

Sara's letter read:

November 22, 1778

Dear Patricia,

My dear cousin, I can't believe your last letter. I don't know how to tell you this, but you are a traitor. Your brother Andrew has made a big mistake by joining Washington's army. When Andrew is caught, he will be hanged. My father has gone to join the British army, and they will win! God save our wonderful King George III.

Your loving cousin,
Sara

P.S. Is it cold in Virginia? It is freezing in South Carolina.

Sara and Patricia were fifth-grade classmates. They were studying the American Revolution, and during one of the unit's projects, they participated in a writing simulation. The class divided into pairs; Sara pretended to be a colonial child whose family remained loyal to the British King George III, and Patricia pretended to be her cousin from Virginia whose family fought for the rebel cause. The girls exchanged letters after participating in multiple lessons that identified the political differences between loyalists and rebels. The letter exchange in Sara and Patricia's classroom was an activity designed to help them see how the same set of events can be viewed from different perspectives and make history more personally relevant for students.

In the previous chapter our focus was on *how* we teach, specific teaching strategies that differentiate instruction and are culturally responsive. In this chapter, the focus shifts to the curriculum, *what* we teach. As I noted in Chapter 1, your social studies curriculum will be dictated by your state standards. Almost any topic you study, however, can be "transformed" to include both (a) multiple perspectives on historical and current events and (b) information on the contributions of women, children, and people from several cultural groups. At the same time, getting students to become more actively engaged in social studies lessons "transforms" learning for them. Thus, the social studies curriculum of a truly multicultural classroom is transformed when students are made aware that historical events affect more than those people who are traditionally identified as participants. Social studies comes alive in classrooms where activities illustrate that there is no single view of any historical event or a current issue. Sara and Patricia's teacher included the letter exchange activity as part of an American Revolution unit developed to include objectives for learning about the roles of colonial women and children, Native Americans, African Americans, common soldiers, and the loyalists in addition to content about events leading to and during the Revolutionary War. The objectives and activities were designed to capture the interests of students and their various diverse backgrounds.

In this chapter, you will read about

- James Banks's perspectives on how to transform the teaching of social studies to incorporate more pluralistic concepts and generalizations
- Three considerations for transforming social studies units of study, including scope, geographic boundaries, and people
- Available resources that help present multicultural perspectives
- Teaching students to use oral histories to appreciate significant events and to connect more personally to family and community history

◆ The Dimensions of Multicultural Education

Multicultural education is probably a familiar topic to you. I would guess you have either taken a course titled "Multicultural Education" or have had discussions of multiculturalism in several of your college courses. Our concern here is how to transform the elementary social studies curriculum so that it may accurately be described as multicultural. As so often is the case with school-related words and phrases, *multicultural education* has many aspects and, thus, many definitions (Banks & Banks, 2003). There are really two interrelated dimensions:

1. *The curricular dimension.* In multicultural education, students learn about many cultural groups, both those that compose the pluralistic society in the United States and those that live in other countries. A multicultural social studies curriculum provides children with opportunities to learn about other cultures as they learn about themselves. Students should study both the current status of cultural groups and the history that led to the present. The personal experiences of each child should be considered valuable and worthy of inclusion in the social studies curriculum. A multicultural curriculum does not limit itself to presenting information about a wide range of people; it provides the perspectives of people who frequently have been silenced or relegated to the margins in traditional social studies programs (Banks et al., 2005; Burstein & Hutton, 2005).
2. *The equity dimension.* Multicultural education is the reform process that creates classrooms where all students have equal educational opportunity. This means that teachers take positive steps to ensure that students of both genders, of every ethnicity, with non-English native languages, with challenging conditions, and from all social classes reach their full potential (Banks & Banks, 2003; Gay, 2000).

Levels of Curricular Integration

Banks (Banks & Banks, 2003) has described four levels of integration for incorporating multicultural perspectives into the curriculum. These are as follows.

