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CHILDREN AND THEIR WORLD:

TEACHING ELEMENTARY SOCIAL STUDIES

David A. Welton
and John T. Mallan

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TEACHING
ELEMENTARY SOCIAL STUDIES

David A. Welton, Syracuse University
and John T. Mallan, Syracuse University



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To . . .

David Jr., Stephen, Christopher,
Lynda and Shawn

. . . as they encounter their world.

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Preface

It was on a fine September morning some several hundreds of students ago that we sat in an empty elementary classroom nervously awaiting the arrival of our first class. Little did we think that some fifteen years later we would be writing a social studies methods book. Yet during those intervening years we have learned a lot (or at least we'd like to think so), no small portion of which came from our students—elementary pupils, in-service teachers, and prospective elementary teachers alike.

During our first year of teaching, for example, we learned that being called upon to teach something has a profound way of revealing what one doesn't know but must learn—and quickly. Similarly, we learned that just because we happen to be teaching something doesn't necessarily mean that our students are eager to learn it. But then, too, we learned of those little things that can make teaching so satisfying—that glow that children exhibit when they finally understand something; that torrent of emotion that can pour forth from a child whom you thought you'd never get through to; that look of pleasure on a child's face when, at Christmastime, you are presented with yet another brightly wrapped package that will complete your year's supply of after-shave lotion or cologne.

It was during our first experiences working with in-service and prospective teachers that we found that involving them in the kinds of social studies learning activities they might use with their own students seemed to be a more effective (and better received) strategy than just telling them about such activities. We have since expanded that approach in our own teaching and have attempted to incorporate it, to the extent that it's possible to do so, in this book. In other words, one of the

things this book is intended to do is to involve you to whatever extent you are willing to become involved.

We've also written this book out of the conviction that social studies can be approached as something kids do and use, not simply as something they are expected to know. In no way are we suggesting that social studies content is unimportant; on the contrary, we think it is more important than ever. In fact, with the expansion of the so-called knowledge explosion, we have become increasingly aware of the necessity to develop an approach that balances the legitimate "know about" dimensions of social studies with a means by which children can develop the skills they need to deal with any kind of information, knowledge, or experience they may encounter. To help you manage such an approach is one of the major purposes of this book.

In planning this book we were, quite frankly, forced to engage in what we call "selective neglect." We found, as one often finds in teaching, that we couldn't deal with everything even if we wanted to. Thus, we were obliged to emphasize some things and neglect others. What we decided to leave out was information that was readily available elsewhere. As a result, for example, you will not find instructions on how to run a filmstrip projector or how to make an overhead transparency in this book.

We have organized this book into three sections. Part I is intended to help establish a framework—an approach or way of looking at social studies and some of the tasks that are involved in teaching it. Part II, the longest section, approaches social studies teaching from a management perspective. Part III pulls together all the bits and pieces we've dealt with previously by focusing on what we consider to



"You'll find 'Teaching Methods That Never Fail' under fiction."

be the synthetic dimensions of teaching—planning and evaluation. Personally, we feel that planning is such a vital function of teaching that we deal with it throughout the book. Part I, for example, we approach the first prerequisite of planning—knowing what you are planning *for*—while in Part II we consider the other prerequisites—the tools and materials to plan *with*. These prerequisites then provide a context for the *mechanics* of planning, which we consider in Part III.

At the end of each major section is a competency-based instructional module that is intended to provide an opportunity to transfer what we deal with here to actual classroom settings. Also, we have integrated exemplary student activities and exemplary teaching materials throughout this book. We have treated materials from the social studies projects in similar fashion. In the case of com-

mercially available materials, however, we were forced to be selective, lest the book take on the appearance of a catalog. In selecting commercially available materials from a particular publisher, we chose those materials that best reflect a particular *kind* of material.

In preparing this manuscript, we also became keenly aware of our indebtedness to many people. As is probably true for many authors, we sometimes found ourselves wondering whether an idea we were dealing with was really ours or one we had adopted from a source long since forgotten. Although we have documented our sources, we accept full responsibility for this manuscript. In addition, we acknowledge the debt of gratitude we owe to the students, the teachers, and to our colleagues—both in social studies education itself and at Syracuse University—who have influenced and inspired us in countless ways.

We also acknowledge the contributions and suggestions provided by Professors Richard Hersh, University of Toledo; Everett T. Keach, University of Georgia; William R. Smith, Shippensburg (Pa.) State College; and Philmore B. Wass, The University of Connecticut, as they reviewed portions of the manuscript.

To Donna Wolohojian (and her students at Edward Smith School, Syracuse City School District) we gratefully acknowledge permission to use the photographs that appear throughout this book.

We also acknowledge those individuals without whom this manuscript might never have been converted into publishable form. We are particularly indebted to "the Janes"—Jane Headley and Jane Bair—as well as to Louise Drapala and Ms. Sharon Coyne for their secretarial assistance. At Rand McNally, we acknowledge Charles H. Heinle for his encouragement (and foresight); Carol Robak, who produced the design for this book; and espe-

Preface

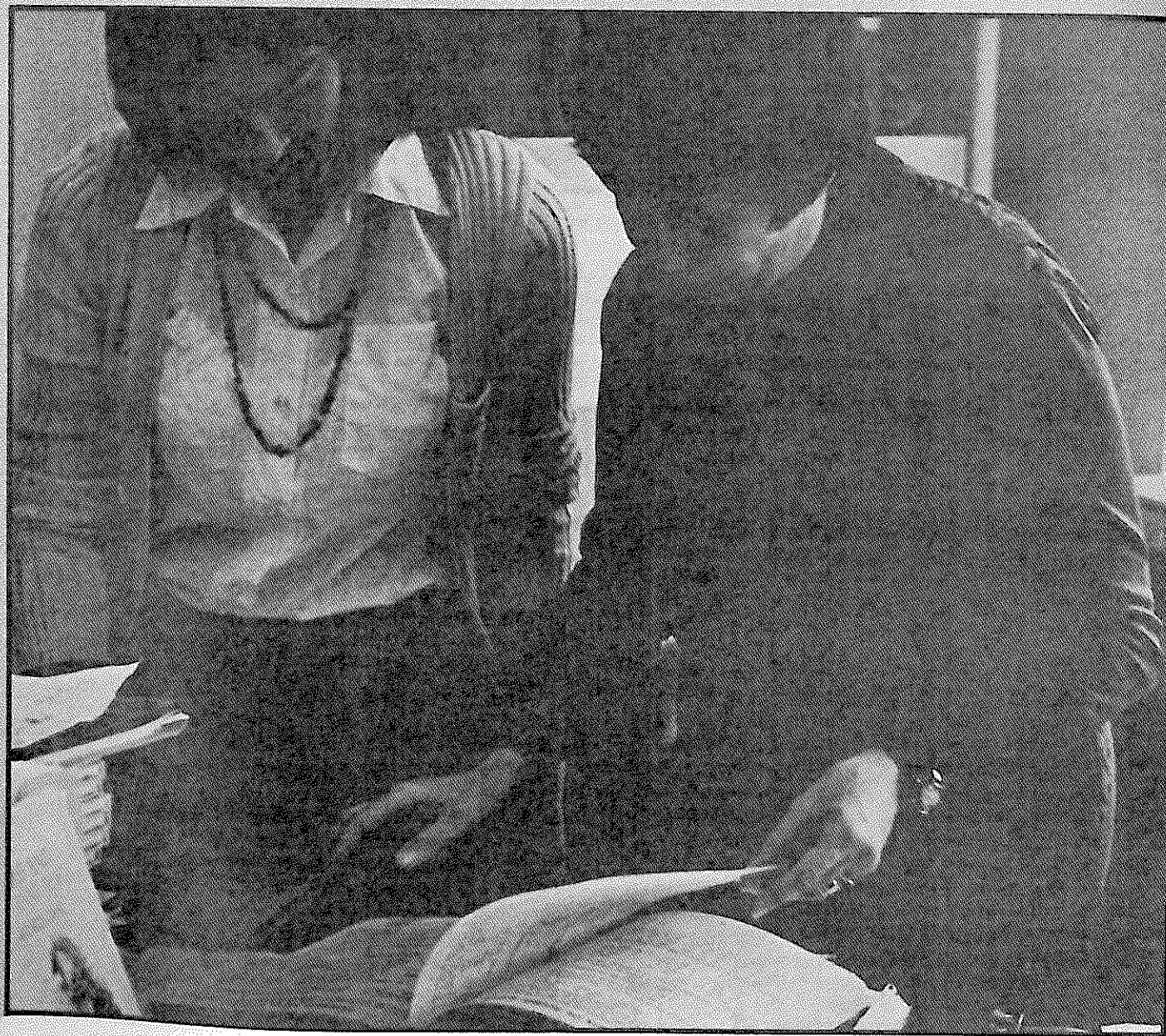
cially Martha Urban, from whom we learned that the word *which* is not interchangeable with *that*, and who, in so many ways, proved to be the kind of editor which [*sic*] authors only dream about.

