students may be comparing the strengths and weaknesses of something, while in others circumstances they may be contrasting facts and opinions. The teacher can be creative with how they utilize T-Charts in the classroom.

Example of Activity:



This is the template for a T-Chart that I have custom made on a website for students to complete.

\*T-Charts could also be used as a means of listing steps necessary to achieve a particular goal on one side and describing how you are going to do it on the other.

Ways you could use this in Social Studies:

* To compare and contrast different cultures; for example Canada and Brazil
* As a tool to introduce a topic- students could write what they know about Saskatchewan on one side and what they want to know on the other (variation of the KWL chart).

References:  
Excellent website to prepare custom made T-Charts.  
<http://www.worksheetworks.com/miscellanea/graphic-organizers/tchart.html>

## Top 10 Commonalities

Basic Function: This is a great activity in which all students are actively engaged in finding similarities between one another. This activity is best to do at the beginning of the school year for students to get to know each other.

Steps:

1. Divide students into small groups and give each group a clipboard with a blank piece of paper on it.
2. The first student with the clipboard will write a fact about himself or herself on it. They will then pass it the person beside them and if the fact applies to them and is true they sign their name. That person will pass it to be the person beside them who will sign their name if the statement is true for them as well and so on.
3. The goal is to find 10 commonalities (true facts) that are shared by all the members in the group.
4. This is a quiet activity and there is to be no talking.

Example of Activity:

The first student may write:

I like pizza.

If this applies to everyone in the group than they have found one commonality- they must find 10.

Ways you could use this in Social Studies:

* Strategy to get to know your peers in the class.
* Could be used to brainstorm 10 facts that group members believe to be true about an even or landmark.

References:  
“Top 10 similarities between the fall of Rome and the fall of America”  
<http://hotbedinfo.com/2011/06/top-10-similarities-between-the-fall-of-rome-and-the-fall-of-america/>

## 20 Questions

Basic Function: Strategy to help improve students questioning and critical thinking skills. Students must collectively formulate twenty “yes” or “no” question in hopes of narrowing down the facts in hopes of guessing the correct answer.

Steps:

1. The teacher (or a student) comes up with a person, place or thing. They must have a concrete understanding of their term.
2. Students have the opportunity to collectively ask twenty “yes” or “no” questions.
3. The teacher (or students) responds honestly and to the best of their ability the questions that they are asked.

\*The purpose of this activity is guess the term before you hit the twenty question mark. Students should record all the hints they get to ensure that they do not waste a questions asking a previously asked question- this also helps give them a visual about what the term might be.

Example of Activity:

My term is Fredericton.

Questions may include: Can I eat it? Is it a place? Have I ever been there? It is on a right? Are their tall buildings? Do a million people live there? Etc.

Ways you could use this in Social Studies:

* Could be used to introduce new terminology and geographic locations
* As a project that forces students to become familiar with a topic- the solar system for example

References:

“Hot Seat”

<http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/04/lp328-04.shtml>

## Venn Diagrams Get Big

Basic Function: To have students compare and contrast two themes or subjects by using a graphic organizer.

Steps:

1. The Venn diagram has three sections, one section for each topic and an over lapping section to place the similarities of the two topics
2. The Venn diagram looks like two circles slightly overlapping
3. Write, or place the appropriate information on cards and get students to place it under the correct section
4. Have students justify why they placed certain facts in certain sections

Example:

Hula Hoop Venn Diagram: Teachers could set up over lapping hula hoops on the floor, label each circle at its center and get students to place word cards in the correct section.

Unique Characteristics

Similarities

Unique  
Characteristics

Human Venn diagram: Using rope create two overlapping circles in a large space, label the circles at their center, provide students a card with information on it and get them to stand in the appropriate sections

Ways you could use this in Social Studies:

* Students could use the Venn diagram model to compare two explorers such as: John Cabot and Jacques Cartier, this will highlight the difference and similarities between these two explorers.

References:  
Graphic Organizer: Venn Diagram  
<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plan/graphic-organizer-venn-diagram>

## Word Splash

Basic Function: Best used to connect a group of facts and words into a larger framework for student understanding. It also helps the teacher assess students leaning at the end of a unit. It is a good visual representation of what students have learned in the unit and helps them to make connections.

Steps:

1. Teacher looks at the curriculum documents and identifies key words, information or concepts. Selecting 20-25 words that represent important people, places or ideas that can be connected to one another.
2. The teacher then creates the words splash by organizing the words into two columns in such a way that a word in one column can be connected to a word or concept in the other.
3. At the end of the unit students can then draw connecting lines between the words to show that they are related. They can also write a statement to explain how and why they are connected.
4. This can be used for group discussion by pairing students up to discuss the connections they have made.
5. The teacher can also create an overhead of the Word Splash and students can come up and complete with the class.

Example:

Urban Prejudice   
Atlantic Region Democracy   
Stereotype Rural   
Government Provinces

Ways you could use this in Social Studies:

* In a grade three Social studies class this activity can be used to when talking about Provincial Identity. The teacher can choose words in the different units that they can connect at the end so that students can see the long-term connections over course of the year and throughout the units.

References:

Word Splash  
<http://www.teachingforexcellence.com/strategies/word-splash/>

## Word Wall with Newspaper Article

Basic Function:

The basic function of a word wall is to give students a visual reference for new, difficult, important, or unit specific words. The most helpful word walls grow and change throughout the year or unit, and are used as a learning reference. Word walls help students see patterns and relationships in words. They can also provide reference support for children during reading and writing activities.

Steps:

1. The class reads a chosen newspaper article (can be done individually in pairs or as a whole class on the Smartboard).
2. Students suggest interesting words that they don’t regularly use or don’t understand to add to the word wall.
3. Re-read the sentences of the article with the challenging words again and try to develop a definition of the word before looking up in the dictionary or using ([www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)).
4. Put words on chart paper/poster board in word wall form. Words can be ordered alphabetically or perhaps by putting the article in the center and the words scattered around linked to where they appear in the article.
5. Discuss the article/language and words used as it pertains to the topic you are discussion in the class.

