A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR THE INTEGRATION OF CHILDREN'S
LITERATURE INTO THE SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM AT
THE PRIMARY LEVEL,

MASTER'S PROJECT

Submitted to the School of Education
University of Dayton, in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science in Education

by

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

The traditional method of teaching social studies is very tedious for children. Children become bored with rote learning and memorization, and, for most of them, the content seems irrelevant. Research indicates that students do not like social studies because of the ways in which content is being taught (McGowan, 1987). They are not taught how to think critically or given an opportunity to demonstrate their creativity. Traditional teaching methods rarely use printed social studies material beyond a textbook. Integrating literature into the social studies curriculum would give meaning to content. The language and predictable outcomes in books naturally teach children that print is meaningful (Holdaway, 1979).

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this project is to develop a resource guide which shows primary teachers how to integrate children’s literature into the social studies curriculum.
Significance of the Project

The primary goal of social studies is preparing children’s citizenship skills. To function as informed citizens, children need the ability to think and read critically. Children’s literature is an excellent resource to use in supplying meaningful content and skill-building experiences. The writer believes integrating children’s literature into the social studies curriculum is an effective way of engaging children in the pursuit of citizenship skills.

Assumptions

The integrated approach to learning enhances the knowledge of students and enables them to think more critically.

Integration is an approach to learning and a way of thinking that respects the interrelationship of the language processes – reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Limitations

This handbook is being developed for a specific grade level and group of students.
Availability of multiple copies of books can limit the successful integration of social studies and literature.

Definition of terms

Whole Language - A shorthand way of referring to a set of beliefs about curriculum, not just the language arts curriculum, but about everything that goes on in classrooms. "Whole Language" is a philosophical stance; it is a description of how some teachers and researchers have been exploring the practical applications of recent theoretical arguments which have arisen from research in linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, child development, curriculum, composition, literary theory, semiotics and other fields of study. As with all theoretical arguments, each of us is obliged to explore the practical ramifications in our own way (Newman, 1985).
CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

The trend in education today is toward whole language and literature-based instruction. Unfortunately, this trend seems to exclude social studies. While, there is an abundance of literature pertaining to the use of literature in the reading program, as well as hands-on activities in math and science, McGowan (1987) notes that studies of the literature-social studies connection are sparse and seldom explicit.

Elementary school children are engaged in finding out about themselves, their peers, and their community. They are building their identities as individuals and as members of families. They are also beginning to understand what it means to be a citizen of a specific society and country. Aside from firsthand experience, there is no better way for children to form concepts and begin to feel the vitality of human history than through reading children's literature (Galda, 1990).

Children's literature offers material that stimulates interest and excitement. It also encourages children to go beyond low-level comprehension found in some basal
readers to a higher level of interpretive and critical comprehension (Billig, 1977).

Standard social studies texts offer facts, but these do not necessarily lead to the understanding that children's literature provides (Billig, 1977). Children's literature, chosen carefully, can supplement the overly concise presentation of a textbook by bringing depth, meaning, and elaboration to concepts that are presented by teachers (Crook, 1990).

Many children's books reflect basic concepts of social studies (Hennings, 1982). For example, the concept of "change" is important in social studies. An ideal story for teaching this concept, at the primary level, is Eric Carle's *The Mixed-up Chameleon*. A chameleon envies each of the animals in the zoo until he realizes the value of his own unique qualities. Once this book has been shared with the children, the teacher can ask questions that focus on the important ideas.

Riecken and Miller (1990) suggest that children's literature integrated into the social studies curriculum offers elementary teachers a wealth of opportunity for engaging children in problem-solving and decision-making discussions, and is relevant to
children's experiences. Two books suitable for extended discussion are Barbara Coony's Miss Rumphius and Ira Sleeps Over by Bernard Waber. Teachers can guide students to examine the story content through the use of story-related questions. Miss Rumphius wants to make the world more beautiful so she plants flowers all over the countryside. Some questions that might be asked regarding Miss Rumphius are - What is the problem here? Why is it a problem? For whom it is a problem? How might the character solve this problem? Ira must decide whether or not to take his teddy bear to his first sleep-over. How could he decide what he is going to do? What do you think he will do? Have you ever had to make a similar kind of decision?

A research study conducted by Levstik (1990) on the impact of literature on historical interest and understanding in a first grade class suggests that children have a need to know about what really happened in a story. One first grader in Levstik's (1990) study sought information from an encyclopedia after reading a story about a aboriginal child in Australia because he needed "to know about where this is" (p.850).
Good literature, whether fiction or nonfiction, has the power to capture interest, not just in particular characters, but in the places associated with the characters (Levstik, 1985). Integrating children's literature in the social studies program can lead readers to seek out maps of different countries. Children's literature can motivate interest and provide a meaningful context for interpreting maps and geographic information (Levstik, 1985).