We owe a special acknowledgment to our families, and especially to our wives, Kathleen Welton and Diane Mallan, who know only too

well the trials and joys associated with producing a manuscript such as this, who patiently shouldered more of the burden than we had any right to ask, and with whom we intend to become reacquainted.

Syracuse, New York

David A. Welton
John T. Mallan



One of the most striking and effective uses of contrast is found in "Man: A Course of Study" (MACOS), the social studies program we mentioned earlier. It is difficult to do justice to MACOS with the written word, but we think it is so significant both as an alternative social studies offering and in its use of contrast that we've devoted the next section to it.

MACOS—a case study

"Man: A Course of Study" is a social studies program about man or, more accurately, human kind. It isn't really a total social studies program as such, however, since it is typically used at only one grade level, most often at fifth or sixth grade. Some schools, even those following an expanded environments approach, have simply dropped their fifth-grade course and replaced it with MACOS. One thing for certain, U.S. History MACOS is not!

The MACOS materials consist of student booklets—with titles such as *Herring Gulls*, *Structure and Function*, *Baboon Communication*—posters, games, and about eleven hours worth of films. The course itself is organized around three key questions, which, in slightly adapted form, are:

- What is human about human beings?
- How did they get that way?
- How can they be made more so?

In examining what it is that's human about human beings, MACOS makes superb use of the principle of *contrast*. Based in part on the premise that as humans we are too close to ourselves to study ourselves, MACOS begins its study of human beings by studying animals. The first half of the course uses animal studies—mainly salmon, herring gulls, and baboons—to enable children to identify

those things that set us apart from animals. That elementary children tend to love animals anyhow just adds to their interest. In the second half of MACOS, the children apply what they learned about humans (by studying animals) to an in-depth case study of the Netselik Eskimos (see Figure 4-4).

The MACOS spiral

Unlike some other social studies programs, once an idea (concept or generalization) is introduced in MACOS, it is built upon and expanded throughout the course. One of the first such ideas is that of "life cycle," the notion that there are significant events—birth, death, reproduction, etc.—that occur in the life of almost every member of a species, human or animal. "Life cycle" is introduced in the introductory lessons, reintroduced and expanded upon as children study the salmon, and then further developed throughout the study of herring gulls, baboons, and, eventually, the Netselik. The children find that although individual lifetimes may end, life still goes on.

Another such idea, *learning*, is carried through in much the same manner. Initially, children distinguish between learned and innate behavior. They then examine how other species learn, what they learn, and, more particularly, who they learn from. The progressive development of ideas becomes the thread that weaves throughout the MACOS program.

The continual development of ideas such as life cycle or learning reflects a major teaching premise of Jerome Bruner—the person behind MACOS. A social studies program, or any program for that matter, in which an idea or concept is developed and then redeveloped in different forms and at different levels of abstraction, can be said to have applied Bruner's notion of a *spiral curriculum* (see, e.g., Bruner, n.d.; 1960).

MACOS

Key
questions

Figure 4-4 Time line for teaching "Man: A Course of Study"

Semester one:

Animal studies

5 days	8 days	12 days	5 days	30 days
Intro- ductory lessons	Salmon	Herring gulls	Natural selection	Baboons

Semester two:

Case study—The Netsilik Eskimo

9 days	13½ days	9½ days	8 days	9 days	8 days	3 days
The Netsilik world	The hunting way of life	Netsilik families	The dangers of winter	The hunting way of life in winter	Winter camp	The long gaze

Source: *Man: A Course of Study; Guide to the Course* (1968, pp. 2-3).

In another form, the basic idea behind a spiral curriculum could be stated as "once you've learned something, let's continue to build upon what you already know by introducing new dimensions as we go." It's an idea that makes such eminent sense, we should speculate on why it hasn't received more attention long before this. To do so would take us somewhat far afield however.

Since MACOS is usually a one-year program, its spiral is horizontal. That is, ideas developed in the fall are redeveloped in the winter and further expanded upon in the spring. The spiral for learning is shown in Figure 4-5.

The notion of a spiral curriculum is also found in other new social studies programs, most notably the Taba Social Science program

Spiral
curricula

(Durkin et al., 1972). In this case, however, the continued development of concepts and ideas progresses from grade level to grade level as well as within a grade level. In other words, a generalization, such as the notion that geography and natural resources influence how people live and what they do, would be introduced in the primary grades and then expanded upon in different contexts at higher grade levels. Other ideas, such as interdependence, are introduced in simple, concrete terms at the primary grades and then continually expanded upon as the children move from grade to grade. Such programs follow a *vertical* spiral, as shown in Figure 4-6.

A vertical
spiral

But enough of these wiggly lines. Back to "Man: A Course of Study."

No training, no teaching!

Should you decide to purchase MACOS classroom materials, you would find the following notice on the order form:

ALL ORDERS FOR CLASSROOM OR FILM MATERIALS ARE SUBJECT TO VERIFICATION BY CDA THAT THE PURCHASER HAS COMPLIED WITH TEACHER EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS NECESSARY FOR PROPER IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COURSE.

The message is clear and straightforward: no training, no buying and, hence, no teaching. But why a training requirement? Why not just sell MACOS as one would almost any other kind of program? The decision to

No training, no buying

impose a teacher-training requirement was made by the MACOS developers who, based on their previous experience, foresaw instances where untrained teachers might misuse the materials and direct the course toward purposes other than those for which it was intended. Actually, their decision was based on a premise that Edwin Fenton (1969, p. 548), who wasn't particularly referring to MACOS at the time, described as follows: "Teachers who do not understand the principles upon which materials are based can make hash of the most imaginative materials ever created."

A question of intent

Such a possibility can be seen in the following example in which, during their study of the salmon, the children complete a chart that compares the salmon and human beings.

Figure 4-5 Development of the concept "learning" in "Man: A Course of Study"

Basic questions: What is learning?

What is innate and learned behavior?

How do we learn?

Who do we learn from?

Exemplary questions:

What do herring gulls learn?

What do Netsilik parents teach their children?