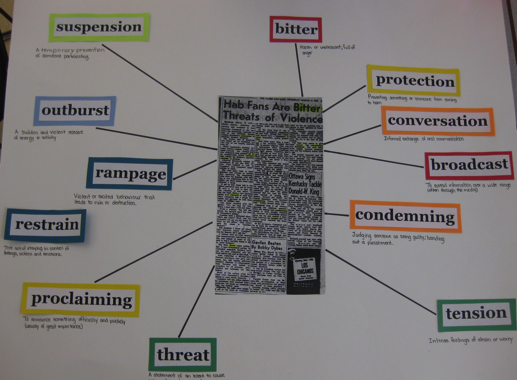
Materials/Resources:

* Smartboard
* Newspaper article(s)
* White paper
* Construction paper
* Poster Board/Bulletin Board
* Markers/coloured pencils
* Dictionaries/ Dictionary.com

Time required: 30 minutes

Examples of activities:

We chose to use a word wall with a newspaper article as an introduction to a grade three unit about promoting positive interactions among people. We chose an article about Maurice Richard and the hockey violence from 1955 to introduce a historical aspect to an issue that is still current. Picking out the new vocabulary from the article will introduce students to new words and also create discussion about the kinds of words and actions we should use when we interact with people.



End Result/ Goal:

The end result/ goal of our word wall activity is for students to develop their vocabulary around a particular subject and understand that violence in any form is not acceptable and these actions affect other people.

Other ways to use this in social studies:

1) There are many different ways that you could use a word wall alongside a newspaper article in Social Studies. You could use it simply as a vocabulary enrichment to introduce words about a particular topic you want to cover. Find a newspaper about historical topic or even a current event or unit that you will be covering and use the article to pull out the vocabulary students will come across in the unit. Students will be able to pull out new or interesting words from the article to make a word wall while also being introduced to the unit of study. Comparing a historical issue with a modern issue

2) You could also use a word wall with newspaper articles to introduce a discussion about multiple perspectives. You could choose a historic event, find a local news story about the event and a foreign new story about the event (make sure they show differing perspectives about the event). Have students make thematic word walls to compare the words and language used to describe what happened in order to compare words. Are the descriptive words they use different? Are there words that contradict each other? \*\*You could also do this activity using an issue that has persisted throughout time and find a historical article and a current article and compare the language in that way.

3) You could also use this in an opposite way by using the newspaper article in whatever lesson you had planned for the day and then incorporate language arts at the end by asking students to locate and cut out words in the article from an already established word wall in the classroom.

References:

<http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/word_walls/>

<http://www.k12reader.com/10-great-word-wall-strategies-for-classrooms/>

## World Map in 3D

Basic Function: A visual organizer that helps students think about new concepts in several ways. Students construct a 3D map that holds information on a certain concept. Students can use the 3D organizers to quiz themselves much like they would with flash cards. It can be used over a wide variety of subjects allowing become independent in their learning, Students are able to work on a 3D organizer alone or in small groups. Can be used for studying or an in class activity.

Steps:

1. Fold a piece of paper horizontally into three sections.
2. Unfold, and vertically fold the paper in half.
3. Cut the top and bottom tabs in half to create four small tabs.
4. On the front of the paper students will write the key concept being taught.

They will then use the four tabs to provide themselves with information on the concept.

Example:

Students can read a small article on Ancient Egypt. From the article, students select unknown or difficult words and find the definition, synonyms, and antonyms of that word. On the last tab students will use the word in a sentence.

Ways you could use this in Social Studies:

* To introduce new terminology, and offer students a discovery-based means of learning the meaning of it.
* Interactive activity to learn about different geographic locations/countries

## Y Strategy

Basic Function: Best used in a grade 1 or grade 2 classes, but can be used at any level. Helps students identify dilemmas and moral problems as well as distinguish the difference between cause and consequence (effect).

Steps:

1. The student starts with two large ‘Y’’s’
2. The ‘Y’ becomes the thinking prompt and the writing structure.
3. The student first identifies the perceived problem
4. The first ‘Y’ is used to list potential causes or choices of action
5. The second ‘Y’ looks at outcomes or consequences
6. The students use each stem of the ‘Y’ to write their three causes (on the first ‘Y’) and three consequences (on the second Y)
7. More than three causes and consequences probably exist in the text, so student answers will vary. This will stimulate conversation.
8. Students then discuss in pairs, small groups, or with the entire class.
9. Helps students clarify what constitutes a problem and expands their view of the world around them.

Example:

Consequence 2

Cause 1

Consequence 1

Cause 2

Recommended books include: *Brave Irene, Enemy Pie, Mr. Lincoln’s Way, Sister Anne’s Hands, Why?*  
  
Ways you could use this in Social Studies:

Consequence 3

Cause 3

Perceived Problem

Perceived Problem

* Use this strategy to integrate social studies (moral judgment benchmark and citizenship unit)
* It is important to integrate Social Studies into literacy as there is so little time given to the You and Your World Curriculum.
* Some example stories you could use include

References:

Stimulating Moral Reasoning in Children through Situational Learning and Children’s Literature

<http://publications.socialstudies.org/yl/1603/160317.pdf>

# Methods in Teaching

A method is a way of doing something, a way you approach students or organize them for learning.

## Folding a Continuum Line

Basic Function: To organize students to create pairs. Students form a line based on a quality decided upon by the teacher (height, age, shoe size etc) and for a straight line. Folding the continuum line is a method of mixing students to ensure that they are not always working with the same students.

Steps:

1. Ask students to form a line based a particular quality. For example you may ask students to line up from oldest to youngest, biggest shoe size to smallest, or in our case from lowest internship grade to the highest.
2. Ask the person on one end to fold the line by pairing up with person who is standing at the opposite end on the line. The second person in the front of the line will be paired the second last person in line and so on.
3. Students will then complete an activity such as paired questions with their partner.

Example of Class Activity:

Once the continuum line is folded each individual will have a partner making this a valuable method to lead into strategies such as Paired Questions or partnering up to create a clustered web.

