

Creating a Sense of Place: Using Multiple Literacies  
To Help Students Understand Geography

by

Charlene Bustos, B.A., M.A.

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Approved

Dr. Reese H. Todd  
Co-chairperson

Dr. Mellinee Lesley  
Co-chairperson

Dr. Peggy Johnson

Dr. Sally McMillan

Ralph Ferguson  
Dean of the Graduate School

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## **ABSTRACT**

Globalization is ever-apparent in our economy, our media, and our political stature, suggesting geography truly is a life-skill. In the current test-driven educational climate, certain subjects which are not under the high-stakes testing agenda get short-changed due to time-constraints and administrative pressures. One such subject is geography—a sub-topic under the umbrella of social studies. The expository text in the state-adopted textbooks provides some basic information of the topic being studied, but is frequently written in a dry, difficult, convoluted style, which often inhibits student engagement. Textbooks do not contain sufficient text or in-depth information on topics to offer experiences students need to develop critical and evaluative reading skills.

This qualitative case study investigated the strategies employed by one fifth grade social studies classroom teacher as she used multiple literacies to teach social studies with a focus on geography. Data sources included detailed field notes of researcher's observations, questionnaires and surveys (teacher and students), focus groups, transcripts of interviews with the teacher and participating students, teacher lesson plans, teacher planning resources, teacher and researcher reflective journals, and student work samples of classroom assignments.

Findings revealed three themes for supporting geographic learning: storytelling as a vehicle for transmediation; writing and drawing as tools for representation; and authentic learning in a socially-safe environment. Findings also revealed that a

classroom teacher can teach and meet the state and local standards while at the same time nurture an enthusiasm for learning. Vertical alignment of curriculum, teacher collaboration and student choices within parameters were key elements of the results. In general, conclusions indicate implications for the education community in the areas of classroom teacher practices, school administrator involvement and support, teacher educator institutions, curricula writers, and educational researchers.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Background**

Since the terrorist attacks in the United States in 2001, discussions about citizenship and patriotism have never been more central to the everyday world of American citizens. Bednarz (2003) noted the “9/11” event “sparked a lively debate about the nature of citizenship, the best ways to develop ‘good citizens’, and the appropriate responsibility of schools in this endeavour” (p. 72). Even so, Bednarz (2003) emphasized, “The 1998 National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) in Civics showed disturbing gaps in students’ civic knowledge” (p. 73). Bednarz further argues “citizenship in the current conservative political climate is limited and focused almost exclusively on ‘character education’...core values such as honesty, integrity, loyalty.....admirable traits, they are not attributes or skills essential in a representative democracy like the United States” (2003, p. 75).

Historically geography has played an important role in an attempt to create a unified national identity and strengthen an informed citizenry capable of participating in the democratic goal-setting of the United States of America. When immigration rates were at an all-time high in the early part of the twentieth century, geography was a key component of the social studies curriculum in public schools because it was believed to support citizenship education (Bednarz, 2003, p. 73). Immigration is once again on the

rise, with rates rising again during the past two decades (Bednarz, 2003, p. 75). Geography is often linked to curricular notions of citizenship because geography provides awareness of and knowledge about people, places, events and environments, as well as the relationship to political, economic and social issues (Bednarz, 2003, p. 76). According to Macken (2003), students need to receive training early in their academic careers in “using information, skills, and concepts to make informed decisions. The study of geography supports the development of those skills” (p. 63). “With a strong grasp of geography, people are better equipped to solve issues at not only the local level but also the global level” (National Geography Education Standards Project, 1994: 24). In effect, teaching to support geographic literacy involves developing critical literacy skills which help “students to see and question the dominant power themes in our society and world, such as racism, sexism, corporate and media hegemonies, and the effects on the environment of individuals and systems” (Wolk, 2003, pp. 101-102). Such connections between critical literacy and citizenship place geographic literacy in a position of importance for educating children and preparing them to be participating citizens.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Globalization is ever-apparent in our economy, our media, and our political stature, suggesting geography truly is a life-skill. In the current test-driven educational climate, certain subjects not under the testing umbrella get short-changed due to time-constraints and administrative pressures. Paquette and Kaufman (2008) contend that

“The segment of the school day in which young Americans traditionally learned about civic responsibility, geography, history, economics, and politics has never been as threatened as it is currently” (p. 187). Paquette and Kaufman (2008) further lament that “all or part of the allotted social studies period is being creatively transformed to provide additional preparation time for high-stakes reading tests” and stress concern as educators and as parents for the “civic void that could result” (p. 187). Educators and administrators are daily faced with the grim reality of the federal mandates of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requiring annual reading and math testing in grades three through eight, which oftentimes results in a “hierarchy of content-area importance” (Vogler, 2003, p. 207). Such a hierarchy leaves certain content subjects behind. Vogler (2003) suggests that “at the bottom of the hierarchy are those content areas that are not tested” or those “that are tested but do not have a passing-score requirement for graduation”--further reducing the amount of instructional time teachers spend on the “untested” areas (p. 207). Basing instructional decisions (time spent on teaching) on tested versus non-tested academic areas “is not intended to improve the overall quality or cohesiveness of an educational program...but designed to protect students against failing the high-stakes test” (Vogler, 2003, p. 207). While passing high-stakes tests is indeed important, it should not be the guiding force behind instructional planning.

When teachers actually do get to spend instructional time on content areas such as social studies and geography, the expository text in the state-adopted textbooks provides some basic information of the topic being studied, but is frequently written in a

dry, difficult, convoluted style, which often inhibits student engagement. According to Nolet, Xin, Gomez, Renouf, Iskold, and DaCosta (2001), "Textbooks that contain mostly factual information would be unlikely to model the manipulation of complex concepts or principles or provide sufficient practice to permit learners to generalize problem solving and thinking in real world contexts" (pp. 153-154). In essence, textbooks do not contain sufficient text or in-depth information on topics to offer the experiences students need in order to develop critical literacy and evaluative reading skills (Ivey & Fisher, p. 71). Many textbooks can be found difficult to read and lacking in coverage of topics.

Thus the problem exists that teachers and school administrators need to become knowledgeable about multiple methods for integrating the curriculum to enhance social studies and geography to meet the ever-present need of preparing students to be informed citizens.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of my study was to explore the role of the teacher in leading students toward a development of geographic literacy through an integration of children's literature, geography, and multiple literacies within a social studies class. In our increasingly global society, citizens must develop an awareness of people and places and how the cultures of those people and places are interconnected with their lives. Teachers have a tremendous influence on students' understanding of place and culture depending on how such content information is presented. I consider the teacher's role

to be important for the reason that students need to be active and decisive in their development as learners, instead of passive consumers of knowledge.

The questions guiding my research consisted of the following:

1. How does a fifth grade social studies teacher use multiple literacies to support children's geographic learning?
2. In what ways do the instructional strategies the teacher employs support geographic literacy?
3. How does the teacher plan and make decisions about pedagogical approaches involving multiple literacies?

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study was grounded in two theoretical domains pertaining to teaching and learning—the theory of responsive teaching and the theory of situated learning. Both domains of study informed my thinking as a researcher through the lenses they brought to bear on my framing of the problem to be studied, development of research questions, analysis of data, and interpretation of findings. More specifically, each domain offered me insights into productive ways of teaching and learning.

#### **Responsive Teaching**

Research on teaching has followed a long tradition of seeking to discover the qualities of effective and influential teachers. Within this body of work, Ruddell and Unrau's (2004) theory of responsive teaching emerged as pivotal to understanding the successful interactions students experience in literacy instruction within classroom settings. Some characteristics of influential or responsive teachers include caring about their students (and showing they care); helping students understand and solve not only

academic but personal problems; displaying visible enthusiasm about what they teach; adapting instruction to suit or meet the individual needs of students (to include motives, interests, and aptitudes); having high expectations for all students; using motivating and effective teaching strategies; and engaging students in intellectual discovery (Ruddell & Unrau, 2004a, p. 954). A responsive teacher supports concepts such as student choice (within parameters established by the teacher); the development of self as learner; a classroom learning environment which emphasizes discussion to negotiate meaning; and opportunities for readers/students to “sharpen their focus of intention on reading and meaning construction” (Ruddell & Unrau, 2004a, p. 955). According to Ruddell and Unrau, there are three major categories of psychological and instructional factors for readers and teachers: “the developing self, instructional orientation, and task-engagement resources” (2004a, p. 955). By understanding that *developing self* is an ongoing event, teachers can convey the notion to students that nothing is permanent—that opportunities arise to make changes—that to develop a sense of self is to understand that individuals pass through a “forever-to-be-revised sense of reality of the self” (Ruddell & Unrau, 2004a, p. 960). Responsive teachers recognize and understand that students’ motives for learning may be influenced by their lives outside school, and teachers need to reaffirm each individual student as a worthy individual, building up his or her sense of self-worth and supporting his or her sense of self-efficacy (2004a, p. 961). Expectations which often influence the focus of intention can be shaped or limited by others. Through developing relationships of trust and caring, by

acknowledging students' interests and beliefs, responsive teachers set a foundation for guiding students to become self-regulated learners, which is the ultimate goal of the teacher. One strategy for promoting self-understanding encourages the use of children's literature by allowing students time for reading and reflective writing to make connections between themselves and the book characters (2004a, p. 964). Rosenblatt (1975) suggests that children become "aware of the personalities of different kinds of people" and may increase their social sensitivity through extended contact with literature (pp. 175-176). Using children's literature and providing opportunities for reading and reflective writing appear to be crucial elements of this strategy.

*Instructional orientation* involves achievement goals, task values, sociocultural values and beliefs, and learner stances. Achievement goals stress the engagement of the learner in selecting, structuring, and making sense of achievement experience, either mastery/task-oriented or performance/ego-oriented. The mastery or task-oriented goals reflect students who are "intrinsically motivated to acquire knowledge and skills that lead to their becoming more competent" (Ruddell & Unrau, 2004a, p. 965). Students pursuing performance or ego-oriented goals are "eager to seek opportunities to demonstrate their skills or knowledge in a competitive, public arena" (p. 965). Responsive teachers can influence students to adopt the mastery or task-oriented goals by creating environments that support "self-improvement, discovery, engagement in meaningful tasks, and practicality" (p. 965). Classroom environments which stress conceptual understanding, collaborative learning, minimal competition,

and student participation in curricular decision-making reflect responsive teaching and stimulate student's self-development (Ruddell & Unrau, 2004a, p. 966). Responsive teachers strive to achieve student-centered classroom environments.

*Task-engagement resources* refer to "information structures that enable a teacher or a reader to undertake a learning task" (Ruddell & Unrau, 2004a, p. 968). Such resources provide cognitive tools for accomplishing tasks. There is a parallel between the reader/student resources and the teacher's resources. Since I am discussing the responsive teacher, I will discuss the teacher's instructional design resources, which include "knowledge of students and their meaning-construction process, knowledge of literature and content areas, teaching strategies, world knowledge, and metacognitive knowledge" (p. 968). Possession of such resources allows the teacher to create "learning environments that nourish the developing self and activate students' instructional orientation" (p. 969). Creating optimum conditions for literacy learning is of prime importance to responsive teachers, and research conducted by Cambourne (2000) suggests that classes where children believed reading and writing were extremely important activities to engage in reflected a "function of the learning contexts that the teacher deliberately and consciously established" (p. 513). Supplementing the textbook by utilizing quality children's literature to design lessons and activities in support of the teaching objective enables teachers to exercise their commitment to "allow students to motivate themselves, expand their intellects, and enliven their imaginations" (Fried, 2001, p. 102). Such intertextual weaving or

illumination of the text reinforces the message from Burke, who states “each text should be as a strand in some larger weave, contributing a unique voice or perspective to the larger narrative of the class” (2001, p. 84). Perhaps a metaphor would include quilting the texts to develop concepts.

Students are motivated to read and learn when the teacher establishes a classroom environment that encourages students to engage with reading and provides opportunities for students to interact in classroom community while participating in the meaning-negotiation process. These classroom supports are apparent when the teacher employs teaching strategies that activate prior student knowledge, assign personally relevant tasks, and encourage students to actively construct meanings through individual, partner, and group work (Ruddell & Unrau, 2004a, pp. 969-972). The resulting interactive classroom community reflects responsive and rigorous instruction.

### **Situated Cognition, Socio-Cognitive Theories**

The other theory that provided a framework for this research study was that of *situated cognition* or *situated learning*. *Situated cognition* focuses on “the structures and interrelations within activity systems” (Kirshner & Whitson, 1997, p. 6). By restating the importance of a theory of knowledge, *situated cognition* gains in popularity if one considers that “knowledge is decidedly social and always situationally contingent” (St. Julien, 1997, p. 264). According to Gee (2004),

Meaning in language is tied to people’s experiences of situated action in the material and social world. Furthermore, these experiences (perceptions, feelings, actions, and interactions) are stored in the mind or brain...in something

like dynamic images tied to perception both of the world and of our own bodies, internal states, and feelings. (p. 117)

The social language mentioned by Gee (2004) refers to a particular socially situated identity—being at a given place at a particular time, we each take on certain identities (doctor, lawyer, teacher, child, informal dinner talk, chit-chat between friends, etc.)(p. 128). Through involvement in school-type academic activities, teachers encourage students to co-construct meaning and become active producers of knowledge (Gee, 2004, p. 129). Such a socially-situated identity often reflects a student’s self-worth, and his or her highest concern is to protect a sense of ability (Ruddell & Unrau, 2004a, p. 962). While all students come to school with language abilities, the specific verbal and written abilities tied to detailed school-based practices might not have been a part of their particular cultural identity—their social situation. Such identity and self-worth may affect a child’s participation in classroom activities; therefore, it is crucial for the teacher (and in this case, the researcher) to be aware of these situated identities (Gee, 2004, p. 122; Ruddell & Unrau, 2004a, p. 962). Environment plays a fundamental role in knowledge acquisition and interpretation (Langer, 2004, p. 1042). Bruner posits that education is crucial to the formation of self and that education “should be conducted with that fact in mind” (1996, p. 35). Students’ identity and self-worth are key factors for all educators to ponder when planning lessons.

The influence of the teacher, the social context of the classroom, the text being read and the reader/student all impact the meaning-construction process (Ruddell &

Unrau, 2004b, p. 1463). Several key assumptions implicitly underlie components of the sociocognitive interactive model of reading delineated by Ruddell & Unrau (2004b):

1. Readers—even beginning readers—are active theory builders and hypothesis testers.
2. Language and reading performance is directly related to the reader’s environment.
3. The driving force behind language performance and reading growth is the reader’s need to obtain meaning.
4. Oral and written language developments, which affect the thinking process, contribute directly to the development of reading ability.
5. Readers construct meanings not only of printed manuscripts but also of events, speech, and behaviors as they “read” gestures, images, symbols, signs, and signals that are embedded in a social and cultural environment.
6. Texts are constantly reinvented as readers construct different understandings for them in a hermeneutic circle. Meanings for texts are dynamic, not static, as individuals, texts, and contexts change and interact.
7. The role of the teacher is critical in negotiating and facilitating meaning construction in the text and social context of the classroom. (p. 1463)

Since students spend so much time within the classroom walls, the environment of the classroom definitely affects their learning. Bruner (1996) discusses the culture of education and the culture of the classroom as it pertains to the shaping of individual minds during the process of *meaning making* (p. 3). Such *meaning making* is culturally situated within encounters of the world and daily exchanges between individuals and events. Bruner (1996) suggests that “human beings deliberately teach others,” thus the critical importance of peer interaction and collaboration (p. 20). The classroom serves as a subcommunity involving teacher and students interacting to tell, show, and learn (Bruner, 1996, p. 20). Such a sub-community of learners reflects Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development (ZPD) theory, which in part, sees the “level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in

collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Developing a classroom into a sub-community provides students an opportunity to be a citizen of that community.

Recognizing that classroom discourse involves teachers and students communicating, curriculum and instruction can be viewed as a domain for conversation—conversations which provide the “primary means of teaching and learning” (Applebee, 1996, p. 37). Schooling should be about knowing and doing, providing students opportunities to participate in knowledge-in-action (Applebee, 1996, p. 36). For example, rather than merely learning the characteristics of literature, students need to talk about the literature they are reading; instead of reading the results of a science experiment, they need to actually carry out the science experiment; and instead of memorizing dates of historical events, they need to read about and discuss such events (Applebee, 1996, p. 36). “Children’s talk about and use of text is guided, then, not only by scaffolding interactions but also by their evolving understanding of event purposes, social relations, and textual expectations—understanding gained from and negotiated by oral participation” (Dyson, 2004, p. 152). Talk about text—students participating in meaningful classroom discussions—stimulates development of thinking skills.

Talking about a text is just one way to reinforce meaning-making. Emotion is another. Since emotion drives attention, which drives learning and memory, emotion is “very important to the education process” (Sylwester, 1995, p. 72). Engagement in

metacognitive activities that “encourage students to talk about their emotions, to listen to the feelings of classmates, and to think about the motivations of people” (Sylwester, 1995, p. 76) should be an instructional focus of schools, easily implemented through the use of *WHY* questions rather than *what* and *where* (basic knowledge-level questions). The disciplines of social studies and geography lend themselves to *WHY* questions, such as “Why did the pioneers continue to settle in the western part of the United States?”

As the purpose of my study was to explore the role of the teacher in leading students toward a development of geographic literacy, the theoretical frameworks I selected to guide my research study directly involve the teacher developing a relationship with students through careful planning of meaningful instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners with a focus on student choice, needs, and interests. In turn, the students need to accept responsibility for their learning by becoming active participants in classroom discussions and assignments. By establishing a caring teaching and learning classroom community, the teacher sets the stage as a role model for relationships and encourages interactions between teacher and students as well as between students and their peers. These interactions then facilitate the transactions of learning between teacher and students wherein both learn from each other (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 291). Dewey and Bentley posit that the involved participants both undergo change as a result of the transaction (1949, pp. 270-271), thereby establishing a precedent for teachers and students as life-long learners—an excellent example of teachers setting the stage for learning.

The theories of *responsive teaching* and *situated cognition* provided the framework for my research study and thus provided a lens that helped me understand the phenomenon taking place in the fifth-grade social studies classroom. By understanding these theories, I was better able to attend to the events I observed.

### **Definition of Terms**

I applied the following terms and definitions for this research study.

**Authentic Learning:** Examples of authentic learning include lessons which involve active student participation in learning about real people, places and events; hands-on activities creating culminating projects; reenactments; text-based & student-led discussions; opportunities to ask questions; partner and group work; (as opposed to individual seatwork with paper and pencil worksheets).

**Critical Literacy:** Critical literacy is about how we see and interact with the world; it is about having, as a regular part of one's life, the skills and desire to evaluate society and the world (Wolk, 2003).

**Instrumental Case Study:** An instrumental case study is a particular case which provides insight into an issue or refinement of theory (Stake, 1994, p. 237).

**Intertextuality:** Intertextuality is the construct that "meaning derives from readers' transaction(s) with the text in which [they] apply their knowledge of literacy and social convention to that text" (Beach et al., 1994).

**Literacy:** Literacy is the ability of a person to engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning in his or her group and community

and also enable him or her to continue to use reading, writing, and calculation for his or her own and the community's development. According to Brozo and Simpson (1999), "*Literacy* (including reading, writing, speaking, and listening) is a meaning-making and meaning-using process whereby meaning is constructed through the interaction between the learner (in all of his or her complexity), the text (in all of its complexity), and instructional variables within the context of the learning situation" (p. 7). Literacy is also used to refer to competence in a special field such as computer literacy, geographic literacy, etc.

**Literacy event:** A literacy event is a communication act that represents any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of participants' interactions and their interpretive processes.

**Multiple Literacies:** Multiple literacies include representative types of literacy: media literacy, real world literacy, television literacy, visual literacy, etc. In 1996, the New London Group formed a theory of Multiliteracies predicated on broadened definitions of text as well as critical literacy goals of fostering representational equity in texts and literacy pedagogy. Specifically included are six important modes of meaning: linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, spatial, and multimodal. These Multiliteracies play a key role in the communications channels of the increasingly cultural and linguistically diverse society of the world.

**Scaffolding:** Scaffolding refers to the instructional support provided by a teacher to a student through the use of directives and clues using dialogue to guide the learner's

participation in a learning task. Such instruction enables the student to successfully complete a task that he or she could not complete independently.

**Semiotics:** Semiotics is the theory of signs [sign systems] and their relations and manifestations. It is the broad field of studies which examines how all kinds of signs, not just linguistic signs, function.

**Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS):** The TEKS are the curriculum standards for the state of Texas public schools ranging from kindergarten through twelfth grade.

**Text:** Text refers to the entirety of a linguistic communication, as a conversation and its situational context; **(2)** a segment of spoken or written language available for description or analysis; **(3)** the topic or theme of a discourse, as *a text of a lecture*.

**Tradebooks:** Tradebooks relate to the books that are available at libraries and bookstores in a variety of genres, such as picture storybooks, fiction, nonfiction, biographies, poetry, etc. The term tradebooks is often used when comparing literature to textbooks.

**Transmediation:** Transmediation means the translation of content from one sign system into another. Transmediation is grounded in the idea that alternative sign systems (linguistic, gestural, pictorial, musical, constructive, and so on) are available for making sense of human experience.

**Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD):** Vygotsky (1978) defines the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) as “the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” ( p. 85).

### **Summary**

Using multiple literacies provides teachers the opportunity to integrate the curriculum to enhance critical literacy through the content areas of social studies and geography. The theoretical frameworks of responsive teaching and situated cognition informed my study and created a new perspective for me as a researcher. In this research study, I documented the various strategies employed by the classroom teacher to support students learning about geography.

In chapter two I provide a review of the professional literature related to this study. The qualitative case study methodology is explained in detail in chapter three. Chapter four presents the findings based on an analysis of the data collected during the study. Strategies employed by the teacher and interactions with the students are described in great detail in chapter four, which situates the reader in the center of the social studies classroom. A discussion of the findings, implications for educators, and recommendations for further research are discussed in chapter five.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Several research domains surfaced as being vital to my study. Understanding pertinent literature within these domains aided in guiding and informing the study. The domains identified were geography education, content area literacy, critical literacy, integrated curriculum, multiple literacies, responsive teaching, classroom environment, and learner motivation and engagement.

#### **Geography Education**

In an attempt to communicate the importance of learning geography, Shearer (2007) described the uses of geography and recognized that “geography is a living discipline—it is used to interpret the past, to understand the present, and to plan for the future (p. 5). The National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education (1999) articulated clear beliefs about the importance of learning geography as they endeavored to encourage parents and teachers to expose children ages two through five to geography and stimulate their curiosity in geography through simplified meaningful activities that incorporate the everyday world which surrounds them.

Geography is a way of thinking, of asking questions, and of observing and appreciating the world around us. It gives us tools we need to move about in the world, to make wise decisions about our environment, and to relate more meaningfully to people from other lands and cultures. (p. 45)

Similarly, Macken (2003) argued that students need to receive training early in their academic careers in “using information, skills, and concepts to make informed decisions.

The study of geography supports the development of those skills” (p. 63). Gregg and Sekeres (2006) explain how geography can support the learning of certain skills. “Geography lessons are full of activities that help children identify, describe, and categorize objects and processes” (p. 103). One teaching strategy which allows students to apply such skills and decision-making is problem-based learning (PBL), a learner-centered methodology. Pawson, Fournier, Haigh, Muniz, Trafford, and Vajocski (2006) provided insights into PBL and discussed the strategy in relation to its potential for the teaching of geography (p. 105). PBL is described as ‘problem first learning’ where the problem is usually set by a teacher, and usually involves collaboration between disciplines. “Such experiences are said to enhance means of managing—or synthesizing—knowledge, or of learning how to learn, rather than attempting to assimilate content before entering employment” (Pawson, et al., 2006, p. 105). Learning how to learn should be the number one goal for all.

Zarillo (2008) shares reasons that geography presents “a unique challenge to teachers, primarily because geographic information is presented in an unfamiliar format” (pp. 306-307). While students are introduced to expository text in textbooks and reference books such as dictionaries and encyclopedias, reading and studying geography involves navigating and comprehending maps, globes, charts and graphs (Zarillo, 2008, p. 306). Learning map skills remains an essential element of geography, and some articles provide suggested strategies for teaching such skills in the primary

grades through the use of children's literature (Gandy, 2006; Landt, 2007). As readers are no doubt aware by now, geography is much more than learning map skills.

Geography involves learning about locations, landforms, people, places, events, and how humans interact with the environment. Teachers knowledgeable of the five themes of geography and the six essential elements of geography identified in *Geography for Life: National Geography Standards from the National Council for Geographic Education* (1994) can enhance geographic literacy throughout the curriculum. The standards identified by the National Geographic Society in 1994 focus on six essential elements which expound on the five themes of geography: the world in spatial terms, places and regions, physical systems, human systems, environment and society, and the uses of geography. By going beyond the basic map skills and intertwining the six essential elements of geography, teachers allow students opportunities to understand the variety of humans, environments, and cultures within our world (Lee, 2008, p. 138). Through this understanding of humans, environment, and culture within our world, students can apply decision-making skills and participate as involved citizens.

Miller, Keller, and Yore (2005) provide a definition for Geographic Information Literacy (GIL), which is "the possession of concepts, abilities, and habits of mind that allow an individual to understand and use geographic information properly" (pp. 243-244). The authors argue that GIL should involve three areas: traditional, digital, and information. They conducted online surveys to obtain expert information regarding GIL

for inclusion in the K-12 curriculum. Many adults struggle with basic map tasks, and the authors provide research which suggests that the problem lies with “how the subject matter is taught at the elementary and secondary grade levels” (Miller, Keller & Yore, 2005, p. 245). Graphs and charts are provided delineating areas included in the online survey. Some results surprised the authors, since comments and additional interviews revealed a general concern in North America about how little geography is offered in the K-12 curriculum.

One strategy for going beyond basic map skills involves using sports to teach geography (DeChano & Shelley, 2004, p. 185-191; Edgington & Hyman, 2005, pp. 113-117). Using sports to illustrate a focus on specific places would provide motivation for many students. Other geography themes or elements such as how humans interact with environmental conditions could be extensions of the original sports-focused lesson (DeChano & Shelley, 2004, p. 185). Given the high degree of global visibility and popularity of sports teams within our contemporary world, such a strategy for teaching geography definitely warrants further research and development.

Another approach to teaching geography to young learners is predicated upon the incorporation of multiple literacies. Through creative use of multiple literacies in the forms of aerial maps, children’s picture storybooks, and student responses using colorful drawings and paintings, Todd and Delahunty (2007) discovered that children exhibited:

a wide range of understanding as students grappled with the concept of time [and that] The transitional developmental stages of the children were clearly

represented in their work. They continued to work on geography skills as they tried to understand characteristics of places and how people modify the environment. (p. 14)

While this aerial map geography lesson may appear to be just another “map skill lesson,” in reality the lesson involved scientific observation, problem-solving, questioning “why and how,” and predictions of the future.

In addition to the role of multiple literacies in geographic literacy, several researchers have noted the important role geographic literacy plays in citizenship education (Bednarz, 2003; Carano & Berson, 2007; Pike & Clough, 2005). For instance, Bednarz (2003) suggested “a new, innovative role for geography and geography education in citizenship education – through the skillful use of information and communication technologies (ICT) such as Internet sites, geographic information system-produced, Internet-based maps, and spatial decision support systems” (pp. 72-73). Knowledge of geography and how to use geographic skills can aide in preparing “students to work *in* society,” and to “think critically *about* society” (Bednarz, 2003, p. 75). In effect Bednarz argued geography educators significantly contribute to citizenship education through awareness of people, places, and cultures.