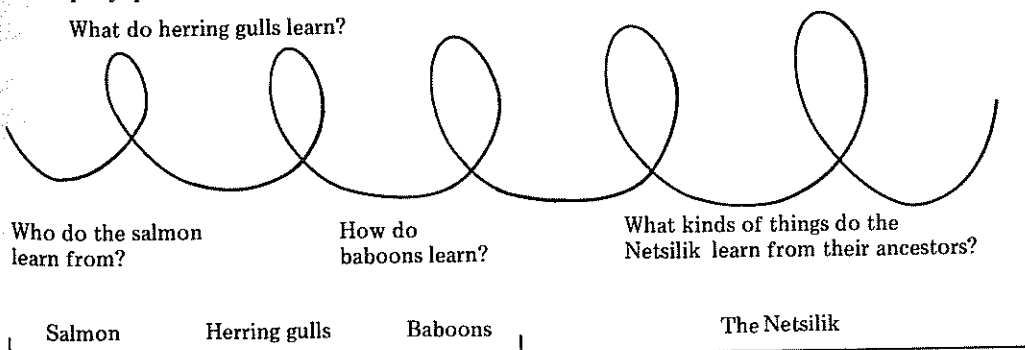
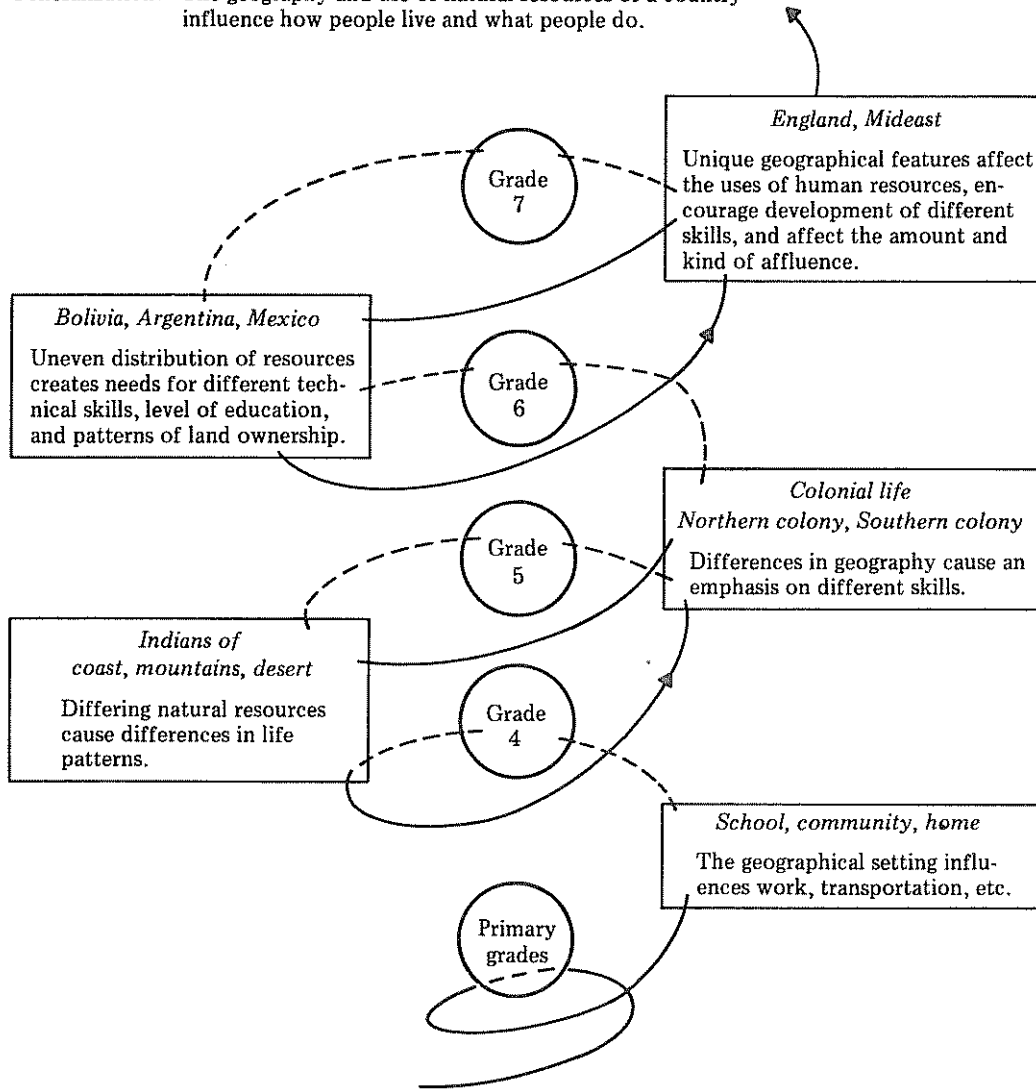
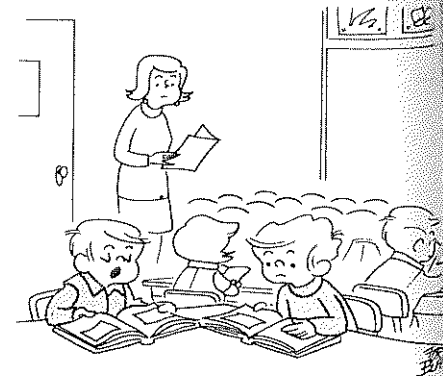


Figure 4-6 The spiral development of a generalization

Generalization: The geography and use of natural resources of a country influence how people live and what people do.



Source: Taba (1967, p. 20).



"It's an experimental curriculum. That means the teachers don't know any more about it than we do."

Later they expand the chart, a portion of which is reproduced in Figure 4-7, to include other species.

This chart is intended to serve three purposes: to help children (1) organize information and look for relationships, (2) raise questions about the nature of learning, and (3) begin to identify the functions parents serve. The MACOS developers were particularly concerned that the chart be used for these purposes, and not perverted for other, unintended uses. Thus, a legitimate question would be, If the "mother" and "father" die before the baby salmon are born, who takes care of the baby salmon and how do they learn? (Does one become a mother or a father if one dies before ones' offspring are born?) Eventually, the children come to see that the longer the period of dependency, the more offspring that will survive to reproduce.

What concerned the MACOS developers was what might happen, for example, if such a chart were used by an uninitiated, untrained teacher, especially one extremely concerned with the amount of content (information) children remember. For example, a teacher who felt that the most important thing children should remember from this chart is the number of eggs a female salmon lays in her lifetime would be guilty of perverting the use of the chart, and ultimately the course itself.

There is absolutely nothing "wrong" with a MACOS teacher asking children how many eggs a female salmon will lay *if her purpose is to determine whether children can read the chart*. This is a critical distinction. The question is legitimate if used diagnostically, that is, to determine if children have *access* to the information. But if used summatively, that is, on a test or as an evaluation device to determine if children can recall how many eggs a female salmon will lay, is *not* legitimate.

Intended
student
responses

In fact, to do so would reinforce the notion that social studies is trivia, writ large.

In "*Man: A Course of Study*," information about animals is not important in and of itself. Rather the animal studies are used as a *vehicle* to enable children to say something about the nature of human beings.

Contrast revisited

Earlier in this chapter we provided you with three ideas and asked you whether you agreed, disagreed, or were not sure about them. We have tried to indicate why, for example, children may study the Japanese family in the course of studying "the family" even though it would seem they should study American families first. We have also tried to indicate that "knowing thyself" before studying others is nearly impossible, and that one of the more effective ways to learn about oneself is by studying others.

Studying
others

The same principle can apply to other areas of social studies as well. Children at the third-grade level, for example, often find themselves studying selected communities around the world—desert communities, mountain communities, etc. Again, the purpose for studying these is not to provide children with masses of information about such communities, but rather to provide a basis for contrasting it with their own communities, and to provide examples of the different ways in which man interacts with his environment.

The same principle could apply to the study of governments, but here we have a special circumstance. In many cases, it is not safe to assume that children sufficiently comprehend the operation of a democracy to be able to contrast it with other forms of government. But these or other educational considerations notwithstanding, the study of democracies must, by law in some states, come before the

Figure 4-7 Life cycles variables chart

	Length of lifetime	Length of dependency	What parents do for survival of young during dependency	Number of offspring in female lifetime	Number that survive to reproduce
Humans (in U.S.A.)	about 70 years	15-20 years	protect; provide food and clothing; provide time and opportunity to learn; teach	about 4	about 3
Salmon	about 4-5 years	none	nothing	5,000 -6,000	about 2
African elephant	<i>ABOUT 65 YEARS</i>	<i>10-12 YRS.</i>	<i>PROTECTS, SHADES FROM SUN, TEACHES, PROVIDES FOOD.</i>	<i>ABOUT 10-15</i>	<i>ABOUT 12-15</i>
Chimpanzee	<i>ABOUT 30 YEARS</i>	<i>3-12 YRS.</i>	<i>PROTECTS, PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION, FEEDS, TEACHES.</i>	<i>7-8</i>	<i>ABOUT 2-3</i>
Bottlenose porpoise					
Wolf					
Grizzly bear					
Gnu					
Brown bat	<i>1 YEAR</i>	<i>2 MONTHS</i>	<i>PROVIDE FOOD</i>	<i>20-48</i>	<i>ABOUT 3-5</i>

Source: Adapted from "Man: A Course of Study; Introductory Lessons: Salmon," p. 45.

study of other forms of government. Such legal requirements, which vary considerably from state to state, are often referred to as "Spirit of '76" legislation. Some state laws also require a course in state history somewhere in a child's elementary school experience. (In fact, some states will not issue a teaching certificate until teachers have taken a course in state history.) Where legal restraints on the social studies curriculum exist, some of them seem to be motivated by political, rather than educational, considerations.