Ways you could use this in social studies:

* Have students discuss and brainstorm with their partner what they know about an historical event or place. For example: Kings Landing
* Use this as a method of grouping students for an in class assignment.
* Ask pairs to complete an entrance slip of the material covered the previous day.

References:

“Activity ideas: A continuum line – exploring and comparing texts, genres, interpretations” <http://www.english.heacademy.ac.uk/explore/resources/seminars/activities/continuum.php>

## Jigsaw

Basic Function: To promote students independence and co-operative learning. Furthermore it allows all students to become experts on a specific aspect of a broader topic and then pass on their knowledge to their peers.

Steps:

1. Students are divided into groups of 4-5.
2. Each student choses a topic to narrow in and study in-depth.
3. Group members disperse and find their classmates in the room who have chosen the same narrow topic as them to students. This new group will work together to learn all they possible can.
4. Students return to their original group and each student presents what they have learned.

Example of Class Activity:

To achieve the grade 4 Social Studies curriculum outcome 4.4.4 Examine symbols associated with Canada’s landscapes, the jigsaw method could be applied. With “Canadian Symbols” as the overarching theme, students could chose to study the symbols found on the Canadian coins (maple leaf, beaver, bluenose and moose) to learn why they are there, who made the decision, what year was it decided, has there ever been anything else, etc. Once students become informed of their topic than they return to their original group to relay the information that they have learned to their peers.

Ways you could use this in social studies:

* To emphasize the most important aspects of an event (done by narrowing in on certain aspects)
* As a means of engaging students in a particular topic that most interests them

References:

Jigsaw Method  
<http://www.jigsaw.org/overview.htm>

Fernsten, L. (2012). Promoting student comprehension with cooperative leaning.   
 *Social Education*, 76(3), 147-150. National Council for the Social Studies.

## Numbered Cards

Basic Function: This is a simple and efficient way of putting students into groups. Additionally, it ensures that students are not always working with the same students and avoids the chaos of them picking their own groups.

Steps:

1. Prepare cards that have numbers or some sort of symbol to identify, which students will be working in a group.
2. Students each pick a card and find classmates with matching card number; they will form a group.

OR

1. Distribute a deck of cards with an equal number of suits to all students in the class.
2. Ask students to form a group of four members with a person with each suit in every group.

\*It is important that the teacher determine the number of students she wants in a group prior to handing out the numbered cards to ensure that groups are all of equal size.

Example of a class activity:

This can be used to put students in groups for a variety of activities such as top 10 commonalities, clustered webs, concept maps, KWL charts etc.

Ways you can use it in social studies:

* This is a method primarily used to ensure that students are always working with different people. It can be used to group students for any activity in social students.
* Good tool to use when grouping students for a project.

References:  
Choosing Partners

<http://www.proteacher.org/c/988_choosing_partners.html>

## Numbered Heads

Basic Function: Divide students into even groups to complete a task given by the teacher.

Steps:

1. This can be done from students seats of they can form a continuum line (a line based on a quality directed by the teacher- older to youngest for example, or simply a straight line).
2. If the teacher would like the create five groups than students will call out numbers 1-2-3-4-5-1-2-3-4-5 etc. until each student has a number.
3. Number 1’s will form a group together and meet in a specific area, Number 2’s will gather and find a quiet place to work, etc.
4. Students work in their groups to complete a task assigned by the teacher.

Example of Class Activity:

Can be used to brainstorm a clustered web or concept map, top 10 commonalities or as a means of forming of a group for a project.

Ways you could use this in Social Studies:

* Create brainstorming groups.
* Have students’ study, discuss and present a particular topic.

References:

“Numbered Heads Together”  
<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/group-work/cooperative-learning/48538.html>

## 1 Stay, X Stray

Basic Function**:** The purpose of this method it for students to share the knowledge they have acquired with their original group with their peers in other groups. This develops students peer teaching skills.

Steps**:**

1. Students are divided into small groups (usually 3 or 4).
2. The students are given information about a particular topic to learn about. Groups are given a few minutes (time varies based on students age) to learn the key information.
3. When the teacher signals that it is time to begin the teaching phase of this activity one member of the original group will stay at their table while the rest of the group will travel to another table and teach what they have learned about their topic. Students will have a pre-determined amount of time to articulate what they have learned and this will be dependent upon the grade level of the students. Typically 1-3 minutes is a sufficient amount of time for this step.
4. The group member who remained at the table will take notes about the topics that the other teaching group members from the other groups present. The group members who “stray” tell the person who “stayed” in the other groups all about what they have researched, so that they can take notes and present them to his/her group.
5. When those who strayed have visited all those who stayed they return to their original table and the person who “stayed” teaches them about all of the information he/she gathered in their notes from the other traveling group members.

Example of a class activity**:**

In class we did this with landmarks. Each group read about a different landmark and one group member stayed at the table to take notes about the other landmarks, while the other two travelled and taught others about the landmark they studied.

How you could use it in social studies**:**

* Small groups could study a Canadian province and then one member could stay and the others stray to teach all groups about the province their read about.

References:

Social Skills and Community Building: http://w4.nkcsd.k12.mo.us/~kcofer/social\_cooperative\_structures.htm

## Round Table/Robin Robin

Basic Function: Express ideas and opinions. Creating a cooperative project. Facilitate equal participation. Get acquainted with teammates. Brainstorming

Steps:

1. Put students in groups (usually around 4).
2. Each student in turn writes something or adds ideas to a paper and pencil passed around the group. The sharing *circles* around the group one after the other. There usually is very little talking during this activity. Take about 15-20 seconds per student.

Example of Class Activity:

Uncommon Commonalities

Ways you could use this in social studies:

* Find out what students know about the War of 1812 by passing around a sheet of paper and getting them to put responses.
* Use to review material.

References:

Keys to Teaching Success at <http://keystoteachingsuccess.blogspot.ca/2009/02/roundtable-and-roundrobin-both.html>

Round Table/Round Robin

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/7220236/Teaching-Strategies>

# Reading Reflections

A reflection and reaction to the journal articles that I have read this term.