An additional aspect to developing citizenship through the emphasis of learning geography is to assist in breaking stereotypes—this is apparent not only from adult views (Carano & Berson, 2007, pp. 65-70), but from the voices of children (Pike & Clough, 2005, pp. 356-363). Both authors stress the importance of learning more than “location and place” by delving deeper into the culture of people and places, of

similarities and differences, and of the realities of everyday lives. Such learning reinforces Macken's supposition that the study of geography stimulates decision-making skills (2003, p. 63). Classroom opportunities to develop decision-making skills encourage critical literacy.

The importance of geography in a child's life is further supported when reviewing the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKs) academic and curricular standards established by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). The geographic elements come under the umbrella of Social Studies, and TEA suggests integration within the social studies strands for enhanced comprehension. For example, one of the TEKs for fifth grade social studies recommends teachers provide opportunities for greater understanding through integrated curriculum across academic disciplines. Specifically the standard states:

(3) The eight strands of the essential knowledge and skills for social studies are intended to be integrated for instructional purposes with the history and geography strands establishing a sense of time and a sense of place. Skills listed in the geography and social studies skills strands in subsection (b) of this section should be incorporated into the teaching of all essential knowledge and skills for social studies. A greater depth of understanding of complex content material can be attained when integrated social studies content from the various disciplines and critical-thinking skills are taught together.

In the words of Grosvenor (2007), "Geography education for young learners and their teachers has been shown to improve overall achievement, even in interdisciplinary instruction" (p. 6). Grosvenor goes on to provide several examples to support this claim when referring to GeoLiteracy and GeoMath (2007, p. 6). Teacher training in geography and subsequent interdisciplinary instruction to elementary school students reflects

increased geographic knowledge and achievement on tests. Grosvenor is the Chairman of the Board of Trustees for the National Geographic Society and remains an active leader in the reform movement for improving the quality of geographic education.

The works mentioned within the geography domain reveal several key elements. First, that learning geography is important for children to be informed citizens within a global society; second, that studying geography stimulates questioning and decision-making skills; third, that suggested teaching strategies are available particularly in the primary grades, and middle to secondary grades; however, review of the literature reveals limited research or reading available in the area of intermediate grade-level teaching strategies for grades three through five.

### **Content Area Literacy**

Draper (2008) describes “literacy as a lens” for viewing content instruction and instructional problems within content-area classrooms” (p. 79). As a result of her content-area literacy study, Draper (2008) discovered that “content-area literacy is more valuable to content-area teachers when it makes space for nonprint/non-language-based texts, and when teachers use print texts in discipline-appropriate ways. The focus should be on helping students gain facility with the texts already present and valued in content-area classrooms” (p. 77) An instrumental concept of Draper’s study was that content-area educators maintain “a clear vision of the aims of the content instruction” (2008, p. 76). Similarly Myers and Savage (2005) respond, “Content-area reading involves more than teaching students reading skills; students need to learn how

to apply instructional strategies that can help them construct knowledge and discover meaning” (p. 18). By interspersing reading with questioning, teachers give students opportunities to “explore beyond the textbook” (Myers & Savage, 2005, p. 21). For example, when a teacher uses a children’s tradebook as a classroom read-aloud, interspersing questions at key junctures in the story such as “How do you feel about the fact that his Ma challenged the drifter with a rifle?” spark students’ interest and opportunities to explore their ideas. This exploration beyond the textbook requires students to reason and “stimulates students to think critically so that they arrive at a hypothesis or conclusion” (Myers & Savage 2005, p. 21).

Daniels and Zemelman (2004) disclose reasons why secondary content-area teachers became teachers in the first place—not to teach-to-the-test or to raise test scores, but to share knowledge of a particular subject area (e.g., math, science, history) with children—to engage young minds and encourage enthusiasm for gaining knowledge (pp. 8-9). Goals such as these require that students be able to read in order to learn about various content area subjects; therefore, content area teachers care about reading (Daniels & Zemelman, pp. 8-10). Since content-area teachers are steeped in their content environment, they sometimes forget that not everyone grasps concepts quickly and enthusiastically. Lapp, Flood and Farnan (2004) point out that content area teachers should be well-versed not only in the content of their particular discipline, but also competent in strategies that will assist them in teaching their field of expertise to students (p. ix). Understanding text-related strategies and methods for effectively

conveying such strategies to students increases the teacher's ability to successfully execute content-area lessons (p. ix). While much of the research mentioned "secondary content-area teachers," it also pertains to intermediate content-area teachers, especially when so many elementary schools are departmentalized in third, fourth and fifth grades.

Using curriculum standards to establish goals and themes, teachers typically begin content-area instruction with state-adopted textbooks. The expository text provides some basic information of the topic being studied. One problem with textbooks is that they are written in a dry, difficult, convoluted style at an often too-high reading level, which often inhibits student engagement for struggling readers (Olness, 2007, p. 2; Ivey & Fisher, 2006, p. 71). Many students possess a sincere desire to learn, but are often intimidated by text that is difficult to read. In an in-depth research study conducted by Pitcher, Martinez, Dicembre, Fewster and McCormick (2010), interviews with students revealed struggles with comprehension as "students also all expressed concerns that they had the most problems reading in content area classes and received no help with strategies on how to understand those materials" (p. 643).

Compound this unfriendly and difficultly to read text with the fact that textbooks do not contain sufficient text or in-depth information on topics to offer sufficient learning experiences, students need to develop critical and evaluative reading skills (Ivey & Fisher, 2006, p. 71). Responsive teachers recognize the inadequacy of textbooks and need to plan for deeper and more thorough teaching of content area topics. Such

delving deeper into a topic requires illuminating the text through the active role “of teaching, of performing an act that is responsive, that cannot be scripted given the inherent complexity of students’ needs and experiences” (Burke, 2001, p. 163). Burke (2001) provides specific examples to educators for illuminating texts and showing students various strategies to read and evaluate such sources as the Internet, textbooks, genres of literature, information sources, and visual images. By providing students guidance and opportunities to interact with a variety of readable, high-interest texts, teachers “support meaningful conversations that develop their capacities—for empathy, for insight, for reflection—as people” (Burke, 2001, p. 84) and stimulate opportunities for struggling or unmotivated readers to read more (Ivey & Fisher, 2006, p. 71). In such instances, teachers carry out differentiated instruction.

Graves (1999) emphasizes that content teaching often focuses on the memorization of dates, names, places, or causes of particular wars with little or no regard for the human story aspect of *how* people lived and *why* they responded to situations as they did (pp. 2-3). Such limited instruction does little to motivate or engage students to develop higher-order thinking and decision-making skills. “It takes real, multidimensional characters to engage children in the drama of history, and in a democracy it is especially important that future citizens feel a sense of engagement in the events of the past” (Graves, 1999, p. 3). Incorporating the use of children’s literature at a variety of reading levels into a unit of study enhances such opportunities. Research studies such as the one conducted by Smith (1993) support incorporating the

use of children's literature in the form of tradebooks to solidify content-area learning. Results of Smith's study revealed increased student learning of content information and a unifying effect through whole-class instruction using historical novels as the guiding text where slower and faster readers "participated in the same discussions and worked together on the same projects" with collaborative activities such as "making things, dramatizing scenes, doing follow-up research, discussing and debating issues, questioning guest speakers, and reviewing each other's writing" (1993, p. 70).

While much of the literature focuses on middle school and high school adolescent learning, these same concerns and teaching strategies apply to pre-adolescents in elementary school. Moss (2005) elicits that "Once associated exclusively with middle and high school instruction, today, as never before, educators are directing their attention to the importance of encouraging content area literacy instruction at even the earliest levels" (p. 46).

### **Critical Literacy**

Concerned citizens and progressive educators might well look to a philosophy of "critical pedagogy" to gear public school education towards opportunities for students to develop higher order and critical thinking skills—in other words, critical literacy. Within the United States, "Teacher autonomy, independence, and control over work is being severely reduced while workplace knowledge and control is given over more and more to the hands of the administration" (McLaren, 2003, p. 69). McLaren goes on to imply "Standardized tests are touted as the means to ensure the educational system is

aligned well with the global economy“ (2003, p. 71). Critical pedagogy, as outlined by McLaren (2003) has many operative principles and McLaren delineated several “salient features“ (p. 72). According to McLaren (2003),

first and foremost, it [critical pedagogy] is an approach to curriculum production, educational policymaking and teaching practices that challenges the received ‘hard sciences’ conception of knowledge as ‘neutral’ or ‘objective’ and that is directed towards understanding the political nature of education in all its manifestations in everyday life. (p. 72)

These ideals are founded in the writings of “Paulo Freire in Brazil and John Dewey and social reconstructionists writing in the post-depression years in the USA” (McLaren, 2003, p. 72). Providing further guidance, McLaren explained that “Critical pedagogy has, after all, joined antiracist and feminist struggles in order to articulate a democratic social order built around the imperatives of diversity, tolerance, and equal access to material resources” (2003, p. 81). Educators at all levels might well benefit from an awareness of the philosophy of critical pedagogy.

Critical pedagogy that involves teaching critical literacy finds support from others. Luke (2003) emphatically states,

What is at stake in literacy education is what we teach people to “do” with texts—intellectually and culturally, socially and politically. Nations, communities, cultures, and institutions have always deliberately shaped these practices. We are not exempt, nor is our teaching simply a neutral, technical, or scientific matter. Our work involves helping kids decide which texts are worth reading and writing, how, where, and to what ends and purposes. This is an ethical and social responsibility. The imperative of learning to live together ethically and justly has been put back on the table. Our students need a literacy education that provides critical engagements with globalized flows of information, image, text, and discourse. That is, we could begin to view literacy and multiliteracies as part of students’ tool kits for understanding, critiquing, and

engaging with the global flows of images and texts that they confront daily. (p. 20)

Broad concepts of critical literacy exist. Lesley (2005) relates “critical literacy has been defined in the field of education as reading and writing pedagogy that examines an omnipresent, unstated social agenda of power” (p. 323). Teaching and promoting critical literacy involves multiple aspects and consists of no one singular teaching strategy. Further interpretation by Lesley (2005) suggests “critical literacy is a response to social constructions of one’s peers, culture, family, classrooms, neighbors, communities, and world” (p. 323). Incorporating a critical theory perspective, Alvermann, Phelps and Gillis (2010) enhance the concept of critical literacy by explaining, “Developing adolescents’ critical awareness through literacy practices that engage them in interpreting and evaluating all forms of text (print, nonprint, image-based, and verbal) is an important aspect of guiding students in their response to reading” (p. 297). Because theories of new literacies (citations needed) were largely derived from examinations into critical literacy, in the context of a critical literacy philosophy, multiple forms of text can be read and interpreted for purposes of examining replication of social hegemony, authorial perspective, and ideology. In effect, such a broadened view of text entails an examination of multiple literacies.

Critical literacy theories support the citizenship goals of geographic literacy as espoused by Bednarz (2003) when stressing that knowledge of geography and how to use geographic skills can aide in preparing “students to work *in* society,” and to “think critically *about* society” (p. 75). Wolk (2003) notes that “Critical literacy is about how we

see and interact with the world; it is about having, as a regular part of one's life, the skills and desire to evaluate society and the world." In effect, Wolk posits a philosophy of critical literacy is a natural theoretical pairing with geographic literacy. Similarly, Bednarz' (2003) views of geographic literacy deem critical literacy to be a crucial aspect in encouraging participatory citizenship.

Teachers in all content areas can assist students in developing critical literacy abilities when they read and interpret multiple texts (Hall & Piazza, 2008, p. 40). Developing a critical literacy stance will require teachers to think about "one's own views on the world as well as helping students learn to think about and question their own" (Hall & Piazza, 2008, p. 40). One way teachers can promote critical literacy is "to provide a supportive, nonjudgmental environment that allows students to examine belief systems" and use the classroom "as a space to consider and test out changes in beliefs, gender roles, and power structures," thereby presenting "students with an opportunity to take control over how they shape their own and each other's lives in a safe environment" (Hall & Piazza, 2008, p. 40). Responsive and caring teachers meet the criteria of critical pedagogy when McLaren explains, "Critical educators seek to realize in their classrooms democratic social values and to believe in their possibilities" (2003, p. 85). Teachers at all grade levels could apply the principles of critical literacy.

The academic discipline of social studies lends itself to critical literacy. Social studies teachers can "help students find personal relevance and meaning in text, show

them that it is appropriate and engaging to question, and have the students think critically about what the authors have written” (Myers & Savage, 2005, p. 22).

When looking at the purpose of this research study and the role of geography education as expressed by Bednarz (2003), developing critical literacy appears to be a crucial aspect in encouraging participatory citizenship. Banks (2003) recommends:

Citizenship education should be transformed in the 21st century, and literacy instruction should help prepare students to be thoughtful and informed world citizens. The large influx of immigrants who are now settling in nations throughout the world, the continuing existence of institutional racism and discrimination in various nations, and the widening gap between rich and poor nations also make the reform of literacy and citizenship education an imperative. (p. 19)

As educators prepare to make decisions regarding curriculum, the concept of “critical literacy that attends to the real-world needs, concerns, and aspirations of youth” (Brozo & Simpson, 1999, p. 12) should be foremost in the minds of educators as meaningful lessons are planned that include authentic learning activities which stimulate discussions among students.

### **Multiple Literacies**

Being literate in the 1950s and being literate in the 21<sup>st</sup> century entail different practices due to changes in the workplace and globalization (Anstey & Bull, 2006, p. 2). In 1950, literacy largely referred to reading and writing words printed on paper. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, literacy entails a variety of modalities that include the ability to access and use new technology that involves an “ability to communicate orally, listen productively and critically, negotiate, use higher order thinking skills, and cooperate” (Anstey & Bull,

2006, p. 3). A greater range of knowledge and skills involving not only reading and writing but digital technology, visual images (moving and still), sound, and music place an increased demand on social behaviors and literate practices (Ansley & Bull, 2006, p. 17). In order to comprehend and interpret the signs and symbols within today's literacies, one must understand the variety of these semiotic systems, of which there are five: linguistic (oral and written language); visual (still and moving images); auditory (music and sound effects); gestural (facial and body language) and spatial (layout and organization of objects and space) (Ansley & Bull, 2006, p. 25). Teachers need to be cognizant of multiple literacies and strategies for incorporating them into daily instruction.

Today's generation of students is well-versed and literate in the use of chat rooms, blogs, text messaging, video games, and email. Popular culture texts derived from television programs, magazines, videos, films, newspaper advertisements, radio, and video games reach into the realms of our everyday lives in homes, cars, places of employment, and school classrooms (Dolby, 2003, p. 258; Pailliotet, 2003, p. 172). Given the prevalence of multi-modal popular culture texts in contemporary life, Ansley and Bull (2006) argued teachers should respond to such out-of-school literacy by providing students a variety of modes to respond to assignments (pp. 33-36). The multimodal learning with multimodal texts and responses allows students to creatively express their understanding of concepts through a variety of venues that highlight their personal strengths (Thompson, 2008, pp. 145-146). Responsive teachers not only

incorporate the use of multiple literacies for content-area instruction, but also allow students opportunities to respond in multimodalities. Alvermann (2007) reflects “learning with multiple sign systems often helps even the least motivated and underachieving readers redefine their literate competence” (p. 26). Today’s students already employ multiple sign systems in their out-of-school lives—teachers need to capitalize on the multiliterate nature of youth to further enhance classroom instruction.

White and McCormack (2006) argued the use of popular culture in the form of music would be an excellent motivational strategy for encouraging student engagement in learning about social issues (p. 123). White and McCormack (2006) posited that using popular culture in the form of music provides students opportunities to “relate the meanings of the lyrics to a real-world context” (p. 125). Whether listening to music, singing, or reading lyrics, music is easily integrated across the curriculum. Particularly as it is relevant to people and places within geography units, Bintz (2010) reflects that the multiple literacy of singing is an excellent instructional strategy in literacy development and has been used over a long period of time (p. 683). Throughout the article, Bintz (2010) relates information about introducing his college students to “singing across the curriculum” as an instructional strategy, with specific examples of songs in science and social studies based on an author text set Bintz developed (pp. 684-685).

Likewise, incorporating visual literacy in the content-area classroom allows teachers to capitalize on the visual culture that is an ever-present part of students’ out-

of-school literacy. Flynt and Brozo (2010) suggest many benefits of enhancing curriculum by stating:

making our children visually literate includes improvement in the following areas: verbal skills, self-expression and ordering of ideas, student motivation and interest in a variety of subject, chances of reaching the disengaged, self-image and relationship to the world, and self-reliance, independence, and confidence. (p. 528)

Visual images enhance comprehension when primary documents in the form of pictures and maps are given to students for interpretation (Lee, 2008, p. 155). By combining traditional print with visual literacies, children's picture books offer readers the opportunity to employ not only reading but viewing skills to fully comprehend the complexity of a story (Anstey & Bull, 2006, p. 83). In addition to viewing art to enhance comprehension, students can respond to what they read (in any content area) through artistic expression (drawing, sculpture, collage, etc.) (Cowan & Albers, 2006, pp. 129-133). Teachers who encourage and support students' responses through multiple literacies reflect recognition of and respect for each individual student's strengths.

Albers and Cowan (2006) point out, "To be literate, you must see yourself in literacy. Students must work within systems of meaning-making such as art, music, language and drama to support their literacy learning across knowledge domains" (p. 516). In essence, humans possess multiple methods of conveying literacy. Using the arts to understand concepts and to represent that understanding in the form of art, music, dance, or drama provides teachers and students opportunities to expand the imagination and become independent learners. As Eisner (2003) reminds us,

Literacy itself can be thought of not as limited to what the tongue can articulate but what the mind can grasp. Thus, in this sense, dance, music, and the visual arts are languages through which both meaning and mind are promoted. (p. 342)

Some of the most effective organizational teaching strategies include using the creative arts of singing, drama, and art (Myers & Savage, 2005, p. 22). Fine arts projects can be used as wide-ranging forms of representation as students express their understanding of ideas and concepts in a variety of content areas.

Children's literature in the form of tradebooks can be used as read-alouds by the teacher, for literature circles which stimulate student interaction and discussion, or for independent reading (Olness, 2007; Burke, 2001; Guthrie, 2004; Lacina & Watson, 2008, pp. 175-181; Brozo & Simpson, 1999, p. 301). Tradebooks often present different perspectives which stimulate thinking and discussion on a particular topic (Olness, 2007, p. 3). The discussion method provides students opportunities to explore ideas, to listen to and evaluate the ideas of their peers, and to engage in meaningful activities such as group problem-solving which lay a foundation for future participation as informed adult citizens (Wilens, 2004, p. 34). The National Council for Social Studies (NCSS) annually publishes a list of *Notable Social Studies Tradebooks for Young People*, which comes as an insert to the annual May/June issue of *Social Education* ([www.ncss.org](http://www.ncss.org)). Titles are arranged under the ten NCSS themes.

Picture books "engage students and provide them with opportunities to explore content" (Macken, 2003, p. 63). This engagement is critical for motivating students and stimulating involvement in their own meaning-making (Asselin, 2004, p. 51). By

introducing geographic regions and cultures through the reading of picture books, Landt (2007) says “curiosity will entice students beyond merely academic knowledge into the experience of a culture” (p. 9). Traveling the world would be the best way to learn about geography and other cultures; however, such a tour is physically and economically impossible. Landt (2007) also suggests a more student-centered approach requiring students to “make connections between what they see and hear in the stories and in their own lives” (pp. 9-12). Using children’s literature to travel and experience places and cultures vicariously appears to be a logical next best effort (Hannibal, Vasiliev & Lin, 2002, p. 81). Supplementing the textbook by utilizing quality children’s literature to design lessons and activities in support of the teaching objective, teachers exercise their commitment to “allow students to motivate themselves, expand their intellects, and enliven their imaginations” (Fried, 2001, p. 102). Professional research of this degree provides excellent guidance and reasons for utilizing children’s literature to support content area learning.

### **Integrated Curriculum**

While geography remains a subtopic within the social studies curriculum, it lends itself to integration into other content areas. For example, successful integration in a middle-school “Island Nations” project connected English, art, and world geography (Daniels & Zemelman, 2004, p. 222). Fine arts courses such as art, dance, and music contain essential elements of culture and global awareness.

Integrating art into sixth-grade social studies lessons proved effective in motivating students and increasing active student participation in learning as reflected in an action research project (Kosky & Curtis, 2008). During a unit study on the Mayan culture, the student teacher designed lessons based upon a multiple intelligences survey completed by the students, and subsequently incorporated art projects, both individual and group, as opportunities for students to reflect on their understanding of the lessons (Kosky & Curtis, 2008, p. 24). Student choice played a key role, as students were allowed to choose from a list of ten projects, which included:

(a) draw an illustration, (b) draw a comic strip, (c) write a fable and illustrate it in a book, (d) write a fable as a screenplay or script, (e) create a computer generated picture, (f) prepare a scene from a fable, (g) build a costume for a fable, (h) write a fable as a song or poem, (i) create a PowerPoint about a fable, and (j) create a diorama that depicts a scene from a fable.” (Kosky & Curtis, 2008, p. 24)

Due to the success of the lessons as demonstrated by student-created projects and a “Rate the Lesson” survey completed by each student, the teacher used the same criteria to design the next unit of study on the Aztec civilization.

Smith and Johnson (1994) recommend incorporating children’s literature in content studies and provide three models for such integration: single-discipline, interdisciplinary, and integrative curricula (p. 198). Various reasons for this integration of children’s literature and content include providing children with connections between their lives and the content being studied by allowing students to experience other lives vicariously and seeing different perspectives with young protagonists (Smith & Johnson, 1994, p. 198). Effective integration of children’s literature requires careful planning by

the teacher to select themes and appropriate narrative texts (Smith & Johnson, 1994, p. 204). Choosing to integrate curriculum in such a manner offers teachers the opportunity to collaborate with other campus professionals including curriculum specialists and librarians.

The National Geography Standards outline expectations for “the development of a geographically literate society” (Berson, Ouzts & Walsh, 1999, p. 85). By using children’s literature in an integrated curriculum approach, teachers can bring geography to life. “Literature bridges the gap between geographically distant worlds and gives students a better understanding of how and where people have lived in the past and present, and how they might live in the future” (Berson, Ouzts & Walsh, 1999, p. 85). While this approach might sound ideal, careful selection of literature, with a focus on essential issues, provides the best approach to successful curriculum integration. Berson, Ouzts and Walsh outlined specific National Geography Standards and highlighted activities to support the teaching of those standards through the integration of children’s literature (1999, p. 86-91). Awareness of these standards provides more guidance for classroom teachers.

Another example of integration involves text-focused discussions based upon children’s literature being read aloud, which incorporates the pleasure of students listening to quality writing while at the same time providing them with content knowledge. Santoro, Chard, Howard and Baker (2008) reflect that “there is considerable interest in this topic [read-alouds] despite the few specific studies on read-aloud

practices” (p. 396). Santoro et al. (2008) designed a read-aloud curriculum and conducted research in a first-grade classroom with results that “demonstrated that read-aloud time is an ideal opportunity to build comprehension through the use of oral language activities, listening comprehension, and text-based discussion” (p. 407). Text-based discussions also provide opportunities for older students to interact with their peers in literacy events.

### **Responsive Teaching**

Several key components of responsive teaching affect the classroom environment and subsequently student motivation and engagement. Turner, Applegate and Applegate (2009) highlight several qualities of responsive teachers—qualities “within the grasp of every thoughtful, conscientious, and reflective teacher” (p. 254). Viewing teachers as literacy leaders, several key qualities of a “complete literacy leader” include a profound love and respect for the printed word; personal professional excellence; providing classrooms conducive to reader engagement; and responsive and rigorous instruction (Turner, Applegate & Applegate, 2009, pp. 254-256). Literacy leaders seek to build students’ background knowledge through an exposure to a variety of text genres (informational, fiction, historical fiction, biographies, etc.) and how to use tools such as graphic organizers (Turner, Applegate & Applegate, 2009, p. 255). By creating literacy learning activities that are authentic and meaningful, “literacy leaders seek to challenge their students to think deeply about what they read, for the depth of their thinking is the pathway to intellectual growth” (Turner, Applegate & Applegate,

2009, p. 255). Such responsive teaching stimulates critical literacy and adheres to the concept of rigorous instruction.

Responsive teaching reflects caring and action where “classrooms have been safe havens for students; lessons have been energizing; learning has mattered” (Strahan & Lavell, 2006, p. 147). Establishing supportive relationships with students, responsive teachers created a learner-centered environment where “teachers noted that their attempts to get to know their students better enabled them to create more engaging lessons” (Strahan & Lavell, 2006, p. 150). Creating a learner-centered environment appears to be a key characteristic of a responsive teacher as he/she “understand the importance of building meaningful relationships with students as a context for greater participation and more enthusiastic learning” (Flynt & Brozo, 2009, p. 536). Delving deeper into a topic requires illuminating the text through the active role “of teaching, of performing an act that is responsive, that cannot be scripted given the inherent complexity of students’ needs and experiences” (Burke, 2001, p. 163).

As educators face the challenge of preparing students for high-stakes testing, where “read and test, read and test” is a daily occurrence, it becomes even more imperative to nurture students’ curious nature and motivation to read within a positive and constructive environment that values thinking and collaboration.

### **Classroom Environment**

Responsive and caring teachers realize the importance of creating a classroom environment that is conducive to open discussions of ideas. Teachers who encourage

student participation through lively text-based discussions create a supportive and socially-safe environment where students feel comfortable revealing their thoughts, feelings and ideas (Strahan & Lavell, 2006; Flynt & Brozo, 2009).

Through the strategy of using children’s literature as read-alouds, research by Santoro, Chard, Howard and Baker (2008) showed “that read-alouds, with explicit comprehension instruction and active, engaging discussions about text, can promote comprehension and vocabulary” (p. 407). By “making the *very* most of read-aloud time”, teachers must carefully plan which children’s literature to use to stimulate purposeful discussions (Santoro, et al., 2008, p. 407). Using children’s literature to support content-area literacy and encourage student involvement through the social aspect of reading, teacher and students work together in meaning-making discussions (Cairney, 1996; McGee, 1996; Guthrie, 2004; Daniels & Zemelman, 2004).

### **Fostering Motivation and Engagement with Readers**

The following literature review will focus on published research in the area of “motivating students to read” and highlight *themes* across the research. Within these themes, certain key words will be defined and expanded on.

**Curiosity.** Intrinsically motivated students are curious. They desire gaining understanding and embark on a personal quest for “learning about a person, topic, or event, for its own sake” (Guthrie, Wigfield, & Perencevich, 2004, p. 56). Such curiosity motivates them to read, which in turn satisfies their curiosity. Students become involved with the text and interact due to intrigue with the content. The involved

reader will choose books that provide “this experience of immersion in favorite topics and pursuits” (Guthrie, Wigfield, & Perencevich, 2004, p. 56). Therefore, reading becomes its own reward.

**Engagement.** Motivation is a contributing factor to *reading engagement*, which is defined as the “simultaneous functioning of motivation, conceptual knowledge, strategies, and social interactions during literacy activities” (Wigfield & Tonks, 2004, p. 250). Johns and VanLeirsburg (1994) indicate a key to *reading engagement* involves immersion and demonstration (p. 94). Students should be “immersed in the medium in which they are expected to learn” (p. 94). Through demonstration, a teacher models a love for and enjoyment of reading, carefully choosing materials and reading with enthusiasm and expression. As the teacher guides students through immersion and demonstration, s/he works to stimulate *interest* in topics and motivate students to read.