Topics or ??

Another variation in this symphony of social studies programs reflects a significant departure from the topic-to-topic sequence of traditional social studies programs. This variation, usually called a *conceptual* approach, is being used increasingly in elementary social studies programs. At least two major publishers have produced materials using a concept-based approach.

One of the best ways for us to get at the nature of concept-based social studies programs is to use a traditional program as a vehicle. (Sorry about that!) The topic-to-topic approach is probably most clearly seen in a traditional program. If, for example, you experienced a regional approach to U.S. geography (Grades 4 or 5), you probably found something akin to "this week the Northeast, next week the South." Or in sixth grade, it was "the Soviet Union last week, India this week, and next week—China." In the primary grades, a unit on community helpers was probably sequenced something like "today, the fireman, tomorrow, the policeman, etc."

The traditional, topic-to-topic approach is illustrated in Figure 4-8. For convenience and clarity we have limited ourselves to the study of nations, although the same pattern can be applied to other areas of study.

The unfortunate thing that often happens in a topical approach is that once you have studied a nation, region, or what have you, it is never returned to again. That is, once you've done the Soviet Union, the South, or "the family," it is done with. A concept-based approach assumes there are some common dimensions—elements (concepts), if you will—around which one's study can be organized. In the case of nations, these could include how they use their resources, how they manage their educational systems, what pattern of government they follow, etc. In this context, a concept-based approach selects one of the dimensions that might have been included in a topic-to-topic approach and makes it the focus of study. The concept-based approach is illustrated in Figure 4-9.

Concept-based approach

The premise in a concept-based approach is that it is not necessary to study every country in the world in order to say something about how nations manage their economic development or how they organize their governments. Rather, it is possible to establish a pattern among nations by studying only selected nations, not the universe of nations. If we pursue economic development for a moment—which, admittedly, isn't especially thrilling—we can *select* nations for study that have managed their economic development in similar ways, but then also include some that are different. This adds a basis for contrast.

Selecting

You may recall that in the introduction, we mentioned a widely used third-grade program in which children study the Spanish monarchy, the Mayflower Compact, and the Eskimos, simultaneously. The explanation for this rests with the fact that the children are

Figure 4-8 A traditional, topic-to-topic approach

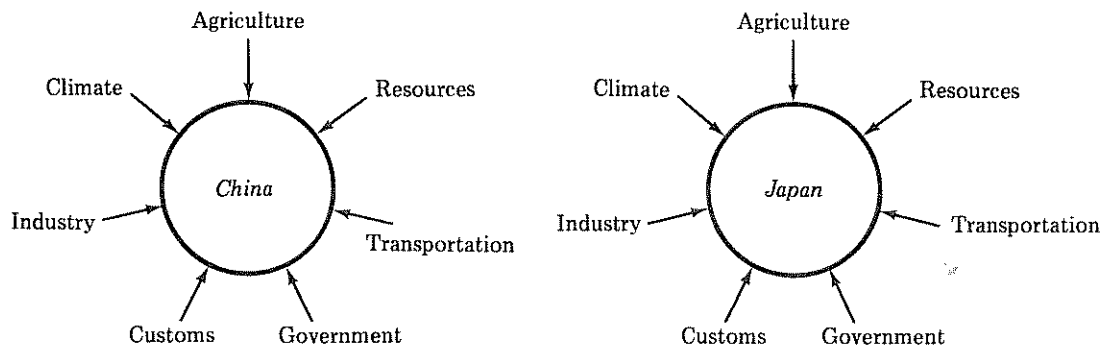


Figure 4-9 A concept-based (selected dimensions) approach

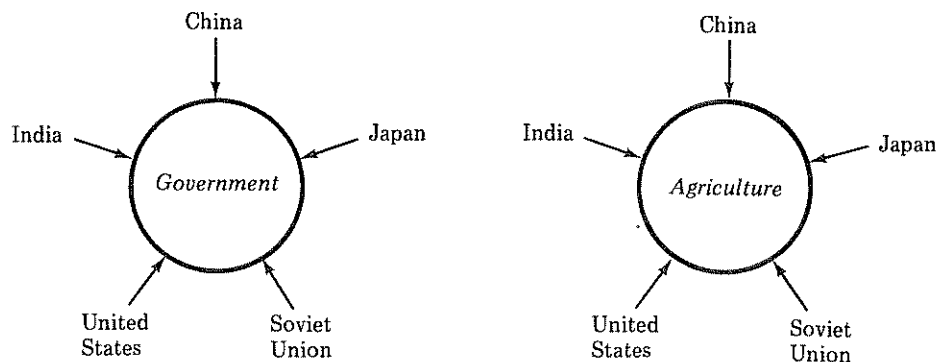
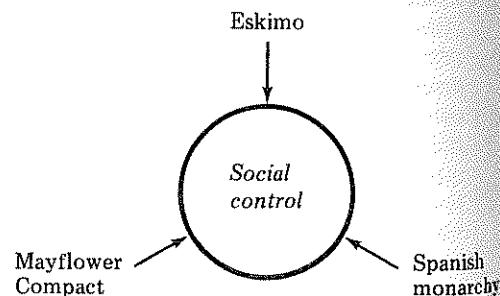


Figure 4-10 An approach to the concept "social control"



Note: In this approach it is not necessary to study all of the nations listed.

studying in a concept-based program. In this instance, the concept is "social control," as illustrated in Figure 4-10.

If you are one of those individuals for whom diagrams do very little, or if you still don't see the connection between the Mayflower Compact, the Spanish monarchy, the Eskimos, and social control, you may wish to read on. But if you feel that you already understand the basis for concept-based social studies programs, you could very well skip the balance of this section and move on to the next.

stand the basis for concept-based social studies programs, you could very well skip the balance of this section and move on to the next.

Now we turn to social control. As you may recall, the Mayflower Compact was produced, oddly enough, by those settlers who came to this country on the good ship *Mayflower*. In their compact they agreed, in writing, to govern (control) themselves for the common good.

Understand? Move on

Such an agreement differs considerably from the way Eskimos govern (control) themselves. Inasmuch as Eskimos don't have a written language, they couldn't produce a written document even if they wanted to.

How, then, do the Eskimos manage relations among themselves? They manage through an elaborate, unwritten system of myths, beliefs, traditions, and practices that are handed down from generation to generation.

The Spanish monarchy fits into this scheme by serving as an exemplar of absolute control based on the divine right of kings. Actually, the program could have used other absolute monarchs, either past or present, as examples. As of this writing (1975), a new, absolute ruler was just installed in Nepal, and, were we teaching in this program, we would have introduced his coronation in the context of current events. And while we are not teaching third grade at the moment, we saved the pictures anyhow.

In the example of social control, the child is confronted with comparing and contrasting different ways in which the process of governing is exercised. Among teachers, an initial reaction to a concept-based social studies program is that it seems piecemeal—a little about the Eskimos, a little about the Pilgrims, and a little about the kings of Spain—but nothing integrated or wholistic about anything. Although the concepts serve as the integrators, there is a touch of validity to their claim. Thus, in concept-based programs, you may find, periodically, case studies where children actually conduct an in-depth examination of a culture, subculture, group, or nation.

In our judgment, concept-based social studies programs are the wave of the future. Quite clearly, they represent a way to deal effectively with the knowledge explosion. On the other hand, though, we also realize that they will not be more widely used until teachers

Wave of
the future

understand the basis for a different way of organizing social studies programs.

Still more variations on a theme

Since the mid-1960s, a number of curriculum development projects has produced social studies materials for the elementary grades. Some of these are available from commercial publishers, while others must be obtained from the developers. Your chances of getting free samples are not very good, but most developers and publishers have descriptive brochures that convey the essence of these new materials.