## Building a Caring Community

Triplet, Cheri Foster. & Hunter, Anne. (2005). Talking circle: Creating community in   
 our elementary classrooms. *Studies ant the Young Learner* 18(2), pp. 4-8.   
 National Council for the Social Studies.

Every Monday morning during my internship our classroom routine was the same: students completed their daily tasks, we did our morning message and then we shifted into our talking circle. I chose to read this article to gain insights into how teachers utilized this activity in their classroom and made it into positive and educational experience for the students. When my internship ended, I left with the feeling that this is not something I would consider adopting in my classroom as I found talking circles not to be a productive use of class time (because students were disengaged) , but after reading this article and understanding that talking circles can be positive, engaging, and develop various skills amongst the students, I find myself reconsidering my hostile view towards this activity.

My experience with talking circles in school is limited to the classroom where I did my internship but we faced the same behavioural challenges each week, which led to my dislike for the activity. The purpose of our talking circles was to allow students to recount a key event from their weekend (work on orally articulating a small moment). Although the intentions for doing this were good, the short attention span of a grade 2 students and the fact they were not engaged in what their peers were talking about, created a period where the majority of the class was simply struggling to sit still and remain focused. The restlessness and disinterest of the students during the talking circle gave me a negative impression of this seemingly fun activity. While reading this article my judgment towards talking circles shifted to the point that I actually became excited about the different ways that they can be incorporated into students learning. Prior to reading this article I connected the link between talking circles and student independence/leadership.

The thing that stood out to me most in this article was that teachers used taking circles as a students-focused activity. At the beginning of the article the Triplet explains how she adopted the talking circle method to address the loss of a pet…this triggered many emotions from the students and sparked a meaningful and productive class discussion. Another example presented in this article involved a students desire to show a *Ninja Turtles* video clip to the class. The teacher used the students’ request as a teachable moment and invited the student to facilitate a class discussion during a talking circle about the appropriateness of *Ninja Turtles*. Although the teacher did not really feel that the question about whether or not to allow this student to show the video was a huge deal, she did see value in using this as an opportunity to develop students’ problem solving skills and reaching their own conclusions.

While reading this article I realized that talking circles are not strictly used to share news, but they can be used to foster students critical thinking skills, their problem solving and persuasion abilities as well as their oral expression. The key thing that I am going to take away from this article is the notion that talking circles can be a positive learning activity and can be incorporated into all subject areas!

## Curriculum Focus Group

Golston, Syd. (2010). The revised NCSS standards: Ideas for the classroom teacher.

*Social Education*, 74 (4), pp. 214-216

“The revised NCSS standards” is a great article because it cuts right to the chase and acknowledges in the opening paragraph that although teachers have multiple curriculum documents and resources available to tell them about what to teach, there is little guidance in how to teach the material. During my time working in a school I found the most challenging task was to be continuously coming up with innovative and exciting ways to explain and present a concept. The notion that the updated NCSS standards provide activities and lessons that engage the students is an excellent start.

One of my favourite aspects of teaching is coming up with creative ways to introduce a topic to my students but sometime it can be challenging trying to come up with an idea that actually excites me. This article alludes to the fact that the new NCSS standards includes’ already established approaches that other teachers have done to teach a particular topic. Having this resource accessible to teacher may ease the stress for those who find it difficult to come up with ideas about how to teach a particular concept. Furthermore, reading an original sample lesson in the NCSS standards document may inspire a teacher to adapt, modify and build on that and create an even more exceptional lesson.

Reading this article reminded me that teachers don't have to teach students a concept/topic a specific way. During my internship there were times that I felt trapped into teaching the lessons provided in the “Math Makes Sense” binder, even though it was clear to me that it was not the curriculum. In my opinion there are many teachers that rely heavily on these kinds of resources, but I think they are part of the reason teachers are killing students creativity in schools! Each lesson or unit that are presented in many of the government-funded projects that offer teachers sample lesson plans on how to reach the curriculum standards tend to be straightforward, dull and disengaging. Rarely will you come across a lesson plan in a government-funded project that is multidisciplinary or promotes group work.

After reading this article I feel as though the revised NCSS standards are a step in the right direction on the part of school boards. The best way for students to truly learn is to engage them and allow them to develop various skills without even being conscious of how much they are truly learning. In a subject area like social studies there are unlimited ways that a teacher can introduce topics such culture, technology, people, the environment etc to their students.

## Planning to Teach

Hubbard, Janie (2007). Lesson study: Teachers collaborating in lesson development.   
 *Social Studies and the Young Leaner*, 19 (4), pp. 25-29.

In this study four second-grade teachers worked collaboratively to develop a Social Studies lesson for their students. Although these teachers don’t regularly have the time to lesson plan together, the benefits of developing, revising and improving a single lesson multiple times benefits their daily planning in more ways than one. An advantage to this process is taking the time to think critically about how the students will respond and the questions in response to a lesson is a skill that teachers should prepare for daily but often get caught up in merely focusing on the lesson itself. The purpose of the following reflection is to highlight some of the key points of this article and reflect on the value of developing a collaborative lesson plan with colleagues.

One of the first things that I thought of while reading the section of this article where they describe the length of the forma lesson plan and how every time they reviewed it they would make changes, I was reminded of the extensive lesson plans that we were asked to write last semester. There was little enjoyment in preparing these comprehensive lesson, but after reading this article I can see the value in going through the motions and considering every minor detail of a lesson; this definitely helped prepare me to create lesson plans daily during my internship. Had I not had the experience beforehand of working with my peers and brainstorming about the kinds of responses and questions students may ask during a lesson, I would have been in for a rude awakening when I started my internship. In general, an overly detailed lesson plan may seem overwhelming for someone who wasn’t involved in the lessons development phase, but in the long run it truly prepares teachers for the challenges they may encounter during a lesson.