**Interest.** Two specific motivational variables are interest and goals. As highlighted by Hidi and Harackiewicz (2000), these two variables can have energizing effects on learning (p. 152).

Interest can be *individual* or *situational*. *Individual interest* can also be referred to as *personal interest* and focuses on the origins and effects. Most individuals who are interested in a topic pay closer attention and subsequently learn more. *Situational interest* refers to the environment and contextual factors, and can be generated by “certain conditions and/or stimuli in the environment that focus attention, and it represents a more immediate affective reaction that may or may not last” (Hidi &

Harackiewicz, 2000, p. 152). *Situational interest* “should play an important role in learning, especially when students do not have pre-existing individual interests in academic activities, content areas, or topics” (p. 153). This is especially significant when attempting to motivate academically unmotivated or at-risk children.

**Social learning (social aspects of reading).** Research conducted by Guthrie, et al. (2006) reflects intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors pertaining to *situational reading* (pp. 98-99). Statistics reveal that the category “wanted to talk with friends about it” (pp. 98-99) showed the largest percentage increase in both informational and narrative text. Since literacy events are essentially social events where readers interact with writers, and often readers discuss text with other readers, these interests are linked to relationships. Cairney (1996) suggests that literacy instruction should include the vital component of “talk about written texts” (p. 178). Through this *talk about text*, students become involved in meaning-making, actively engage in and contribute to comprehension of text, build relationships with others, and strengthen their academic and social worlds through language. In other words, *talk about text* contributes to the “social fabric of the classroom” (Cairney, 1996, p. 178). Talking about text naturally leads to a variety of children’s responses.

Rather than the traditional teacher-lecture classroom environment where the teacher asks a question and the student recalls information, McGee (1996) suggests utilizing a strategy termed *response-centered talk* where children discover or construct new understanding about literature (p. 195). Children voice comments reflecting their

interest in and reaction to a story. This teaching strategy stimulates “the building of a shared, common understanding of a book” (McGee, 1996, p. 199). Building a shared understanding also creates a bond, reinforcing a sense of classroom community.

This social interaction concept is reinforced by Guthrie, Wigfield, and Perencevich (2004) as part of a high scaffold for motivational development. This involves the teacher providing students the opportunities to participate in “multiple social structures, such as whole class and pairs reading” (2004, p. 65). Literature circles provide social interaction between students and text where each student in the circle takes on a role of responsibility for certain tasks, such as oral reader, vocabulary enricher, summarizer, and facilitator. Responding to literature via literature circles empowers students to engage in discussions, form opinions, debate conclusions, and make choices regarding other forms of group response (Johns & VanLeirsburg, 1994, pp. 101-102). Research on literature circles provides another key example of *talk about text*.

**Supported situations.** Regarding academic motivation and classroom environment, the teacher remains the key instrument. Several aspects to this vital role involve goals and expectations. According to Guthrie (2004), “conceptual knowledge or learning goals are more motivating for students than performance or skill goals” (p. 16). Guthrie (2004) has suggestions for creating a motivating context which include: “(a) having knowledge goals for reading instruction, (b) providing hands-on activities related to reading, (c) giving students realistic choices, (d) using interesting texts for instruction,

and (e) weaving collaboration into children's classroom lives" (p. 5). Additional research reflects children placing "a great deal of importance on the information they could learn from reading information books" (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006, p. 417). Quotes from students reflect their excitement in gaining knowledge and sharing that knowledge with others (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006, p. 417).

Taken together, these studies emphasize the importance of promoting reading as a useful, valuable, and desirable activity (Johns & VanLeisburg, 1994, p. 93). Furthermore, meaningful learning objectives should guide the teacher's selection of activities. Since "motivation to read and engagement in reading do not develop automatically" but are "strongly influenced by children's individual experiences with reading" (Guthrie, Wigfield, & Perencevich, 2004, p. 59), teachers can positively impact children's individual experiences with reading by creating supportive classroom environments. At a minimum, Johns and VanLeisburg (1994) recommended that teachers incorporate two essential elements—demonstration and immersion—by effective teacher modeling and opportunities/available resources for students, then implement "other conditions for learning (expectation, responsibility, use, approximation, and response)" as important tools to enhance literacy experiences (p. 102). A particular interdisciplinary structure called the inquiry project serves many instructional purposes and supports the criteria mentioned for meaningful activities with student choice and interactive discussions (Daniels & Zemelman, 2004, pp. 223-227). Research conducted by Ivey & Broaddus (2001) revealed several key issues

regarding adolescent literacy which support many of the elements previously mentioned, such as meaning-centered curriculum, students' voices and opportunities for discussion with peers, and student choice (pp. 350-355). While much of this literature gives examples of middle school and high school adolescent literacy, similar strategies pertain to pre-adolescents in elementary school.

The literature on motivation and engagement identifies factors relevant to the current study. Motivating students to read can be accomplished through *situational interest*, where the teacher implements reading instruction strategies that incorporate high-interest level topics coupled with meaningful hands-on activities that attempt to enable students to attain conceptual knowledge. Additionally *social aspects of reading* should be reinforced and practiced throughout all subject areas allowing student-led discussions to stimulate and enhance learning. Students need opportunities to read, discuss, and respond to all genres of literature.

### **Summary**

Literature offers research-based support for the importance of incorporating multiple literacies in contemporary geography lessons. Extant literature in the domains of geography, content area literacy, critical literacy, multiple literacies, integrated curriculum, responsive teaching, classroom environment, and motivation and engagement in reading provide an underpinning for investigating the teaching of social studies and geography in elementary classrooms. Research also supports the importance of teaching geography due to its global significance. Few studies, however,

have been conducted that examine the integration of children's literature and other multiple literacies within a geography class. Consequently, there is a need for increased research within the field pertaining to effective teaching strategies which enhance geographic literacy in the upper elementary grades (third through fifth) and how pre-adolescent students respond to these strategies.

In an effort to address this paucity of research, I examined the teaching strategies employed by a social studies teacher at the fifth grade level and ways the students responded to this curriculum through their expressed engagement in learning. My study will support the research findings displayed in the domains of the literature reviewed and will significantly add to the limited research literature available regarding curriculum integration, lesson designs, and teaching content-area subjects in the intermediate grades.

I will discuss the qualitative research methodology in chapter three.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of my study was to explore the role of the teacher in leading students toward geographic literacy through the integration of children’s literature, geography, and multiple literacies and to examine how students respond to such teaching strategies. Students need to be active and decisive in their development as learners, instead of passive consumers of knowledge. According to Johnson (2006), “Making personal connections with the material to be learned is integral” (p. xviii). Using multiple literacies, especially children’s literature, provides students opportunities to connect to the main character through vicarious experiences which in turn promotes active student involvement in the topic being studied.

#### **Methodology**

This study is representative of a qualitative research methodology. I conducted my study in an elementary fifth-grade social studies classroom where I observed the teacher and the students in their natural classroom setting. The timeline for the observation period of this study was approximately twelve weeks (mid-January 2009 through mid-May 2009). Through observation and collection of a variety of documents (e.g., interviews (teacher and student), surveys, questionnaires, student work samples, teacher lesson plans, teacher resource books, a teacher reflective journal, field observation notes, a researcher reflective journal), I analyzed and made sense of the manifold extent of the lessons. According to Creswell (1998, p. 15), the characteristics

of such an approach to data collection fall under the scope of qualitative research. The qualitative paradigm was the best choice for the type of research I conducted because it is an interpretive, naturalistic approach using multiple sources of information (Creswell, 1998, p. 15). Miles and Huberman (1994) reveal several recurring features of “naturalistic” research:

- Qualitative research is conducted through an intense and/or prolonged contact with a “field” or life situation.
- The researcher’s role is to gain a “holistic” (systemic, encompassing, integrated) overview of the context under study: its logic, its arrangements, and its explicit and implicit rules.
- The researcher attempts to capture data on the perceptions of local actors “from the inside,” through a process of deep attentiveness, of empathetic understanding, and of suspending or “bracketing” preconceptions about the topics under discussion. (pp. 6-7)

In this study, the “field or life situation” was a fifth-grade social studies classroom. Similarly, the local actors involved the classroom teacher and the students.

As a qualitative researcher, I was concerned with *context* and understanding the actions of the teacher and students by observing the setting in which the action occurred—in this case, an elementary fifth-grade social studies classroom (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 4). As Bogdan and Biklen (2007) explained, “Qualitative researchers assume that human behavior is significantly influenced by the setting in which it occurs” (p. 5). The qualitative research method fits my study because it is descriptive. Particular care was given to recording rich descriptions of the setting, events, teacher perspectives and teaching strategies, as well as responses from students in the form of their written

work and their perspectives obtained through interviews (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 8). I collected data from multiple sources including surveys, personal interview (teacher and student) transcripts, field observation notes, photographs, student work samples, lesson plans, and teacher and researcher reflective journals. By analyzing the data and by providing rich descriptions, by paying close attention to even the smallest of particulars, I garnered a comprehensive understanding of what I was studying (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 5).

### **Research Design**

I chose to use a *case-study* design within a qualitative study to conduct this research. I chose the format of a case-study design for several reasons. First, a case-study is “an exploration of a ‘bounded system’ or a case over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context” (Creswell, 1998, p. 62). Second, a case-study generally answers one or more questions that begin with *how* or *why*. The questions guiding my research consisted of the following: (1) How does a fifth grade social studies teacher use multiple literacies to support children’s geographic learning? (2) In what ways do the instructional strategies the teacher employs support geographic literacy? (3) How does the teacher plan and make decisions about pedagogical approaches involving multiple literacies? Third, case-study is the best method to use when learning about individuals and real-life situations. My case-study involved learning about a particular fifth-grade classroom teacher’s teaching strategies and the opinions of students in her social studies class as they

learned about geography. Case-study is *particularistic* since it focuses on a particular event, situation, or phenomenon (Creswell, 1998, p. 62; Merriam, 1988, p. 11). The particular situation under study was the social studies class. I examined a single case with some phenomenon—geographic literacy embedded in a single social setting (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 27). Case-studies can be *descriptive* as the researcher gathers rich descriptions (Creswell, 1998, p. 62; Merriam, 1988, p. 11). I gathered rich descriptions through data collected in the form of observations, interviews, journals, and artifacts. According to Merriam, “*descriptive* means that the end product of a case study is a rich, ‘thick’ description of the phenomenon under study” (1988, p. 11). Merriam further elaborates that “*thick description* is a term from anthropology and means the complete, literal description of the incident or entity being investigated” (p. 11). Case-studies can be *heuristic* and *inductive* as they enrich a reader’s understanding—understandings which emerge through the data collected during the study (Barone, 2004, pp. 7-27). Case studies “are concerned with understanding and describing the process” (Merriam, 1988, p. 31). “Educational processes, problems, and programs can be examined to bring about understanding that in turn can affect and perhaps even improve practice. Case study has proved particularly useful for studying educational innovations, for evaluating programs, and for informing policy” (pp. 32-33).

Since I wanted to develop a better understanding of a particular case mainly to provide insight into the issue of geographic literacy (a certain issue), this case study was deemed an *instrumental case study* (Stake, 2000, p. 437). The case (a fifth-grade

teacher and her social studies classroom) facilitated my understanding of teaching geographic literacy. I selected a particular fifth-grade teacher who believes in curriculum integration and is knowledgeable of both children's literature and geography standards. This teacher exemplifies responsive teaching as she believes in and supports student choice and encourages student engagement through meaningful classroom assignments and interactive discussions (Ruddell & Unrau, 2004a, pp. 954-975). Creswell (1998) states "A *case study* involves the widest array of data collection as the researcher attempts to build an in-depth picture of the case" (p. 123). Such purposive sampling in case-study research provides information-rich cases (Barone, 2004, p. 22). *Purposeful sampling* involves choosing particular subjects to include in the research study because "they are believed to facilitate the expansion of the developing theory" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 73). I chose Mrs. Wainwright as the particular subject in the study because of my knowledge of her as an exemplar teacher who is not only knowledgeable about social studies and geography but is passionate about teaching and cares about students learning. Thus Mrs. Wainwright would "facilitate the expansion of the developing theory" as stressed by Bogdan and Biklen (2007, p. 73).

### **Research Questions**

I developed this study from several substantive theoretical questions that focused on the particular setting and subjects in the case-study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 162). Such questions allowed me to organize and guide the data collection. Questions for qualitative research are open-ended, evolving, and nondirectional. Qualitative

research questions typically begin with “what, how, or why,” and are few in number (Creswell, 1998, p. 99). A case study is usually organized around a small number of research questions based on issues or thematic phrases such as “In what ways” (Stake, 2000, p. 440). The questions guiding my research consisted of the following:

1. How does a fifth grade social studies teacher use multiple literacies to support children’s geographic learning?
2. In what ways do the instructional strategies the teacher employs support geographic literacy?
3. How does the teacher plan and make decisions about pedagogical approaches involving multiple literacies?

### **Existing Presuppositions or Assumptions**

My age, life experience, and teaching experience certainly affect the lens through which I view the world. As such, I came to this study with several presuppositions. First, I believed having students read a variety of genres to introduce them to certain content-area topics is a critical strategy to employ for engaging and motivating readers of all ages, especially struggling readers and students uninterested in the topic at hand. I have become informed of this teaching strategy due to extensive reading (Smith, 1993; Smith & Johnson, 1994; Johns & VanLeirsburg, 1994; Burke, 2001; Guthrie, 2004; Ivey & Fisher, 2006; Landt, 2007; Olness, 2007). Second, I believed the current curriculum within the public education system is too segmented, and increased curriculum integration would enhance the literacy of all students. Third, I believed literacy applied to all content areas. Fourth, I believed the focus on high-stakes testing limited teachers’ sense of pedagogical time, thereby limiting opportunities for extended,

meaningful activities that would be of high interest to their students. Fifth, while we live in a global society and need to increase the global awareness of our students, I believed the opportunity to teach geography remains limited due to the daily demands to prepare for high-stakes testing in reading and math. Sixth, I believed geography was truly a life-skill involving five domains that connect to other topics, but map skills appears to be the main (and sometimes only) geography focus in the elementary grades.

### **Description of the Setting**

The unit of study involved a fifth-grade classroom teacher and the students in one of her social studies classes. The fifth-grade classroom I chose was one of three fifth grade classrooms in a kindergarten through fifth grade elementary school campus located in a mid-sized West Texas city with a population of approximately 100,000. The school district served 14,000 students with a variety of campuses to include one 5A high school; one 4A high school; one alternative campus; one freshman (ninth grade) campus; three middle schools (sixth-eighth grades); seventeen elementary schools (either pre-kindergarten through fifth grades or kindergarten through fifth grades); and three Head Start/Early Head Start campuses. The campus involved in my study was a Title I school located in the northwest portion of the city with an enrollment (2008-2009) of 410 students. Seventy-seven percent of the students qualified for the free or reduced lunch program. The ethnic breakdown of the student population was 59% Hispanic, 26% White, 14% African-American, and 1% Asian. Personnel on the campus

included a principal, a guidance counselor, one instructional specialist, twenty-two certified classroom teachers, one full-time certified general music teacher, one full-time certified physical education teacher, four instructional aides, one part-time school service worker, one part-time registered nurse, two custodians, and several cafeteria workers.

My access to this particular campus was secured through my employment as the general music teacher for the campus. I taught music to all students (kindergarten through fifth grade) on the campus. The fifth-grade students involved in the study were in my music classes as fourth graders during the 2007-2008 school year. They were in my fifth-grade music classes beginning in August 2008, so a rapport with them was clearly established prior to the commencement of this research study in the spring of 2009. I also visited the social studies class for several weeks prior to the official date for observation to allow students an opportunity to view me in a different context. Developing a rapport with the actors in a setting assists the researcher in blending into the setting (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975, p. 45). Official access to conduct this study was granted by the campus principal, the gatekeeper. A gatekeeper is one who has “the power to grant access” (p. 31). An important aspect of gaining access was to assure the gatekeeper that my research would in no way disrupt the classroom or distract from the teacher accomplishing required teaching objectives (p. 36). Prior to my request to the campus principal, I discussed the project in-depth with the fifth-grade classroom

teacher, Mrs. Wainwright. Mrs. Wainwright enthusiastically agreed, which opened the door to request access from the principal.

My role within this setting of the research study was as a participant observer. I balanced my participation and observation modes throughout the length of the study according to the situation at hand. During observation, the researcher often assumes a combination of roles along a continuum from that of strict observer to that of a participant within the circumstances (Spradley, 1980; Glesne, 1999). For example, if my goal was to better understand the classroom activity from the students' point of view, I chose to participate more actively with the students than the teacher. If my goal was to gain insight to the teacher's advance planning of lessons and strategies, then I discussed and interviewed the teacher during the teacher's planning time. If my goal was to gather a rich description of events and discussions during a lesson, I was a passive participant in the observation mode (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, pp. 91-93). As the observer, I had little or no interaction with the students and teacher (Glesne, 1999, p. 44). While I did not provide any direct instruction to the students, I interacted with them through formal and informal interviews, by listening and asking clarifying questions during individual and group work, and by occasionally acting as a resource by bringing in children's literature books (fiction and nonfiction) from the local public library. My role in this stage of the continuum was that of a *participant as observer*, providing me with a greater opportunity to learn (Glesne, 1999, p. 44). During teacher

planning and discussion, I sometimes offered ideas to the classroom teacher for lesson preparation.

**Participants.** This particular instrumental case-study focused on one fifth-grade teacher and one of her three fifth grade social studies classes. Student enrollment in this class was twenty-one students (ten boys and eleven girls) of diverse ethnicities and socioeconomic backgrounds. The teacher was responsible for teaching science to all fifth graders (departmentalized), and for teaching social studies to all fifth graders (departmentalized). The teacher was a veteran elementary school teacher who taught in a second-grade self-contained class environment for approximately ten years and has been teaching fifth grade science and social studies for the past two years. I was in her social studies class once a week during the spring 2008 semester for a pilot study. During this pilot study time, I spoke with her about my future plans for conducting research and writing a dissertation. Therefore, she was familiar with the requirements for a dissertation research project and was agreeable to participate in the study. Pseudonyms are used for all participants.

Informed consent was an important aspect of this research project. According to Rossman and Rallis (2003), “gaining the informed consent of participants is crucial for the ethical conduct of research” (p. 75). Several principles of informed consent help guide the researcher in ensuring the participants are not deceived and all participation is voluntary. The principles stressed by Rossman and Rallis (2003) include:

- participants are as fully informed as possible about the study's purpose and audience,
- they understand what their agreement to participate entails,
- they give that consent willingly, and
- they understand that they may withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice. (p. 76)

Informed consent not only serves the ethical purpose of preventing deceit but also to protect the identities of the participants through the knowledge that pseudonyms would be used instead of their names and personal information (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 76). I first obtained formal written consent from the campus principal and the participating fifth-grade teacher. I next informed the students in the social studies class about the purpose for the study, and gave each student copies of parent and student consent forms. A letter to the parents went with the consent forms, which described the intent of the study and asked permission for their children to participate (Appendix F). Parental permission was necessary since the study was conducted during a normal classroom situation where students were interacting with the teacher and other students, students were involved in the interviews and focus groups, and students' work examples were collected to enable an in-depth understanding of the learning process. Such involvement and artifacts have the potential to impact not only the instructional decisions of the teacher, but the content of the field notes as well.

### **Data Sources and Methods**

As a qualitative researcher in the participant-observer mode, I served as the main research instrument or tool. As an instrument, the researcher "gathers words or pictures, analyzes them inductively, focuses on the meaning of the participants, and

describes a process that is expressive and persuasive in language” (Creswell, 1998, p. 14). Within my participant-observer role, I collected data from semi-structured interviews with the classroom teacher and the participating students, open-ended questionnaires and surveys given to the teacher and students, field notes of classroom observations collected two or three times a week for an average length of time of one hour, student work samples, teacher lesson plans, the teacher’s reflective journal, and the researcher’s reflective journal. The nature of qualitative data involves words which express the fundamental nature of people, objects, and situations. Such words, or extended text, are based on observations, interviews, and documents collected during activities within the research setting (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 9). Since it is easy to become overwhelmed with the amount of information gathered in a qualitative study, I limited my classroom observations to no more than one-hour at a time (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975, p. 42). I used a digital voice recorder during some interviews, and two classroom observations, for verification of notes and clarity of transcribing. To assist in collecting data, I developed protocols or written forms for recording the information. Included in the protocols was a place for both descriptive and reflective notes (Creswell, 1998, pp. 111 & 125) (Appendix C). The interview and observation notes were transcribed daily and stored in a hard-drive computer file, with a portable flash-drive as a back-up file. While surveys and questionnaires were used, the researcher as participant-observer served as the main *research instrument*. In other words, the knowledge constructed during and as a result of this study was interpretive as the

researcher “makes meaning of (interprets) what he learns as he goes along” (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, pp. 36-37). The researcher’s worldview or lens acts as a filter. Table 3.1 provides an explanation of which data sources were used to answer the research questions.

**Table 3.1 Research Questions and Data Sources**

<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Data Sources</b>
1. How does a fifth-grade social studies teacher use multiple literacies to support geographic learning?	Teacher questionnaire Participant observations Interviews w/teacher Artifacts: lesson plans
2. In what ways do the instructional strategies the teacher employs support geographic literacy?	Student work samples Participant observations Student surveys Student focus group & individual interviews Reflective journals
3. How does the teacher plan and make decisions about pedagogical approaches involving multiple literacies?	Interviews w/teacher Reflective journals Artifacts: lesson plans Artifacts: TEKS & district pacing guide

## Interviews

**Focus Groups.** Group interview is a qualitative data gathering procedure “that relies upon the systematic questioning of several individuals simultaneously in a formal or informal setting” (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p. 651). The group interview format comes under the label *focus group*. The interviewer can direct the inquiry and interaction in either a structured or unstructured fashion, depending upon the purpose. Group interviews can aide in “recall of specific facts or to stimulate embellished descriptions of events” (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p. 651). When combined with other sources of data collection, the focus group procedure can be used for triangulation purposes. Some advantages of group interviews over individual interviews include: “They are relatively inexpensive to conduct and often produce rich data that are cumulative and elaborate; they can be stimulating for respondents, aiding recall; and the format is flexible” (p. 652). While the advantages are important, it is also critical to note the few disadvantages of focus groups: “results cannot be generalized; the emerging group culture may interfere with individual expression, and the group may be dominated by one person; and ‘groupthink’ is a possible outcome” (p. 652). I used one focus group scenario involving all eight student participants as I explained the research project in more detail and highlighted exactly what I was trying to learn (RRJ p. 4).

**Individual Interviews.** Individual interviews, formal and informal, occurred occasionally throughout the case study for a variety of reasons. I interviewed the teacher at the beginning, during weekly lesson planning, and at the end of the study. I

interviewed the students during classroom activities to query them about their attitudes and perceptions of the specific project of the day, and at times to clarify their responses on surveys and questionnaires. I interviewed each student individually to allow unlimited freedom of responses and to encourage in-depth reflection by students as to “what” helped them learn in social studies class.

**Questionnaires and Surveys.** These instruments for students and teacher contained a variety of open-ended questions and Likert attitude scales.

**Field Notes of Observations.**

Turning what I saw and heard into descriptive transcripts required systematically recording impressions and insights. Such a written record is referred to as *field notes*. According to Rossman and Rallis, field notes consist of two major components: “the descriptive data of what you observe and your comments on those data or on the project itself” (2003, pp. 195-197). Sometimes called *the running record*, the descriptive data involved writing descriptively who was/was not there; where, what and when events happened; and sometimes why the events took place. Important aspects of rich and thick descriptions involved using specific and concrete details such as evocative adjectives and action verbs, and avoiding evaluative language (p. 196).

**Reflective Journals.** Reflexivity is a phenomenon “central to understanding the practice of qualitative research” (Rossman and Rallis, 2003, p. 49). Reflexivity is “the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 183). By keeping a reflective journal, the teacher not only recorded her thoughts, but also recorded

observations of pertinent student comments throughout the day. Such observations and reflections added to the data base, and broadened the data collection of this case study. By keeping a reflective journal and through understanding my perspective as the researcher, I placed restrictions, illustrated assumptions, and detailed the process of discovery, thereby establishing the intellectual integrity of the project. These contributed to the trustworthiness of the project (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 54).

**Student Work Samples.** Work samples were based upon classroom assignments and included art projects, maps, exams, written activity pages, graphic organizers and foldables. Most items were kept in students' social studies folders.

### **Methods of Analyzing Data**

Open-coding within the constant comparative method was used to analyze data. Part of analyzing the data involved looking for themes or categories and using open-coding to organize the information. Through the constant comparative method, a researcher attempts to search for instances that represent the category or theme. Such a process assists the researcher in "reducing the database of information to a small set of themes or categories that characterize the process or action being explored" (Creswell, 1998, pp. 150-151). Miles and Huberman (1994) discuss thirteen specific tactics "for drawing meaning from a particular configuration of data in a display." The first three assist the analyst in seeing "what goes with what"—noting patterns and themes, seeing plausibility, and clustering. Since patterns seem to just "happen", the important thing is "to be able to (a) see added evidence of the same patterns (recurring regularities) and

(b) remain open to disconfirming evidence when it appears” (pp. 245-262). Open-coding led to axial-coding, and then to identification of themes.

I analyzed data sets separately. The data sets consisted of field notes of observations (FNO), teacher questionnaire (TQ), teacher and student surveys (TS or SS), teacher interview (TI), student interviews (SI), teacher reflective journal (TRJ), lesson plans (LP), teacher’s resource books (TRB), student work samples (SWS), and researcher reflective journal (RRJ). Of the 21 students in the social studies class, eight returned parent and student consent forms (seven girls and one boy).

In my initial analysis of the data sets, I used colored highlighters to label the repeating words or phrases. For instance, as I read through the typed field notes of observations (FNO), the first word or phrase I noticed repeating was “maps,” so I highlighted each phrase that contained the word “map,” whether it was the teacher as she traveled to show locations on the large classroom pull-down map, or whether the teacher asked students to look at their individual maps. As I read through the other data such as lesson plans, student interviews, and reflective journals, I continued the same process of coding by using colored highlighters—a different color for each key phrase. After this initial coding of all data sources, I grouped the patterns into several categories. I listed these categories into separate EXCEL documents with the following titles: maps, graphic organizers, pictures, children’s literature as read-alouds, teacher questions, and student engagement. When I again looked at the data within these categories, two subcategories became prominent—that of people and places. I then

removed the phrases that mentioned people and places, made a separate EXCEL chart for people and one for places, and wrote down what appeared to be pertinent about these phrases. Samples of my field notes and charts of my analysis based on various themes (Appendix C) give readers a representation of my analysis process.

As a result of this in-depth analysis and coding, three themes or big ideas became apparent: (1) storytelling as a vehicle for transmediation; (2) writing and drawing as tools for representation; and (3) authentic learning in a socially safe environment.