The Contributions Approach. The contributions approach is sometimes called the “heroes and holidays” approach. The social studies curriculum remains the same because the only things added are a few lessons on Martin Luther King Jr. during January, a dance festival for Cinco de Mayo, and a Multicultural Day, on which parents bring to school the foods of their homelands. The key element missing is a lack of depth: No comprehensive study of other cultural groups is undertaken, nor is any attempt made to look at topics from a full range of perspectives.

The Additive Approach. In an additive approach, the units of study change only in that content is added to include multicultural perspectives. For example, in a fifth-grade social studies curriculum on the United States, two units of study are added: “The Civil Rights Movement” and “The Immigrant Experience.” The additive approach is an improvement over the contributions approach, but the problem is that experiences and perspectives of minority groups in the United States and people in foreign countries appear as an afterthought.

The Transformation Approach. In the transformation approach, the social studies curriculum has undergone a significant revision. The key element of a transformed social studies curriculum is that it allows students to consider more than one perspective on a concept, topic, or issue. An excellent example of a curriculum that provides multiple perspectives is “Land and Landscape: Views of America’s History and Culture,” which was developed by the National Museum of American Art of the Smithsonian Institution (Powe, 1998). Students view a series of historic photos and then compare and contrast the Native American and European American ideas of the ownership of land. A transformed curriculum is essential in a society that values diversity and is part of the foundation on which effective social studies teaching is built.

The Social Action Approach. The social action approach includes all the elements of the transformation approach but goes further and asks students to make decisions and take action. This action is often in the form of service learning. For example, if a class of elementary students were to study their city, they would learn about problems the city faces. If the teacher had adopted the social action approach, then students would not only talk about issues but also prepare a simple “position paper” and present it to the city council. Not all units present the possibility for social action, and some actions are appropriate only for middle and high school students. In this chapter, our discussion covers the “how to” process of transforming the curriculum, and in Chapter 10 we provide a more complete examination of social studies service learning and social action projects.

The Transformation Process

Transforming social studies curriculum to make it multicultural is an evolutionary process and includes the following steps:

1. *Reconsider the scope of the social studies curriculum.* This is a task that, in most cases, should be undertaken by a committee of teachers. Units of study should be analyzed for their content. Do they reflect only the

perspectives of the mainstream, European American majority? Should some units be eliminated? Should new ones be created? For example, most fourth graders study their state. Virginians study Virginia, Californians study California, and so on. The curriculum is almost always chronological. In the study of Virginia, for example, the units of study would be "The Natives," "Colonial Virginia," "Virginia in the New Republic," "Virginia in the Civil War," "Reconstruction in Virginia," "Virginia in the Twentieth Century," and "Virginia Today and Tomorrow." The transformed curriculum would include information on African Americans, Native Americans, immigrants to Virginia, women, and children. Units need not be based on historical periods. Instead, issues or themes could be used as the focus. Examples are as follows:

- "People and the Natural Resources of Virginia." What are the resources of Virginia? How have the natives, colonists, and subsequent inhabitants of the state used these resources? What must be done to preserve the natural resources of the state? Throughout the history of the state, why have different groups taken opposing positions on the use of the state's resources? Are the resources that are recognized to be important to Virginians today the same as those recognized to be important in colonial times? How have the resources of Virginia shaped the economy and jobs of the people of Virginia? What natural resources in Virginia are threatened today, and what can be done to save them?
- "The Struggle to Be Free." At the same time that prominent Virginians led the American Revolution, what was the status of Native Americans, African Americans, women, and poor European Americans? How did laws in Virginia maintain a system of slavery and indentured servitude? How might a slave, an indentured servant, a shopkeeper, and a plantation owner have reacted differently to the Declaration of Independence and the adoption of the U.S. Constitution? During the period of segregation (1870–1965), what was life like for African Americans living in Virginia? How did people gain civil rights in Virginia? What else should be done to create a just society? (Often in fourth grade, the study of state history stops shortly after the Civil War. In a transformed curriculum, the civil rights movement of the 20th century will receive the same attention as the colonial period.)
- "Technology and Life in Virginia." How have the tools and machines used by Virginians changed over the years? How did the industrial revolution of the 19th century change the way people lived in Virginia? What does the information age mean for the citizens of Virginia? Will technology close the gaps between the rich and the poor or exacerbate the differences?
- "Production, Distribution, and Consumption." What have Virginians produced? How have goods and services been distributed? What has been imported and exported? How did a slave-based economy function? How did the economy of Virginia change after the Civil War? How do Virginians earn their livings today?