Another thing that I will take away from this article is the value of working in teams and getting feedback. One of the most intimidating factors of starting my internship in November was that I would not have the support of the classmates when creating a lesson. Although I think I did some pretty cool lesson during my internship, I can only imagine how much more awesome they could have been if I could have continued to work closely with my peers. Everyone always says that “two heads are better than one” and I believe that this saying is especially true for teachers. Not only does working in conjunction with another teacher result in a more creative and well-developed lesson the planning and preparation time tends to be less lengthily.

At the elementary level teachers rarely have opportunity to sit down, let alone plan co-operatively with their colleagues making the opportunity these teachers had very unique. I truly appreciate that principals acknowledged the value and encouraged teachers to take the necessary time to plan collaboratively, reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of their lessons and actively improve the methods they use to teacher. I hope that someday I am able to find a school where I will have the opportunity to collaborate with other teachers as it benefits the students. In conclusion this was very interesting article that makes me want to work in a school like New Maryland Elementary where teacher collaborate on a regular basis.

## People, Place and the Environment

Nagel, Paul. (2008). Geography: The essential skill for the 21st century. *Social   
 Education* 72(7). Pp. 354-358.

Paul Nagel’s article discusses how technology has played an active role in shaping how students learn and what they learn. In the opening paragraph he provides a concise overview of the purpose of studying geography, and the values that are at the core of the Social Studies curriculum: “Students need a global awareness that includes familiarity with different cultures, beliefs and lifestyles in order to understand and address global issues” (Nagel, 354). When I read this sentence I was excited about the perspective that the author took to defend the value is studying this topic. As a student, and even more so as a teacher, Social Studies in my passion; looking back to my years in the public school system I feel that I was robbed of the opportunity to develop the critical thinking and problem solving skills that Nagel goes on to discuss in the article. Today’s society has become co-dependent on technology to survive, whether it be tools such as GPS’s, computers or GIS’s, we are heavily reliant on technology to teach us what we think we need to know.

The greatest strength of this article is that it encourages teachers to make geography cross-curricular. Nagel suggests that instead of merely focussing on memorizing the names of capitals and countries, teachers should take significant events such as Katrina and study the disaster from multiple perspectives. For example students could study the path the hurricane travelled, discuss which countries and towns were most impacted and furthermore, they could investigate the social and economic impact of this natural disaster. Teachers must take it upon themselves to find creative ways to make geography more interesting to students. It is becoming increasingly apparent that students are unaware of the cultural norms of countries, let alone the geographic location of said country.

This summer I had the opportunity to take four 11 year old children to an international camp in Norway. While there, we spent a month with delegations representing twelve different countries. This experience opened by children’s eyes to the cultural diversity that exists in the world. Although this type of learning experience is not possible in the classroom, there are other ways to make the same valuable connections. During my internship in the days leading up to Christmas we discussed holiday traditions in different parts of the world. I quickly realized that these grade 2 students were seldom shown a map in school.

In conclusion, there is a lot to take away from this article provides a thorough explanation of geography and its value as a tool to investigate the world. Nagel (357) concludes this article by stating “Rather it [geography] is a way to know where something is, how its location influences its characteristics, and how its location influences relationships with natural phenomena”. I aspire to adopt and exemplify many of the values that are presented in this article in the future.

## Time, Continuity and Change

Kirchner, Jana & Helm, Allison & Pierce, Kristin & Golloway, Michelle. (2011).   
 History + mystery = Inquiring young historians. *Social Studies and the Young   
 Learners*, 23 (3), pp. 14-16. National Council for the Social Studies.

The concept of teaching history as a mystery is a novel concept, that if properly executed, could enrich students understanding of a particular topic. Not only would presenting historical events allow each student to understand that they history is understood by everyone differently, students’ curiosity would be sparked as they work diligently to “solve” the mystery; this would increase student interest in the subject matter. Historical events do not have to be taught from a textbook and this article successfully articulates one strategy, which would make history come alive. Students, who may not have otherwise been engaged in this particular topic, are virtually guaranteed to leave the classroom after this innovative lesson having learned something. The history + mystery approach is differentiation by design to accommodate a range of different learning styles including: bodily-kinaesthetic, spatial, linguistic and logical. There are many positive aspects in approaching history in this manner if the teacher has the time to properly prepare this kind of lesson.

Another overarching theme throughout this article is the notion that elementary level students struggle to differentiate the difference between “history” and “the past” (concepts that is equally challenging for most adults to distinguish). Throughout this article, Kirchner et al. suggest that history is a collection of scattered puzzle pieces in which the “truth” about a historical event is a combination of the various perspectives. For example, World War II cannot be fully understood by seeing the events through one person’s eyes; to truly comprehend the war you have to gain insight into millions of people’s perspective to be completely familiar of the immediate and post-war impacts this event had on society and history. I appreciate that the authors of this article acknowledge that the history we read about in textbooks is biased. Throughout my liberal arts undergrad one of the most important things that I learned was that all “facts” are partial and merely reflect the scholars who articulated the information’s’ subconscious values and beliefs. As a teacher I intend to make a point of ensuring that my students grasp this concept much younger than I did. Today’s students have access to significantly more resources as a result of the Internet, so it more critical now than ever, that students acknowledge the difference between credible and non-credible sources in effort to eliminate the biases that influence history.

At the elementary level it is important that students want to learn about the past. To me learning about how modern society developed and the struggles that our ancestor overcame is extremely exciting, but it is important that I carry this enthusiasm into my future classroom and utilize strategies such as the one articulated to teach students the content at their level. Kirchner et al. have shared a creative and innovative strategy for teaching Social Studies.

## Time, Continuity and Change II

Burstein, J. and Lisa Hutton. (2005). Planning and teaching with multiple   
 perspectives. *Social Studies and the Young Learner*, 18 (1), 15-17. National   
 Council for the Social Studies.

Similar to last weeks article, “Planning and teaching with multiple perspectives”, highlights the fact that history is best understood by studying as many different points of view as possible. The authors of this article have put a significant amount of emphasis on giving students at the elementary level the opportunity to read -and understand the difference between- primary and secondary sources. Historical events- no matter how big or small- are influenced multiple people and factors and this article suggests that gathering as many all of which is important to consider when studying the topic.