Literature is about the whole range of human ideas and emotion, not only laughter, satisfaction, and delight, but also injustice, evil, loneliness, and death (Hade, 1991). Therefore, when selecting books to be used for children, it is important to select high quality literature. McGowan (1987) contends that high quality children's literature satisfies several criteria. First, the book is developmentally appropriate and can be understood by its intended audience. Setting, plot and theme should be familiar or at least comprehensible to young readers. Second, the author should write with attention to character development, dialogue, plot, imagery and message. Third, quality children's literature must present the reader with valid and relevant information. Fourth, it needs to offer the
reader a message of lasting value. Stoddard (1984) notes high quality (nonfiction) children's literature also should be up-to-date and provide accurate information.

Integrating children's literature into the social studies curriculum is not easy. It requires organization and commitment by the teacher (McClure, 1982). However, it does have its rewards. Children's literature provides endless opportunities for enhancing children's understanding of social studies concepts. The use of high quality children's literature in social studies can cause children to become motivated and go beyond the story and search for answers to questions that may have been raised in the course of reading. The writer believes children's literature should be considered as a major source to accomplish social studies objectives.

The decision on the part of the teacher to adapt, modify, and eventually change from a traditionally organized classroom to an integrated whole language centered classroom must be a personal one. According to Anderson (1984) "teaching will be challenging and exciting in new ways in the integrated whole language
classroom. Children will experience excitement and joy in learning because reading and writing will function as normally as speaking and listening in learning ideas and in interacting interpersonally with others."
CHAPTER III

Procedures

The writer plans to undertake the following procedures in order to develop a resource guide that shares with primary teachers ideas on how to integrate children's literature into the social studies curriculum.

1. The writer will review the school curriculum guide for social studies objectives (see Appendix A) to be met by the primary grades.

2. The writer will organize the resource guide according to units to be taught and objectives to be met by the teacher.

3. The writer will select major concepts to be developed from each unit such as: All cultures have families; all cultures have people who possess needs and wants, all cultural participants speak a language. The concepts will be developmentally appropriate and important to the curriculum and to the children's needs and interests.

4. The writer will select high quality children's literature from a variety of resources such as the
school library, the public library and the media specialist. She also will review journals such as *Social Education*, *The Social Studies* and *The Reading Teacher*. The literature will reflect the social studies concepts selected.

5. The writer will show how to integrate the children’s literature selected through a unit on France and a unit on Australia. France and Australia are two of the countries around the world that are often studied in the primary social studies curriculum.

6. The writer will provide a list of recommended high quality children’s literature.
CHAPTER IV

Sample Whole Language Units

The whole language method of teaching promotes the integration of subject areas where children are reading, writing, listening and speaking across the curriculum. They are using real books and hands-on experiences to explore and investigate. Children’s literature is an excellent way to introduce social studies concepts and themes to young children. What children read is formative in their lives. Therefore, we need to select the best literature to use when teaching social studies concepts. "Families around the world" is a concept taught at the primary level. Fiction and nonfiction literature selected to teach concepts should provide insight into how families live around the world, and, at the same time provide information about history and geography. The literature should be meaningful and motivating to young readers.

The following units on France and Australia have been selected to demonstrate how children’s
literature can be integrated into the social studies curriculum.

**FRANCE**

The following nonfiction children's literature is excellent for providing the children with cultural information about France.


An excellent source of large, colorful maps easy for children to read.

Activities: Have children locate France on a map. Discuss the differences between countries and continents. Familiarize students with the seven continents and the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Provide each child with a blank copy of a world map. Have the children identify the continents and oceans by labeling and coloring them on the map.

*A Family In France* by Peter Jacobsen, Bookwright Press, 1984.

This book takes students on a journey to a small town in France. Students meet the Michel family. Joel Michel produces champagne and he will show
the students how the grapes from his vineyard are turned into the most famous wine in the world.

Introduce the book *A Family in France*. Plan a trip to France and a visit with the Michel family.

Activities: Discuss the Michel family, what they like to eat, and what their hobbies and interest include. Discuss and chart the likes and differences of the Michel family and families in the U.S.A. Chart wants and needs of families. Make passports out of construction paper. Make suitcases out of construction paper. Have students cut out of magazines what they will need for the trip and paste in suitcase. Have students begin a journal of their trip to France.


