

Elementary & Middle School Social Studies

Third Edition

An Interdisciplinary Instructional Approach



Pamela J. Farris

Elementary & Middle School Social Studies

An Interdisciplinary Instructional Approach

Pamela J. Farris

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Preface

Let us put our minds together and see what life we can make for our children.” These words of wisdom were shared by Sitting Bull with members of the U.S. Congress in the late 1800s. As elementary and middle school teachers, we have the same goal for our students, to make a better life for them. As teachers, we try to present social studies in meaningful, relevant ways.

Social studies has six basic tenets:

- Children should be actively involved in their learning.
- Children should be given opportunities to make decisions and become decision makers.
- Children need to use their previously gained knowledge and experiences as a learning scaffold.
- Children need to develop a positive self-concept in which they feel secure, effective, competent, and capable.
- Children need to develop an appreciation for the aesthetics of a subject.
- Children need to be productive, contributing citizens.

The third edition of *Elementary & Middle School Social Studies: An Interdisciplinary Instructional Approach* was developed on the basis of these tenets.

Approach

Based on interdisciplinary instruction as its pedagogical focus, *Elementary & Middle School Social Studies: An Interdisciplinary Instructional Approach*, Third Edition, provides the “theory into practice” that preservice and inservice teachers can both understand and appreciate. Oftentimes this entails combining social studies concepts and objectives with those of other content areas; that is, geography and science, economics and math, history and language arts. The arts help students develop an appreciation for their own heritage and others.

The chapters are written by experts from their respective social science as well as elementary and middle school fields. Within the chapters are social studies activities that can be linked with other content areas for effective and efficient interdisciplinary instruction.

Organization

Chapter objectives are listed at the beginning of each chapter followed by the theoretical background in social studies and interdisciplinary instruction. National social studies standards are stressed throughout. In addition, several examples of activities for developing social studies concepts, particularly in the areas of history, geography, and civics, with lower and upper elementary as well as middle school students are included in this textbook along with several Web site addresses.

The opening chapter of the book is "Social Studies and Interdisciplinary Instruction: A Look at Social Studies." This chapter provides an overview of the social studies: anthropology, economics, geography, history, political science (civic education), and sociology. It includes current national standards and recommendations on how social studies is best taught.

Chapter 2, "Social Studies and Interdisciplinary Instruction: A Look at Interdisciplinary Instruction," provides the reader with insights into the philosophy, rationale, and goals of interdisciplinary instruction. The latter part of the chapter describes how social studies can be integrated in the elementary and middle school classroom. The end of the chapter presents an example of an interdisciplinary thematic social studies unit.

Chapter 3, "Classroom Assessment in Social Studies," presents ways of including authentic assessment in terms of rubrics, checklists, and portfolios. In addition, objectives and benchmarks for social studies instruction are discussed.

Chapter 4, "Early Childhood Social Studies," focuses on the young child's (K-2) widening awareness of the social studies environment. The chapter elaborates on how the child moves from viewing self to family to neighborhood to community to state to nation to world and finally to the universe itself. There are numerous examples of how interdisciplinary curricular activities can be used to teach basic social studies concepts.

Linking social studies and the language arts is the focus of Chapter 5, "Reading, Writing, and Discussing: Communicating in Social Studies." This chapter further elaborates on and extends the ideas presented in Chapter 4 in the grade 2-8 curriculum. The inclusion of children's literature as supportive and enriched reading material for social studies instruction is examined. Stages of the writing process and different types of writing in the social studies, such as narrative, expository (descriptive and explanatory), and persuasive, are discussed. In addition, the importance of discussion is considered along with cooperative learning.

Personalizing instruction in social studies is significant, as is activating students' prior knowledge of related concepts. Chapter 6, "Facilitating Learning through Strategic Instruction in Social Studies," examines brain research findings and other learning research as it presents a variety of ways that teachers can assist students in acquiring and extending their knowledge of social studies.