This article initially caught my attention in the introduction with a student claims that “It’s not fair! Japanese kids should not be put in prison!” (Burstein, 15) when discussing World War II in class. Obviously, the method used for teaching this topic was effective in engaging students and provoking this kind of interest, but the author goes on to say that the majority of the textbooks that are used in schools today are tertiary sources that condense history into brief synopsis. It is a shame that it is up to each individual teacher to find and/or develop their own resources to allow students to understand complex events such as WWII, because not all teachers are willing and able to take the time to do this. After the short time I spent in a classroom during my internship at the primary level, I can fully understand how preparing a lesson in which students can critically assess multiple perspectives is challenging. While the primary the focus in early elementary on reading, writing and mathematics, it has become increasingly challenging over the years for teachers to find the time to include Social Studies into the curriculum as it is let alone find a way to incorporate several perspectives into their lesson. Even the suggestion of developing cross-curricular Social Studies lessons will evoke a sense of panic and defense from some teachers. What resources are available for elementary teachers to ensure that students are given a full picture of historical events and gain insight into the underlying motivations that existed?

In general I think that Burstein and Hutton have written a valuable article worth reading. Although it is challenging to actively incorporate the teaching of multiple perspectives of history into every lesson, it is important that teachers acknowledge that it is extremely important that students understand that history and the social science are built on multiple points of view. Like the authors highlight, there are many resources available both online and in print that will assist teachers in preparing multi-perspective lessons, the trick is in finding those reliable resources. No matter how busy a teacher is, taking the time the time to develop students critical thinking skills is essential and should no be overlooked for any reason. I hope that if a student in my classroom questions why the Japanese children were being sent to prison than I would be able to provide them a rational explanation and make them understand that history is complex, and the way we look at a situation is not how everyone else does.

## Story Path

McGuire, Margit, E & Brownyn, Cole. (2012). Real-world problems: Engaging young   
 learners in critical thinking. *Social Studies and the Young Learner*, 24(4), pp. 15-  
 17.

Story path is a form of role-play that students can actively participate in to nurture their problem-solving skills and develop higher order thinking skills. Typically this strategy is done in the form of a narrative where there is a story told that the students act out. Throughout the narrative there are challenges that the students must act out to solve the problem. Although there are several variations of story path articulated in this article the one that I would be most likely to apple would be that created by Edward de Bono called “The six thinking hats strategy”. In this strategy students are each given a hat, and depending on which hat they are wearing they have a different perspectives to offer a conversation. For example the blue hat- process, white hat- facts, green hat- creativity, yellow hat- benefits, black hat- cautions and the red hat- feelings; students are asked to think about a problem through the eyes of someone else.

This strategy would be positively received in many elementary classrooms because it is inclusive, encourages problem solving and creativity, students are actively engaged and movie around. One of the distinguishing features of story path from other strategies that we have done thus far in class is that it is entirely oral with no written component for students. If there were a student who struggled with writing this would be an excellent tool to use to differentiate a lesson so it appealed to students strength and abilities; no one feels that they can’t succeed because the reading and writing components are not included. Another strength of story path is that the students are given the opportunity to be the main characters and determine the direction of the story. Students have few opportunities to be empowered and have the ability to talk through a problem to solve it on their own without be told by an adult the “right” way.

## Time, Continuity and Change III

Von Heyking, Amy. (2004). Historical thinking in the elementary years: A review of   
 current research. Canadian Social Studies, 39(1). Retrieved from   
 <http://www.educ.ualberta.ca/css/Css_39_1/ARheyking_>historical\_thinking\_  
 current\_research.html

Before reading Von Heyking’s article I had not realized that somewhere between my last Social Studies class in grade 8, and today the term “social studies” had become synonymous in my mind with history. Although we have spent the last month studying a range of topic in the classroom I was oblivious to the fact that I had subconsciously meshed these two distinct terms together. History has become a loaded term that is often associated with the memorization of dates and events; this article suggests that this is a widespread misconception of the subject. While elementary students can't be expected to recite historical facts to their teacher, several scholars referenced in this article support the notion that elementary student can develop sophisticated historical thinking skills if the teacher provides them with engaging and age appropriate learning tasks.

This article breaks down historical thinking into 6 elements: significance, epistemology and evidence, continuity and change, progress and decline, empathy and moral judgment, historical agency. The author makes a strong argument as to why these six elements are the key aspects of students building their historical thinking skills but the one that would be most beneficial and I think should be the most emphasized when you apply this concept in an elementary classroom, is significant. So often when history is taught students see it as being an event in the past that has no connection to modern society. Today I could tell you very few things about what I learned in Social Studies and History in school because there was never any real connection to my everyday life- unless we were studying a country I had visit or a province I had been to- and I believe that this feeling of disconnect is shared among students today when they are introduced to historical events. No matter how engaging and exciting your Social Studies lesson is, unless you find some way to make it relevant to students and give it significance it will be in one ear and out the other. It is crucial that students understand the link between the past and the present; today’s culture is influenced by our ancestors and it is important that students absorb this interconnected relationship.

In conclusion I think that the ongoing shift in teachers perspective in teachers purpose of teaching history is a positive thing as learning becomes more student-focused. Understanding that history is complex and challenging for students to grasp in the elementary level is an equally important point of view for teachers to consider when planning a lesson. After reading this article I have a better understanding as to why Social Studies is no longer introduced until grade 3 and why the outcomes in the primary years for You and Your World focus on life skills and attitude.

## Method/Strategy

**Method: Jigsaw**

Jigsaw is a method used to organize students to promote independent learning. Students are initially divided into groups of four or five. Once team members have met their will each chose a sub-division of the overarching topic that the class is studying to learn more about. The members from the initial groups will disperse and begin researching/working on the narrower topic they have chosen with the members from the other groups who have selected the same topic. This new group of students will work together to learn as much as they can about their topic. To complete the jigsaw method, students will return to their original groups and teach their peers about what they have learned.