2. *Expand the geographic boundaries of your units of study.* Take a global perspective and look for cross-cultural comparisons. For example, first graders should not only study their school and neighborhood but also compare them to schools and neighborhoods in other states or countries. If third graders are learning about what characterizes a city, they could explore how their city compares to other cities.
3. *Introduce your students to a mosaic of people.* This is the *who* of the transformed curriculum. Whatever the topic, consider the contributions of, and the impact on, African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, Hispanic Americans, women, and children. This should be a process of inclusion, not exclusion. For example, the addition of Revolutionary War hero Sybil Ludington, who warned the residents of Danbury, Connecticut, of an impending British raid, does not mean that you eliminate coverage of Paul Revere. The transformed curriculum should continue to present information that has traditionally been a part of social studies.

◆ In Their Own Words: Children's Books

To transform the curriculum, children must hear the voices of a wide range of people. It is one thing to read secondhand descriptions of the experiences of other people; it is another to read firsthand accounts, written or dictated by people who were participants in the events. After many years of neglect, there currently are a large number of books that share the perspectives of African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, members of religious minorities, children, and people from outside the United States. Some of the accounts are autobiographical; others are anthologies of oral histories.

For example, in *Voices from the Fields: Children of Migrant Farmworkers Tell Their Stories*, editor Beth Atkin (1993) interviewed and photographed nine children of migrant workers. Perspectives of children usually are overlooked in elementary social studies, so Atkin's book is an important addition to our reservoir of instructional resources. Other edited books can provide your students with the words of enslaved people (*To Be a Slave*, Lester, 1968), teenage civil rights activists (*Freedom's Children: Young Civil Rights Activists Tell Their Own Stories*, Levine, 1993), African Americans throughout U.S. history (*The Black Americans: A History in Their Own Words*, Melzer, 1984), and Native Americans who came in contact with European Americans (*Native American Testimony: An Anthology of Indian and White Relations*, Nabakov, 1978).

Autobiographical accounts provide an essential level of authenticity to social studies teaching. This transforms your curriculum. For example, students can expand their knowledge of Asian Americans by reading about the following topics:

Conditions in North Korea during the 1940s and 1950s (*Year of Impossible Goodbyes*, Choi, 1991)

A childhood in Vietnam (*The Land I Lost: Adventures of a Boy in Vietnam*, Huynh, 1982)