### **Trustworthiness, Dependability, and the Researcher's Lens**

**Trustworthiness.** Trustworthiness of a research project can be evaluated as the researcher answers questions pertaining to a set of standards—for acceptable and competent practice, and for ethical conduct (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 63). Through accuracy of what I reported in written form, I met the standard for acceptable and competent practice. My study was rigorous and adhered to qualitative research and case-study criteria, exhibiting systematic analysis leading to published findings (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 65). A systematic and rigorous study involves methodological decisions within a sound conceptual framework, where the researcher gathers data over an extended period of time, thoroughly documenting and revealing the decision-making process (p. 66). I was a participant observer in the social studies classroom two or three times weekly (forty-five to fifty minutes each time) for a period of at least twelve weeks. Observations were documented through the use of field notes and a digital voice recorder and transcribed daily onto a laptop computer in a Microsoft Word document.

According to Merriam (1988, pp. 169-170), there are six basic strategies a qualitative researcher can use to ensure trustworthiness. These six strategies have been formulated as a result of research experience and a review of the literature on qualitative research (p. 169). These basic strategies are triangulation, member checks, long-term observation, peer examination, participatory modes of research, and researcher's biases.

**Triangulation.** *Triangulation of data* was a strategy I employed to help establish trustworthiness, drawing from several data sources and theories to inform the same question or issue (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 66). "Triangulation is the gathering of data from different sources to confirm the dependability of the data" (Purcell-Gates, 2004, p. 98). Triangulation helped ensure that I studied the issue in its complexity from a variety of points to build my understanding.

**Member-checking.** *Member checking* was constant as I observed and discussed the emerging findings with the participant teacher (Mrs. Wainwright), asking her to "elaborate, correct, extend, or argue about" a point or idea (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 69). Conducting member checking involves "taking data and interpretations back to the people from whom they were derived and asking them if the results are plausible" (Merriam, 1988, p. 169).

**Long-term observation.** *Long-term observation* contributes to the trustworthiness of the research findings and consists of extended time in the field of study and gathering data during that time. Not only was I in the field for about twelve

weeks in the spring of 2009 for the formal research project, I previously spent time in Mrs. Wainwright's social studies class during the spring of 2008 as I conducted a pilot study. Dr. Reese Todd, a professor at Texas Tech University responsible for teaching social studies methods courses in the College of Education, and co-chair of my dissertation committee, visited the research site (social studies classroom) during the spring of 2008 and became cognizant of the research setting and participant teacher.

**Peer examination.** *Peer examination* involved discussing the findings with and asking peers and colleagues to read the findings as they emerged and comment on these findings (Merriam, 1988, p. 169). The peers involved a fellow campus music teacher who engages in integrated curriculum (and also writes curriculum for the school district) and a former university classmate who recently earned a doctorate. The colleagues involved in the examination of the written findings of my study included a literacy professor and a social studies professor at a state university.

**Participatory modes of research.** *Participatory modes of research* involve the participants (researcher and classroom teacher) in all phases of the research, "from conceptualizing the study to writing up the findings" (Merriam, 1988, pp. 169-170). Mrs. Wainwright (participant) and I (researcher) spent time during the spring of 2008 (pilot study) and spring of 2009 (dissertation study) discussing the study and the data sources.

The sixth strategy, researcher's biases, was exhibited from the outset of the study as a clarification of my lens as a researcher through awareness of my assumptions,

pre-suppositions, experience, worldview, and theoretical orientation (Merriam, 1988, p. 170).

**Transferability.** Another one of the distinctive criterion supporting the trustworthiness of a research project is that of *transferability* or *generalization*. *Transferability* concerns the “inquirer’s responsibility for providing readers with sufficient information on the case studied such that readers could establish the degree of similarity between the case studied and the case to which findings might be transferred” (Schwandt, 2001, p. 258). *Generalization* can be understood in social research to be concerned with “the potential for drawing inferences from a single study to wider populations, contexts or social theory” (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p. 285). In other words, through the detailed explanations of theoretical framework (responsive teaching and situated cognition) and research methodology (qualitative case-study design), and thick descriptions of data from field notes of observations, interviews, questionnaires, and reflective journals (Chapter IV, Findings), I have provided a way to transfer the research study to other intermediate grade classrooms across the United States. Through a sincere desire to achieve understanding of the phenomenon under study (supporting geographic learning), what has been learned from this study can be useful in other settings.

**Dependability.**

Through engagement in the study, I closely examined the context of fifth graders learning about geography. As the lone researcher, I chose to examine the teaching and

learning within a single classroom. I recognize that findings may be different within other classrooms. Since the character of my study was exploratory and inductive within a free-standing study, the types of dependability involved were *descriptive/contextual* (thoroughly describing the setting, actors, and events), *interpretive* (connecting with the experiences of the students and the teacher), and *natural* (the setting of the classroom is mostly undisturbed by the presence of researcher) (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 36).

### **Strengths**

The qualitative methodology was the best choice for the type of research I conducted because it is an interpretive, naturalistic approach using multiple sources of information (Creswell, 1998, p. 15). Within the qualitative paradigm exists the case-study design which provides a method for investigating complex social units that are anchored in real-life situations that allow researchers to gather data and detail the results in a rich and holistic account of the phenomenon under investigation (Merriam, 1988, p. 32). Length of time in the field of study contributes to the strength of the case-study approach. I was in the field for ten weeks in the spring of 2008 conducting a pilot study and for twelve weeks during the formal research study, observing in the classroom two to three times a week for a class period that lasted forty-five to fifty minutes. Barone (2004) suggests that “case-study research is important to our understanding of literacy. Case studies are complex because they are built around multiple data sources that must be analyzed into themes or patterns” (p. 25). I analyzed multiple data sources (interview transcripts, teacher lesson plans, teacher resource

books, teacher reflective journal, field notes of observations, researcher reflective journal, and student work samples) to determine themes and patterns.

In the next chapter, chapter four, I present the findings of my research study.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of my study was to explore the role of the teacher in leading students toward geographic literacy through an integration of children's literature and multiple literacies within a fifth grade social studies class.

In what follows, I present the results of the study in five sections including:

(a) my contextualized biography, (b) a description of the teacher's and my professional backgrounds and history of our collaboration both prior to and during this study, (c) a description of the classroom setting, (d) a description of the findings from my inquiry, and (e) a summary of the findings.

I use pseudonyms throughout the discussion for the teacher and children who returned consent forms, and identify myself as "researcher" in order to distinguish my interactions with students from those of the classroom teacher. References to other students within the regular classroom observations appear as student [boy or girl (B/G)].

#### **Contextualized Biography**

My interest in this research topic involved several pathways. First, I love to read and enjoy the vicarious travels it permits me, thus my interest in various forms of literature. Second, I first became aware of geography during my Texas geography class when I was in seventh grade and my teacher assigned a project to choose one Texas town to research--I chose Waxahachie because I liked the sound of the name. Third, as I

watched the news or weather on television, I became constantly amazed at the sheer vastness of the earth which further teased my curiosity about geography. Lastly, throughout my twenty-two years of teaching, integrating children's literature and music into daily lessons remain constant staples in my toolkit of teaching strategies.

### **Professional Background**

The classroom teacher participating in this study, Mrs. Wainwright received her BBA (Accounting) from the local university in the community in 1985. After working for five years in the business community, Mrs. Wainwright decided to return to college, earning over thirty-six hours in history and English while obtaining her teaching certificate. Since that time, Mrs. Wainwright has spent the last nineteen years teaching at Foremost Elementary, a kindergarten through fifth grade school in a mid-sized west-Texas city with a population of nearly 100,000. During those nineteen years, Mrs. Wainwright taught second, third, fourth, and fifth grades. The classes she taught in the second and third grades were self-contained, providing Mrs. Wainwright the opportunity to teach all content subjects. Departmentalization in fourth and fifth grades narrowed her teaching focus to science and social studies.

I first met Mrs. Wainwright when we both taught second grade in the same school district, and we served on not only the district-wide second grade curriculum committee but also the district-wide science curriculum-writing committee. I became reacquainted with Mrs. Wainwright as a colleague at the elementary school where I have taught general music classes for the past four years, and consequently conducted

this study. I received my B.A. in Liberal Studies from Our Lady of the Lake University (San Antonio, TX) in 1988 and my M.A. in Curriculum and Instruction in 2001 from Angelo State University. After receiving my B.A., I taught a variety of grade levels in three school districts across Texas: first grade, second grade, first and second multi-grade, eighth grade English, and general music to students in kindergarten through sixth grade. During four of the past five years, I taught pre-service university classes in elementary reading methods part-time as an adjunct instructor in the evenings at the local university.

#### **Context of Professional Collaboration**

Before I discuss my findings in depth, readers would benefit from hearing a brief description of the context for the research with respect to teacher collaboration. Having received permission from my college professors and the campus principal to conduct a pilot study in the spring of 2008, I talked at length with Mrs. Wainwright to plan lessons and collaborate about resources such as children's literature to use during the social studies lessons. I visited her class three days a week for several weeks to observe and participate. In addition to visiting her during class time, I would meet with her approximately once a week to plan for the upcoming week's lessons. It was during these conversations that I first became aware of the books *The Secret Soldier – The Story of Deborah Sampson* and *Facing West*, and books in the Dear America series. During classroom lessons, I assisted with reading several portions of *Deborah Sampson* and *Facing West*, and was amazed at the involvement of the students. According to Mrs.

Wainwright's notes to me (April 2008), "Four of my students got very interested in reading more about the people of that time....The group read several books, switching out with one another when they were finished with the book." As a result of reading Mrs. Wainwright's notes, I learned how students became more involved in social studies through children's literature—an aspect which informed my dissertation study.

As I observed Mrs. Wainwright teach social studies, I noticed how often she used the large classroom map to give students a visual of places and locations. Mrs. Wainwright even commented in her April 2008 notes to me:

All students were more interested in the maps. They enjoyed labeling their own maps with places, rivers, and other places the people lived and traveled. The students are constantly asking me to put down the map so they can read and look at it. Anytime there is a chance to mention the area of place on the map, I do that with the students.

As I became more enlightened and realized I wanted to conduct a formal research study, Dr. Todd took the time to come visit Mrs. Wainwright's class, talking with not only Mrs. Wainwright and several of the students, but becoming cognizant of the place I wanted to conduct my dissertation study.

Mrs. Wainwright and I continued collaborating throughout the dissertation research study in the spring of 2009. While we did not have a set time to meet weekly, we would schedule our time around tutoring, faculty meetings, and last-minute school activities. Our weekly planning sessions were brief, sometimes lasting only five minutes, as Mrs. Wainwright would tell me and show me in her lesson plans what the next week's lessons would involve. I often asked if I could assist or participate in any way,

and it was at these moments that topics would arise such as visiting the local library, providing copies of song lyrics, and scheduling guest speakers.

### **Description of School and Classroom Setting**

The campus involved in my study was a Title I school located in the northwest portion of the city with an enrollment in 2008-2009 of 410 students. I studied Mrs. Wainwright in one of her three social studies classes.

The fifth-grade social studies/science classroom was located on the northeast corner of the newest wing of the school building, with two large windows facing east, doors providing access to the hallway, and a boys' and girls' bathroom shared with a fourth grade class. There were twenty-one students, ten boys and eleven girls, with a diverse range of ethnicities. Three-fourths of the southside wall of the classroom contained wall lockers for the students, with wall space above the lockers to post instructional materials such as posters. The teacher's desk resided parallel in front of the east wall with built-in storage shelves below the two windows. At the end of the storage shelving was a sink and water fountain. Whiteboards lined about two-thirds of the north and west walls. A television with a built-in video cassette player was mounted from the ceiling in the corner between the north and west walls. Below the television rested the student computer center which consisted of three computer hard drives and desk-top monitors, each equipped with headphones and connected to a classroom printer. A small bulletin board was on the west wall near the door to the hallway. Next to the bulletin board was a large classroom pull-down map, one map each for Texas, the

United States, and the world. A small four-shelf bookshelf sat on the west wall between the door to the hallway and the door to the restrooms. On the shelves rested a variety of fiction and nonfiction books for student use. The student desks were rectangular in shape and were rearranged each six weeks. The front of the room was on the north wall; located near the front center was a table that held the teacher's technology center for instruction. The table contained a laptop computer, a document camera, a projector, and a DVD player.

### **Findings**

As I analyzed the data from this study, I found distinctive examples of the three themes: (1) storytelling as a vehicle for transmediation; (2) writing and drawing as tools for representation; and (3) authentic learning in a socially-safe environment.

#### **Storytelling as a Vehicle for Transmediation**

Across the breadth of my research, as I read, reread, sorted and coded, I noted the number of times Mrs. Wainwright made references to specific people and places in her instruction. To bring various people and places to life, Mrs. Wainwright employed a variety of resources such as the social studies textbook (TB). She also relied on several other resources including teacher resource books other than the textbook (TRB), maps, children's literature for teacher read-alouds, children's literature for students to read independently, images (e.g., videos from the social studies series and the local library; video clips from United Streaming; maps, posters, pictures, charts and graphs); and various music from CDs and DVDs (e.g., the *School-House Rock* series). While all of

these resources helped bring historical events and settings to life in the classroom, deeper analysis revealed that Mrs. Wainwright's use of storytelling tied the multiple texts together and engaged students in the study of people and places. Through in-depth analysis of the data set regarding people and places, I discovered the overarching theme of *storytelling as a vehicle for transmediation*.

In the simplest of terms, transmediation has been defined as "the movement between and among sign systems" (Leland & Harste, 1994, p. 340). According to Leland and Harste (1994), "transmediation encourages reflection and supports learners in making new connections" pg 340). Siegel (1995) provided further elaboration: "Transmediation is grounded in the idea that alternative sign systems (linguistic, gestural, pictorial, musical, constructive, and so on) are available for making sense of human experience" (p. 460).

Transmediation occurred as I observed Mrs. Wainwright effectively weave together read-alouds with the social studies textbook to create a sense of story about people and places. Rather than ask students to recite a list of facts connected to dates, which all too often resides in short-term memory long enough to take a test, Mrs. Wainwright provided instruction to encourage long-term memory. Biography and historical fiction books provided students a window into the past through the vehicle of storytelling. As part of the data set provided in Mrs. Wainwright's journal (TRJ), she reflected how reading and traveling helped her teach geography and social studies.

The experiences and sights of travel coupled with reading books, magazine articles, and historical fiction about those places increases

the stories you can tell about the “dead” places or events in the textbook. When I have included children’s books in the classroom with the TEKS and textbook support, the students have learned more and enjoyed their time in social studies. The stories make history “alive” and finding places on the map and learning about those places helps make students feel a part of the learning. They are amazed that the places exist and that real people like them lived there. These historical people did some of the same things that we do today and were people just like we are, or different than we are today. It helps them put a face on history or give a place a spot on the map. (TRJ pg 7)

Transmediation was evident when Mrs. Wainwright moved across the text in the social studies textbook to the text in biographies. For example, while focusing on the study of the American Revolution, Mrs. Wainwright introduced biographies to her students—biographies of everyday, ordinary citizens who accomplished important deeds in support of the revolutionary cause. The first book, *Secret Soldier—The Story of Deborah Sampson*, told the story of Deborah Sampson’s life from early childhood struggles to her adventures disguised as a man serving in the Continental Army, and eventually to her travels across the newly-formed United States of America as a guest speaker retelling her experiences as a soldier. Mrs. Wainwright read *Deborah Sampson* to the class over a period of three class meetings. According to Mrs. Wainwright, “students were intrigued that a girl could have joined the war as a “boy” and actually got away with it” (TRJ, pg. 3). I listened as several boys expressed amazement when Deborah Sampson removed a bullet from her leg and bandaged it so the doctors would not discover her true identity—the boys even commented how that must have really hurt (FNO p. 1). Students located Deborah Sampson’s name and picture in the social studies textbook (pp. 263 and 307) along with a brief description of this “faithful and

good soldier” (p. 307). I observed excitement and involvement as the students listened to Mrs. Wainwright read the *Secret Soldier – The Story of Deborah Sampson* aloud to the class—an interactive read-aloud which provided opportunities for students to jump in and comment (FNO pp. 1 & 2). Reading this biography as a class established credibility for reading biographies as a way of learning history, and preceded the upcoming assignment for all students to read a biography about someone important during the American Revolution. Mrs. Wainwright reflected, “I used her [Deborah Sampson’s] biography as a sample for the biography quilt” (TRJ, p. 9). I will discuss this assignment in the *writing* portion of chapter four.

Another example of transmediation became evident when Mrs. Wainwright would use the large pull-down classroom map. While reading about Deborah Sampson, Mrs. Wainwright often paused when *places* were mentioned in the book, such as where Deborah lived and where she enlisted in the Army, and walked over to the large pull-down U.S. map to provide a visual for the students. Not only would Mrs. Wainwright point out these locations, she would “travel the map” with her finger or pointer to help students understand Deborah’s world as she traveled on foot. When the students heard that Deborah Sampson enlisted in the Army at West Point, several students commented that they had heard of West Point and appeared amazed to know that it was a “real place” (FNO, p. 2; RRJ, p. 1).

The second read-aloud book that Mrs. Wainwright chose for the Revolutionary period was a short historical fiction book titled *Buttons for General Washington*. Based

upon primary source documents about a Quaker family who became involved in spying to aide their son who was a soldier serving with General Washington, the book tells what might have happened to 14-yr-old John Darragh on one of his missions to carry notes to Washington – notes that Mrs. Darragh, John’s mother, placed inside buttons before sewing them on the young boy’s coat. Mrs. Wainwright explained that the Quakers are pacifists and believe in peaceful resistance. During the read-aloud, students were quiet and appeared to be intently listening as they watched Mrs. Wainwright. I again observed engagement and excitement from all of the students in the class—boys and girls alike—as they intensely focused and waited for the climax and conclusion of the story (FNO pp. 2-3).

Yet another opportunity for transmediation occurred in my fifth grade music class the same day as the *Buttons for General Washington* read-aloud. Knowing that social studies content can be reinforced by songs, I had previously introduced students to several songs about Martin Luther King—songs they had learned in honor of his birthday. Two of the songs were “A Kid Like Me” from the adopted music textbook and “MLK Rap.” One of the phrases in the “A Kid Like Me” rap stated, “He didn’t use violence—no guns or knives. His message was one that revered our lives.” I used PowerPoint presentations while students sang the songs. A visual on the PowerPoint of the song lyrics showed a picture of Martin Luther King, Jr. in one of the freedom marches. As we reviewed the content of the songs and while they were singing, I came upon a “teachable moment” as I asked the students, “How are the Quakers (during the

Revolutionary War) and Martin Luther King, Jr. alike?" (RRJ, p. 2). Several students burst out with words and phrases such as "freedom" and "equal rights for everyone." After I asked them to quiet down and think a bit more, I noticed a smile creep across the face of a student (B) in the front row—then he slowly raised his hand and answered "peaceful resistance." Suddenly the room started buzzing with exclamations such as "yeah, that's it;"-- "right." We took a few minutes to discuss and make connections from past to present. I felt exhilarated as I watched and listened to students make these connections. I love to watch children enjoy learning! Such learning is an excellent example of teacher collaboration—because I knew what Mrs. Wainwright had been teaching, I could ask pertinent questions which supported student learning and allowed for connections across content areas--music and social studies (RRJ, p. 2).

Using images to enhance comprehension is another example of the role of storytelling as a vehicle for transmediation. During the study of the formal beginning of the westward expansion--the Louisiana Purchase which led to the Lewis and Clark expedition, Mrs. Wainwright simplified the term westward expansion for the students by saying it "is a fancy way to say moving west" (FNO p. 4). Using images such as a poster on the wall and a picture in the textbook (p. 373), Mrs. Wainwright queried "How is the picture in the textbook the same as the picture on the wall?" (FNO p. 3). Both images had horses, mountains and trees near a wide body of water. Several students responded with "horses, trees, lake, mountains" (FNO p. 3). Using the textbook as a springboard (TB pp. 372-377), Mrs. Wainwright enhanced the text again by using images

in a video from the local public library, “The Journals of Lewis & Clark,” to assist in *telling the story* of Meriwether Lewis, William Clark, Sacagawea, and the expedition forces. A reenactment narrated by Lorne Greene took the students from the beginning of the expedition through their travels across the nation until they reached California. Dressed in period costume, rowing a keelboat and pulling a pirogue—often trudging through the mud in shallow waters to even pull the keelboat—the video offered students a glimpse of what the Lewis and Clark expedition encountered on a daily basis, with frequent quotes from the journals of both Lewis and Clark, and even including a visual example of elk hunting to show the type of hunting that might have been necessary to supplement a diet of dried foods.

Due to the limited information in the social studies textbook, I suggested to Mrs. Wainwright that I bring in some informational books from the local public library. Mrs. Wainwright was enthusiastic and wholeheartedly agreed (RRJ, p. 3). Becoming more involved as a participant observer and teacher collaborator, I visited the local public library where I discovered many books about the Lewis and Clark expedition. I brought in about 25 books for Mrs. Wainwright’s students to read and browse through during the study. While the textbook (TB p. 374) gave a sample excerpt from the journal of Meriwether Lewis and a small picture of the actual journal (TB p. 377), these examples were miniscule. Several of the library books (Appendix D) provided students with a greater variety of journal entries and, coupled with the video narration, resulted in some students expressing amazement at the detailed journals of Lewis and Clark. Reba

commented, “I liked learning about their journals” (SI #6). The variety of journal entries found in the library books included details about plants, animals, landforms and bodies of water, in addition to encounters with any Native American people (RRJ, p. 3). Mrs. Wainwright told her students “Believe it or not, they [Lewis & Clark] wrote daily in journals or diaries” (FNO p. 5). During independent reading time, students would get in small groups to take “time to skim and discuss books” (TRJ, p. 3).

Still another example of transmediation occurred as Mrs. Wainwright used a concrete example to provide a visual image of road width during the continued story of westward expansion. Mrs. Wainwright reviewed the previous day’s lesson by asking several knowledge-level questions, “What did Eli Whitney do?” and “Where did cotton grow?” (FNO p. 6). After reviewing the first two pages (TB p. 408 & 409) of the textbook lesson, Mrs. Wainwright introduced “Moving Goods and People” which was the topic on TB p. 411. She explained, “The roads during this time period were not very wide—about the width of your desk”-- to which several students responded “Nah—huh?” (FNO p. 6). This led into students reading and discussing TB p. 411 which offered one paragraph each on the National Road, Robert Fulton and the steamboat, canals, and the Erie Canal.

Transmediation was again evident as Mrs. Wainwright took the opportunity to move across literacies or sign systems as she introduced stories in the form of song lyrics to enhance the study of the American Industrial Revolution (Chapter 12, Lesson 2, TB pp. 408-415). As Mrs. Wainwright and the students read the paragraph about “canals,” Mrs. Wainwright went on to explain that New England has many lakes and

rivers. One way to connect bodies of water to each other is through a narrow waterway called a canal. Mrs. Wainwright then walked over to the large pull-down classroom map of the United States and showed the students the large lakes known as the Great Lakes. After a moment, Mrs. Wainwright began singing “15 Miles on the Erie Canal” (FNO p. 7). At this point, several students had questions, such as Susan who asked, “How did water get in it? How did they keep digging as water came in?” (FNO p. 7). Mrs. Wainwright had students turn to textbook pages 414-415 which was a double-page spread to employ another sign system as students looked at and discussed the cross-section diagram with images of the upper and lower water levels, lock chambers, and gates in a canal lock (FNO p. 7).

Continuing with the study of transportation, during the next class period Mrs. Wainwright and her students read the two textbook pages about the early railroads (TB pp. 412-413). Similar to the reading and writing project that students created at the end of the study on the American Revolution, Mrs. Wainwright assigned students an oral book report project. The assignment required them to select an American inventor or important person in 19<sup>th</sup> century America, conduct some research on their own time, and prepare an oral report using the criteria in the written assignment (LP p. 12).

Storytelling continued to mediate across sign systems as Mrs. Wainwright used a picture of a covered wagon from the textbook to provide an example of vocabulary they would encounter in the next teacher read-aloud. Mrs. Wainwright chose a small book from the school’s literacy closet titled *Facing West* by Kathleen V. Kudlinski as a read-

aloud. *Facing West* is an historical fiction novel from the “Once Upon America” series written for 7-11 year-old children. In the story, eleven-year-old Ben, the main character, is traveling the Oregon Trail in 1845 with his parents and two sisters. Ben’s asthma and the need for a drier climate present the reason for the long journey. During the second day of reading *Facing West*, Mrs. Wainwright began the class by using a picture of a covered wagon (TB p. 438) and saying, “Do you see the wagon? You’ll see some this Saturday if you attend the trail ride parade. Most wagons carried blankets, pots and pans, and one change of clothes and one pair of shoes for each person in the family” (FNO p. 9). Mrs. Wainwright continued this line of conversation as she gave a short history of the rodeo and trail ride traditions.

Recognizing that textbook information was inadequate to effectively meet students’ needs for understanding the state standards, Mrs. Wainwright used the textbook (TB p. 438-440) as a springboard to other texts. Mrs. Wainwright read a short passage about a fictional teenager, Mary Ellen Todd, and her family as they traveled west in a covered wagon in 1852—there were three paragraphs or one textbook page for this brief story. One more textbook page (TB p. 439) provided facts about the Oregon country, mountain men, and missionaries Marcus and Narcissa Whitman.

Recognizing maps as a sign system, Mrs. Wainwright used transmediation again when she guided students to view the western trails map on textbook p. 440. This map gave students a visual of five westward trails--California Trail, Mormon Trail, Old Spanish Trail, Oregon Trail, and the Santa Fe Trail. So that students might be able to keep and

write on a map, Mrs. Wainwright gave each student a copy of the “Trailblazer’s Map,” which was a Scholastic News resource (Appendix A, SWS #5). As in the textbook, the Trailblazer Map delineated each trail in a different color. Mrs. Wainwright told her students they would be using the Trailblazer Map while she read stories about the trails. During the study of the various trails, students made their own maps of each trail. Mrs. Wainwright reflected how important it was to the students to have their own maps (TRJ p. 5).

Reaching across another sign system, visual literacy, to assist with exposing the students to images and support comprehension through visualization, Mrs. Wainwright utilized district-provided resources by showing a United Streaming video clip “Oregon Trail.” Mrs. Wainwright reflected “This gave visions of what it was like reenacted for film” (TRJ p. 6).

The overarching idea of people and places permeates the social studies lessons as Mrs. Wainwright travels from reading-aloud to using maps. During the read-aloud of *Facing West*, Mrs. Wainwright would pause whenever a landform, a river, a town, or a fort were mentioned. She would guide the students to use the maps in the textbook and the individual map to locate each site. For example, here’s an excerpt from p. 19 of *Facing West*, a conversation between Ben and mountain man Pete, the trail guide.

“You just stay upwind of campfires, you hear?” Pete said. “And I’ll come get you on dusty days.” He pulled his horse to a stop along a rise. “Now look yonder.” A river wandered wide and flat and brown below them. “That’s the Platte.” Ben whistled. “We really *are* getting somewhere!”

After reading this segment of the book, Mrs. Wainwright guided the students in looking for the Platte River on both the map in the textbook and individual student map. Mrs. Wainwright asked students to look at their copy of the trailblazer map, then emphasized that the green line represented the Oregon Trail—the one that Ben and his family took. Mrs. Wainwright commented “Platte River—this is how far Ben and his family have gotten in several months” (FNO p. 9). Next Mrs. Wainwright went to the large classroom map and pointed to the Platte River. I observed many students appearing in awe of this information—that the river in *Facing West* is actually a REAL river in the United States (FNO p. 9). Mrs. Wainwright continued this pattern for several days—she would read-aloud one or two chapters, pausing when geographic locations were mentioned—highlighting the forts like Fort Laramie, Fort Hall, and Fort Walla Walla, and rivers. “Traveling up the Columbia River just like Lewis and Clark” (FNO p. 9). Students using their individual maps and the map in the textbook, and Mrs. Wainwright pointing to the large classroom pull-down map, were daily events in the lesson pattern.