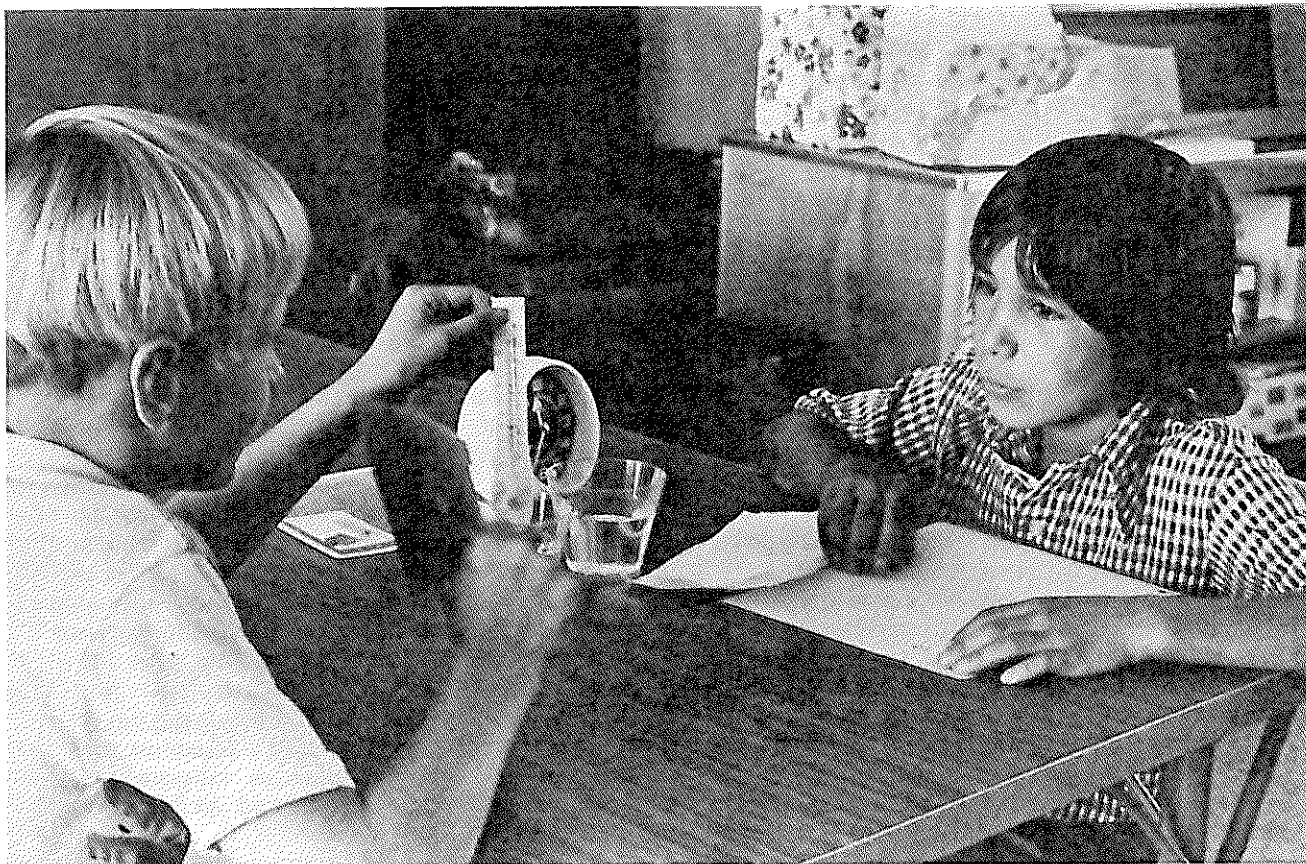
Some of the recently developed social studies materials include:

1. "MATCH (Materials and Activities for Teachers and Children) Units." These wonderful, self-contained kits are available for "The City" (K-4), "The Japanese Family" (4-6), "Paddle to the Sea (Indians)" (4-6), "Medieval People" (4-8), "Indians Who Met the Pilgrims," (4-8), and, "A House of Ancient Greece," (5-10). The MATCH kits were developed by the Boston Children's Museum and are available from American Science and Engineering, Inc., 20 Overland St., Boston, MA 02215.

Social
studies
projects

2. "Concepts and Inquiry." Originally developed as the Greater Cleveland Social Science Program, the materials use a multi-text approach that combines basic concepts from all of the social sciences. Grade 2 materials, for example, include "Communities at Home and Abroad" and "American Communities." Available from Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 470 Atlantic Ave., Boston, MA 02210.

3. "Our Working World." These K-6 materials were developed under the leadership of economist Lawrence Senesh, and include, for example, "Families At Work" (Grade 1) and "The American Way of Life" (Grade 5).



Economics is the central discipline, especially in the primary grades, but all the social science disciplines are evident. Available from Science Research Associates, 259 East Erie St., Chicago, IL 60611.

4. "Social Science Laboratory Units." These materials, originally produced as part of the Michigan Elementary Social Science Education Program, were described earlier. Available from Science Research Associates, 259 East Erie St., Chicago, IL 60611.

5. "Man: A Course of Study." Originally developed by the Education Development Center (E.D.C.), these materials are currently available from Curriculum Development Associates, 1211 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 414, Washington, DC 20036.

6. "People and Technology." This middle-grades (6-9) program uses two in-depth case studies—one of whaling in nineteenth-century Nantucket and the other of the Volta River Dam in the African nation of Ghana—to ex-

plore concepts related to technology, tool usage, and acquiring energy. Available from the Education Development Center, 15 Mifflin Place, Cambridge, MA 02138.

7. "The Family of Man." This is a K-6 program originally developed by the University of Minnesota Project Social Studies Curriculum Center, directed by Edith West. Materials are available from Selective Educational Equipment, Inc., 3 Bridge St., Newton, MA 02195.

8. "The Georgia Anthropology Curriculum Project." Materials for this project, which were described earlier, are available from M.J. Rice, 107 Dudley Hall, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30601.

9. "Taba Program in Social Studies." This interdisciplinary, 1-7 program is keyed to developing children's thinking skills, especially as they involve concept formation, formulating generalizations, and applying principles. Available from Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 2725 Sand Hill Rd., Menlo Park, CA 94025.

Two projects have developed elementary social studies materials in which economics is the central social science discipline. In some instances, these could be used to supplement an ongoing social studies program. They include:

10. "The Elementary School Economics Program." This project has developed materials for Grades 4 and 5. Materials are available from the Allied Education Council, P.O. Box 78, Galien, MI 49113.

11. "The Developmental Economic Education Program" (DEEP). Materials for various grade levels, including high school, are available from the Joint Council on Economic Education, 1212 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036. Some states have affiliated state councils on economic education that, in some cases, have produced additional teach-

ing materials. This information is available from the address above.

Reconciliation

We have tried to do a number of things in this chapter, and hope we haven't left too many things dangling. We've tried, for example, to illustrate the dominant "expanding environment" approach to elementary social studies. If you plan to teach third grade, for instance, you should have some idea, albeit rough, of what you might be expected to teach. We have tried, also, to deal with some of the most significant variations among newer elementary social studies programs, especially those that follow a spiral or concept-based approach, and those in which the content (subject matter) is used as a vehicle to permit children to contrast new information with something from their own experience.

That information isn't necessarily important in and of itself (How many eggs does a female salmon lay?) is a tough notion to accept. This is especially true for those who have had a liberal arts education, where the premium is typically placed on information retention. Indeed, the idea that low-level information can be used (can become a *vehicle*) to get to higher level, more useful, more universal information hasn't been seen much in practice, at least in our experience. We've tried to illustrate, however, some elementary social studies programs that attempt to do just that.

One aspect that we may have left dangling relates to our examination of how children develop their conceptions of space and time. We suggested, with some research support, that children seem better able to cope with space and time when they move into

In
summary

Piaget's stage of "formal operations," somewhere around the age of eleven. How, then, are primary children able to deal with the Japanese family (if you'll forgive one final reference to this example), which is many miles distant and representative of a wholly different culture? At this point you should be able to indicate why (to provide contrast) this particular content (the family) is used in the primary grades, but how, then, does this reconcile with the way children view space?

In treating the Japanese family, the idea is to make it as concrete and real as possible. Thus teachers use films, pictures, stories, even chopsticks to bring a Japanese family within the scope of a child's experience. Just how far away this family lives, as well as Japan's location on a map or globe, are secondary if not incidental to the entire study. For first graders, the fact that the Japanese family lives "far, far away" is generally sufficient. The day-to-day activities and the structure of the Japanese family are what's important, especially as these help clarify the day-to-day activities and structure of American families.