Figure 3.1 **Books for Children: First-Person Accounts**

- Atkin, S. Beth (editor). *Voices from the Fields: Children of Migrant Farmworkers Tell Their Stories*. Atkin interviewed and photographed nine children.
- Choi, Sook Nyul. *The Year of Impossible Goodbyes*. The author tells of her childhood in North Korea during the 1940s, the Japanese occupation, and escape to South Korea.
- Crews, Donald. *Bigmama's*. African American author-illustrator Crews reminisces about summer trips to his grandparents' farm. Easy-to-read picture book.
- de Paola, Tomie. *26 Fairmount Avenue*. Popular author/illustrator recounts his year in kindergarten, 1938.
- Frank, Anne. *The Diary of a Young Girl*. More able fifth and sixth graders can read this well-known diary of a Dutch Jewish girl in World War II.
- Garza, Carmen Lomas. *Family Pictures*. This Mexican American painter tells of growing up in a small town in Texas. Easy-to-read picture book; the text is in Spanish and English.
- Hautzig, Esther. *The Endless Steppe*. The author, who was born to wealthy Jewish parents in Poland, provides an account of growing up in a slave labor camp in Siberia.
- Huynh, Quang Nhuoug. *The Land I Lost: Adventures of a Boy in Vietnam*. The author remembers incidents from his childhood in Vietnam.
- Lester, Julius (editor). *To Be a Slave*. Anthology of autobiographical narratives told by several former slaves.
- Levine, Ellen (editor). *Freedom's Children: Young Civil Rights Activists Tell Their Own Stories*. Thirty African Americans who were children or teenagers during the 1950s and 1960s describe their experiences.
- Lord, Bette Bao. *In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson*. Fictionalized account of the author's immigration from China to Brooklyn in 1947.
- McKissack, Patricia. *Goin' Someplace Special*. Author of children's books tells her own story of growing up in Nashville.
- Meltzer, Milton (editor). *The Black Americans: A History in Their Own Words*. Testimony of African Americans from the early 1600s to the 1970s.
- Myers, Walter Dean. *Bad Boy: A Memoir*. Noted author tells of growing up in Harlem in the 1950s.
- Nabakov, Peter (editor). *Native American Testimony: An Anthology of Indian and White Relations*. This book contains 200 years of Native American commentary and is an excellent teaching resource. Almost all entries can be read by fourth- or fifth-grade students.
- Reiss, Johanna. *The Upstairs Room*. Author's experience when she and her sister were hidden by a farm family during World War II.
- Say, Allen. *The Bicycle Man*. Author-illustrator Say, who grew up in Japan, tells the story of the day when two American soldiers visited his school.
- Uchida, Yoshiko. *Journey to Topaz*. Fictionalized account of the author's family's evacuation and internment during World War II. The sequel is *Journey Home*, where Uchida and her family are released from the camp in Topaz, Utah, and return to California.

A Chinese girl's immigration to Brooklyn (*In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson*, Lord, 1984)
Life in Japan immediately after World War II (*The Bicycle Man*, Say, 1982)
The internment of Japanese Americans during World War II (*Journey to Topaz*, Uchida, 1971).

Figure 3.1 lists some of the children's books that are first-person accounts. At the end of the chapter is a lesson plan based on the narratives of enslaved people found in *To Be a Slave*.

◆ In Their Own Words: Oral History

All people have interesting stories to tell. Children should never consider social studies to be a dry subject that tells the stories only of other people living in other places. Our families and communities can be rich sources of information. Oral histories collected by your students will help you transform the curriculum. *Oral history* is a method of gathering spoken, first-person accounts of past events (Ritchie, 1995). Oral histories collected by adult historians are tape recorded, carefully indexed, and placed in an accessible archive. Several authors have written about how students can collect and use oral histories (Anand et al., 2002; Hickey, 1991; Huerta & Flemmer, 2001; Mehaffy, Sitton, & Davis, 1979; Olmedo, 1996; Walbert, 2004). Oral history projects conducted by students can be relatively simple. For example, Miller (2000) described how fifth-grade students wrote biographies after each fifth grader conducted an interview of a second grader in the same school. On the other hand, some oral history projects will challenge both students and teachers. Alibrandi, Beal, Thompson, and Wilson (2000) provided a report of a project conducted by middle school students that incorporated oral history, field trips, historical maps, and data from the computer-based GIS (geographic information systems).

The Benefits of Oral History

The process of collecting, analyzing, and reporting oral histories is a wonderful experience for our students for many reasons:

- Oral history allows students to become historians; they will learn how historians work and will have firsthand knowledge of one important source of historical evidence.
- Oral history transforms the curriculum in that it inevitably increases the sources of information available to our students. If we limit social studies to sources that are in print, then we ignore the history that is most immediate, relevant, and comprehensible to our students: their history, the history of their families, and the history of their immediate communities. Hickey and Kolterman (2006) showed how oral history can be used in a social studies unit that helps children learn about the roles of women in history.