Jigsaw is a valuable tool to use in the classroom as is allows students to dig deeper into topics that most interest them. Furthermore, students are given to opportunity to develop their oral skill as they relay the information that they have learned about their topic.

**Strategy: Mock Trial**

This strategy is very engaging and asks students to get into character and actively participate is a trial. Students are first select (or are assigned) a character to embody and then the class proceeds to act out a trial and become familiar with differing perspectives. Although this can be a time consuming on behalf of the teacher to facilitate it is an engaging learning opportunity for students as they are challenged to think critically and solve problems. If done effectively, students will complete this activity and have a better understanding of the legal system, how important decisions are made, and what motivates the two sides of a controversy.

For more information about these two methods and strategies please see the “Methods” and “Strategies” section of my Personal Reflective Journal.

# Final Task

The purpose of the following section of my journal is to reflect upon the teaching strategies and methods studies this semester, as well as to rank the articles that I read for the “Reading Reflection” component of my PRJ order based on their importance to my personal growth and development.

I have ranked the following articles as having the most significant impact on my growth (in order of importance):

**1.** Von Heyking, A. (2004). Historical thinking in the elementary years: A review of current research. Canadian Social Studies, 39(1). Retrieved from <http://www.educ.ualberta.ca/css/Css_39_1/ARheyking_historical_thinking_current_research.html>

* January 28th, 2013

**2.** Nagel, P. (2008). Geography: The essential skill for the 21st century. *Social   
 Education* 72(7). Pp. 354-358.

* January 21st, 2013

**3.** Triplet, C., Foster. & Hunter, A. (2005). Talking circle: Creating community in our   
 elementary classrooms. *Studies ant the Young Learner* 18(2), pp. 4-8. National   
 Council for the Social Studies.

* January 10th, 2013

## Strategies and Methods

Over the last eight weeks in Methods in Elementary Social Studies we have created a comprehensive resource where were compiled a wide range of teaching methods and strategies that will inherently benefit my teaching practices in the classroom. In creating my personal reflective journal (PRJ) I was introduced to creative ways of engaging students in their learning. In preparing the methods and strategies section of this PRJ, I gained a significant amount of perspective on how to effectively guide students in their learning while still nurturing their critical thinking skills. Whether I find myself in a kindergarten classroom introducing the five senses or discussing ancient civilizations in grade five, my PRJ is an invaluable tool to keep on hand as I begin my career in teaching; it is also a resources that I will continuously be extending in effort of continuously expanding my teaching repertoire.

Looking back to mid-January when I was frantically working to gathers as much information as possible about the methods and strategies to submit my first PRJ reflection, I was oblivious to the genuine value of this project. It was not until a couple weeks later in February that I understood how often I would be able to apply the teaching approaches in my future classroom. Creating my journal was a learning experience that resulted in significant professional growth and development. Although many of the strategies were taught as though they were taught in a Social Studies classroom, the majority of the pedagogy we discussed this term is multi-disciplinary and can be adapted and applied to many different subject areas. Knowing that I have created a resource exploding with student-centered learning opportunities has given me a sense of confidence because this is one area of teacher that I intend to improve upon during my second field placement. I am really looking forward to starting my second internship and begin testing and incorporating many of the teaching strategies and methods that we learned about in this class.

## Article #1: “Historical thinking in the elementary years: A review of current research” by A. Von Heyking

As part of this course I was exposed to numerous articles, but the one that had the most significant impact on my personal growth and development as a teacher was Amy Von Heyking’s “Historical thinking in the elementary years: A review of current research”. Although there are many reasons I have chosen to highlight this particular article, the main reason for my selection traces back to- as I stated in my initial reflection- the notion that my own interpretation of the term “social studies” has, over the years, become synonymous with the term “history”. This article really grounded me and forced me to take a step back and look at the big picture and the overarching purpose of this subject in the curriculum. Though students spend the first nine years in the public school system learning about the social sciences and humanities, a misconception has developed claiming that memorization plays an active role in students’ achieving the curriculum outcomes. I stand by what I said in my first reflection of this article in stating “that elementary student can develop sophisticated historical thinking skills, if the teacher provides them with engaging and age appropriate learning tasks”, as I believe that there is a distinction between teaching History and Social Studies and the distinction is reflective of students intellectual development.

One of the key points that I will take away from this article and apply when teaching Social Studies is to be conscious to avoid teaching Whig history. Although there were others that we read this term, particularly Berstein and Hutton’s article “Planning and teaching with multiple perspectives,” Von Heyking goes beyond the traditional response that there are multiple perspectives to historic moments when she stresses that educators should be mindful of how they present history to ensure that they don’t give students the impression that historical events inevitably lead to our current reality. One practice that I would consider doing in my classroom that is suggested in this article, is to present students with a range of perspectives to study historical events as I stated in my first reflection this is one of the greatest strengths and a practical suggest I highlighted in my first reflection: “teachers should take significant events such as Katrina and study the disaster from multiple perspectives”. To demonstrate to students that history is a combination of different perspectives, Von Heyking suggest that they teacher start presenting students with facts that challenge their initial understanding of a historical event. Provoking students with alternative perspective to a scenario will ask students to think critically about biases that impact people perspectives on an event. This discovery based approach to understanding different perspectives can be linked to telling versus tattling, and needs and wants.

A second teaching point discussed in this article that I intend to model when teaching is to find innovative and creative ways to makes Social Studies meaningful and memorable for students. As a stated in my initial reflection “So often when history is taught students see it as being an event in the past that has no connection to modern society” which results in students value this subject, but as a teacher who studies history during my undergraduate degree, like Von Heyking, I believe that there are ample opportunities to make connections between historic moments and students lives no matter the age level or subject.

In conclusion, I ranked “Historical thinking in the elementary years: A review of current research” as being the most significant article I read this semester because of the wealth of knowledge that it offered. Furthermore, reading this article forced me to take a step back and re-evaluate why it is important to teach Social Studies in elementary school and ask myself what I want students to get out of studying to subject. I look forward to having the opportunity in the future to apply some of the teaching practices presented in this article.