The same ideas apply to a third-grade study of communities. The intent is to make the community as concrete and real as possible for children. You might even use a model igloo, adobe hut, or Indian hogan (although you should give some thought to having the children build these). The location of whatever communities you are studying, other than your own, should receive relatively little attention in terms of where they are in space or on a map.

Time, especially historical time, usually doesn't rear its ugly head until about fourth grade; when it does, there's not much you can do about it except follow our previous advice. If there is one word that best describes the kinds of activities that can take the dryness out of elementary social studies, we suspect you'll find it is a synonym for *cement*.

The family as a vehicle

Concrete!

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Suggested activities

Go to your curriculum library or resource center and get at least three or four texts, each for the same grade level but from different textbook series. Do a content analysis of these, comparing the topics they cover, the approach they take, and the things they do and do not emphasize. If you work in a small group of six or eight members, and each takes a different grade level to study, you will have a composite of the similarities and variations among textbook series, any one of which you might find yourself teaching from.

Assume that you are teaching in a school that uses MACOS. A small group of individuals has charged that you are not teaching social studies anymore. They say you are teaching about fish, birds, and monkeys and, as anyone knows, that's science. How would you respond to them?

Review the assumptions upon which the expanding environments approach to social studies is based, for example, that children should be exposed to the world by Grade 6, etc. Then, in small groups, outline the characteristics of a K-8 social studies program that follows alternative assumptions of your choosing.

Speculate as to why *contrast* is so infrequently found in elementary social studies programs.

Suggested readings

Two of the best references we know of for examining social studies programs and materials are:

Social Studies Curriculum Materials Data Book. Boulder, Colo.: Social Science Education Consortium. This loose-leaf, three-volume collection contains more than 350 analyses of social studies materials. It's also updated with biannual supplements. Invaluable.

ALERT: A Sourcebook of Elementary Curricula, Programs and Projects. Pleasantville, N.Y.: Docent Corporation, 1974. Developed by the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development in San Francisco, this guide to elementary programs is one of the finest that we've seen.

Observation and listening

All of us have our own perceptual blinders through which we see what we are prepared to see, and hear what we are prepared to hear.

Observations that are shared with others (and are repetitive) protect a person from selective bias.

Listening is a combination of what one hears, expects to hear, observes, and remembers from previous experiences.

The average listener remembers only a small percentage of what has been said. Within eight hours, the average listener "forgets" up to one-half of what was heard, more than will be forgotten over the next six months.

Findings
from the
social and
behavioral
sciences

Activities that focus on observation skills can be organized in a fashion similar to those for listening. Pictures cut from magazines, such as the one below, are among the most obvious

Observa-
tion
activities

An effective listener:

- a) thinks ahead of the talker and anticipates the direction of the discourse.
- b) assesses the kind of evidence being used.
- c) periodically reviews and synthesizes points made up to a particular point.
- d) "listens between the words" and observes nonverbal aspects of the communication.
- e) constructs ideas rather than being content with just picking up facts.
- f) withholds evaluation of the message while it is being given.

Poor listening habits and skills are an element in poor human relations (e.g., the non-listening talker).

data sources. In this instance, the picture is mounted on a task card, but it could also be used as the basis for a whole class or small-group activity (see Chapter 12).

Task
cards

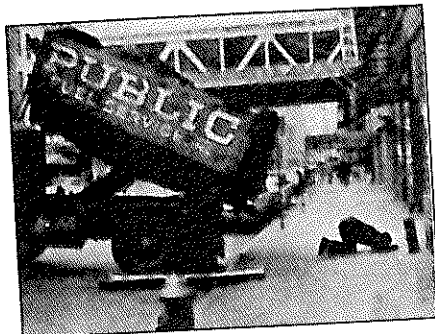
OBSERVING

When you make an observation you record all of the details of what you see. You do not include your personal feelings or opinions unless you indicate that you have done so.

Look at the picture carefully.

Remember that even the smallest detail may be an important one.

Record only what you see on a separate sheet. Do not take anything for granted.



The following series of student activities rely primarily on the access skill of observing (and the process skill of inferring). They put the student in the position of an archeologist or an anthropologist who must, without relying on written accounts (initially), depend on observational skills. As we used these activities with students, we began with one called "Excavating a Wastebasket."²

EXCAVATING A WASTEBASKET

Student
activity

Stage one

Materials needed: One full wastebasket from another room—another classroom preferably, or from the teachers' lounge or principal's office. (Note: A plastic bag inserted the previous morning can make this activity a lot less messy.)

Procedure: Do NOT indicate which room the wastebasket is from.

1. Place the basket where everyone can see it.
2. Appoint one person as the excavator. That student's job is to take the objects out of the basket, one by one, and describe them carefully.
3. Appoint another child as the cataloger. This job involves drawing a cross section of the wastebasket on the chalkboard and noting the position of the items as they are dug up by the excavator. (Note: Since the "digging" proceeds from the top downward, allow plenty of room to draw an oversized illustration.)
4. Have the rest of the class list the items and describe them briefly on a sheet as follows:

Item	Description
8 milk cartons	empty, from Byrne Dairy, 1/2 pint
5 plastic straws	red & white striped, about 8 inches long

2. Excavating a Wastebasket is adapted from the MATCH (Materials and Activities for Teachers and Children) unit, "The City" (MATCH, 1965).

Item	Description
8 pieces orange peel	different sizes, dry
pencil shavings	yellow, green & blue, mostly yellow, about 1/4 cup
one crumpled paper	three-ringed notebook, subject math, addition problems with 3 wrong. Name: Sarah Farr

5. Ask the following questions, as appropriate:

- a) What kinds of activities took place wherever this wastebasket came from?
- b) Which took place first? (Those that produced items at the bottom of the basket.)
- c) Can we be sure?
- d) Where did the basket come from?
- e) Which articles give the best clues?
- f) Can we be sure of the significance of some items? (Does the presence of orange peel but the absence of brown lunch bags and waxed paper indicate that lunch was eaten in the room?)

6. At a prearranged time, appoint a small (3-4) delegation to take their findings to the room from which the wastebasket came to check out the accuracy of their conclusions. If they are uncertain as to exactly which room it is from, you may need to make some hasty arrangements so as to have several delegations operating simultaneously.

Stage two: Excavating wastebaskets

Materials needed: Full wastebaskets from a variety of places—both in school and out. (You can "load" some with clues if you wish.) Each basket (or plastic bag) should be labeled Exhibit A, Exhibit B, etc.

Procedure: Proceed as the previous day except this time provide each small group with its own wastebasket.

Their task: "Tell as much as you can about wherever this wastebasket came from and what activities took place wherever it was." Each group should record its findings on chart paper, and present them to the class upon completion. Note: Caution each group not to indicate where their basket is from until after they have presented their information to the entire class.

[After establishing a basic mode of operating for the "junior" archeologists and anthropologists, we then shifted to a contemporary culture other than their own. For this activity we used a simplified map based on the significant village area of a group that shall remain nameless.³ If the inhabitants are named prior to the activity, previous information about them will direct attention away from observing and inferring, and the sense of mystery—of dealing with an unknown—would be lost.]

Stage three: A cultural map

Overview: Students are provided with a simplified map of an existing group and asked to indicate as much as they can about (1) the people who live there, (2) their way of life, and (3) what the people are like. Once the students have exhausted all the possibilities, they are furnished with a series of pictures (without captions), which they can use to validate their hypotheses.

Materials needed: One simplified map (per student) of the village area. One Observations-Inferences Worksheet. Assorted pictures of the group from National Geographic, or other sources (with captions removed).

Procedure:

1. Distribute maps (see Figure 8-1).
2. Explain vocabulary as needed. (E.g., you may wish to point out that "post molds" refer to places where a wooden post or stake has been driven into the ground. When a post rots, it leaves an area darker than the surrounding earth.)
3. Distribute and explain Observations-Inferences Worksheet.
4. Divide the class into small groups (three to four students each).
5. Remind them of the following points:
 - a) The object is to tell as much as possible about the people who live in the area shown on the map. The object is not to label or name the group.
 - b) The people are alive and living today.
 - c) This is not a "Scout Camp"!
 - d) Except for a few artifacts, nothing of significance has been left off the map. In other words, if cultivated areas were significant to

the lives of this tribe, they would be included on the map. If you find no cultivated fields, then that should tell you something about the people and their way of life.