After finishing *Facing West*, Mrs. Wainwright introduced the students to a children’s picture book she had checked out from the local library. Before reading the book, Mrs. Wainwright shared a personal story to help students make connections.

“We talked about the Oregon Trail and the Mormon Trail. Here’s another story – *The Santa Fe Trail*. This lady started remembering things from her childhood, and the author listened and wrote those things down. People have a lot of stories...my husband’s grandmother (70 yrs later) remembers taking a wagon from Carolina to Oklahoma in the early 1900’s, late 1800’s—.” (FNO p. 12)

Storytelling continued to support social studies lessons. During the study of the Civil War, Mrs. Wainwright read excerpts from the novel *Abner and Me* by Dan Gutman. *Abner and Me* is historical fiction and time travel rolled into one novel. The 13-year-old main character Joe loves baseball and has discovered that by holding one of his baseball cards and wishing to know more about that particular player or time period, he could travel through time. This time Joe wants to know if Abner Doubleday actually invented baseball. His wish carries him and his nurse mother back through time to the Battle of Gettysburg, where General Abner Doubleday was a Union officer. After reading portions of *Abner and Me*, which included descriptions of battlefield and hospital scenes, Mrs. Wainwright directed the students to the social studies textbook, Chapter 15 (TB pp. 490-495), which gives some details of the Civil War.

Storytelling provided answers as images (visual literacy) again played an important role in stimulating students' questions. While looking at the textbook (pp. 490-495), Susan queried Mrs. Wainwright: "Pictures—when they're fighting—do they really fight that close?" (FNO p. 21). Mrs. Wainwright took time to answer and explain the difference between war then and now by explaining the close proximity of soldiers in battle versus bomber pilots dropping bombs and never seeing the aftermath. Mrs. Wainwright related a story about her sister being a B-1 bomber pilot (FNO p. 21), again using a story to provide clarification and examples to aide in student comprehension.

The story of the Underground Railroad is familiar to most students in upper elementary. When Mrs. Wainwright began this lesson (TB p. 473), she first asked

students to look at the map at the top of the page which showed not only the routes of the Underground Railroad, but also which states allowed slavery (FNO p. 18). Mrs. Wainwright asked several 'leading questions' about the Underground Railroad, such as "Is that a choo-choo train?" Several girls answered, "No, it's an underground path." Mrs. Wainwright elaborated, "It was a 'secret' – not physically underground – underground means 'secret'" (FNO p. 18). Mrs. Wainwright further clarified this secret as being similar to adults "spelling out" in front of young children. Reba asked, "So is that why they sang songs like--?" (FNO p. 19). "Yes, like Follow the Drinking Gourd," said Mrs. Wainwright, who then immediately went into singing the chorus, and several students chimed in: "Follow the drinking gourd—follow the drinking gourd. For the old man is awaitin' for to carry you to freedom. Follow the drinking gourd" (FNO p. 19).

Transitioning from the story in the song lyrics to the story in a picture, Mrs. Wainwright guided the students to another page in the textbook, "Page 475 – see the picture of Harriet Tubman – this was later in her life when she was free" (FNO p. 19). One observant boy raised his hand to ask, "Why is there a question mark by the year 1820?" (FNO p. 19). The information is the birth/death date entry on TB p. 475: "1820(?) - 1913". Storytelling aided in explaining the answer (FNO p. 19): "Records weren't accurate—many didn't write the dates down." Mrs. Wainwright used a personal story to provide an example as she went on to say that there was a controversy about her own grandmother's birthdate—apparently the date wasn't written down in

the official birth records and the county clerk had to interview several relatives to verify the date (FNO p. 19).

Personal stories provided students the opportunity to view events from another's perspective. The second lesson in Chapter 15 (TB pp. 498-499) begins by explaining some of the hardships the soldiers faced during the Civil War. The lesson begins with two short letters from soldiers, one from the North and one from the South, who fought in the Battle of Fredericksburg in Virginia on December 13, 1862. Both letters express the despair and sadness felt by the soldiers. The hardships suffered led to a decrease in volunteers on both sides of the conflict, so both the Union and the Confederacy passed draft laws. Mrs. Wainwright used a storytelling technique to summarize TB p. 499.

At the beginning of the war, most men were volunteers—after awhile, many stopped volunteering. So the government enforced the DRAFT—all men aged 16-40 yrs old had to sign up for war. If you had enough money, you could buy yourself out of the draft. So this was prejudiced against the poor. Boys, aged 10-12 yrs, were usually drummers. The vibration of the drum caused ground vibrations—therefore, it was a good way to communicate messages to troops. The fife helped with main cadences—also used for wake-up and breakfast. (FNO p. 25)

Mrs. Wainwright further clarified the age of sixteen by telling the students that would be the same age as most sophomores in high school (FNO p. 25).

The convenience of the large classroom pull-down map aided Mrs. Wainwright in reinforcing students' awareness of places in stories. The social studies textbook (TB p. 507) discusses details of the Battle of Gettysburg. While the textbook states that Gettysburg is in Pennsylvania, there is not a map on pp. 500-508. Mrs. Wainwright

walked over to the large pull-down classroom map of the United States, and alerted students to pay close attention: “All eyes up here please.” Mrs. Wainwright pointed to North Carolina where General Robert E. Lee and his troops started marching, and she traveled her map pointer all the way to Gettysburg, PA (FNO p. 26). Mrs. Wainwright further explained, “Gettysburg—there are towns in several states with that name. Probably the family was Getty—they owned a lot of land—so the town was named Gettysburg—burg means ‘a town’” (FNO p. 26).

Bringing in another literacy from popular culture--Mrs. Wainwright queried her class to see if anyone had watched the movie “Remember the Titans” starring Denzel Washington. Seeing several students raise their hands, Mrs. Wainwright told the students the cemetery scene in that movie was at Gettysburg, and Denzel Washington’s speech referred to Abraham Lincoln’s famous speech (FNO p. 26). “Is that why it’s called “The Gettysburg Address?” asked Alana (FNO p. 26). Mrs. Wainwright said that it was. Alana continued, “Wasn’t it a short speech that he actually wrote on the train ride from Washington to Gettysburg?” (FNO p. 26). Mrs. Wainwright confirmed that statement, and further added that Lincoln usually made short speeches—he spoke clearly and concisely (FNO p. 26). Mrs. Wainwright told the students, “Lincoln told these people—in about three minutes as Alana said—he was honoring the dead, and telling the people ‘yes, this is sad--but they’re fighting to help people be free’” (FNO p. 27).

Transmediation was evident as Mrs. Wainwright continued using stories to highlight specific aspects of the Civil War. Before reading some of the battlefield scenes

in *Abner & Me*, Mrs. Wainwright alerted students about several graphic descriptions of the bloody battlefields with bodies, arms and legs scattered all around. Mrs. Wainwright also explained that references to “ambulance” in the book meant a horse-drawn wagon. She returned to the book *Abner and Me* and read one of the amputation scenes where the doctors would cut off an arm or a leg, then casually toss the sawed-off limb into an ever-increasing pile of human limbs.

While several of the boys appeared enthralled with the bloody descriptions, others got upset with the apparent insensitivity of the doctors as they tossed limbs (arms and legs) onto an ever-growing pile, with one of the comments [student (B)] being “Jerk! That’s not fair!” (FNO p. 27). Later, as Mrs. Wainwright read the scene where the doctors used leeches to “bleed out” the patients (Mrs. Wainwright explained the procedure), some of the boys blurted out calling the doctor stupid (FNO p. 27). In response to such comments, Alana said, “They did what they had been taught” (FNO p. 28). Apparently Alana had done some out-of-class reading, because she continued, “Isn’t this the time that the ‘angel in the battlefield’ was there?”, to which Mrs. Wainwright answered, “Yes—Clara Barton” (FNO p. 28). Mrs. Wainwright told the class they would see a picture of Clara Barton in their textbook. Mrs. Wainwright continued reading the next scene which talked about one of the Union soldiers being shot. There was a buzz among several of the boys, with one student (B) saying, “I told you they’d shoot the German boy (Little John)” (FNO p. 28). Due to the disruption, Mrs. Wainwright stopped reading and gave the students a chance to settle down. She then

commented, “Do you want me to keep reading?” to which the several boys emphatically responded, “YES!” (FNO p. 28). Mrs. Wainwright read a few pages, then when she got to the CPR scene and read the phrase “then an officer rode up”—one of the students (B) jumped up and shouted, “Doubleday—I was right!” (FNO p. 28). The boys exhibited genuine excitement and attentiveness to the story, even to the point that another boy commented, “I want to see the rest of the book—read the rest of the book” (FNO pg 28). After hearing these two outbursts, I wondered if some of the boys had been discussing the book *Abner and Me* outside of class (RRJ p. 6). Mrs. Wainwright decided to stop at the end of the chapter, and had students get out their social studies textbook and their blue foldable graphic organizer.

Using stories and images about real people, Mrs. Wainwright directed students to their textbook (TB p. 502), which contained a primary source image of Clara Barton feeding and helping wounded soldiers. After students silently read TB p. 509, Mrs. Wainwright elaborated, “Gettysburg is in Pennsylvania—this is the battle in *Abner and Me*.” Mrs. Wainwright guided the students to use the map on TB p. 509, asking students to locate Vicksburg on the border of Louisiana and Mississippi, and explained that the Battle of Gettysburg was being fought at the same time as the Battle of Vicksburg. “Look at your map—do you see Gettysburg? Look down at Vicksburg. Remember the Anaconda Plan? It’s coming together now after two years. Vicksburg—48 days of battle – the town was ‘imprisoned’” (FNO p. 29).

The next portion of the lesson involved a short video from the textbook series, Scott Foresman *Video Field Trips*, Unit 7 – Abraham Lincoln. This 12-minute video segment contained primary document images – black and white pictures of Abraham Lincoln as a young man through his first term as President. Also included in the video narration were quotations from Abraham Lincoln and other citizens of that time period. Of particular interest to the students (boys) was the black and white image of a horse-drawn “ambulance” being loaded with stretchers of wounded soldiers. One student (B) commented it [ambulance] was just like the scene in *Abner and Me* (p. 85) (FNO p. 29).

In an effort of further collaboration, I had a brief chat with Mrs. Wainwright about using music literacy to supplement the study of the railroads. I showed her a CD of railroad songs, *Classic Railroad Songs* from Smithsonian Folkways, that I planned to use in music class one day. Since her classes had recently seen the Lincoln video which showed Lincoln’s funeral train, we selected the song “He’s Coming to Us Dead”, track #12-- a story in song for the students to listen to, discuss and reflect on. Gussie Davis wrote the song in 1899 and it was first recorded in 1927 by Henry Whitter and G. B. Grayson. In summary, the song tells the story of a father waiting at the train station for his son. The father arrives early and goes to the “Express Freight” section, where he is greeted by the telegraph clerk. The father explains that he is awaiting the arrival of his son from war, and the clerk explains that he should go to the train depot where the passengers arrive. In a grieving tone, the father states that his son’s coffin will be in the freight section. In music class, without telling the title of the song, I played the song

through in its entirety. Next I asked students to tell me what they had learned. Several students wanted to hear it again to get more details, so I played a portion, then stopped to discuss it. Students seemed saddened when they realized why the father was at the freight section of the depot instead of the passenger section (RRJ, p. 7).

At the beginning of the next social studies class, Mrs. Wainwright went over to the pull-down map and guided the students' thinking away from the Civil War and to other events that occurred during the 1800s involving communications and transportation, Unit 8 – Expansion and Change, TB pp. 529-559. Before the war, the usual modes of transportation included walking, riding a horse, wagon or stagecoach, locomotive, and ship. Explaining that walking or riding in a wagon or stagecoach could be accomplished all the way from the east coast to the west coast, Mrs. Wainwright also shared that each of these would take several months. Mrs. Wainwright traced the ship route from New York around the tip of South America and up to San Francisco, California (FNO p. 32). Mrs. Wainwright reflected “The students were really surprised—lots of questions about this” (TRJ, p. 5).

Through the vehicle of storytelling, Mrs. Wainwright consistently planned opportunities for students to learn about people (LP pp. 10, 12 & 16) and places (LP p. 16) and executed those plans using a variety of strategies such as questioning (FNO pp. 3, 6, 8, 19, 22 & 31) and the use of graphic organizers (LP pp. 10, 12 & 16) (FNO pp. 23 & 29) (SI pp. 1, 3 & 7). Some examples of the range of questions include *inference*: “He set goals [referring to Thomas Jefferson] – goal #1 was to make friends with the Native

Americans – why?” (FNO p. 5); *analogy*: “Using your textbook, pg R77 – here’s an analogy: Oregon Trail is to Oregon as the Mormon Trail is to \_\_\_\_.” (FNO p. 19); and *recall and inference* (Civil War): “Capture the Mississippi River—Why?” (FNO p. 22).

Mrs. Wainwright would ask a series of general questions used to trigger prior knowledge from previous lessons or to involve students in the present day’s lesson. Here’s an example of one such classroom dialogue. Mrs. Wainwright gave each student a copy of a map titled “A History Map: The United States in 1861” from one of her resource books entitled *Daily Geography Practice Grade 5* (p. 143/TRB #2); then the dialogue began:

**T:** We see the boundary line—we can see the Union states in the gray.  
Where are those located?

**Ss:** In the north.

**T:** States with lines—the Confederate states—where are those?

**Ss:** In the south.

**T:** North – Union; South – Confederate. They have two different names—called them the North because most of the states were in the --

**Ss:** North.

**T:** What kinds of things do we think about when we hear the word North?

**S (G):** There weren’t slaves.

**T:** What about the weather?

**Ss:** Cold.

**T:** What was prevalent in the southern colonies? What jobs?

**Ss:** They farmed.

**T:** Was it easy to farm in New England?

**Ss:** No.

In summary, Mrs. Wainwright used storytelling to journey across the multiple texts and literacies she employed to teach social studies concepts. The stories in the teacher read-alouds were enriched through the use of maps, pictures, songs, and videos.

#### **Writing and Drawing as Tools for Representation**

Not only storytelling, but also writing and drawing illuminated the social studies lessons. Mrs. Wainwright scaffolded lessons by guiding students in taking notes using foldables and graphic organizers. In the previous example of questioning strategies, information reveals knowledge retained from prior lessons that had been recorded in the trifold or foldable. Graphic organizers played a key role in assisting students to take notes on important concepts while creating a useful tool for future use. Mrs. Wainwright's lesson plans reflect her specific goals to include people and places (LP pp. 8, 10, 12 & 16) and provide students tools for reviewing and retaining information.

During unit studies such as the American Revolution, the Lewis & Clark Expedition, westward expansion involving trails west and transcontinental railroad, and the Civil War, Mrs. Wainwright provided each student with copies of maps for each geographic region being studied. Students would write and draw on the maps detailing

pertinent information such as Appendix A, a map titled “The Colonies, 1775” (SWS #1) from a teacher resource titled *USKids History: Book of the American Revolution* (p. 14) (TRB). Mrs. Wainwright projected an image of the map on the projector screen and guided students with placing information in appropriate places. Mrs. Wainwright added a map key for students to draw and write in to provide additional information such as what crops were prevalent in each colony (Appendix A, SWS #1).

As part of the unit of study for the American Revolution--TB pp. 259-328, Unit 4, Chapters 8 & 9--Mrs. Wainwright assigned a book project (LP p. 8): Students would self-select an important person from the American Revolution from a list provided by Mrs. Wainwright, read a biography of that person, and make a quilt square to exhibit what they learned (Appendix A, SWS #3). Mrs. Wainwright gathered a variety of biographies from the school library covering a span of reading levels. Students browsed the books and made selections. The required information for the four-flap quilt square included name, birthdate and birthplace, and at least one sentence stating why that person was important. Students were to select information for the fourth flap—something they thought was important or unique about that person. In addition to this information, students were to locate a picture from the book or from the internet and place that image in the center of the quilt square.

While not a lot of writing was involved in this project, the writing was concise and specific, giving students the opportunity to reflect on and represent what they learned. After all students completed their biography quilt squares, a class quilt was put

together and displayed on the bulletin board outside the social studies room (Appendix A, photos). The quilt square served as a graphic organizer. The study of persons in American history is part of the state TEKS 5.2A – Identify contributions of persons in the American Revolution. Smaller examples of writing included 4”x 6” index cards with cartoon caricatures of events in the American Revolution, such as Paul Revere’s Midnight Ride and the Boston Tea Party (Appendix A, SWS #2).

As Mrs. Wainwright planned her lessons for learning about the United States Constitution, she integrated music as she asked me for a copy of the song “The Constitution Rap” from the book *Schoolhouse Raps* (Albrecht & Smith, 1999, p. 22). She knew that all fifth grade students sang the song during a patriotic program in November 2009 and wanted to use it to introduce the Constitution lesson. I provided her a copy of the song, and she assigned students to complete a circle map (Appendix A, SWS #4) to highlight details from the song—expository text with actual facts about the writing of the Constitution. For example, the song begins, “in 1787 a delegation met—they came to solve their differences and get our nation set. It happened in May in Independence Hall—all except Rhode Island answered the call” (p. 22). Before starting the writing assignment, however, Mrs. Wainwright led the students in singing “The Constitution Rap” to refresh their memories (FNO p. 3).

While studying the Industrial Revolution, students created a three-layer flipbook for keeping track of inventions and inventors (LP p. 12, FNO p. 4). After a discussion of the invention of the steamboat by Robert Fulton and the construction of the Erie Canal

(TB p. 411), Mrs. Wainwright guided the students to map the major waterways of the United States and its territories to show how this mode of transportation “moved people and cargo farther away to more people” (TRJ p. 4)(LP p. 12). Students created a four-layer flip-book for the Industrial Revolution that also highlighted transportation--roads, waterways and rails (Appendix A, SWS #8)(LP p. 12). Mrs. Wainwright used foldables to help students “easily put together information” (TRJ p. 1). Sometimes Mrs. Wainwright would put the information on the whiteboard in the same format as the foldable, or sometimes she would use the projector screen. However, Mrs. Wainwright did not just put up all the information and simply have the students copy it. Mrs. Wainwright and the students “built” the foldable information together—she started with pertinent information, then posed leading questions which students could answer to help supply data from the textbook reading. Here is an example for the Industrial Revolution and Transportation (four-flap flip book).

<u>Industrial Revolution</u>	<u>Roads</u>	<u>Water</u>	<u>Rails</u>
New ways to manufacture 1. Samuel Slater	National Road 800 miles	Erie Canal dug by hand	Railroad horses pulled wagons on rails

Mrs. Wainwright would put this much information on the board to begin the discussion, then ask the students questions so the foldable could be completed as a class project rather than a “teacher written, student copied” product.

During the study of the Civil War, students maintained two different foldables or graphic organizers for comparing and contrasting of the North and South with detailed

information on state locations of battles (FNO p. 23-Battle of Antietam; FNO p. 29 – Vicksburg). A student favorite was the North and South trifold (LP pp. 16 & 22) (SI pp. 1, 5 & 7): “Mrs. Wainwright read the textbook, then showed us how to take notes using foldables. She stressed the most important parts. My favorite foldable is the trifold for the North and South” (SI p. 7) (Appendix A, SWS #7). The shutterfold graphic organizer serves the same purpose as a Venn diagram, but provides more room in the center for elaborating on the same characteristics. It is one of the foldables or graphic organizers located in the Dinah Zike resource book used by Mrs. Wainwright. In addition, students had their own copy of “A History Map: The United States in 1861” (FNO p. 15). The map divided the country into gray for the Union states, diagonal lines for the Confederate states, and dots for the territories.

The lesson continued with some reading of the Social Studies textbook (TB pp. 463-465), a question and answer session about weather, commerce, and lifestyles of both the North and the South, then an analysis of the pie graphs and charts on TB p. 465 which emphasized the percentage of rural versus urban populations (FNO p. 16). Students referred to the textbook pie graphs and charts to provide further information for their foldable.

Other examples of writing included the variety of activity pages Mrs. Wainwright selected to use with each unit of study. For example, while studying the trails of the westward expansion, Mrs. Wainwright selected the resource book *Westward Expansion* (McDonald Publishing Co., TRB) that contained a page for each trail including the

California/Gold Rush, Mormon, Oregon and Santa Fe (LP p. 13) which coincided with the students' Trailblazer Map (Appendix A) and the textbook map (TB p. 440). Each activity page had various questions or statements for students to answer and reflect upon, including true/false, fill-in-the-blank, multiple-choice, short answer, and opinion. Mrs. Wainwright would vary the completion of each assignment from individual students, pairs of students, and small groups (FNO p. 9).

During individual student interviews, several students commented about having individual student maps. Briana stated, "I like having my own map—to make notes on" (SI #2). Corina was specific when she commented, "I liked the maps that go with the trails across America" (SI #3)(SWS #5).

Bringing back the reading of biographies, Mrs. Wainwright asked each student to select an important American who lived between 1800-2000, read biographical resources, and prepare a short oral report on that person (FNO p. 14). There were six components of the assignment (Appendix B) including writing a book report, drawing a map, and completing a timeline. Examples of important persons selected by students included Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, and Helen Keller (FNO p. 14).

The students kept their maps, foldables and graphic organizers in pocket-folders labeled "Social Studies" for several purposes—for review and studying prior to exams and for preparation of written assignments such as the patchwork quilt and oral book reports. In some cases, Mrs. Wainwright allowed students to use the Social Studies folder as a resource during exams. Written exams included those pre-printed from the

textbook resources or thematic unit exams composed by Mrs. Wainwright such as the Movement Westward Test.

Throughout the production of these writing and drawing examples, Mrs. Wainwright guided students to extract important details from the textbook, maps, graphs and other resources, and modeled a variety of ways to record information for current and future use. Students learned how to read and interpret graphs, and to refer back to their foldables as a resource.

### **Authentic Learning in a Socially Safe Environment**

Through the incorporation of storytelling, writing and drawing, questioning strategies and multiple literacies such as maps, music, pictures, videos, an authentic learning community can be created and thrive. By establishing respect for individuals and exhibiting sincere caring for student learning, a teacher sets the foundation for authentic learning. Mrs. Wainwright modeled respect as she listened attentively to students when they provided comments or their own opinions, and when they asked questions. Mrs. Wainwright never laughed at or made fun of any student.

Mrs. Wainwright demonstrated a variety of teaching strategies which aided in creating an authentic learning community where students could feel safe when asking questions or making comments. Mrs. Wainwright employed questioning strategies for an assortment of purposes, one main purpose being to create a socially safe learning environment where students can take risks through interactive involvement during instruction. For instance, Mrs. Wainwright would open most social studies' class periods

with a series of cloze procedure questions, allowing students to chime in with one or two word responses. While reading *Facing West*, Mrs. Wainwright made this statement: “When animals poop, it dries in the sun. Pioneers collected them for \_\_\_?” Students responded chorally “fuel” (FNO p. 11). Not only did Mrs. Wainwright formulate stimulating questions about real people and places, but she took multiple opportunities during several read-alouds of children’s literature to ask literal questions and personal evaluation questions such as “What do you think about his Ma taking the gun?” during the reading of *Facing West*. The boys were especially impressed that the main character Ben’s Ma would take the rifle and stand up against a man to defend her family. Comments such as “pretty awesome” rang out across the room (FNO p. 11). Questions often required a simple yes or no response, but provided students opportunities to make judgments on social justice issues, such as when Mrs. Wainwright asked “Was it fair for him to be charging money for water?” referring to a scene in the book *Facing West* (FNO p. 11). Some of the boys even chose the word “scamming” to explain the man’s motives (FNO p. 11).

Employing a variety of sign systems, Mrs. Wainwright scaffolded lessons with supplemental materials such as large colorful posters, song lyrics, video segments, individual maps, primary source pictures, and charts and graphs in the textbook. During an individual interview, Amanda shared, “I like it when Mrs. Wainwright goes to the big map, instead of just listening to a location, we had a visual. It helped me understand it more” (SI #1). Another perspective came from Briana as she revealed, “This [teacher

using large classroom map] helped me the most—the teacher explained and showed where people lived, started from and where they moved to” (SI #2). One example of this is when Mrs. Wainwright told the students to turn to TB p. 549 where the book discussed ‘American fever.’ After reading to the students about immigrants, farming skills, 1870s Mennonites, and wheat seeds, Mrs. Wainwright walked to the pull-down map and said, “Let’s look at the map to see where these immigrants came from” (FNO p. 34).

Through simple questioning strategies about these multiple sign systems, Mrs. Wainwright openly encouraged students to participate in classroom discussions where group answers contributed to students’ success: “Turn thirty pages to page 373 – How is the picture in the textbook the same as the picture on the wall?” to which students answered, “horses, trees, mountains” (FNO p. 3); “Where did he [Cooper] get the idea for a steam engine for the train?” and several students (B) responded, “Fulton” (FNO p. 7); while studying about the building of railroads, Mrs. Wainwright commented ““Rails – steel – nice and shiny/very smooth. Is that like the roads back then?”, and several boys answered “No—rough and bumpy” (FNO p. 7); while looking at the map of the US from 1861-1865: “We see the boundary line—we can see the Union states in the gray—where are those located?”, and most students said, “In the north” (FNO p. 15).

Exhibiting another excellent way to create a sense of community, Mrs. Wainwright consistently demonstrated respect and interest when responding to student queries, such as when the topic of pioneers and farming were discussed after viewing a

four-minute United Streaming clip on farming. Reba asked, “Was John Deere a real person?” and Mrs. Wainwright responded, “Yes, I’m glad you picked up on that. He invented the metal plow” (FNO p. 4). During the next class session, when Mrs. Wainwright highlighted: “Two men were very important to the farming industry: Cyrus McCormack for the mechanical reaper and John Deere for the steel plow”, to which Susan queried, “So everyone would have wanted one back then?”(FNO p. 6). Mrs. Wainwright smiled and said, “Yes.” As the lessons on westward expansion continued and talk turned to construction of a national road, Susan posed another question: “Why do you hear in history about moving West – or North?” (FNO p. 6); Mrs. Wainwright paused the lesson and took time to say, “People [in this country] started in the East, the coastline, and the only way to go was West. The Northern travel was probably from the Southern states—the Civil War era” (FNO p. 6).

When reading the book *Facing West*, several students seemed interested in “why” things were the way they were. For instance, Susan asked “How come kids walked?” and Mrs. Wainwright explained, “They switched around—older people could usually handle the large oxen better” (FNO p. 9). Mrs. Wainwright compared it to driving a car today – age 16. “The kids weren’t given the privilege unless they knew how to handle the oxen” (FNO p. 9).

Through the vehicle of storytelling, Mrs. Wainwright introduced her students to important Americans involved in the history of the United States. Several students responded to reading biographies with a new-found interest in people. Amanda

commented, “I enjoyed reading about people such as Abigail Adams and Susan B. Anthony” (SI #1). While reviewing student folders and documents, I discovered Amanda had used the internet to glean additional information on the women she was reading about (RRJ p. 8). Corina also enjoyed learning about people such as Clara Barton, revealing, “I went to the county library and checked out a book on Clara Barton” (SI #3). When Mrs. Wainwright read biographies to the class then gave an assignment for oral presentations, Corina liked having a choice, saying, “She [Mrs. Wainwright] brought in biographies and we got to choose—I chose Paul Revere” (SI #3). Student choice played an important role in the oral book report assignments. Several students exhibited similar enthusiasm for reading biographies during the spring 2008 pilot study.