## Article #2: “Geography: The essential skill for the 21st century” by P. Nagel

The second most notable article this semester was Paul Nagel’s “Geography: The essential skill for the 21st century” in which he claims that modern society has become increasingly dependent on technology, but this tool can be used to enhance students learning in the classroom. Furthermore the author suggests that we use technology as a teaching mechanism and create opportunities for students to develop critical thinking skills. When I read this article a few weeks ago, I expressed a sense of refreshment because Nagel admits that a co-dependence on technology is not inherently positive, but it can be used in a productive way to enrich and extend learning opportunities for students. Now that I have taken the time to re-read this article and reflect upon on my initial reflection, I have realized that I may have underestimated what Nagel was saying when he wrote: “Geography provides students an inexhaustible context for creativity in an interdependent world” (Nagel, 354). When I began ranking the articles we read this semester this was not originally one of the forerunners, but after thinking about this concept further in depth, I concluded that this is valuable advice that I should be reminded of constantly when teaching in the classroom, which is why I found it valuable when I first read it and is I why I ranked this article in my top three.

Though this article has an optimistic view of technology, the author is not naïve to the fact that students are- as I stated in my previous reflection on this article- “becoming increasingly unaware of the cultural norms of countries, let alone the geographic location of said country.” The ideology presented in this article, that geography can be engaging, interactive and increase global awareness, is an important topic and I appreciate the fact that the Nagel encourages teachers to make Social Studies cross curricular and integrate it whenever possible in other subject areas. Perhaps because this subject was my concentration during my undergrad, but it only seems natural to discuss geography frequently in the classroom; after reading this article is it obvious that not all teachers share the same view about this topic as I do.

Another key concept that is emphasized in this article is to inspire creativity using imagination, pursuing with purpose, being original and discussing different values with students. As I stated in my reflection, during my internship I integrated learning about different holiday traditions into the morning message, making geography fun. Bringing in artifacts such as Dutch clogs genuinely increased students engagement in the lesson and sparked curiosity about the Dutch culture. I believe that inspiring children’s curiosity in geography at a young age is very important, and keeping this interest as they mature is definitely something that I will have to be conscious of as I enter the teaching profession.

One of the strengths of this article is that the author articulates several ways that geography can be integrated into various subject areas. Although there were many ideas proposed, one lesson I would consider organizing Nagel’s suggestion of geocaching. The author suggests that giving students the opportunity to learn how GPS units use GIS tracking and recognizing land patterns is one way to study geography from a very different perspective. Another suggestion made in this article to integrate geography into the classroom is by tying geography to economics; although the example provided in this article is quite advanced for the elementary classroom, we could modify the idea and host a bake sale in the classroom for example, calculate the profits and compare the income, and compare what we could buy for that amount of money in different countries. Students would then be expected through a process of self-discovery to understand that every country has a different value for its currency. There are an infinite number of ways to study geography and make it meaningful for the students but the teacher must be willing to take that extra bit of time to construct these meaningful learning opportunities.

Like any subject, I believe that students active participation in their learning is essential, and “Geography: The essential skill for the 21st century” inspires the creativity that is necessary on behalf of the teacher to facilitate memorable learning in the classroom. Students require learning opportunities that develop their critical thinking and problem solving skills, and as I have discussed in this reflection, there are many ways that teaching geography can help build these valuable skills. In a world that is becoming more technologically advanced and globalization is shaping industries around the world, shouldn’t we be educating our students about geography?

## Article #3: “Talking circle: Creating community in our elementary classrooms” by Triplet, Foster and Hunter

The third article that I have selected which reflects my personal growth and development is “Talking circle: Creating community in our elementary classrooms.” I chose to rank this article in my top three, for very different reasons than the previous articles; while the others were chosen based on their novel content and perspective, I chose to highlight this one because forced me to personally re-evaluate my own notions towards this pedagogy. As I stated in my first entry “When my internship ended, I left with the feeling that this would not something I would consider adopting in my classroom as I found talking circles not to be a productive use of class time.” Evidently I had very strong feelings about this teaching method a couple of months ago, but after learning about all the different teachings strategies and methods that are available, I think that this approach has more merit than I was initially giving it. Although I was receptive to this article when I initially read it, I am currently more open to applying this strategy in my classroom now than I was previously. Talking circles have many academic benefits, and I think the tunnel vision of how to apply them in classroom I experienced during my internship, was challenged by this article.

Building a sense of community amongst students, particularly in the elementary classroom is particularly important. Not only are talking circles successful in helping to establish a positive and comfortable learning environment for the students, it also strengthens the teacher-student and student-student relationships in the classroom. Although using talking circles as a means of developing a sense of community it also has other functions such as “share news, foster students critical thinking skills, their problem solving and persuasion abilities and students oral expression.” When I have my own classroom, I can envision using talking circles as a means of developing students’ relationship in September as well as to teach them the importance of respecting and listening to each other’s ideas.

Throughout this article, the authors provide several practical functions for incorporating talking circles in classroom activities. One of the strategies discussed is to facilitate a discussion about controversial topic where everyone gets to have their opinion heard, or to deal with grief. In the article there is a anecdote about a young students who arrives as school devastated after her pet and to help the students feel supported, the class had a talking circles where students all shared stories about the loss of someone/something. This part of the article truly resonated with me because during my internship school suffered the loss of one of the bus drivers. For seven year olds this is a traumatic event, and while some students don't quite understand death and how to death with grief, looking back I think that having a talking circle in this kind of situation would have helped teach students positive ways dealing with their emotions and ensuring they feel supported and comforted by their peers and teacher.

In conclusion, there is no question that reflecting on this article had significant value to me as a teacher; I am glad that I no longer hold a bitter sense of resentment towards using talking circles to any capacity in a classroom. This dramatic shift is perspectives truly reflects the openness that is required of me as I continue to learn through trial and error in search for best teaching practices.