- Oral history is an excellent language arts activity. In the process of gathering, analyzing, and reporting oral histories, students will listen, speak, read, and write.
- Olmedo (1996) explained why oral history projects work well with English learners. These projects are relevant to their experiences, they teach social science inquiry processes, and they allow English learners to use both their languages. Oral histories can be collected in any language, so we can encourage our bilingual students to gather oral histories in their native languages.
- Oral history makes any subject more interesting. Hirshfield (1991) notes, "Oral history attaches emotion to events that can be provided only by the person who has lived through them, the young interviewer inevitably develops a deeper understanding of the recent past" (p. 111).

Guidelines for Oral History Projects

Oral history projects require thorough planning. The following guidelines will help us prepare for the use of oral histories and help children successfully complete an oral history project.

1. *Determine the focus of the oral history project.* Choose one of two possibilities for the project focus. First, oral histories can *supplement* other resources. For example, a group of fourth graders studying the recent history of their state will read about recent immigrants in their textbooks and in children's books. Add oral histories to the print and other media resources. Second, oral histories can be the *sole source* of information for a lesson. A fifth-grade class did a project on how their grandparents met. In this project, the only source of data for a Website the students created were the oral histories they gathered.
2. *Identify the project's outcomes for students.* It is important that students understand the entire process of gathering data from interviews, analyzing the data, and creating a final product. They should know about how long each phase of the process will take. Perhaps most important, they should understand what they will ultimately produce, and there are several possibilities: a Website, a CD-ROM, a written report, a bulletin board display, or an oral presentation.
3. *Engage students in doing some background work.* The more your students know about the time, places, people, and events that are the substance of the interview, the better. They will need this knowledge to make sense of what they hear and to ask follow-up questions. This is easier in some projects than in others.
4. *Direct students to plan their interviews.* After the topic has been defined and students have acquired background knowledge, ask the class to make a list of people they could interview. Discuss with students why thinking carefully about how the person(s) they choose to interview will inform



Anthony Magnacca/Merrill

Effective teachers work with their students in a variety of instructional settings. All children benefit from individualized instruction.

their own knowledge base and contribute to their oral history project. Explain how being a good communicator can help them better reach their goal. Determine as a group that the value of any interview is directly related to the quality of the questions asked.

5. *Create a list of questions to be asked during the interview.* In some projects, a standardized set of questions should be asked of all interviewees. In other projects, each interviewee will have a different set of questions. Questions should be open ended; questions that can be answered with one word or a short phrase should be avoided. For example, a group of sixth graders compiled an oral history of playground games as part of a large project on "Kids at Play: A History from Ancient Egypt to Today." Rather than ask senior citizens, "Did you play with jump ropes when you were in elementary school?" students should ask, "Tell me about the games you remember playing at recess when you were in elementary school." Generate with your class samples of open-ended questions, such as the following:

What do you remember about _____?
 How old were you when _____ happened? How do you know that the event happened when you were _____?
 How did this event affect (change) your life?
 What did you do when _____?
 What else was going on during the same time?

6. *Help students understand how to "go beyond" previously determined questions.* As Gail Hickey (1991) states, predetermined questions should be "a guide rather than a strict script" (p. 217). We might even have our students interview us. Interviewing is difficult for students to master, but

the ability to ask a good follow-up question is essential for the oral historian. When students hear something unusual, they should ask additional questions, even though it means deviating from the standardized list of questions. Remember, too, your students should be interested in interviewing people who have *firsthand* knowledge. It is inevitable that some interviewees will repeat things they have heard. Family stories that have been passed down for generations will be told and are interesting to hear. From a historical sense, however, the real value of oral history is in recording eyewitness accounts.