A guide designed to introduce young people to French culture, as well as to the sights of Paris.

Activities: Familiarize students with famous sights of Paris. Visit the Eiffel Tower, Arc de Triomphe, Notre Dame Cathedral, Palace of Versailles and Louvre. Have the students make
postcards to send home giving one detail about each place they visited.

Encourage your students to speak a few words in French such as:

hello - bonjour

good bye - au revoir

thank you - merci

you’re welcome - de rien

let’s go! - allons-y!

good luck - bonne chance

my name is - je m’appelle

yes - oui

no - non


This book is a wonderful true story of the first giraffe ever to live in Europe. The giraffe was a gift given to the King of France in 1826 by the pasha of Egypt.

Activity: The book lends itself to a discussion of French history.
Students will also enjoy reading these additional books that contribute to learning about French culture.


Sasek, Miroslav *This is Paris*. Macmillan, 1959.


In helping young children appreciate other cultures and customs, folklore and fairy tales are an excellent source of ideas. Folk/fairy tales appeal to children and have a wonderful rich vocabulary. The story of *Cinderella* by Charles Perrault, Bradbury Press, 1972, originated from France. The teacher should read aloud a fairy tale or have available for students to read different versions of one fairy tale. Cinderella, which has many variants, is one tale that works well.

Additional folk/fairy tales which are enjoyed by young children:


*Sleeping Ugly*. Coward-McCann, 1981.

Activities: Chart characteristics of the fairy tales. Read aloud a favorite fairy tales and construct a story map to include title of story, author, setting, characters, problem, action, and resolution. Have students write and illustrate their own fairy tales to be turned into a class book. Write down the fairy tales read in class. Have children select their favorites. Graph the results on a large chart. Have the students compare and contrast two fairy tales, such as *Sleeping Beauty* and *Sleeping Ugly*.

A great book to use for whole class or small group reading in the teaching of France. The story takes place in Paris and tells of Madeline's rescue from the Seine.

Day 1. Discuss the book's cover, title, author and illustrator. Discuss title page and copyright. Have students predict what the story might be about just from looking at the cover. Read the book to the class without stopping. Initiate informal discussion about the story such as setting and characters.

Day 2. Review content, author, illustrator and copyright. Have students pair up and read to each other - alternate pages.

Day 3. Read the story with students. To assess students' oral reading abilities ask individuals or small group of students to read aloud.

Skill focus: Rhyming words - Make a class chart of all the rhyming words from the story.

Day 4 Review rhyming words. Have students think of other rhyming words and make individual list of words.
Day 5 - Evaluation and Assessment. Evaluate students on their use of rhyming words by encouraging them to write a short poem using words from their list. Have the students illustrate their poems and put together a class book of rhyming poems.

Other Activities: Make cutouts of Madeline and her schoolmates. Write poems on the cutouts. Make a large background mural of Paris and attach the cutouts. Have a tea party. Make cream puffs and camomile tea.


This book is set in a train station in Paris during the 1920's. It is a story of two children and the love and admiration they feel for their mother. When the children "lose" their mother in the train station a kindly gendarme comes to their aid. This book may also be used in the same format as Madeline's Rescue.

Activities: Before students read the story, explain to the class what a gendarme is - similar to a policeman. Divide students into two groups.
Have the first group say the first two lines and the second group say the last line of each verse. Have the entire class repeat the chorus.

Oh lala!

What do you do when you are lost?
Just call for the gendarme.

Chorus:
Gendarme, gendarme
Call for the gendarme
If you're in danger or if you're harmed,
Just call for the gendarme.

Have students create additional verses by adding new situations after the second line, "What do you do when..." 

Have students reconstruct the path the gendarme and children took to find their mother. Work together to list the locations on the board. Then reread the book to check out the list prepared by the students.

The following books are also set in France:

Agee, Jon. The Incredible Painting of Felix

Bjork, Christina. Linnea in Monet's Garden.

Fatio, Louise. The Happy Lion. Scholastic, 1986.

Ungerer, Tomie. The Beast of Monsieur Racine
Australia

Begin the unit by having the students locate Australia on a map. Discuss with the children that Australia is a country that is also its own continent. The Big Book of Maps by Modern Curriculum Press, 1992 is an excellent source. The maps are large, colorful and easy for the children to read. Then introduce the book Children of the World - Australia, Gareth Stevens Publishing, 1988. This book is a must in introducing a unit on Australia. The book presents the life of a young boy, Scott, and his family who live in a house located on the grounds of the largest zoo in Australia. Scott's parents work for the zoo. The book also features the diversity and richness of the culture and heritage of Australia with discussion of the native Aboriginal culture. It is a book full of good information and illustrations.