6. On the chalkboard, or using an overhead projector, develop a master list of findings as provided by the various groups. Debate and discussion of some findings are guaranteed. You may wish to establish the ground rule that you will not include a finding unless it is noted by at least two or more groups.
7. Ask children to speculate on the group they think they are dealing with, but do not tell them.
8. Distribute pictures with captions removed (see Figure 8-2).
 - 8.1 Ask students to indicate what they observe in each picture.
 - 8.2 Then, ask students to identify those pictures that support their findings.

OBSERVATIONS-INFERENCES WORKSHEET

What we observed

What we decided about it

--	--

GIVEN THIS DATA, WHAT DO YOU CONCLUDE ABOUT THESE PEOPLE AND WHAT THEY ARE LIKE?

3. Adapted from a course of study prepared by the Anthropology Curriculum Study Project (1966) of the American Anthropological Association.

Using maps

Some of the most effective and interesting map-related student activities begin with a heuristic question such as, "If you were the town council, where would you build the new incinerator (or park, or shopping center, or apartment complex)?" and use maps as the main data source. One such activity comes from the MATCH Unit, "The City," and focuses on the problem of where a new freeway should be built in a town called "Five Corners, U.S.A."

Map-related activities

FIVE CORNERS, U.S.A.

Student activity

Overview: A new highway is being constructed and is complete except for a small section that is to pass through part of the city of Five Corners. Students, each of whom is either a resident or a businessman, must decide where the unfinished portion of the road will go.

Materials: Desk maps of Five Corners (Figure 8-6, p. 222)

Procedure:

1. Assign or permit children to choose one of the residences or businesses as their own. Write their names on the small maps or on a master map if you use the latter. (All plots need not be assigned.)

2. Tell the children that the finished highway must be at least as wide as the two unfinished sections, and that the final route cannot have very sharp bends in it. Considering these limitations, each child (or small group of children) should select a tentative route for the highway.

Note: In the MATCH Unit, it's suggested that Step 2 be done as homework. A note is printed on the back of each map explaining the problem and the idea of the activity to parents. Help from the student's family is encouraged.

Solutions involving tunnels, bridges, the moving of buildings, or an elevated highway are all permissible. You may, however, wish to refrain from suggesting these in advance but rather let the children arrive at possible alternatives.

3. Working either individually or in small groups, the class should try to agree upon a route for the highway.

4. Have the class, either individually or in groups,

present the proposed plans. Bring out the implications of the different plans, help clarify choices, and break deadlocks if necessary. How complex you should get depends on your students and their abilities.

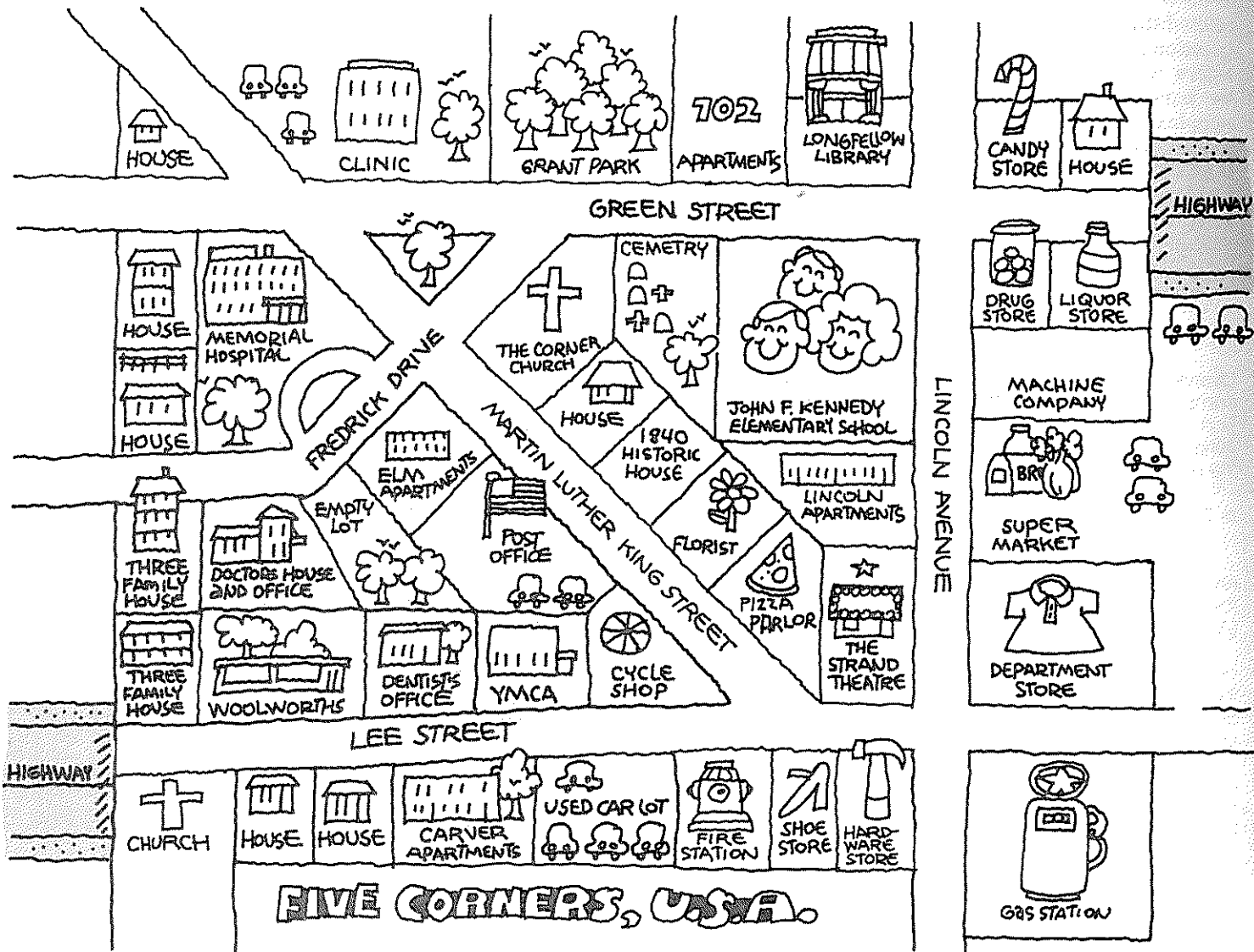
5. Try to reach one solution. However, it is permissible not to arrive at a solution, a situation that may teach children more than would a hastily arrived at solution.

In addition to the "Five Corners" map, the MATCH "City" Unit also includes a magnetic board on which miniature buildings can be placed so as to provide children with a three-dimensional model of the situation. In other words, the model helps maintain one-to-one correspondence with what is shown on the map.

Variations on the model It is really quite easy to vary activities of this kind; in fact, if



Figure 8-6 Desk map for Five Corners, U.S.A. activity



Source: MATCH unit, "The City" Teacher's Guide, p. 52. Reprinted by permission of American Science and Engineering, Inc.

you teach in a suburban or urban school, for example, you could create a mythical freeway-type situation using a map of an area near the school. In rural settings, the location of a freeway probably has less human impact—at least fewer buildings need to be destroyed and families moved—so in such instances you might wish to focus on the ecological impact that freeways can have. Thus, your question could become, “Should the proposed freeway be built through a wildlife preserve?”

In the “Five Corners U.S.A.” activity, you could have the children represent special interest groups (a businessman’s association, the town council, etc.) instead of individual property owners. This variation would also introduce a political dimension, especially if the town council had the final say.

Yet other map-based activities are described in Willard Woodruff’s *Case Study Book* (1970). For example, in an activity entitled “Where Do We Build the Incinerator?” the children face a problem similar to that in “Five Corners, U.S.A.” Many other excellent activities not using maps are also included.

Another kind of map-related activity is based on presenting students with a sequence of maps, each of which adds its own kind of specialized information. In the following activity, for example, students are asked where they would locate a city on a mythical island. Then, in succession, additional information on terrain (landforms), vegetation, and rainfall is provided, each on a separate map.