Chapter 7, "Another Time, Another Place: Bringing Social Studies to Life through Literature," explores in further depth the use of children's literature to teach history and geography. This chapter weaves the social studies curriculum with a cloth of quality children's books on geographic and historical themes. Ways of using thematic units of study in social studies instruction are shared as a means of providing choices for students so they can select areas of study in which they have a personal interest.

Chapter 8, "Geography: Exploring the Whole World through Interdisciplinary Instruction," includes the geography for life standards and provides numerous examples of literature-based instruction of geography skills and strategies.

Active participation is essential in political science and civic education. Chapter 9, "Civic Education in a Democratic Society," discusses democratic ideals and core values of a democratic society. Character education is also examined in this chapter.

“Economics Education: Ways and Means” is the title of Chapter 10. This portion of the textbook includes an overview of economic concepts and two thematic units of study.

Personalizing instruction is further examined in Chapter 11, “Drama in the Social Studies: Gateway to the Past, Pathway to the Future.” Ways teachers can use drama as “living history” lessons are presented as the chapter points out how social studies develops children’s attitudes, values, and perspectives. By combining drama and social studies, the aesthetic is awakened in students and becomes part of their vision of social studies.

Interdisciplinary instruction must include the arts. Chapter 12, “Social Studies and the Arts: From Inner Journeys to Faraway Lands,” shares ways music and the visual arts can be incorporated as a part of social studies instruction. In addition, social studies instruction is tied to the Multiple Intelligences.

Students with attention deficit disorder (ADD) and learning disabilities (LD) typically have difficulty acquiring many social studies concepts. Chapter 13, “Social Studies for All Learners,” explains how an interdisciplinary approach to teaching social studies instruction can be used successfully with all children.

Our students live in a technological world. Certainly technology has become important in the teaching of social studies. This is examined in Chapter 14, “Automation, Innovation, Participation: Infusing Technology into the Social Studies.”

Community is the focus of Chapter 15, “It All Depends on Your Point of View: Multicultural Education in the Social Studies.” This chapter describes how children develop prejudices and the role of the classroom teacher in helping students to accept other cultures and beliefs.

The last chapter is entitled “Social Studies, Bilingualism, Respect, and Understanding: Making the Connections.” This chapter discusses cultural awareness including specifically Hispanic children as well as the complex diversity within Asian and Pacific American communities. The chapter provides a vast array of integrated social studies activities for bilingual students whose first language is not English.

Features

Elementary & Middle School Social Studies: An Interdisciplinary Instructional Approach, Third Edition, offers several practical aspects for the preservice and in-service teacher including:

- *Focus Boxes* that take a closer look at important topics
- *In the Classroom Mini Lesson* boxes that present lesson ideas that can be used in the classroom
- Annotated, comprehensive lists of children’s literature
- Developmentally appropriate activities featuring the six primary social sciences
- Actual children’s work demonstrates instructional outcomes
- An emphasis on social studies standards throughout the text
- Teacher resources at the end of each chapter
- An Instructor’s Manual with suggested class activities, discussion questions, resources, Web sites, and test items

Such features make this a book that serves as both an instructional tool and a teaching resource.

New to This Edition

This edition focuses on teaching the social studies via an interdisciplinary approach—a pedagogical change from the last edition. Other changes and additions include the following:

- *New Chapter* featuring the arts and social studies—coverage requested by the reviewers of the text
- Activities based on brain research as well as the Multiple Intelligences
- Web sites for student and teacher use
- Instructor resources to supplement instruction

The third edition offers the shared belief of seventeen elementary and middle school educators that social studies instruction can be enriched by interdisciplinary instruction. Through such instruction students will develop and maintain a lifelong interest in social studies that will result in their making positive contributions as responsible citizens in our democratic society. This edition has been expanded to include numerous examples of interdisciplinary instruction. More lessons and unit plans for middle school instruction have been included.

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Certainly it takes lots of effort and encouragement from the home front for a book to come to fruition. To my husband and son goes my deepest gratitude for their support.