Activities: Chart the likes and differences of family life in Australia and the United States. Discuss animals found in the zoo where Scott lives. Do any of these animals live in North America? Make a mural of the zoo for background. Out of construction paper, make hand torn animals and place them on the mural. Compare how the first Americans and Australians treated the
people they found living there. Find out more about the culture of Aborigines.

Additional nonfiction books on the culture of Australia.


Books on Australia recommended by Gareth Stevens Publishing:


A good book for introducing the concept of the two hemispheres. It points out that "up" is towards the sky and "down" is toward the earth. To extend this concept read aloud Summer by June Factor, Viking Penguin, 1987. In Australia summertime begins in December so that means Christmas Day is a warm summer holiday. This is a story of an ordinary Australian family living in the country celebrating Christmas.

Activities: Give the students a large piece of white drawing paper folded in half. On one half write "December in Australia." On the other half "December in the United States." Have them draw scenes of what people would be doing in each country.

A fun way for children to learn a variety of things about Australia is to do an author study on the Australian author Mem Fox.


Through a series of questions, reader must answer yes or no regarding the personality and occupation of a lady called Daisy O'Grady.
Activity: Meet Mem Fox. - The following questions are about the author Mem Fox. Have the students guess yes or no in response to the question. Begin with telling the students: "Far away from here, in the land of Ayers Rock lives a creative lady named Mem Fox." The teacher then continues the questioning asking the class:

Teacher: Is she from Australia? Guess!
Class: YES!

Teacher: Does she live in Adelaide? Guess!
Class: YES!

Teacher: Is she an author of children's books? Guess!
Class: YES!

Teacher: Does she write in the middle of the night? Guess!
Class: YES!

Teacher: Is she a senior lecturer at the South Australian College of Advanced Education? Guess!
Class: YES!

Teacher: Is she married? Guess!
Class: YES!

Teacher: Does she have a daughter? Guess!
Class: YES!

An interesting introduction to various foods common throughout Australia. There is a glossary in the back of the book describing the foods.

Activity: Make the Australian dessert known as Lamington by dipping a square of sponge cake in thin chocolate icing and rolling it in coconut.

A story of a young koala longing to hear her mother speak lovingly to her as she did before other children came along; she plans to win her distracted parents' attention.

Activity: Koala Lou lends itself to discussion of when moms and dads are sometimes too busy to say "I love you" even through it's clear that they still do.

Old Lily Lacely dozes by the fire with her faithful dog at her feet as strange night noises herald a surprising awakening.

Activity: Have the students predict the night noises and ending before reading the book. Have the students rewrite the ending after reading the book.

Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge by Mem Fox, Kane/Miller Book Publishers, 1985.

A small boy tries to discover the meaning of "memory" so he can restore that of an elderly friend. The components of memory according to those people Wilfred questions are: something that makes you warm; something that makes you laugh; something that makes you sad; something from long ago; and something as precious as gold.

Activity: Have students make up their own "memory" baskets to share with the class.


In a cumulative rhyme, family members describe the clothes they intend to give Jessie to go with her shoes from grandpa.
Activity: Have the students make their own construction paper character dressed in mismatched clothes.

A beautiful book with colorful illustration of the native Australian animals and birds. It is written in rhyme and fun to read.

One Wooly Wombat by Rod Trinca and Kerry Argent, Kane/Miller, 1985.
This book depicts fourteen Australian animals, introduced in rhyme, along with the numbers from one to fourteen.

Activity: Have the students pick their favorite Australian animal to research and illustrate. Put together a class book on Australian animals.

This is an Australian poem about the fears of a little boy as he walks alone to school for the first time.

Activity: Have the students write about their fears of walking or riding to school for the first time.

Additional books that are set in Australia or revolve around the animals that are native to Australia.
Argent, Kerry. *Wombat and Bandicoot Best of Friends.*


Ernst, Lisa. *Nattie Parsons' Good-Luck Lamb*


Kipling, Rudyard. *The Sing-Song of Old Man Kangaroo*
Mr. Pickwick, SPC5121.


Wild, Margaret. *The Very Best of Friends.* Harcourt
CHAPTER V
SUMMARY

Children's literature provides insight into social studies concepts that broaden children's limited experiences and teach them more about themselves, others, their heritage and the world community. High quality literature offers children the opportunity to become acquainted with authors who are expert at their craft, who create memorable characters, who establish captivating moods, and who can spin compelling plots. Children's literature provides enjoyment for children and helps to develop their imaginations and insights into human behavior. It also enables children to think critically. The integration of high quality literature into the social studies curriculum can be used as a springboard for enrichment activities that enhance the teaching of specific concepts in the accomplishment of social study objectives.