WHERE WOULD YOU LOCATE YOUR CITY?

Overview: The object of this activity is to determine whether students will change their original decision in light of new information.

Urban approach

Rural approach

Student activity

Procedure: Provide students with a copy of Map 1 (Maps 1, 2, 3, and 4 are shown in Figure 8-7). Ask where, with just the information they have, would they locate a city if they were prospective settlers. The area is, of course, otherwise uninhabited. Permit them to discuss their choices in small groups, and then have each group present their choice to the entire class. Then provide each group with copies of Maps 2, 3, and 4, permitting discussion and explanations (as warranted) after each one is distributed.

Variation: Ryan and Ellis (1974, pp. 41–42), in their book *Instructional Implications of Inquiry* describe an interesting variation on this activity. It uses a similar sequence of maps but for a real country. However, the identity of that country is kept from students—it’s just called “Country X”—until they determine where they would locate a major city within that nation. After students have made their decisions, they can turn to their atlases and compare their selections with the actual location of major cities in the country.

Tables and graphs

Tables, charts, and graphs are the “bad breath” area of social studies for many teachers. Working with statistical information in this form is what they avoid unless forced to do otherwise. Tables and graphs can be imposing, true, but by no means are they impossible if approached from a *use* perspective. That is, unless you plan to use—to do something with—the information on a graph, chart, or table, you will find that they can quickly fall into the realm of just that much more information to remember.

Charts, graphs, and tables are such an efficient form for presenting information that it doesn’t take long before most elementary students begin to suffer from information overload. They become faced with too much information too quickly, and they usually lack the means to know what to do with it. Plain old common sense indicates that a student is not likely to *use* information, whether in table, graph, or some other form, while reeling under

Using tabular data

have something against people who end sentences that way, ya know.

If people infer and, in a sense, hypothesize all the time, why should there be such concern for formal hypothesis testing? The response, of course, lies in the fact that what we do in informal situations has application in many more formal situations and with many other kinds of data sources. And, although in informal situations we might be satisfied using impressionistic data—a hunch, a whim, or a feeling—formal hypothesis testing requires that all elements of the process be *public*. In other words, in informal, face-to-face relations, one is free to use whatever information one wants. But in more formal, rational, and public data-validating procedures, one must follow the rules. Hence, our distinction between an inference and a hypothesis.

Rules of
procedure
are *public*

Knowns and unknowns When something is known, there's not much left to hypothesize about. And so, a statement such as "Milk comes from cows" isn't very likely to lead to much speculation. But if you ask kids the question, "Where does milk come from?" you can get some mighty interesting hypotheses:

From trucks

From dairies

From the supermarket

These are all testable in terms of their accuracy, but the question you must assess concerns whether the children will gain enough from testing such facts to be worth the effort involved. We can test the accuracy of "knowns," but must hypothesize about things that are unknown or that can be explained only in part.

Physical objects often offer an excellent opportunity for activities emphasizing hypothesizing, especially when the object and its use are unknown to the children. A colonial bootjack—a forked board used to help remove one's boots—or even a butter churn can lead to

creative hypothesizing activities. A visit to an antique shop can provide a wealth of objects for potential hypothesizing activities.

A HOUSE OF ANCIENT GREECE

Student
activity

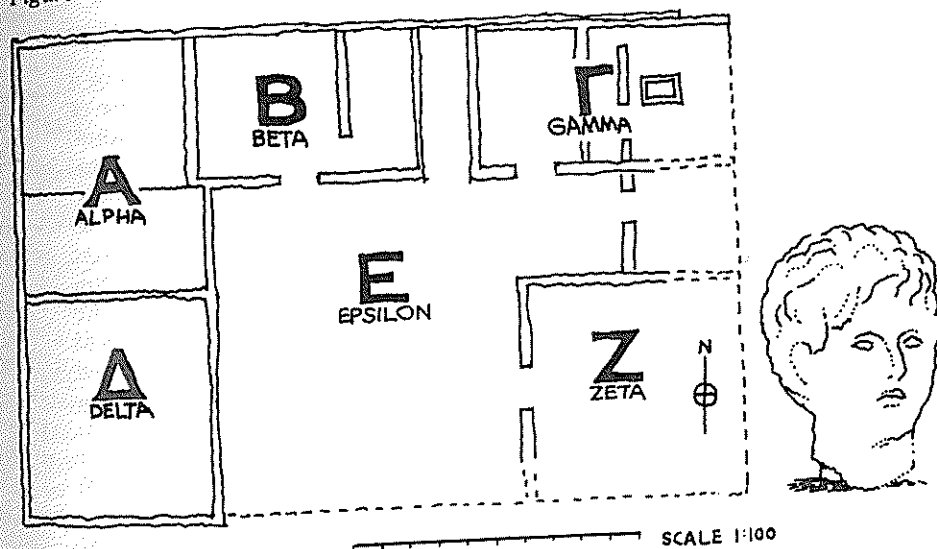
An excellent example of a series of activities, most of which focus on hypothesizing and hypothesis-testing, can be found in the MATCH Unit, "House of Ancient Greece." The unit contains a wealth of materials—an authentic Greek coin, filmstrips, pictures, several reference books, etc.—but most intriguing are some photographs and reproductions of artifacts found by a team of American archeologists, led by Dr. David Robinson, as they excavated the site of the ancient Greek city of Olynthus. All of the kit's artifacts are reproductions of artifacts found in the various rooms of a home which Dr. Robinson named the Villa of Good Fortune. Whether the home's original owners called it that 2,300 years ago is unknown. Dr. Robinson's name was derived from a translation of the mosaic found on the floor in one of the villa's rooms.

As best they could, the archeologists developed a floor plan for the villa. In adapting the floor plan for the MATCH kit, the rooms were labeled Alpha Room, Beta Room, etc., as illustrated on the map in Figure 9-1.

In the MATCH kit, artifacts from each room are packaged separately. The class is divided into teams, one team for each room in the villa. The objective is for each team to identify (1) what the various artifacts are, (2) what they might have been used for, and (3) the nature of the room from which they came. Figure 9-2 shows artifacts from the Beta Room. See if you can identify what they are, what they might have been used for, and what function(s) the Beta Room served for the villa.

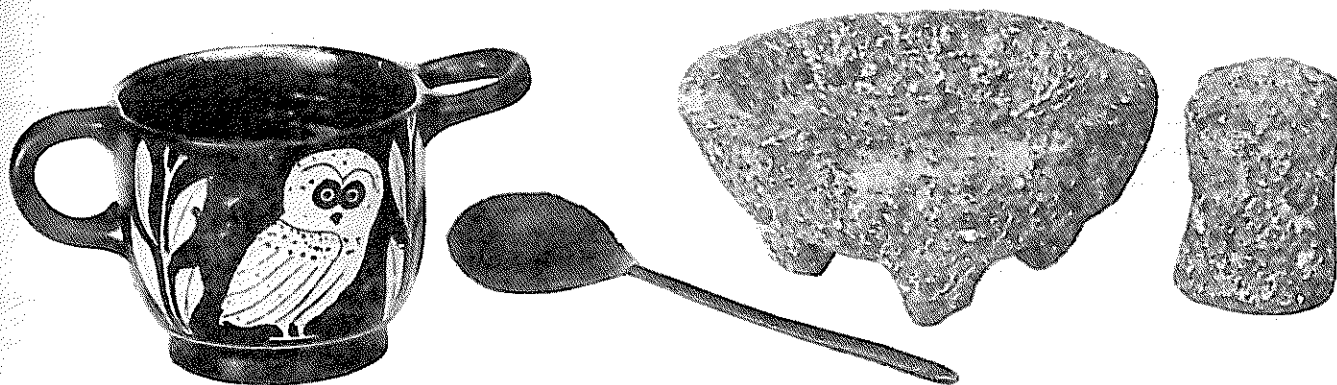
What are the various artifacts and what might they be used for?

Figure 9-1 The Villa of Good Fortune



Source: Adapted from MATCH unit, "House of Ancient Greece" Teacher's Guide, p. 23.
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Figure 9-2 Artifacts found in Beta Room of Villa of Good Fortune



Source: MATCH kit, "House of Ancient Greece."