Foreword

The social studies have always been a true love of mine. Reading historical fiction as a child opened my eyes to the lives and times of other people and cultures as I read of the Middle Ages, the Civil War, and Westward Expansion. Biographies enabled me to learn of heroes and heroines of our past. For instance, I learned of the deeds of Crispus Attucks, Paul Revere, George Washington, and Abigail Adams during the Revolutionary War.

As an adult I can remember well those teachers who went beyond the realm of social studies to put things in what is now referred to as *interdisciplinary instruction*. They made social studies come alive for me. The field trip to the canal that was once part of the Erie Canal system. The seventh-grade teacher who ran across the room wielding a yardstick, jumping on a chair and then his desk, shouting, "Charge!" as we envisioned Teddy Roosevelt leading his men up San Juan Hill. The music teacher who shared the background of such songs as "America, the Beautiful" and "Red River Valley" as well as pointing out that as history changes, so does music. The construction of relief maps. The oral reports on political leaders and then having a U.S. senator come to our school. The sharing of current events and how they affected our lives in our small midwestern town. All of these events and much more have made me love social studies.

By weaving a web of social studies and other content areas, teachers can pique the interests of students and motivate them to better understand and accept their world and other cultures. It is by linking social studies and interdisciplinary instruction that this can best be accomplished.

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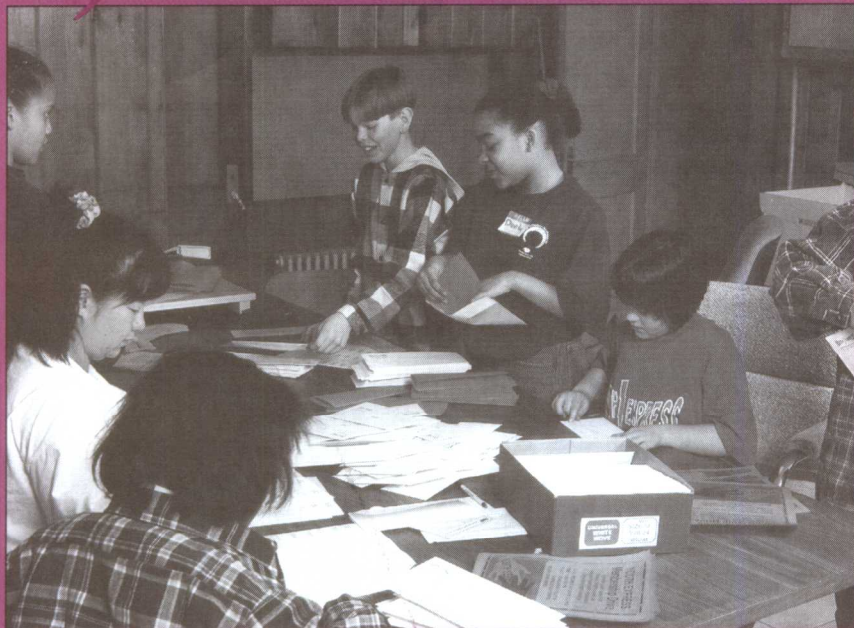
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*Elementary & Middle
School Social Studies*

Chapter 1

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Social Studies and Interdisciplinary Instruction

A Book at Social Studies

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Social studies should be the study of how citizens in a society make personal and public decisions on issues that affect their destiny.

—Jeffrey Linn
“Whole Language in Social Studies”

Objectives

Readers will

- be aware of the six social sciences that make up social studies (anthropology, economics, history, geography, political science/civics, and sociology);
- be aware of the skills of a citizen actor;
- discover how the social sciences can be integrated for instruction;
- be aware of the steps in teaching social studies as a decision making process; and
- be aware of the national curriculum standards for social studies instruction.

Introduction

The fresh smells of a new school year permeate the air—newly waxed floors, freshly painted rooms, chalk on the chalkrail. Marty Hammond’s first graders are already engaged in learning an economic lesson about corn. On the first day of school Marty, a teacher in rural Illinois, asked her students several questions about their interests, what they liked, and what they didn’t like. When she asked what their favorite food