In order for the children's literature and social studies connection to be successful, teachers must be willing to take risk and reform their traditional method of teaching social studies. The use of children's literature is strongly advocated in language
arts. Routman (1991) contends literature is the best vehicle to achieve integration of the language arts. Why is children's literature not adopted as a teaching tool in the social studies discipline? The reason is simple: It is complicated and difficult. However, it is still quite feasible. Integrating children's literature related to social studies concepts or the use of thematic units are two ways of innovating the social studies curriculum. Publishing companies of trade books must promote high quality children's literature. The books cited in this project should provide real and meaningful scenarios for the application of social studies content.

Future Research

Future research needs to be conducted to determine why teachers resist change in the social studies teaching approaches. Administrators need to become more involved in understanding and supporting whole language theory and practice if it is to become an approach to teaching and learning that is here to stay. Teachers need to take the initiative to be afforded their rightful and responsible place as decision makers and
leaders in the staff development process (Routman 1991).
APPENDICES
Appendix A

Social Studies Objectives
Greene County Social Studies Course of Study, 1986

1. Students will be able to define the term family.

2. Students will use appropriate kinship terms and future kinship terms to describe the relationships that exist among the members of families.

3. Students will be able to explain why people live in families.

4. Students will be able to explain that all members of a family are alike in some ways.

5. Students will identify food, clothing, and shelter as three of the needs that families have.

6. Students will list some of the different kinds of wants that families have.

7. Students will list some of the many different kinds of rules that families use to regulate their lives and govern their social relationship.

8. Students will identify various countries where families live.

9. Students will use an globe and maps to locate the continents, oceans and will be able to identify the continents and oceans by name.
10. Students will define the terms map, key and compass rose.

11. Students will identify some of the ways in which families in other countries differ from families in the United States.

12. Students will recognize that families in other countries are like families in the United States.

13. Students will recognize that families everywhere use goods to help fill their needs and wants.

14. Students will identify how some families celebrate holidays.
Appendix B

Recommended Literature for Units on France and Australia

France

A Family in France by Peter Jacobsen
Beauty and the Beast by Jan Brett
Bonjour, Mr. Satie by Tomie dePaola
Cinderella by Charles Perrault
Countries of the World-France by Alan Blackwood
First Book of France by Louisa Somerville
Getting to Know France by Dominique Norbrook
Kidding Around Paris by Rebecca Clay
Linnea in Monet’s Garden by Christina Bjork
Madeline’s Rescue by Ludwig Bemelmans
Princess Furball by Charlotte Huck
Sleeping Beauty by Jane Yolen
Sleeping Ugly by Jane Yolen
The Beast of Monsieur Racine by Tomie Ungerer
The Big Books of Maps - Modern Curriculum Press
The Giraffe that Walked to Paris by Nancy Milton
The Happy Lion by Louise Fatio
The Incredible Painting of Felix by Jon Agee
This is Paris by Miroslav Sasek
Tom Thumb by Richard Watson

Where's Our Mama by Diane Goode

Australia

An Aboriginal Family by Rollo Browne

Australia by Laurence Santrey

Australia by Emilie Leptien

Australia by D. V. Georges

Australia Today by Caroline Arnold

Bushbaby by Adrienne Kennaway

Charles B. Wombat and the Very Strange Thing by Wendy Elks

Children of the World-Australia-Childrens' Press

Guess What? by Mem Fox

Hattie and the Fox by Mem Fox

Koala Lou by Mem Fox

Looking at Australia by W.F. Henderson

My Grandma lived in Gooligulch by Graeme Base

Nattie Parsons' Good-Luck Lamb by Lisa Ernst

Night Noises by Mem Fox

One Wooly Wombat by Rob Trinca

Red Earth, Blue Sky by Margaret Rau

Summer by June Factor
The Big Book of Maps—Modern Curriculum Press
The Bunyip of Berkeley's Creek by Jenny Wagner
The Sing-Song of Old Man Kangaroo by Rudyard Kipling
The Very Best of Friends by Margaret Wild
This is Australia by Miroslav Sasek
Walking to School by Ethel Turner
Wallaby Creek by Joyce Ann Powzyk
Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge by Mem Fox
Who Killed Cockatoo by W. A. Cawthrone
Who's Upside Down by Crockett Johnson
Wombat and Bandicoot Best of Friends by Kerry Argent
Wombat Stew by Marcia Vaughan
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