7. *Hold the interviews in a controlled setting.* A significant challenge in an oral history project is the logistics of the interviews. In many cases, the teacher will contact informants and arrange for them to come to school for their interviews. In other projects, the students make contacts with letters and follow-up telephone calls. If interviews take place outside of school, students must be accompanied by their parents. Hirshfield (1991) lists two essential features of the interview setting. First, the interview should be one on one. Second, the interview should be in a quiet place with no distractions. Be sure that interviews are conducted only after an appointment has been made and confirmed.
8. *Help your students be good interviewers.* Students should ask one question at a time. If students use a tape recorder, they should know how to operate it. If students write down the answers provided by the interviewee, they should be trained to write fast and accurately. My experience has been that the vast majority of students cannot write fast enough to record what the interviewee is saying. Tape recorders are a much better tool for the interviewer to use. Students should be sure that they have the correct spelling of names and places. They should ask follow-up questions to be sure that dates, places, and names are stated (and recorded) clearly. It is a good idea to role-play oral history interviews beforehand so that students become comfortable with the process and efficient in getting information (one student plays the informant, the other the interviewer). To help students while they role-play the act of interviewing or to help them feel more confident when they conduct their interviews, consider providing some kind of planning form, such as the one displayed in Figure 3.2. Students can use this form to think critically before they conduct any interviews and to hold them accountable for getting their interview plan in motion.
9. *Request that interviewees sign a release form.* A release form authorizes the interviewer to share what he or she has heard from the interviewee. The form can be simple (a sample is shown in Figure 3.3) and should be approved by the school principal. The important thing is that people who are interviewed know that other people will hear or read what they have said and that their comments "belong" to the school (in the unlikely event that they are published, the copyright and any money generated by the publication they appear in belong to the school).

Figure 3.2 Planning the Interview

Interviewer _____ Date _____
Whom will you interview? _____

What is the purpose of your interview? _____

When will you conduct the interview? _____

Date _____ Time _____
What questions do you intend to ask and in what order?
1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Remember, answers you hear to your questions may change any follow-up questions you may ask. Be flexible!

Figure 3.3 Permission Form for Oral History Interviews

Please complete the following before or after your interview. Thank you.

I agree to be interviewed by _____

I understand that what I say will be shared as part of a classroom project. I also understand that my comments may be published for school use and that if the school decides this interview project is important enough to be shared beyond the use of _____ that I will be
School name _____

contacted for further permission.

Signature of Interviewee Date _____

10. *Support interviews with documents and artifacts.* Many times, an interview will lead a person to “dig out” old clothing, photographs, letters, souvenirs, gifts, or other items. Usually, these are too valuable to take to class. Under some circumstances, they can be borrowed, photographed, or photocopied. These documents and other artifacts are important historical sources and can provide illustration for the text of a report based on the interviews.
11. *Analyze interviews.* After students have completed their oral interviews, their work has just begun. First, students should do what real historians do: make an index (list) of the interviews. Second, they should meet in groups and attempt to make sense of what they heard. The simplest form of analysis is to edit out irrelevant comments and compile an anthology of the interviews. This would work if all the interviewees responded to one broadly stated question (e.g., “What do you remember about the teachers’ strike in 1980?”). Students will learn more if they compare and contrast the interviews. Some projects lend themselves to a chronological review; events described in several interviews can be arranged in the order they took place. Typically, though, the analysis will look for similarities and differences.

At the end of the chapter is a description of an oral history project completed by third graders on the history of their elementary school.

Incorporating the Personal Experiences of Your Students

Firsthand accounts of events, including both those found in children’s books and those recorded as oral history, are two ways to transform the curriculum. Equally essential is using the personal experiences of your students as a basis for social studies teaching and learning (Alleman & Brophy, 1994a). Virtually everyone who writes about social studies and minority students stresses the importance of incorporating the personal experiences of students into the curriculum (e.g., Banks & Banks, 2003; Garcia, 1994; Short et al., 1994). This is a venerable idea, advocated in the late 1800s by Francis Parker, John Dewey, and other Progressive educators (Cremin, 1961). By “personal experience,” I mean the daily existence of students outside of school. Here are some ways to connect social studies to the personal experiences of students.