Mrs. Wainwright exhibited a responsive and caring teacher persona through her knowledge of children’s literature and supporting video resources. When she introduced me to the Dear America series of books, Mrs. Wainwright also mentioned that the public library had several Scholastic videos about the books, so I proceeded to locate one on the American Revolutionary War. Using the video “Light in the Window,” Mrs. Wainwright told her students about the Dear America book series and that I had checked the video out from the local library. Mrs. Wainwright explained that the Dear America series of books are historical fiction based upon factual diary accounts. This particular story was about Americans living during the Revolutionary War. Mrs. Wainwright reflected, “Several of the girls in the class checked them [Dear America books from school library] out and enjoyed reading them” (TRJ, p. 9). When queried by

students where I got the video, I informed them it was a free checkout from the local country library, as long as an individual has a library card. Amanda later informed me that she checked out the video and watched it with her family at home (RRJ, p. 2; SI #1). After viewing the video, Mrs. Wainwright reflected that “the students responded about the lack of electricity, the work that everyone in the family had to do on a daily basis and the dress of the time” (TRJ, p. 9).

Mrs. Wainwright did not judge students’ responses to the read-aloud books, but allowed interaction between students as part of class discussion. When reading the amputation scene from *Abner and Me*, several boys became upset with the doctor and Alana tried to defend or justify the doctor’s actions. After Mrs. Wainwright explained some of the problems with germs and sanitation, she continued reading. One boy commented “Jerk! That’s not fair!” [in response to a surgeon not sewing up the leg] and after Mrs. Wainwright read the scene about using leeches for bleeding [she explained the procedure], several boys called the doctor “STUPID”, to which Alana responded “They did what they had been taught” (FNO p. 28). At no time during this student-directed debate did Mrs. Wainwright interfere, giving the students an opportunity to challenge what was written and hear other people’s ideas. Mrs. Wainwright demonstrated respect for the students’ thoughts and feelings.

Throughout the lessons in the Civil War unit, several students expressed curiosity about how battles got their names. Mrs. Wainwright intentionally provided names and locations of battles for students to include in their North and South trifold organizer.

Mrs. Wainwright explained, “I want to show where the battles were located by state—this will be important to look at” (FNO p. 23). After Mrs. Wainwright gave details on the Battle of Antietam and then pointed out on the large classroom map exactly where that battle occurred, Susan asked, “Why did they name it that?” (FNO p. 23), to which Mrs. Wainwright replied, “They usually named the battles after the location--town or place they occurred” (FNO p. 24). Going back over to the classroom map, Mrs. Wainwright showed students the locations of several battles such as Antietam, Bull Run, and Vicksburg, and also stated that the large classroom pull-down map was detailed enough to include the names of the Civil War battles (FNO p. 24).

Learning to take notes was important to several students. Susan commented, “Mrs. Wainwright read the textbook, then showed us how to take notes using foldables. She stressed the most important parts” (SI #7). Corina stated, “Mrs. Wainwright helped us just put down the most important parts, rather than all the information in the book” (SI #3). I asked Corina if she would use graphic organizers and foldables to take notes in the future, and she said she would (SI #3).

During individual interviews, several students expressed their feelings about graphic organizers and exams. For instance, Susan revealed, “I liked using the textbook and our graphic organizers [foldables] to take tests” (SI #7). When I asked her why that was good, she gave two sincere reasons: “I think we know a lot, but it’s a good review and helps when you get stuck; and when I was sick—it helped me to review the graphic organizers instead of reading the whole chapter—that hurt my head” (SI #7). Gina was

specific when she commented, “I like the North and South trifold, and that we got to use it to help with the test” (SI #5).

When students are allowed to physically participate in their own learning, they become active learners in constructing their own meaning. Mrs. Wainwright used simple reenactment to encourage students to feel what it was like to sit in a covered wagon. She opened one day’s lesson with this information:

I also learned yesterday about the size of the wagon—2 feet across, 11 ft long, and 6 feet deep. They would have had to put all their bedrolls, pots & pans, extra clothes in the wagon. I’ve put the desks in the center of the room in that size dimensions and formation so you could see the size of the wagon.” (FNO p. 12)

Mrs. Wainwright asked for volunteers to “sit” in the wagon, and several students (boys and girls) enthusiastically participated. These students climbed “into the wagon” and sat crosslegged. Students seemed surprised at how small the space was (FNO p. 12).

A major key to an authentic learning community involves a caring teacher—a teacher who reaches out to others to enhance learning for her students. Mrs. Wainwright exhibited excellent rapport and cooperative planning with her fellow teachers. Mrs. Wainwright and I coordinated with the school principal and the fourth grade social studies teacher to invite the local Chuckwagon Lady to visit our school as an enhancement of the study of cowboys and pioneers. Arrangements were made to schedule the visit during fourth and fifth grade PE times. Students rotated through three ‘stations’ within a 50-minute class period. These stations were the chuckwagon, feed-sack races, and tortilla relays. At the chuckwagon station, the Chuckwagon Lady

talked about her duties as the trail ride cook, providing an immense display of cast-iron skillets, coffee grinder, and assorted tools. Some students were fascinated with the coffee grinder as they got to try their hand at grinding fresh coffee beans. Others tried to hold the huge cast-iron skillet and groaned as they did. They appeared amazed at the sheer size of the skillet. The Chuckwagon Lady mesmerized the students with stories of the trail and played her fiddle as she would around the nighttime campfire. Since the students had recently learned to square dance and sashay during folk dancing sessions within their music classes, several asked if they could dance—which I enthusiastically encouraged. Students were allowed time to climb onto the chuckwagon and explore.

The feed-sack races had a two-legged partner segment, and then an individual segment. I should have brought a video camera to record all the action of falling down, the giggles that were heard, and the multiple comments “This is hard!” I asked several students what they learned and they told me they learned how important cooperation and teamwork was to success (RRJ, p. 11) (see photographs, Appendix B).

Another way in which Mrs. Wainwright stimulated a socially safe learning environment was through her planning and instruction for the dreariest of tasks. As part of the unit study on the Civil War, Mrs. Wainwright ignored the multiple groans from several students when she told the class they would be doing a vocabulary assignment (FNO p. 18). While Mrs. Wainwright asked the students to get out their Social Studies textbook and turn to page R77 (the first page of the glossary), one of the students passed out the vocabulary preview (p. 108) from the workbook that is part of

the Social Studies textbook resources. Providing explicit instructions, Mrs. Wainwright said, “This is a vocabulary preview—that means these are some of the yellow-marked words that we’ll be reading about. I’m going to read the directions—I know that you can read, but I want to make sure you UNDERSTAND” (FNO p. 19). Mrs. Wainwright provided further guidance by saying, “My suggestion would be – find the words – use ABC order – look up the word and find the definition. It will not be word for word—because they think you’re smart enough as fifth graders to use your brain and find words that are synonyms/mean the same thing” (FNO p. 20). By giving such guidance, Mrs. Wainwright provided differentiated instruction while clarifying that fifth graders are capable learners. Examples of vocabulary to match with definitions on Workbook page 108--Vocabulary Preview, a book from one of the resource books in the adopted textbook series, included Confederacy, free state, Missouri Compromise, secede, states’ rights, sectionalism, Union, etc. There were fifteen vocabulary words and twelve definitions.

Providing a different approach to vocabulary study, Mrs. Wainwright gave another assignment during the unit of study on cowboys and farmers.

I’m going to give you something—I think it’s a bit hard to do—a crossword puzzle and word search. I think you can work together on it. You’ll find some of those same words we heard/used last week—exodusters, sod busters—take those words you find in the word search, and use those to answer the crossword. (FNO p. 37)

Mrs. Wainwright and I walked around as students began to work together on the word search. Students appeared actively engaged in the word search task. As I walked

around, I was able to answer a few of the students' questions and give encouragement. After about ten minutes, Mrs. Wainwright went to the overhead and placed a blank word search so that the whole class could interact in locating the words. Students would take turns calling out answers, such as "cattle drives – on the next to last line" [S(B), FNO p. 37]. When Amanda called out "American fever," Mrs. Wainwright asked, "Where did you find that?", then Mrs. Wainwright asked Amanda to come to the overhead screen and highlight the answer for the class (FNO p. 37). Such an act reveals the sense of community within Mrs. Wainwright's class.

### **Summary of Findings**

With a focus on people and places, Mrs. Wainwright used storytelling as an instructional strategy to engage her fifth grade students in learning about United States history and geography. Mrs. Wainwright gathered information and resources to support the required concepts outlined by the state in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and in the local district's social studies pacing guide. Mrs. Wainwright read children's literature aloud to the students to mediate between the facts in the social studies textbook. Mrs. Wainwright made children's literature available to students for independent reading for the time period being studied. Mrs. Wainwright used a variety of images (e.g., maps, posters, primary source documents, graphs, charts, videos) to bring history to life in the minds of her students. Songs were sung or played on the CD player to strengthen the images of times past.

Writing and drawing played an integral part of the social studies lessons. Mrs. Wainwright taught students to use graphic organizers in a variety of foldable formats to take notes to represent what was being discussed and learned. Individual maps helped students visualize where events took place during key periods of United States history, maps where the students could draw or take notes. Central to the social studies lessons was a large pull-down map for the teacher and students to use, again providing a visual to assist in comprehension. According to Mrs. Wainwright,

Keeping maps of the areas and places we studied helped keep the students connected to the learning. The students referred to the maps in the other two homerooms when reading about things we had studied. It wasn't unusual during free time that several students were at the maps looking for places and events that took place in history. (TRJ p. 9)

Mrs. Wainwright exhibited enthusiasm for learning and respect for her students. Through her use of storytelling and multiple literacies, Mrs. Wainwright opened a door for students to enter a world of learning through the eyes of people in the past. Mrs. Wainwright encouraged students to read and share what they had learned through culminating unit projects.

### **Interpretation of Findings**

Through an in-depth analysis of the data sets collected, by winnowing open codes into axial codes into selective themes through reading and re-reading across the codes for patterns, I identified three selective themes arising in the data: (1) storytelling as a vehicle for transmediation; (2) writing and drawing as tools for representation; and (3) authentic learning in a socially-safe environment. It would be difficult to separate

these in order to provide an interpretation; therefore, since these themes are connected in such a way that they weave together throughout the study, I discuss the conclusions of these themes by presenting them alongside each research question. Each of these themes adds to the theories of responsive teaching and situated cognition previously discussed.

**Research Question 1:  
How does a fifth grade social studies teacher use multiple literacies  
to support children’s geography learning?**

The findings from this study highlight the importance of teachers using multiple literacies and a variety of media resources in order to support children’s geographic learning. Specifically, Mrs. Wainwright employed a variety of resources such as the social studies textbook (TB) and supporting tools, teacher resource books other than the textbook (TRB), maps, children’s literature as teacher read-alouds, children’s literature for students to read independently, images (e.g., videos from the social studies series and the local library; video clips from United Streaming; posters; pictures, charts and graphs); and various music from CDs and DVDs (e.g., the *School-House Rock* series). All of these resources helped bring historical events and settings to life. As expressed by Mrs. Wainwright (TI #3), “Kids are very visual. History is hard to teach because you can’t go there—but you can use videos to take them there.”

A sub-category under the social studies curriculum, geography is much more than learning map skills. Geography involves learning about locations, landforms, people, places, events, and how humans interact with the environment. The standards

identified by the National Geographic Society in 1994 focus on six essential elements which expound on the five themes of geography: the world in spatial terms, places and regions, physical systems, human systems, environment and society, and the uses of geography. By going beyond the basic map skills and intertwining the six essential elements of geography, teachers allow children opportunities to understand the variety of humans, environments, and cultures within our world (Lee, p. 138). “It takes real, multidimensional characters to engage children in the drama of history, and in a democracy it is especially important that future citizens feel a sense of engagement in the events of the past” (Graves, p. 3).

#### **Multiple-Literacies.**

Multiple literacies played a significant role in the teacher scaffolding social studies lessons to strengthen student engagement and comprehension of sometimes difficult to understand and dry topics.

**Children’s literature.** Children’s literature in particular was critical for enabling the teacher to use storytelling as a vehicle for transmediation. Through the use of children’s literature as teacher read-alouds, Mrs. Wainwright opened a door for her students to engage in events from the past. Examples of children’s literature used as read-alouds are: *Secret Soldier—The Story of Deborah Sampson* and *Buttons for General Washington* which gave students a glimpse of what some everyday people experienced during the American Revolutionary War; *Facing West*, a small book from the school’s literacy closet, allowed students to be a part of the lives of families traveling west for a variety of reasons; *Abner and Me* placed the fifth-grade students in the midst of the Battle of Gettysburg during the Civil War of 1863.

Egan tells us that stories in the classroom “accomplish two important things simultaneously: Stories can communicate information very clearly and effectively, and they can engage the emotions of the students in the knowledge being learned” (2006, p. 6). Egan goes on to say that “the great power of the story, for the purposes of literacy instruction, is that it can shape content of any kind, true or fictional, into emotionally satisfying forms” (p. 6). Mrs. Wainwright effectively employed the strategy of storytelling (whether it was from children’s literature or from her own personal stories) to engage her fifth grade students in learning.

Other children’s literature played a key role in supporting students’ geographic learning. Mrs. Wainwright brought in books from the school library (biographies, historical fiction, nonfiction picture books) for students to browse and read during units of study. As a participant observer, I brought in children’s books from the local public library to support the Lewis and Clark westward expansion unit of study. Several classroom assignments required the students to select biographies to read, and then prepare a written and oral report. Mrs. Wainwright established the parameters of a set list of people to read about, and then students were allowed to choose which person they wanted to study and learn about.

Graves (1999) emphasizes the fact that content teaching often focuses on the memorization of dates, names, places, or causes of particular wars with little or no regard for the human story aspect of **how** people lived and **why** they responded to situations as they did (pp. 2-3). Through the use of tradebooks, Mrs. Wainwright

provided her students exposure to this very human story by illuminating the textbook (Burke, 2001, p. 163) through the multiple literacies of children's literature. By providing students guidance and opportunities to interact with a variety of readable, high-interest texts, teachers "support meaningful conversations that develop their capacities—for empathy, for insight, for reflection—as people" (Burke, 2001, p. 84) and stimulate opportunities for struggling or unmotivated readers to read more (Ivey & Fisher, 2006, p. 71).

How did the reading of such books support geographic literacy? Mrs. Wainwright used the fiction and historical fiction books to grab the interest of the students and connect them to history. By highlighting the location of real places such as rivers, towns, states, and landmarks, Mrs. Wainwright truly supported a "sense of place" for her students. While reading the books aloud, Mrs. Wainwright would travel to the pull-down classroom map and point to exact locations mentioned in the books; for example, when Deborah Sampson traveled to West Point to enlist in the continental army, Mrs. Wainwright showed her students West Point, New York on the map. The same happened for the Mississippi River, Platte River, Promontory Point, Gettysburg, Vicksburg—just to give a few examples.

**Visuals – Maps.** Students benefited from Mrs. Wainwright's use of the large classroom map. Amanda said, "I like it when Mrs. Wainwright goes to the big map, instead of just listening to a location, we had a visual. It helped me understand it more" (SI #1). Another perspective came from Briana as she revealed, "This [teacher using large classroom map] helped me the

most—the teacher explained and showed where people lived, started from and where they moved to” (SI #2).

While use of the large map was beneficial, and also served as a model of how to use a map to enhance reading comprehension, students benefited even more from the individual maps that Mrs. Wainwright provided them. During each unit of study [Revolutionary War, Civil War, westward expansion (Lewis and Clark, transportation, Industrial Revolution)], each student had an individual map pertinent to that unit of study. Some examples include “A History Map: The United States in 1861” (FNO p. 15) (Appendix A, SWS #6) which was a map that divided the country into colored section such as Union states in gray, Confederate states in diagonal lines, and territories in dots; and the Trailblazer Map for discussing the trails west showing each trail in a different color which coincided with a similar textbook map. During individual student interviews, several commented about having individual student maps. Briana stated, “I like having my own map—to make notes on” (SI #2). Corina was specific when she commented, “I liked the maps that go with the trails across America” (SI #3)(Appendix A, SWS #5).

**Visuals – Postures, pictures, graphs.** Frequently Mrs. Wainwright would use classroom posters to start a social studies lesson as she asked students various questions about the picture. Pictures stimulated students’ curiosity. For example, while looking at the textbook (pgs 490-495), Susan queried Mrs. Wainwright: “Pictures—when they’re fighting—do they really fight that close?” (FNO p. 21). On another occasion, Mrs. Wainwright directed students to their textbook (TB p. 502) which contained a primary source image of Clara Barton feeding and

helping wounded soldiers. Two students in particular displayed interest in Clara Barton—Alana and Corina. After reading biographies for the American Revolution assignment, Corina became interested in biographies and read some on her own initiative. “I liked learning about people, such as Clara Barton. I went to the county library and checked out a book on Clara Barton” (SI #2).

**Visuals – video clips.** Mrs. Wainwright enhanced the text again by using images – visuals in the form of video clips. Not only did she use the resources available with the textbook series, Mrs. Wainwright would gather resources available within the school library and the local public library. One example was a video from the local public library: “The Journals of Lewis & Clark” to assist in *telling the story* of Meriwether Lewis, William Clark, Sacagawea, and the expedition forces. Another example was when Mrs. Wainwright utilized district-provided resources by showing a United Streaming video clip “Oregon Trail” while studying about the trails moving west. Mrs. Wainwright reflected “This gave visions of what it was like reenacted for film” (TRJ p. 6). Still another example involved a short video from the textbook series, Scott Foresman Video Field Trips, Unit 7 – Abraham Lincoln. This 12-minute video segment contained primary document images – black and white pictures of Abraham Lincoln as a young man through his first term as President. Reba commented on the video about the Missouri river, saying, “I like how it shows how it is today” (SI #6). Visual images enhance comprehension when primary documents in the form of pictures and maps are given to students for interpretation (Lee, 2008, p. 155).

**Visuals – reenactments.** During the study of westward expansion and the need for building roads, Mrs. Wainwright explained, “The roads during this time period were not very wide—about the width of your desk”-- to which several students responded “Nah—huh? (FNO

p. 6). The concrete example placed a visual in the students' minds and added to their understanding. Expanding on this use of concrete examples, while studying the westward movement, Mrs. Wainwright pushed together several students desks to demonstrate the actual "inside" of a covered wagon, then she asked for student volunteers to sit inside the wagon. As students clambered aboard, there was a buzz of discussion regarding how little room there really was inside the wagon (FNO p. 12).

Students physically participating in their own learning occurred again when guest speakers or special programs were presented. This was the case when the Chuckwagon Lady visited the school campus especially for fourth and fifth grade students during their respective physical education and music class periods. Students were involved in hands-on learning which included manually grinding coffee in the hand-cranked coffee grinder, trying to lift the enormous black wrought-iron skillet, and participating in two-legged sack races (see Appendix B for photographs).

**Auditory – music.** Mrs. Wainwright utilized music to enhance social studies learning as she assigned students to complete a circle map for the song "Constitution Rap." The first verse of the song mentions a location, Independence Hall, which students asked about. During the singing of "Follow the Drinking Gourd," Mrs. Wainwright used the large classroom map to trace a pathway of one section of the Underground Railroad. White and McCormack (2006) suggest using popular culture in the form of music to provide students opportunities to "relate the meanings of the lyrics to a real-world context" (p. 125).

**Writing and drawing.** Another literacy or sign system involved in the social studies lessons involved writing and drawing. Mrs. Wainwright scaffolded notetaking skills through the use of foldables, a form of graphic organizer which Mrs. Wainwright learned about during a

Dinah Zike professional staff development (TRJ, p. 1; TRB). A different foldable style (flip-book, trifold, shutterfold) and different color of paper were used for each unit of study. Mrs. Wainwright “usually looked over chapters of study and decided on which [foldable] to use” (TRJ p. 1). Mrs. Wainwright used foldables to help students “easily put together information” (TRJ, p. 1). Sometimes Mrs. Wainwright would put the information on the whiteboard in the same format as the foldable, or sometimes she would use the projector screen. However, Mrs. Wainwright did not just put up all the information and simply have the students copy it. Mrs. Wainwright and the students “built” the foldable information together—she started with pertinent information, then gave leading questions which students could answer to help supply data from the textbook reading.

Other writing projects included simple flashcard-like projects with cartoon characters, completing map keys on individual student maps, the quilt-square project for the Revolutionary War, crossword puzzles and word searches. (see samples in Appendix A). Students completed more detailed writing projects after reading biographies during the Industrial Revolution as they took notes and completed the written task in preparation for their oral reports. I asked Mrs. Wainwright why she assigned an oral project, and she replied that “it’s important for students to share what they learn” (TI #3). Mrs. Wainwright had attended a professional staff development sponsored by the local Education Service Center (ESC). Mrs. Wainwright commented on something the presenter (Brandon Ligon) said during this writing workshop – “the more we get the students involved in their own learning, the more the students will grow” (TI

#3). In other words, Mrs. Wainwright provided her students opportunities for “student teaching student – peer teaching” (TI #3).

**Research Question 2:  
In what ways do the instructional strategies the teacher  
employs support geographic literacy?**

Mrs. Wainwright employed a variety of instructional strategies which support geographic literacy. Key among these strategies was the use of a large classroom pull-down map and individual student maps. Mrs. Wainwright taught a geography map-skill set of lessons early in the school year (September 2008) and reinforced those map skills during weekly social studies lessons. Mrs. Wainwright also used the large classroom map during science lessons when the lessons referred to landforms and biomes (TI #2). While map skills remain an important element of geography, geography involves much more as it integrates five different themes and six standards. Geography involves learning about locations, landforms, people, places, events, and how humans interact with the environment. Teachers knowledgeable of the five themes of geography and the six essential elements of geography identified in *Geography for Life: National Geography Standards from the National Council for Geographic Education* (1994) can enhance geographic literacy throughout the curriculum.

Mrs. Wainwright was knowledgeable of geography and definitely went beyond the basic map skills and intertwined all the elements of geography as she used multiple literacies to teach students about important people in America, transportation and inventions which show how humans interact with the environment, and locations

involving people and events (e.g., Independence Hall, Constitution; Civil War/Lincoln/Gettysburg). Lee (2008) tells us that by going beyond the basic map skills and intertwining the six essential elements of geography, teachers provides students with an opportunity to understand the variety of humans, environments, and cultures within our world (p. 138).

Through the use of multiple literacies in the form of children’s literature, often referred to as tradebooks, Mrs. Wainwright showed her students another dimension of reading novels and nonfiction—the dimension of identifying places. Finding places mentioned in the tradebooks on the map gave a visual to students and allowed for improved comprehension (SI #1, 2 & 7). Mrs. Wainwright not only used the large classroom map, but she used maps within the social studies textbook and individual maps from a variety of teacher resources (TRB).

**Research Question 3:  
How does the teacher plan and make decisions about  
pedagogical approaches involving multiple literacies?**

Mrs. Wainwright began unit lesson planning by first looking at the state standards for Texas, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Not only did Mrs. Wainwright look at the TEKS for fifth grade, but she went a step beyond and vertically aligned her lessons by looking at common names and events across the TEKS at fifth, eighth and eleventh grades. Such alignment allowed Mrs. Wainwright to see “what’s really important—what repeats across the TEKS vertically and the major points of what Texas wants them [students] to learn” (TI #3). Since the social studies textbook contains

such a vast amount of information that it often overwhelms students and teachers alike, Mrs. Wainwright chose to go “in-depth on certain subjects so that students could learn HOW and WHY” of those major points (TI #3). Going in-depth meant taking the topic from the TEKs and the social studies textbook, and supplementing lessons with a variety of texts in the form of tradebooks, videos, music, maps, and culminating projects. Mrs. Wainwright had three daughters who had all taken social studies and history at fifth, eighth and eleventh grades, in addition to taking state mandated and end-of-course examinations. Mrs. Wainwright’s daughters advised her to “pick the important parts and teach those” (TRJ, p. 1).

Mrs. Wainwright believes in multiple literacies and incorporates them in her weekly lesson plans. As she determined what chapter/unit to study, she also determined which foldables to use and which tradebooks to use as read-alouds. When Mrs. Wainwright introduced biographies to the students during the read-aloud of *The Secret Soldier—The Story of Deborah Sampson*, she also gave the students an assignment to read a biography and do a combination writing/art project in the form of a quilt square (Appendix A, SWS #3). Prior to making the list of famous Americans from the Revolutionary War, Mrs. Wainwright visited the school library to determine which biographies were available for the her students. Mrs. Wainwright liked to use resources within the school library for several reasons: “able to use for longer period of time; students can go back and show others what they’ve read” (TI #3). Mrs. Wainwright was able to provide students biographies at different reading levels that were appropriate

for a variety of diverse learners—which included “some short biographies and some longer ones for the gifted-talented (GT) students” (TI #3). Such planning provided differentiated instruction and opportunities for each student to be successful with the same assignment. In addition to using the school library, Mrs. Wainwright was knowledgeable of the school’s literacy closet and again found available resources. Mrs. Wainwright felt that “access to students was important” (TI #3).

What I did not observe or hear during any of the lessons was an explicit mention of the term “geography.” While Mrs. Wainwright obviously teaches the five themes and six standards of geography (as outlined by NCGE), she never specifically used the term when teaching, whether it was transportation, inventions, places or landforms. No reference was made to geography. Perhaps that is why the students had difficulty answering the first question on the student survey (SS) “What does the word ‘geography’ mean to you?” (Appendix E, SS). Answers in both the spring 2008 pilot study and the spring 2009 dissertation study varied from such responses as “I don’t know,” “the study of life,” “study of shapes,” “study of the earth,” and “study of the world”.

Chapter five will provide conclusions based on these research findings. In addition, I will discuss implications for classroom teachers, campus and district administrators, university teacher preparation programs, curricula writers, and educational researchers.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR CLASSROOM PRACTICE, POLICY, AND ADMINISTRATION**

#### **Statement of Problem - Review**

Globalization is ever-apparent in America's economy, media, and political stature, suggesting knowledge of geography truly is a life-skill for American citizens. At the same time globalization is on the rise, social studies curriculum in American public schools has become increasingly narrow in scope. In the current high stakes test-driven educational climate, certain subjects not under the testing umbrella often get short changed due to time constraints and administrative pressures for teachers to "teach to the test" at the expense of instruction in subject areas not tested. Because of this trend, Paquette and Kaufman (2008) contend that "The segment of the school day in which young Americans traditionally learned about civic responsibility, geography, history, economics, and politics has never been as threatened as it is currently" (p. 187). Paquette and Kaufman (2008) further lament that "all or part of the allotted social studies period is being creatively transformed to provide additional preparation time for high-stakes reading tests" and stress concern as educators and as parents for the "civic void that could result" (p. 187). Educators and administrators are daily faced with the grim reality of the federal mandates of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), requiring annual reading and math testing in grades three through eight, oftentimes resulting in a "hierarchy of content-area importance" (Vogler, 2003, p. 207). Such a hierarchy leaves

certain content subjects behind. Vogler (2003) suggests that “at the bottom of the hierarchy are those content areas that are not tested” or those “that are tested but do not have a passing-score requirement for graduation,” further reducing the amount of instructional time teachers spend on the “untested” areas (p. 207). Basing instructional decisions (time spent on teaching) on tested versus non-tested academic areas “is not intended to improve the overall quality or cohesiveness of an educational program...but designed to protect students against failing the high-stakes test” (Vogler, 2003, p. 207). While passing high-stakes tests is indeed important, it should not be the guiding force behind instructional planning.

