Social Studies and the Literacy Connection

Literacy and Democracy

“Education is the soul of a republic.” - John Jay, 1785


Literacy

Means
Being able to process information from a variety of sources.

A democratic society cannot function without a literate citizenry.

Word Splash

Use the following terms/words and create sentences from them to predict the relationship between each term and the topic.

- 39
- 10 years old
- oceans
- Canary
- Itasca
- Nikumaroro
- Kansas
- George Putnam
- social worker
- 23
- 1897
- Hoover and Curtis

Amelia Earhart’s Intriguing Life

- 39 - Final Challenge
- 10 years old – saw 1st plane
- Oceans – flew over Pacific and Atlantic Oceans
- Canary – name of 1st plane
- Itasca - US Coast Guard cutter following flight
- Nikumaroro – last known area
- Kansas – place of birth
- George Putnam - publisher and husband
- social worker – attended college and became a social worker
- 23 – 1st plane ride
- 1897 – birth year
- Hoover and Curtis - President presented her with a gold medal, and the Distinguished Flying Cross (1st women to receive this)

Making Connections

- Biography
  - http://www.ellensplace.net/earhart/intr.html
  - http://www.lib.purdue.edu/spcol/earhart/blog.html
  - http://www.americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi?/2/explorers/earhart
- Time Line
  - http://www.ninety-nines.org/earhart.html
  - “Records Relating to Amelia Earhart.”
    - http://www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq2-1.htm
- Amelia Earhart Activities
  - http://teacher.scholastic.com/earhart/
- Map of Last Flight
  - http://www.lib.purdue.edu/spcol/earhart/map/map.html
- The Search Continues
  - http://www.tighar.org/Projects/Earhart/AEdescr.html
- How Much Does It Cost to Find Amelia Earhart?
  - http://www.tighar.org/Projects/Earhart/NikuV.html
Two Divergent Outcomes

1. The amount of good literature related to social studies topics has reached an all-time high.
   - Notable Social Studies Books
     - http://www.socialstudies.org/resources/notable
2. Many teachers report that students are less and less interested in reading and writing.
   - Literacy rates may actually be lower than they were in the Middle Ages.

Literacy and Content Area Learning

Three Literacy Practices
1. Practical Literacy
   - The practice of reading or writing text in order to function in everyday life.
     - Reading food labels
     - Reading bus schedules
     - Following instruction to assemble a DVD player
     - Functionally illiterate
     - People cannot read the label on a medicine bottle.
     - 50% of Americans are functionally illiterate

2. Informational Literacy
   - Reading or writing to gather data about the world
     - Newspapers
     - Magazines
     - Looking up information on the Internet
   - Aliterate
   - A person who can read but doesn’t!

3. Literary Appreciation
   - Reading for the literary experience
   - No one has to tell you to read!

Becoming a Reader Takes Practice

If you want your students to read, you must model it!

Reading and Classroom Life

- DO NOT make reading a chore!
- Acknowledge and support students’ reading habits!
- Take time to listen to students tell about the books they are reading.
  - Keys to High Achievement (p.79)
  - Encouraging Thoughtfulness (p. 80)
Reading and Writing

• “The best way to learn to write well is to read good book.” – John Gardner
• Reading frees the imagination!
  – The reader must supply his or her own images.
  – This creates an ongoing mental process of interaction with the written text.
• Reading and writing are actually a seamless process, each one supporting the other.

Building Social Studies Vocabulary

• The vocabulary density of social studies reading material is one of the major causes of poor comprehension in social studies.
• Vocabulary development should be conducted in relatively short, fun settings.
• It is essential that teachers model a curiosity about new words.
  – Involve students in word games
  • The Shape of the Globe

The Shape of the Globe

A globe is a model of the Earth. Some people say the globe is round. But a penny is round. And a nickel is round. The globe is not shaped like a penny, And the globe is not shaped like a nickel. The globe is shaped like a ball. And the shape of a ball is spherical. The shape of the globe is spherical.

Expanding Vocabulary

Journal Response

• Describe at least three ways that you can help children increase their social studies vocabulary.
• Record your ideas on the chart paper.
• Be prepared to share your ideas.
Experiences and Discussions

EXPERIENCE IS NECESSARY
- It is vital that children have direct experiences and vicarious experiences.
- Direct experiences build perception and ideas.
- Vicarious experience are often best supplied through print, film or pictures.

DISCUSSIONS ARE NECESSARY
- Research shows that student-initiated talks accounts for approximately 7 minutes out of a typical 300-minute school day.
- “Schools will not improve until teachers are willing to give over vast amounts of time to both small-group and whole-group discussions.”
- Discussions expose people to the thinking of others who may have had the same experiences yet whose perceptions of the experience vary.