When teachers actually do get to spend instructional time on content areas such as social studies and geography, the expository text in the state-adopted textbooks provides some basic information of the topic being studied, but is frequently written at a reading level and a style that often inhibits student engagement, especially for struggling readers (Olness, 2007, p. 2; Ivey & Fisher, 2006, p. 71). According to Nolet, Xin, Gomez, Renouf, Iskold, and DaCosta (2001), “Textbooks that contain mostly factual information would be unlikely to model the manipulation of complex concepts or principles or provide sufficient practice to permit learners to generalize problem solving and thinking in real world contexts” (pp. 153-154). In essence, textbooks often do not contain sufficient text or in-depth information on topics. Such lack of information serves to discourage students from developing a stance of critical literacy through an

examination of multiple perspectives and evaluative reading skills (Ivey & Fisher, 2006, p. 71).

Given the phenomenon of globalization, time constraints for social studies education and the often problematic texts districts adopt to support social studies curriculum, identifying effective social studies pedagogy that can counteract these trends is critical. As such, the findings from this study have many implications for classroom teachers, campus and district-level administrators, university teacher educators, curriculum writers, and policymakers.

### **Discussion**

I identified three selective themes arising in the data: (1) storytelling as a vehicle for transmediation; (2) writing and drawing as tools for representation; and (3) authentic learning in a socially-safe environment. Each of these themes adds to the theories of responsive teaching and situated cognition previously discussed. By understanding these theories, the findings can be translated into conclusions and implications.

Several tenets of the responsive teaching theory involve teachers:

1) caring about their students, 2) helping students understand and solve problems, 3) adapting instruction to meet the individual needs of students, 4) using motivating and effective teaching strategies, and 5) engaging students in intellectual discovery (Ruddell & Unrau, 2004a, p. 954). Key characteristics of the tenets include concepts such as student choice within parameters, the development of self as learner, a classroom

learning environment which emphasizes discussion to negotiate meaning, and opportunities for students to “sharpen their focus of intention on reading and meaning construction” (Ruddell & Unrau, 2004a, p. 955). All three selective themes within my research project add to our understanding of the theory of responsive teaching as outlined below.

The theme “storytelling as a vehicle for transmediation” reflects the teacher as one who cared that her students learned and were involved in their own learning as she planned and executed lessons incorporating a variety of resources to motivate students and encourage discovery learning. Mrs. Wainwright spent extra time to locate content-area historical fiction with main characters about the same age as the fifth grade students—a motivating strategy. The theme “writing and drawing as tools for representation” allowed students to understand and reflect on problems and solutions from the past, then self-select (within the teacher’s parameters) important Americans to read and report on. Students learned how to use a variety of graphic organizers and foldables to record main points within the units of study.

The theme “authentic learning in a socially-safe environment” incorporates several tenets of responsive teaching as Mrs. Wainwright established a classroom community through the respect that she modeled for herself and her students, displaying interest in the students’ ideas and feelings about events occurring in the stories she read aloud, and designing open-ended assignments to allow for individual student creativity—such as oral book reports on famous Americans.

The theoretical framework based on the theory of situated cognition is connected and enhanced through understanding of the themes identified in this study. Some key aspects of situated cognition include: “the structures and interrelations within activity systems” (Kirshner & Whitson, 1997, p. 6); “knowledge is decidedly social and always situationally contingent” (St. Julien, 1997, p. 264); and “meaning in language is tied to people’s experiences of situated action in the material and social world” (Gee, 2004, p. 117). Students come to school with language and cultural abilities, but may not be aware of or well-versed in the specific verbal and written abilities necessary to school-based practices. Such a cultural identity and self-worth may affect a child’s participation in classroom activities; therefore, it is crucial for the teacher to be aware of these situated identities (Gee, 2004, p. 122; Ruddell & Unrau, 2004a, p. 962). Mrs. Wainwright built a classroom community of learners that supported knowledge acquisition and interpretation as she used “storytelling as a vehicle for transmediation” to develop background knowledge for each unit of study. Through involvement in school-type academic activities, Mrs. Wainwright encouraged her students to co-construct meaning and become active producers of knowledge (Gee, 2004, p. 129). The theme “writing and drawing as tools for representation” supports and expounds on the theory of situated-cognition as Mrs. Wainwright scaffolded writing assignments through the use of foldables and individual maps. The theme “authentic learning in a socially-safe environment” definitely connects to and adds to understanding the theory of situated-cognition through the caring influence of Mrs. Wainwright as she planned and

executed lessons, and established the social context of the classroom by way of facilitating student discussion and debate on topics being studied.

The findings from this case study represent a sample of a classroom where a responsive, caring teacher employed multiple literacies as a primary instructional approach to enhance geographic literacy. Teachers who encourage student participation through lively text-based discussions create a supportive and socially-safe environment where students feel comfortable revealing their thoughts, feelings and ideas (Strahan & Lavell, 2006, Flynt & Brozo, 2009). Mrs. Wainwright epitomized the criteria of a responsive teacher through her classroom management, student-centered lesson planning, and opportunities for student-led discussion and debate which challenged the students to think deeply (Turner, Applegate & Applegate, 2009). Supplementing the textbook by utilizing multiple literacies to design lessons and activities in support of the teaching objective, teachers exercise their commitment to “allow students to motivate themselves, expand their intellects, and enliven their imaginations” (Fried, 2001, p. 102).

By considering the context of the study, conclusions can be drawn about the ways in which such teaching strategies affect the relationships between the teacher and the students, between and among students, as well as the aesthetic and cognitive growth of students in social studies and geography. Supportive relationships between students and teachers, and a learner-centered environment, provide a foundation for more engaging lessons (Strahan & Lavell, 2006).

Teachers should vertically align lessons for optimal student learning. By reading and comparing the state standards for each content area across grade levels, teachers can discover and isolate the repeated concepts, then focus writing lesson plans to delve deeper into those concepts.

Lesson plans should include using a variety of texts and multiple literacies to scaffold and enhance learning. A classroom teacher can adequately teach and meet the state and local standards, in this case the TEKS, and a school-district's pacing guide while at the same time nurturing an enthusiasm for learning among students (Cambourne, 2000). Mrs. Wainwright hooked her students through storytelling using a variety of texts and multiple literacies to enhance comprehension and student involvement. Burke calls this "illuminating the text" (2001, p. 163).

Teachers should intersperse a variety of questions throughout daily lessons, thus providing opportunities for students to actively participate in their own learning through animated discussions and interaction with the events and characters in read-aloud stories. By building a classroom environment that includes responsive and rigorous instruction, teachers can support critical literacy and stimulate learning (Turner, Applegate & Applegate, 2009; Strahan & Layell, 2006).

Teachers can establish a socially safe classroom by modeling respect for themselves and their students (Ruddell & Unrau, 2004a). Mrs. Wainwright established a classroom community wherein students felt free to voice their emotional responses to what they heard. Through her silence during some student-led discussions, Mrs.

Wainwright encouraged students to become involved citizens as they evaluated and challenged behaviors and procedures such as amputation scenes and water-selling/scamming.

Teachers can motivate students by allowing them choices within parameters. Rather than free choice and no direction or guidance, teachers should set the parameters for reading and writing assignments. This teaching strategy is critical to student success, as is evident in Corina's statement, "She [Mrs. W.] brought in biographies and we got to choose—I chose Paul Revere" (SI #3).

Teachers need to be knowledgeable of in-school resources as well as resources within the local community. Mrs. Wainwright brought biographies into her classroom for the students to read and write about. Awareness of guest speaker presentations within the community provides another opportunity to motivate students and enhance learning.

### **Implications**

Based upon my findings, I believe there are several implications for educators working in a variety of settings. The implications are organized into five categories: classroom teachers, school administrators, teacher educator institutions, curricula writing, and educational researchers.

#### **Implications for Classroom Teachers.**

Through vertical alignment, teachers can effectively plan and integrate lessons. Too often, classroom teachers feel such a sense of pressure to "teach to the test" that

the “un-tested subjects” often get ignored. Social studies in the elementary school is one of those “un-tested subjects.” Classroom teachers can still teach the standards while being creative in their strategies. By awareness of local and state standards in a vertical format, teachers can focus lesson planning on the key elements that repeat across grade levels and are repeatedly tested, and incorporate a variety of teaching resources instead of depending upon the state-adopted textbook. Textbooks contain a tremendous amount of information—so much, that it often intimidates students and teachers. Using the state-adopted textbook as a springboard, teachers can use this research study as a guide to create their own “sense of place” in their classroom. While this teaching style involves more research and time for the teacher “up-front,” it is effective and meaningful for students. Another area of importance for classroom teachers is teacher collaboration. Through my awareness of and planning lessons with Mrs. Wainwright, as the music teacher I was able to support the social studies curriculum through connections to song lyrics. Planning for guest speakers and special visitors with hands-on learning was another important aspect of this teacher collaboration component. The collaboration can extend throughout the school to the instructional specialist, librarian, and various grade levels.

**Implications for School Administrators.** This section is two-fold—the first level administrator would be the campus principal, who then answers to an administrator at the school-district level (Central Office).

**Campus Principals.** As educators, our main goal should be to meet the needs of the students, rather than looking only at test scores to evaluate schools and teachers. The campus principal plays a key role in whether classroom teachers only “teach to the test”, or teach the standards for the benefit of the students. Through awareness of this case study, principals can be cognizant of the important part that social studies and geography play in developing citizens who: (1) are aware of social justice elements; (2) can evaluate, debate and make decisions on a variety of issues; and (3) are globally aware of human interactions with the environment. Campus principals need to be supportive of creative and passionate teachers by allowing sufficient time in the school-day to teach all subjects, not just the tested ones. Campus principals can establish and participate in cross-grade level teacher planning sessions to support integration of curriculum.

**Administrators at the Central Office.** District-level administrators need to be aware of and analyze quality research in effective teaching for the “whole child” and provide staff development opportunities for teachers that focus on multiple literacies and integrated curriculum. Vertical alignment should include elementary, middle school, high school and university levels—in addition to the business community and real-world requirements for American citizens. There seems to be a great disconnect between these levels/areas. These administrators can also provide much needed encouragement and support to campus principals to seek out sufficient time within the school schedule to meet the diverse student and teacher needs.

**Implications for teacher education institutions.** Colleges and universities responsible for teacher educator programs could benefit from this case study by reviewing the teacher's use of vertical alignment for lesson-planning and integration of multiple literacies. Since Mrs. Wainwright integrated reading and writing in her social studies lessons, she provided students opportunities to connect their learning across the curriculum, rather than seeing each subject as separate and segmented. In addition to the importance to College of Education faculty, I believe that content area faculty and professors across the entire university campus should be cognizant of teaching strategies employed by Mrs. Wainwright, since expository text within the content areas of mathematics, science, and social studies provides a challenge to many students. By understanding the intertextuality of multiple literacies, professors could incorporate such integrated and scaffolded teaching methods in their daily lessons, thereby modeling the integrated curriculum process.

**Implications for curricula writing.** This case study is important to those educators who write curricula. Instead of segmenting and isolating content areas, more integration should be included in the written local and state standards. There is some indication of this as TEA suggests integration within the social studies strands for enhanced comprehension (TEKs §113.7. Social Studies, Grade 5):

Skills listed in the geography and social studies skills strands in subsection (b) of this section should be incorporated into the teaching of all essential knowledge and skills for social studies. A greater depth of understanding of complex content material can be attained when integrated social studies content from the various disciplines and critical-thinking skills are taught together.

Curriculum writers need to be well-versed in all content areas in addition to reading and writing, and be knowledgeable of the topic of integration, in order to creatively write the standards for teachers which incorporate implications of research from established professional educational organizations such as the International Reading Association (IRA), National Council for Social Studies (NCSS), and National Council for Geographic Education (NCGE) to name just a few.

**Implications for educational researchers.** Educational researchers need to look for gaps in the available research, and determine where to conduct research to reduce that gap. Currently there is a gap in research for using multiple literacies to teach social studies and geography in the intermediate grades (third, fourth, and fifth). These early adolescents need explicit instruction in meaningful context to assist them in developing higher-order thinking skills. The case study I have just completed is a start to closing that gap.

#### **Directions for Future Research**

While my case study focused on the teacher and her strategies, the study could be enhanced through a closer look at the students and how they responded. Although I interviewed the students who returned consent forms (eight) and gathered work samples from their social studies folders, perhaps some sort of pre- and post assessment would give support to the findings. I would like to follow the eight students and interview them in another year to see if they continue to use foldables for

notetaking, and if they have retained their interest in people and places that might be evident in their choices of independent study projects and out-of-class readings.

Future research should be conducted at other intermediate grades across the state and country to discover the best practices for social studies teachers. I believe I discovered a responsive, caring, knowledgeable teacher who loves to teach and scaffolds her lessons for improved student success. This research study is transferable to other schools and regions, and to other grade levels.

### **Final Thoughts**

Mrs. Wainwright can be considered a “weaver of thoughts” as she employed key questioning strategies to stimulate critical literacy through the use of multiple literacies and the vehicle of storytelling to transmediate from textbook to novel to maps to art work to video to music in order to enhance student learning and truly give them a “sense of place.” By creating a socially-safe classroom community through a foundation of respect, Mrs. Wainwright offered her students opportunities to think, debate, share, and participate in decision-making. As a believer in life-long learning, I would like to see all children have such a responsive teacher in a quality learning environment to stimulate participatory citizenship and instill learner responsibility.

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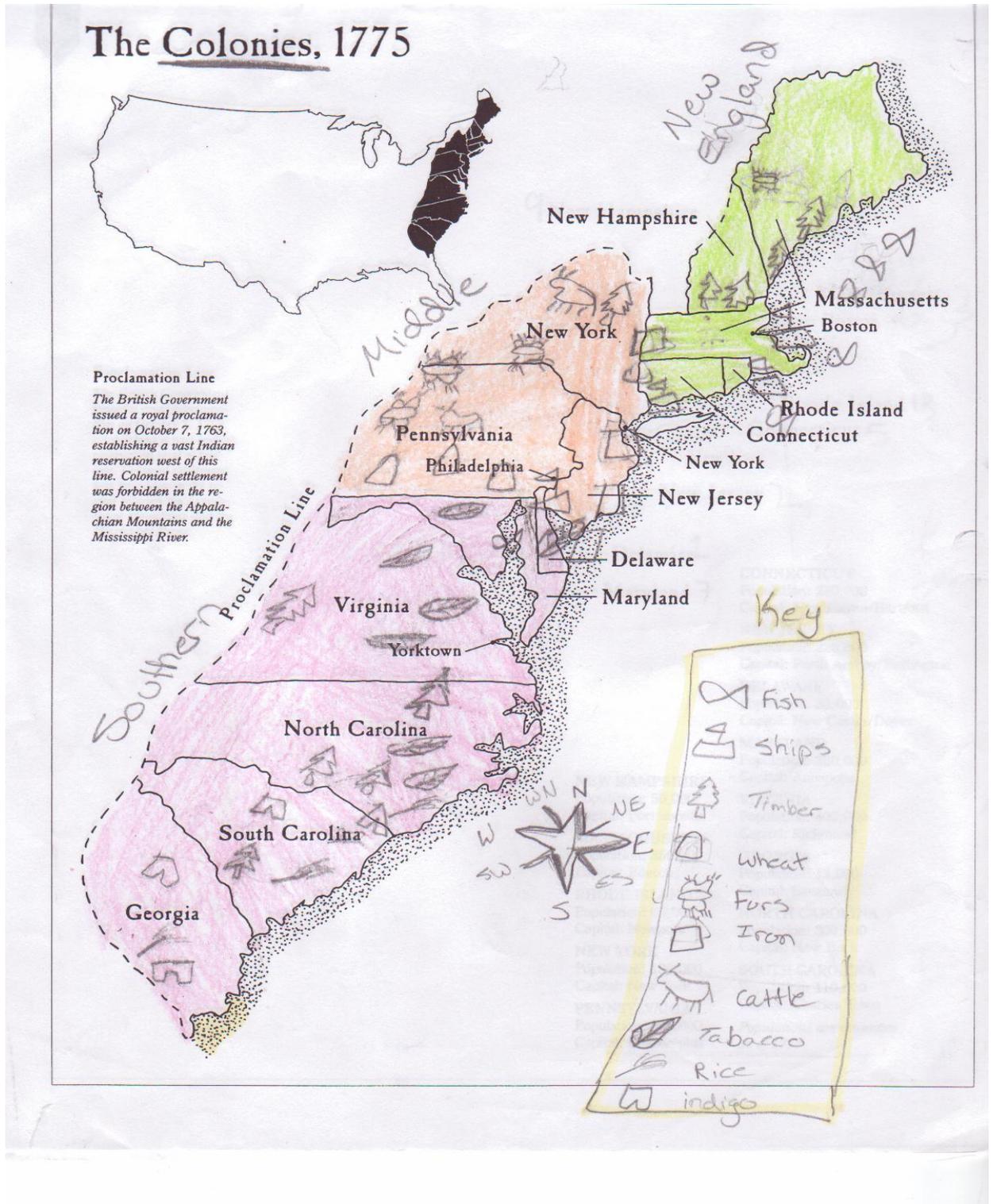
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## **APPENDICES**

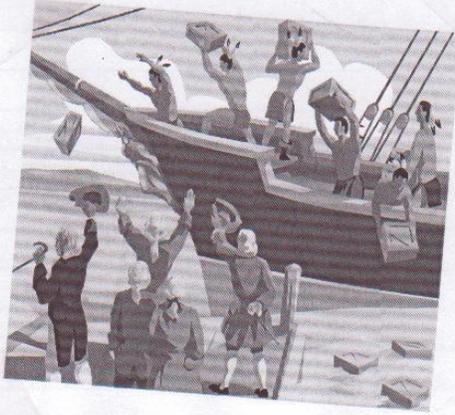
**APPENDIX A –**

**Writing and Drawing as Tools for Representation –**

**Student Work Samples (SWS)**



SWS #1 - Student Work Sample #1



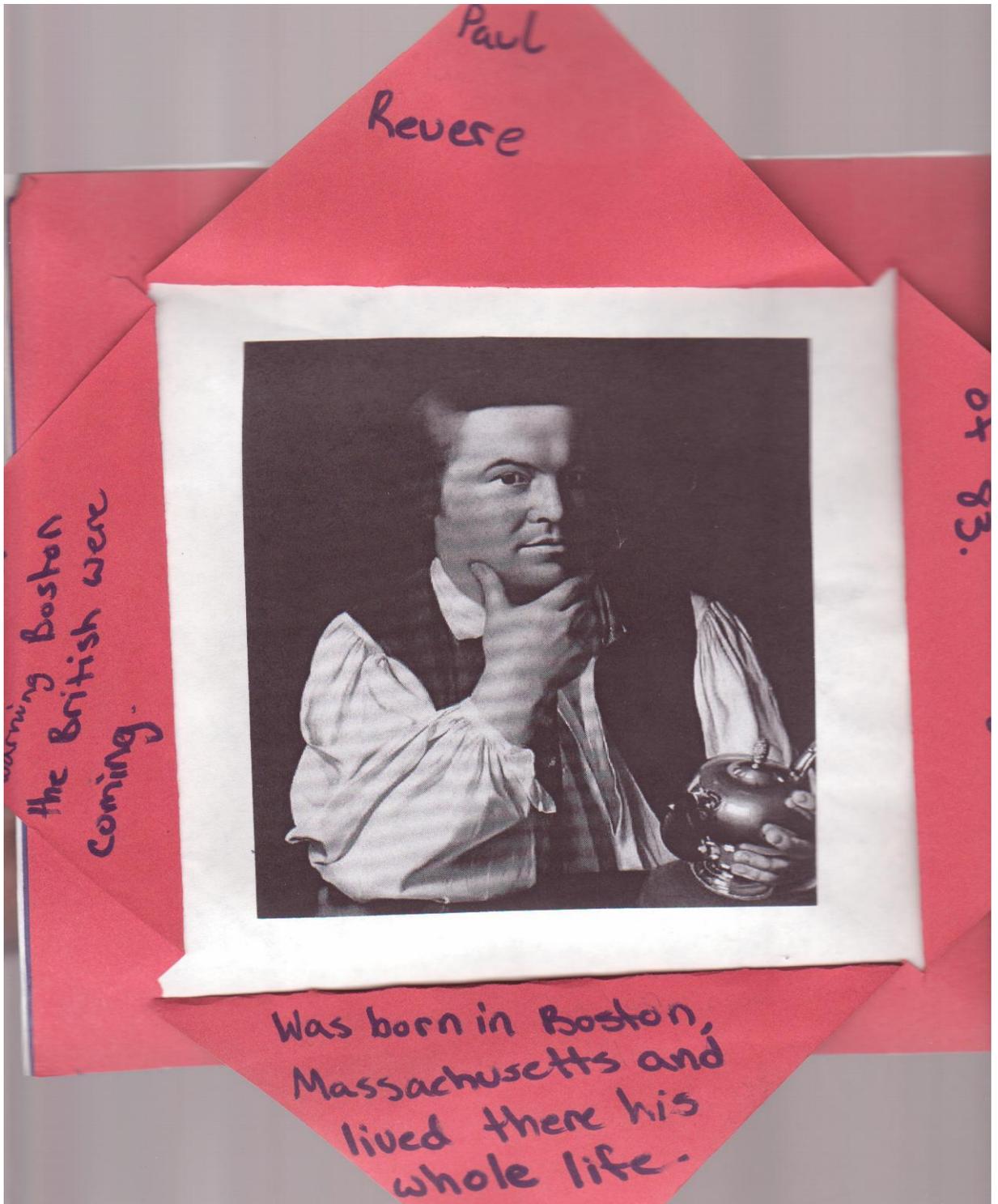
Dumping tea  
in the Harbor  
River.



Paul Warring  
Boston that  
the British  
were coming.



SWS #2 - Student Work Sample #2



SWS #3 - Student Work Sample #3



Photos of Rev War Biography Quilt

**Circle Map and Frame** Name \_\_\_\_\_

100

how with a feather pen and ink and also with their ideas.

**Who**  
 Ben. Franklin - old/wise  
 George Washington - Pres. of convention  
 James Madison - father of constitution

**Where**  
 Independence hall Philadelphia

**When**  
 1787  
 1788  
 May 14

**What**  
 They came to solve their differences and to get our nation set. They wrote the constitution

**Why**  
 why making rules of new country set up what the was going to be like

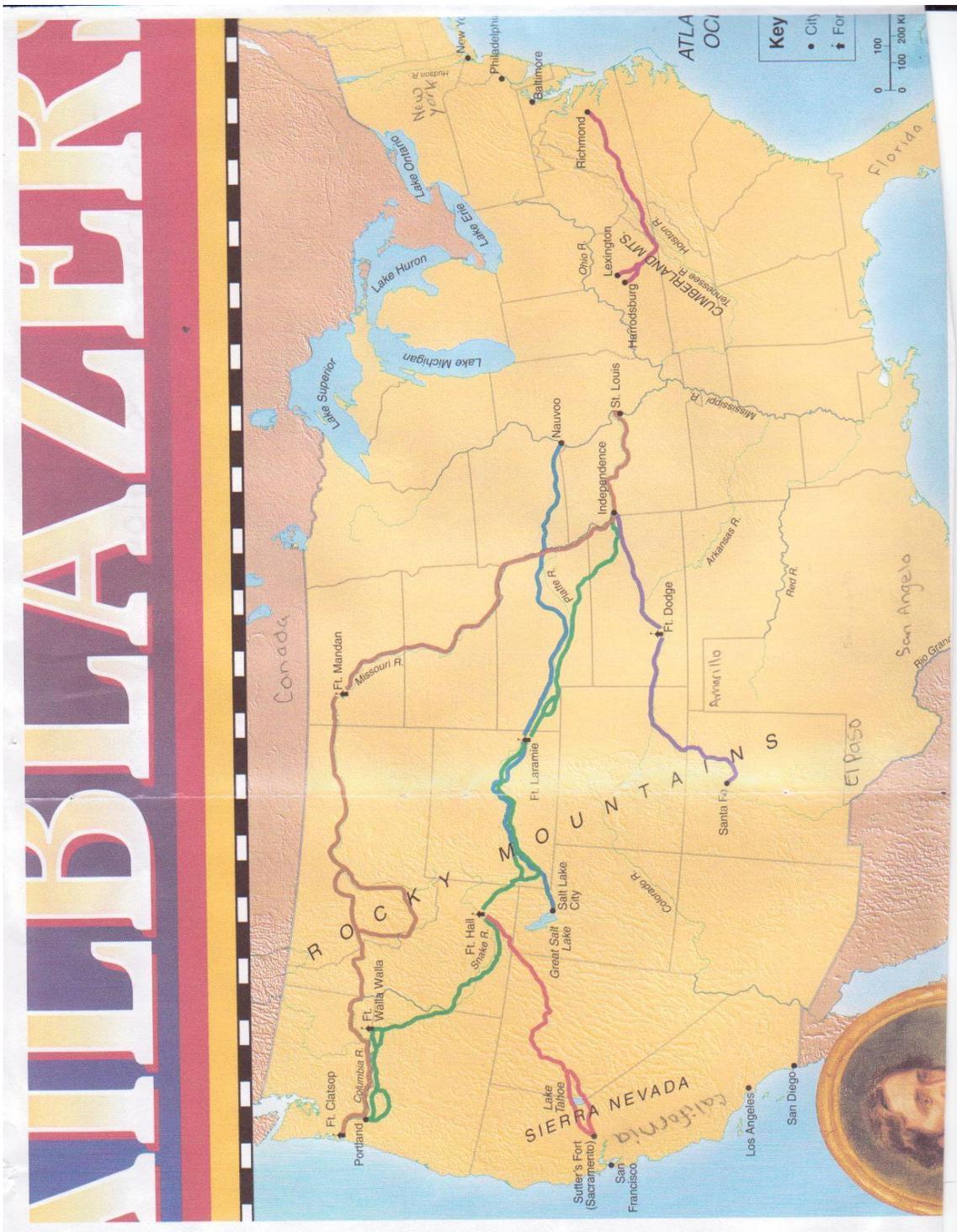
**1776 - DOTF**  
 Free-war

**The Constitution Rap!**

**Circle Map for Defining in Context • Frame for Frame of Reference**

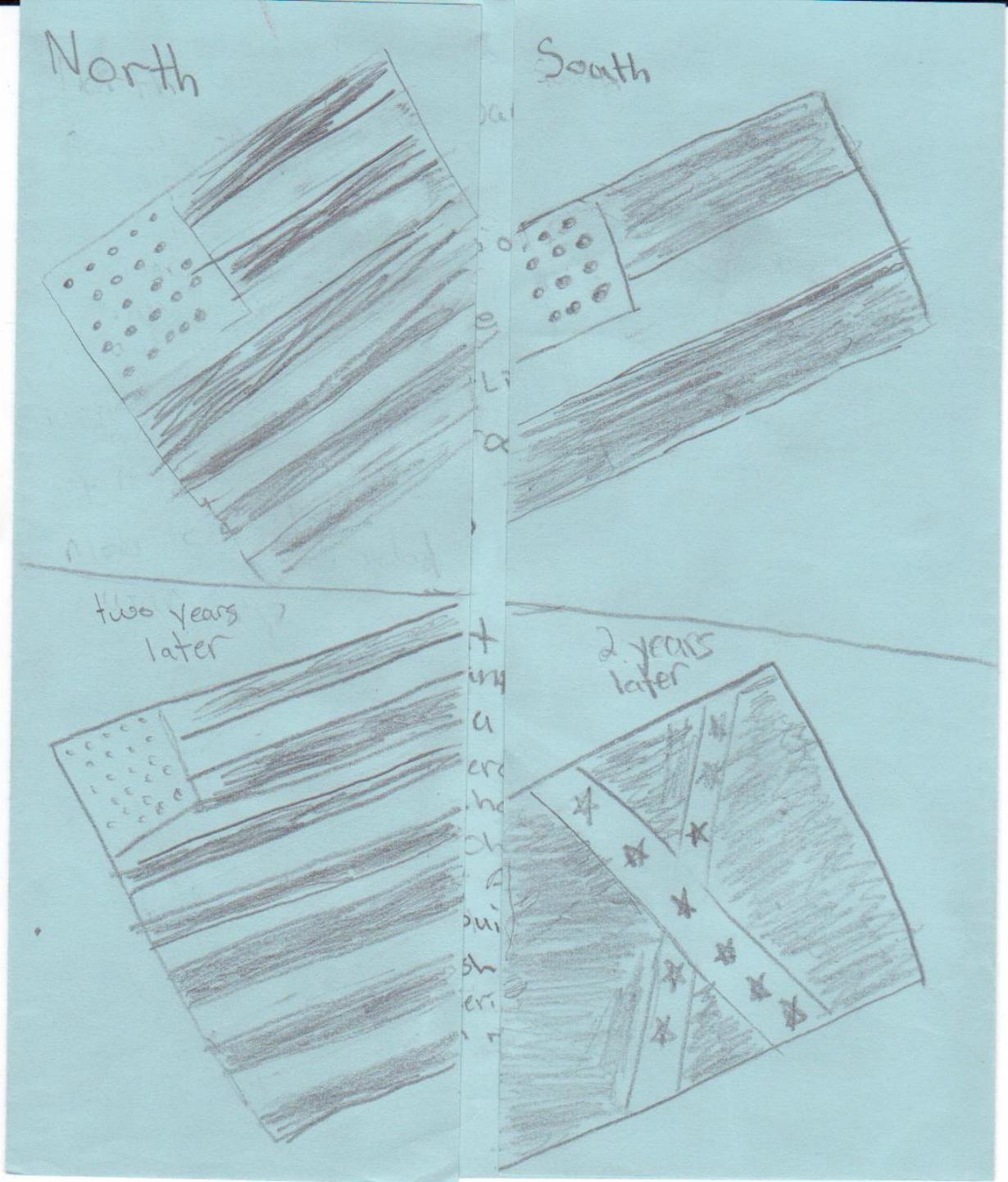
2-9  
 INNOVATIVE LEARNING GROUP  
 ©1995 All Rights Reserved

SWS #4 - Student Work Sample #4 – Constitution Rap Circle Map



SWS #5 - Student Work Sample #5 – Trailblazer Map





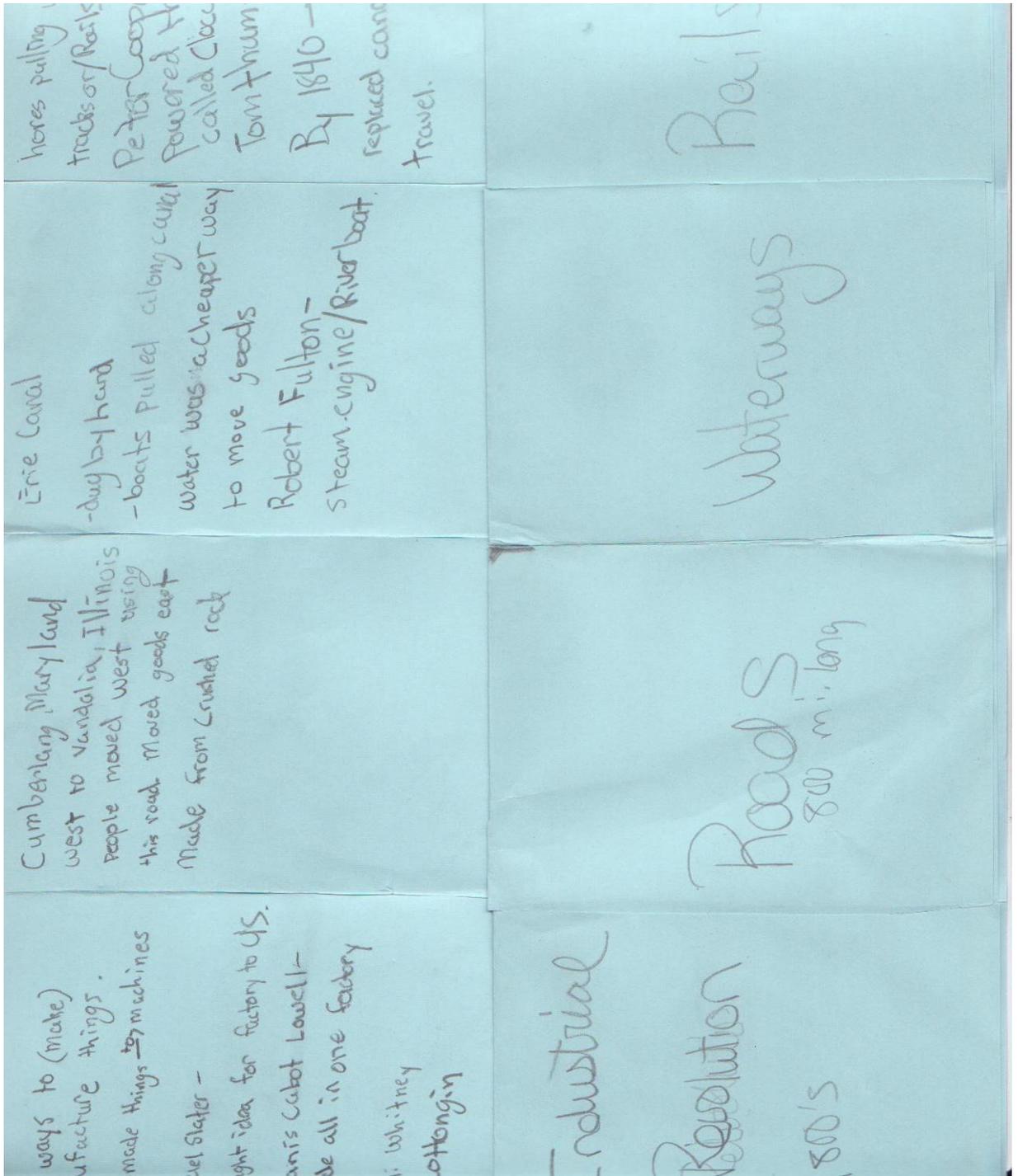
SWS #7a – Student Work Sample #7- North/South Trifold (outside front)

North  
 Grant  
 Anaconda plan  
 - Blockade  
 - capture the Mississippi River  
 - attack from west and the east & squeeze Southern forces  
 September 17, 1862 Battle of Antietam (Maryland)  
 Monitor - 2nd ironclad warship.  
 Battle of Gettysburg  
 July 1-3, 1863  
 4,1863 (Penn.)  
 defeat Vicksburg  
 Ulysses S. Grant U.S. Grant  
 November 2, 1864 - Ft. Hatteras  
 100,000 of damage Dec 1864 Savannah fell  
 was sought

South  
 15th On April 12th  
 The south the war at  
 July 21, 1861  
 one, Stonewall was leader  
 Robert E. Lee  
 General for antietam.  
 made swim to go un that were Virginia → ship con

Draft - all men  
 Signed up for war  
 age 16-40  
 1 million Union of  
 Confederate soldiers died  
 January 1, 1863 - Lincoln  
 Emancipation Proclamation  
 November 1863 - Gettysburg address  
 General Robert E. Lee and  
 Ulysses S. Grant met Appomattox Court House, Virginia April 9, 1865  
 South surrendered  
 April 15, 1865 Abraham Lincoln was killed  
 died in early morning John Wilkes Booth was shot  
 found hiding in Barn Andrew Johnson - became president  
 Reconstruction - construct build country of No Segregation  
 14th amendment - abolish slavery  
 15th amendment - African Americans citizenship  
 Separation of school  
 Sharecropping  
 Rented land from owners (cost for most slaves)  
 all men right to vote

SWS #7b - North/South Trifold (inside)



SWS #8 - Student Work Sample #8 -

Industrial Rev & Transportation Foldable (4 flap)

**APPENDIX B -**

**Photos of Chuckwagon Lady Experiences**



Pioneer Cooking Utensils

Students at Chuckwagon



Sack Race





Listening to campfire fiddlin'



Happy Trailhands

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Samples of Field Notes of Observations (FNO)**

Sample of Field Notes of Observations (FNO)

T & S (B/G)	OBSERVATIONS – Feb 26 <sup>th</sup>	My comments/
T	16 min video – people looked for landforms that people would look for. They went through the pass that crossed (1812) over Rocky Mountains. They’ve been 1000 miles; they have another 1000 miles to go. Who was Pete’s friend?	Continuation of questions referring back to <i>Facing West</i> book.
S/B	Indian Boy – fun buffalo chips & water fight	
	Poop fight – buffalo chips --	
T	When animals poop—it dries in the sun—they collected them for?	
S	Fuel	
T	Cuthbert’s turning back because Mrs. I is pregnant	
	Next chapter – Desert Fire (T reads)	Most students attentive—some fidgeting in desk. Students silent & mesmerized as the venture turned dangerous because of lack of water—animals & people dying.
T	What do you think about his Ma taking the gun?	
S/B	Pretty awesome.	
T	Was it unfair for him to be charging money for water?	

S	No	
T	What did he tell us? That the previous wagon train sent a water wagon back to help others.	
	It is very, very dangerous—think about the time when you’ve been very thirsty. You can’t even lick your lips—no saliva in their mouths.	
S/B	Scamming?	
T	He’s at the South Pass—near Snake River—it looks like a snake because it’s curved.	T points to large map to give location.
	They had to go around Mt Hood—they couldn’t follow the river—it took an extra few weeks (to get to Portland).	
S/G	Didn’t they go on a river?	
T	Some did. I also learned yesterday about the wagon—2 feet across, 11 ft long, 6 feet deep. They would have had to put all their bedrolls, pots/pans.  I’ve put the desks in the center in that size & formation so you could see the size of the wagon.	
S/B	Did they invent belt loops yet?	
T	No—they had suspenders.	
S/B	Were there termites?	
T	I bet there were.	

	We talked about the Sante Fe Trail, Mormon Trail	
T	Here's another story—"The Sante Fe Trail". This lady started remembering things from her childhood, and the author listened and wrote those things down. People have a lot of stories—I never heard this one, but my husband's grandmother (70 yrs later) remembers taking a wagon from Carolina to Oklahoma. Early 1900's, late 1800's--	Book I brought from the library
T	There's Independence MO again	T points out river
S/G	Is it still there?	
T	Yes—it's still there.	
S/G	??? about religious group	
T	Yes—Mormon – Latter Day Saints	
T	Reads from book (picture bk Sante Fe) – cholera excerpt	

T: We learned about cholera yesterday (Facing West) several had cholera & died.

S/G: Babies—umbilical cord—how did they cut that?

T: They did the same thing—used a knife.

T: (continued reading)

S/B: Why didn't they make the medicines?

T: They had some, but later more people began making medicines.(continued reading)

T: So here the wagon train's going again—pulled by oxen & mules. Mules were used quite often.

S/G: But mules are stubborn!

## **APPENDIX D**

### **Bibliography of Teacher Resources and Children's Literature**

## TEACHER RESOURCES

### State-Adopted Textbook Series –

Boyd, C.D., Gay, G., Geiger, R., Kracht, J.B., Pang, V.O., Risinger, C.F., Sanchez, S.M., et.al. (2003). *The United States, grade 5, teacher's edition* (Vol 1, pp. 1-328). Glenview, IL: Pearson Education, Inc.

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Davis, G. (1899). He's coming to us dead. Recorded by The New Lost City Ramblers. On *Classic railroad songs from Smithsonian Folkways*. (CD). Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. (1966).

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Johnson, S. (2004). *Daily geography practice grade 5*. Monterey, CA: Evan-Moor Educational Publishers.

Scholastic Entertainment, Inc. (1999). *Standing in the light: The captive story of Catharine Carey Logan*. [Video]. Available from [www.scholastic.com/dearamerica](http://www.scholastic.com/dearamerica).

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Zike, D. (undated). *Dinah Zike's foldables for grades 1-6: 3-D, interactive graphic organizers*. New York, NY: Macmillan/McGraw-Hill.

### **In-School Resources for Read-Alouds**

Gutman, D. (2005). *Abner & me*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.

Kudlinski, K.V. (1994). *Facing West: A story of the Oregon Trail*. New York, NY: Scholastic.

McGovern, A. (1975). *Secret soldier: The story of Deborah Sampson*. New York, NY: Scholastic.

Roop, P. (1987). *Buttons for General Washington*. Minneapolis, MN: Carolrhoda Books.

Shura, M.F. (1991). *Gentle Annie: The true story of a Civil War nurse*. New York, NY: Scholastic.

### **Local County Library – Children’s Books**

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Blashfield, J. F. (2001). *The Sante Fe Trail*. Minneapolis, MN: Compass Point Books.

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Blumberg, R. (1987). *The incredible journey of Lewis and Clark*. New York, NY: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books.

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Bowen, A. R. (1997). *The back of beyond: A story about Lewis and Clark*. Minneapolis, MN: Carolrhoda Books.

Bruchac, J. (2000). *Sacajawea*. San Diego, CA: Harcourt.

Dorian, E. and W. N. Wison, Eds. (1955). *Trails west and men who made them*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Erdrich, L. (2003). *Sacagawea*. Minneapolis, MN: Carolrhoda Books.

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- McDonald, M. (2003). *All the stars in the sky: The Santa Fe Trail diary of Florrie Mack Ryder*. New York, NY: Scholastic.
- Morley, J. (1998). *Across America: The story of Lewis & Clark*. New York, NY: Franklin Watts.
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- O'Dell, S. (1986). *Streams to the river, river to the sea*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
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- Pringle, L. (2002). *Dog of discovery: A Newfoundland's adventures with Lewis and Clark*. Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mills Press.
- Quiri, P. R. (2001). *The Lewis and Clark expedition*. Minneapolis, MN: Compass Point Books.
- Rounds, G. (1995). *Sod houses on the Great Plains*. New York, NY: Holiday House.
- Russell, M. (1993). *Along the Santa Fe trail: Marion Russell's own story*. Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman & Company.

Sanford, W. R. and C. R. Green (1997). *Sacagawea: Native American hero*. Berkeley Heights, NJ: Enslow.

Stein, R. C. (1994). *The story of the Oregon trail*. Chicago, IL: Childrens Press.

## **APPENDIX E**

### **Teacher Questionnaire, Student Survey & Interview Protocols**

SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE  
& OPEN-ENDED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL  
CLASSROOM TEACHER

1. Please tell me about your teaching position...what you teach and where.
2. Tell me about your past teaching experiences.
3. Describe the reading for learning students do in your classroom on a regular basis.
4. What most informs or influences the way(s) you choose to teach Social Studies?
5. What activities or classroom assignments do you feel benefit your students the most?
6. Do you believe that choice in reading material is an important piece of the classroom experience? If so, how do you support that choice?
7. What barriers do you face both in your classroom and in your school that restrict or constrain you as a teacher?
8. Describe the professional development related to content area literacy that you have participated in during the past year or so.
9. Is there anything else you would like to tell me that would help me understand the teaching and learning processes in your Social Studies classroom?

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Survey**

What does the word "geography" mean to you?

Which of the following best describes the way you learn best?

Reading independently

Having someone read to you

Reading combined with hands-on activities

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Subjects I am interested in are: *(Check all that apply)*

- |              |              |                      |
|--------------|--------------|----------------------|
| Science      | Fantasy      | Mystery/Crime        |
| Math         | Sports       | History              |
| Biography    | Art          | Computers/Technology |
| Movies       | Music        | Travel               |
| U.F.O.'s     | Supernatural | Fashion              |
| Health       | Medicine     | Animals/Nature       |
| War/Military |              |                      |
| Other        | _____        | _____                |

I enjoy reading these topics: *(Check all that apply)*

- |                                      |                                  |                                    |  |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> history     | <input type="checkbox"/> travel  | <input type="checkbox"/> plays     | <input type="checkbox"/> science fiction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> romance     | <input type="checkbox"/> sports  | <input type="checkbox"/> art       | <input type="checkbox"/> adventure       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> war stories | <input type="checkbox"/> poetry  | <input type="checkbox"/> cars      | <input type="checkbox"/> biography       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> mysteries   | <input type="checkbox"/> humor   | <input type="checkbox"/> astrology | <input type="checkbox"/> westerns        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> astrology   | <input type="checkbox"/> science | <input type="checkbox"/> folktales | <input type="checkbox"/> how-to-do-it    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> non-fiction | <input type="checkbox"/> music   |                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> supernatural    |

other (please list) \_\_\_\_\_

A person(s) I would like to know more about is:

*(Example: historical figure, sports figure, movie/music celebrity, etc.)*

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I like to read magazines about:

*(Example: current events, fashion, sports, music, mechanics, etc.)*

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A time period/event in history that I would like to know more about is: *(Example: Middle Ages, ancient Egypt, Civil War, Gold Rush, etc).*

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I would like to visit/travel to these places:

*(Example: Mount Rushmore, New York City, France, Italy)*

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My favorite activities/lessons in school have been:

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	True of Myself	Mostly True of Myself	About Halfway True of Myself	Slightly True of Myself	Not at All True of Myself
1. I like to read.					
2. I like to work with partners.					
3. I like to work in groups.					
4. I like to work alone.					
5. I like to learn new things.					
6. I like to find answers to problems.					
7. I think of different ways to work on things.					
8. I ask questions when I don't understand things.					
9. I like to draw or work on projects.					

**APPENDIX F**

**Institutional Review Board (IRB) Document  
and Consent Forms**

**Charlene Bustos**

## **Human Subjects Proposal**

### **A Sense of Place: An Investigation of One 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher's Strategies to Enhance Geographic Literacy**

#### **I. Rationale**

The purpose of this study is two-fold: (1) explore the role of the teacher in leading students toward geographic literacy through integration of children's literature, geography, and multiple literacies; and (2) examine how students respond to such teaching strategies. I plan to examine the teacher's planning and execution of social studies lessons and the perceptions of the students in response to teaching strategies. I will approach this research from a descriptive manner with each participant having an opportunity to describe and reflect on their classroom experience. I hope this research will assist content-area teachers in developing strategies which will motivate students and enhance learning.

#### **II. Subjects**

The subjects for this study are a fifth-grade classroom teacher and the students in one of her social studies classes. Participation in this study will not harm or benefit the participants. However, it may provide insight to strategies that may assist educators in planning and executing content-area lessons that will allow for increased student motivation and academic growth.

#### **III. Procedures**

Data collected during this study will include:

1. Field notes of observations of two-three social studies classes weekly (45-50 minutes each) during the fifth and sixth six weeks of the spring semester of the 2008-2009 school year (6-7 weeks total).
2. Reflective journals kept by the researcher and the participant teacher.
3. Open-ended and semi-structured surveys of the teacher and students (sample provided).
4. Interviews:
  - a. Pre-and post interviews with the teacher (sample attached).

- b. Spur of the moment interviews with students (for clarification during observations) Sample questions: “How is the map helping you understand the lesson? Do you like having your own copy of the map to work with and keep? Please tell me about the novel you are reading—in what ways does it help you learn about the topic you are studying?”

5. Artifacts:

- a. Classroom assignments and projects assigned by the teacher and completed by students.
- b. Teacher lesson plans
- c. List of children’s literature

6. Assent forms, parental consent forms, and teacher consent form

**IV. Confidentiality**

This study will maintain confidentiality of the participants with the use of pseudonyms during the collection of data process and during the interview process. The only other individuals besides Charlene Bustos and Rebecca Wilcox (the fifth-grade teacher participant) who will have access to the interview materials will be Dr. Mellinee Lesley and Dr. Reese Todd. Mrs. Bustos will keep all data collected (surveys, interviews, lesson plans, reflective journals, class assignments, voice recordings) in a locked file cabinet for one year, after which time all data will be shredded and destroyed. Students who decline the opportunity to participate will not be penalized in any fashion. Consent and Assent forms will be kept in a locked storage space in the office of one of the investigators and will be separate from the other research materials.

**V. Consent and Assent Forms**

Consent and Assent forms for the students, parents, and teacher are attached.

### **Informed Consent – Teacher**

You are being asked to participate in a research project conducted by Charlene Bustos and supervised by Dr. Mellinee Lesley, and Dr. Reese Todd of Texas Tech University. The research project involves trying to understand a fifth grade teacher's planning process for social studies and geography lessons. We would also like to know how students respond to those lessons.

Charlene Bustos would like to visit your fifth-grade social studies class two or three days a week for 7 weeks during April and May 2009. If you consent and are willing to be in the study, you will be asked questions about how you plan social studies and geography lessons, and what factors determine those plans. Your answers will be recorded on a digital voice recorder so they can be listened to carefully after class. We would also like you to keep a reflective journal during this 7-week period. We would like to collect samples of classroom assignments, lesson plans, and your reflective journal to help support classroom observations.

You do not have to be in this study. You may choose to be in the study or not. If you are willing to be in the study, you can stop at any time. Participation in this study will not harm or benefit the participants. If you agree to participate, your responses may possibly assist other teachers become better teachers of social studies and geography.

If you agree to be in the project, please sign this form. All of your information (voice recordings, lesson plans, surveys, reflective journal) will be kept private. Names on all classroom assignments, interviews, and lesson plans will be pseudonyms.

Supervisors for this project are Dr. Mellinee Lesley and Dr. Reese Todd. They are both professors in the College of Education at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas. This information (surveys, voice recordings, lesson plans, reflective journal) will only be reviewed by you, Charlene Bustos, Dr. Todd, Dr. Lesley, and two other college professors. Dr. Todd and Dr. Lesley will gladly answer any questions you have about this project. They can be reached at (806) 742-1997, ext 281 (Dr. Todd) and ext 240 (Dr. Lesley).

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, you may write the Texas Tech University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at the Office of Research Services, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas 79409. Or call (806) 742-3884. In addition, you can contact Mrs. Bustos at (325) 651-5043.

By signing this form, you indicate you have read and understand the consent form, and agree to participate in the research project.

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

This consent form is not valid after March 31, 2010.

### **Assent Document - Student**

You are being asked to take part in a research project that is being conducted by Charlene Bustos, Dr. Mellinee Lesley and Dr. Reese Todd at Texas Tech University. The research project involves trying to understand a fifth grade teacher's planning process for social studies and geography lessons. We would also like to know how students respond to those lessons.

Mrs. Charlene Bustos will visit Mrs. Wilcox's fifth-grade social studies class two or three days a week during April and May 2009 (about 7 weeks). If you choose to take part in this project, you will be asked questions about how you feel about the lessons and classroom assignments. Your answers will be recorded using a digital voice recorder. Some questions might be: "How is the map helping you understand the lesson? Do you like having your own copy of the map to work with and keep? What do you enjoy most about learning about your country?" We might want to use samples of classroom assignments you have finished.

Being in this project is completely up to you. You can change your mind later. You may decide to stop the interview at any time. Being in the project or choosing not to take part will not have an effect on your grades.

You will be at no risk or discomfort during this project. If you decide to take part, your responses could possibly help other teachers become better teachers of social studies and geography.

If you are willing to be in the project, please sign this paper. All of your information (voice recordings, class assignments, survey responses) will be kept private. Names on all classroom assignments and on interviews will be changed.

Supervisors for this project are Dr. Mellinee Lesley and Dr. Reese Todd. They are both professors at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas. No one will see your assignments or interview comments except Mrs. Bustos, Mrs. Wilcox, Dr. Lesley, Dr. Todd, and two other college professors. Mrs. Bustos will keep the assignments, interview comments, and voice recordings for one year in a locked file, and then they will be shredded.

Dr. Lesley and Dr. Todd will gladly answer any questions you have about this project. They can be reached at (806) 742-1997, ext 240 (Dr. Lesley) and ext 281 (Dr. Todd). In addition, you can contact Mrs. Bustos at (325) 651-5043.

If you have any questions about your rights if you take part in this research project, you may write the Texas Tech University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, the Office of Research Services, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas 79409. Or you can call (806) 742-3884.

If you sign this sheet, it means that you read this form and have been given the chance to ask questions. Signing the form means that you understand the project and agree to take part in the research project.

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

This consent form is not valid after March 31, 2010.

### **Informed Consent – Parent**

You are being asked to allow your child to take part in a research project that is being accomplished by Charlene Bustos, music teacher at Fannin Elementary, and supervised by Dr. Mellinee Lesley and Dr. Reese Todd at Texas Tech University. The research project involves trying to understand a fifth grade teacher's planning process for social studies and geography lessons. We would also like to know how students respond to those lessons.

Your child is a student in Mrs. Wilcox's fifth-grade social studies class. Charlene Bustos will visit during regular class time two or three days a week during April and May 2009 (7 weeks). If you give permission and if your child is willing to be in the study, your child will be asked questions about how he/she feels about the lessons and assignments. Your child's answers will be recorded using a digital voice recorder. These recordings can be listened to carefully after class is over.

Some examples of questions to be asked include: "How is the map helping you understand the social studies lesson? Do you like having your own copy of the map to work with and keep? What do you like most about learning about your country?" We may use a few samples of classroom assignments completed by your child.

Your child does not have to be in this study. He/She may choose to be in the study or not. It will not have an effect on his/her grades or class time. If he/she is willing to be in the study, he/she can still choose to stop at any time. It will not hurt his/her grade. Your child will not be at risk for any discomfort during this project. His/her responses will possibly help other teachers become better teachers of social studies and geography. Another benefit could be your child's self-awareness and reflection of his/her learning.

If you agree to let your child be in the research project, please sign this form. We will keep all of your child's information private and confidential. Names on all classroom assignments and interviews will be changed to protect your child's identity.

The supervisors for this project are Dr. Mellinee Lesley and Dr. Reese Todd. They are both professors in the College of Education at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas. The only persons to see the class assignments and interviews will be Charlene Bustos, Mrs. Wilcox, Dr. Todd, Dr. Lesley, and two other college professors. Mrs. Bustos will keep the assignments, interview comments, and voice recordings in a locked file cabinet for one year, then all items will be shredded and destroyed.

Dr. Todd and Dr. Lesley will gladly answer any questions you have about this project. They can be reached at (806) 742-1997, ext 281 (Dr. Todd) and ext 240 (Dr. Lesley). In addition, you can reach Charlene Bustos at (325) 651-5043.

If you have any questions about your child's rights as a participant, you may write the Texas Tech University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, the Office of Research Services, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas 79409. Or please call (806) 742-3884.

If you sign this consent form, it means that you read about and understand the project, and that your child has your permission to take part in the project.

Printed Name (Child) \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name (Parent) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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