Social Studies and Language Development

- “The limits of a person's language are the limits of that person’s world.” – Ludwig Wittgenstein
- Children need to read good materials, to write extensively and to be given ample opportunity for oral discourse.
- “Experience added to social interaction or group sharing of written and oral language is a key to language development.” – Lev Vygotsky

The Spoken Word

- Public Speaking
- Small-Group Speaking
- Informal Talks

“Speech is out most purely human attribute.” – Quintilian

Electronic Literacy

- Ancient times, people had little choice but to communicate using the spoken word.
  - Many cultures did not have written language
- Today the situation is quite the opposite.
  - Books are available to everyone.
- Internet provides a means of communication that affords people access to databases and online information systems of an incredible range.
Reading Skills Essential to Social Studies

- Reads flexibly
- Uses chapter and section headings as aids to reading
- Uses context clues to suggest meanings
- Talks with classmates about possible meanings
- Adjusts reading speed to purpose
- Hypothesizes cause-effect relationships
- Uses reference material freely to understand vocabulary
- Investigates the author of primary documents (who, when, why, where?)
- Seeks data in maps, charts, pictures, and illustrations and interprets data and symbols found there

Reading Skills Essential to Social Studies

- Uses various parts of a book (index, table of contents, introduction, etc.) as aids to reading
- Previews the selection to become familiar with text structure and to hypothesize general meaning
- Skims to locate facts and hypothesize main ideas
- Compares one account with another
- Recognizes and seeks topic sentences
- Uses library and Internet skills to find needed material
- Uses the newspaper directory to locate articles, letters, arts, comics, and editorials

Using Newspapers

- Teaching Current Events in the elementary classroom is a MUST.
- Teachers must
  - Promote the habit of interest in current events and social problems.
  - Help students relate school learning to life outside of school
  - Promote civic-mindedness

Using Newspapers

- Promote growth of a variety of skills and abilities
  - To read and view news materials.
  - To discriminate between important and less significant news items.
  - To take a position on issues based on knowledge and critical evaluation of the facts.
  - To predict likely consequences in terms of present developments.

Teaching About Current Events

1. Teaching about Current Events
2. Why Teach Current Events?
3. Twenty-Five Great Ideas for Teaching Current Events
4. Ten Great Activities: Teaching With the Newspaper
5. Read All About It! Ten Terrific Newspaper Lessons
6. We've Got News for You! (News Activities, That Is)
7. It's News to Me: Teaching Kids About the Newspaper
8. Sites to See: Current Events
9. Extra! Extra! Eight Great Web Sites Connect News to Your Curriculum
10. Every Day Activities: Today in History
11. Finding Main Ideas

Current Events Activity

- Search the newspaper for information related to each of the following categories:
  - International story
  - Local story
  - Political event
- Write a question based on the information you find.
  - Make a note of the answers to the questions.
- Arrange students into teams, and use the question-and-answer to test student's knowledge.
Expand Your Vocabulary

- Assign each student a letter of the alphabet.
- Ask students to browse through the newspaper, find five unfamiliar words beginning with the assigned letter, and look up the definition of each.
- Then have each student create and illustrate a dictionary page containing the five words and their meanings.
- Combine the pages into a classroom dictionary.
- In a variation of this activity, you might ask students to look in the newspaper for any of the following:
  - words with a particular suffix or prefix
  - words containing a particular vowel sound or consonant blend
  - compound words
  - words in the past, present, and future tenses
  - possessives
  - plurals
- Older students might look for examples of similes, metaphors, irony, hyperbole, and satire.

Additional Current Event Resources

- Teaching Current Events via Newspaper, Magazines, and TV
  - http://www.csun.edu/~hcedu013/cevents.html
  - http://teacher.scholastic.com/scholasticnews/
- Current Events Format
  - http://home.att.net/~teaching/misc/current.pdf

Locating and Using Reference Materials

- Children should use a wide variety of reference materials.
  - Identify Types of Social Studies Reference Materials
- Teachers need to teach children
  - Which references to use for various purposes
  - How to use the reference efficiently

Using Children’s Trade Books

- Helps to launch a lesson/unit
- Helps students gather information from multiple perspectives
  - Any one perspective is prevented from being put forward uncritically as neutral.
  - Develops higher order thinking as students make sense of competing accounts.

Using Children’s Trade Books

- Encounter by Jane Yolan
  - http://www.janeyolen.com/

Using Children’s Trade Books

- Use Trade Books to improve reading comprehension
- Activate prior knowledge
  - Semantic mapping
- Preview
  - Teacher directed introduction
- Skim for ideas and related details
- Summarize
  - Dependent on prior knowledge and judgment
  - Must decide what is important
Using Children's Trade Books

- Carol Hurst's Literature Website
- Picture Books as a Social Studies Resource in the Elementary Classroom
- Great New Picture Books to Teach Social Studies K-3 by Tarry Lindquist
- Using Fiction to Support History Teaching
  - http://www.nis.org/ERICSearch/downloadDetails.action?irn=moe&infid=20070207
- Children's Literature Offers Lessons in Decision Making
  - http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/5000/5290.html
- More Than Just Pictures: Using Picture Story Books to Broaden Young Learners' Social Consciousness
- 50 Multicultural Books Every Child Should Read – NEA
  - http://www.nea.org/readacross/resources/50multibooks.html
- 10 Quick Ways to Analyze Children's Books for Racism and Sexism
  - http://www.birchlane.davis.ca.us/library/10quick.htm

Summary

- **Key Ideas**
  - Teachers need to pay special attention to the meaning-making process.
  - Children do not make meaning in a vacuum.
  - Children read and write to accomplish goals.
  - Children need a well planned curriculum that includes opportunities to develop literacy skills.
  - Make reading a natural part of the social studies instruction.

Flat Stanley

- **Parts of a Story PRE-VOC Activity**
- **Sharing Lessons**