Cultural Universals. All people share basic needs, such as food, clothing, shelter, and transportation. These “cultural universals” can be used to transform social studies teaching and learning by linking the lives of your students to people from other places and times (Alleman & Brophy, 2000; 2004). Units and lessons can begin by having students consider their own existence, proceed to a middle section where information is presented about people living in other places or in other times, and conclude with cross-cultural comparisons. For example, a unit on the Pilgrims might

include an activity on "Lunch with the Pilgrims, Plymouth, 1622." First, the students would answer these questions:

- When do we eat lunch at school?
- Does your family have a "lunch" at home on the weekends? (Many cultural groups eat their main meal at midday.)
- What types of foods do we eat for lunch at school? How are they different from breakfast and dinner?
- Whom do you eat lunch with at school? (Do adults eat with children?) Whom do you eat lunch with at home?
- How does lunch begin at home? (Some students might begin with a prayer or other ritual.)
- What beverages do we drink with lunch at school? What do you drink with meals at home?

Students would learn that the first Pilgrims ate with their fingers, drank a low-alcohol beer with their midday meal, and consumed incredible amounts of food each day (a half pound of butter, a half pound of meat, and a pound of bread). Several children's books would serve as resources: *Giving Thanks: The 1621 Harvest Feast* (Waters, 2001), *Colonial Living* (Tunis, 1957), *Meet the Real Pilgrims* (Loeb, 1979), *Eating the Plates* (Penner, 1991), and *Sarah Morton's Day* (Waters, 1989). Students could then make comparisons and observe the similarities and differences between lunch today and the midday meal of the Pilgrims. Finally, there should be an examination of how the coming of European Americans changed the food sources and meal customs of the Native Americans living in Massachusetts during the 17th century. A small group of students could prepare a presentation for their classmates.

The Experiences of Childhood. When we are teaching about another cultural group or about people who lived in the past, one effective way to link subject matter to the personal experiences of your students is to focus on the experiences of children. All too often in social studies, the curriculum seems to ignore the existence of children. I think the status of children is highly relevant and an interesting avenue to understanding other cultural groups. Today almost all children go to school and participate in some form of recreational activity. School and play are perfect topics to include in any study of another group of people, whether they lived long ago or are living today. Comparisons based on school and play will provide information about many other topics you wish to cover, such as the roles of men, women, and children; the values of the group; and the technology of the group of people being studied.

For example, consider a second-grade unit on "Our Grandparents." The teacher calculated an "average age" for her second graders' grandparents. (The year was 2007, so most of her second graders were born in 2000. She figured that their parents were 30 when the children were born: $2000 - 30 = 1970$. She then figured that the grandparents were 25 years old when the parents were born: $1970 - 25 = 1945$. Thus, the grandparents, on average, had been born in 1945 and turned 7 in 1952.) What games did the grandparents play when they were in second grade? What books

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did their teachers read aloud to them in 1952? How did their grandparents dress when they went to second grade? The unit provided answers to all these questions as the class looked at what it was like to be a second grader in 1952.

A Child's Life History. The life histories of our students can be used in a variety of ways as part of the social studies program:

- Some students may have participated in events you are studying. For example, in California the experiences of immigrants are part of the social studies curriculum in grades 2 to 5. Students in our rooms who are immigrants can tell about their immigration; these oral histories can supplement other resources. (One important note: Some students may have fled their native countries under horrible conditions; if these students do not want to recount their experiences, then that wish should be respected.)

- Students can learn how historians work by writing *documented* histories of themselves (autobiographies) and their families (Czartoski & Hickey, 1999; Schwartz, 2000). There is value in having students write from memory. Memories can be combined with a historical record; however, old photographs, report cards, and birth certificates should be consulted and referenced. Students should interview their parents, siblings, former teachers, and other people who have known them. The addition of the documentation will show students how historians gather data to support their texts.

- Students should learn about their communities, and as they do, they can combine their personal experiences with field trips, oral history, and the examination of documents, like old newspapers (Hickey, 1999). Many school districts make a study of the local community the focus of third-grade social studies. It is important that your curriculum incorporate the people and places your students know well. For example, children walk and drive by many buildings with historical significance every day. Children can take "walking field trips" to visit these buildings. They can learn when a building was built and who has occupied it.

Current Events. The events of the day can also be used to provide a link between personal experiences and social studies. Three general strategies come to mind:

- Of greatest value are events that your students experience firsthand. Although the content may not fit with the curriculum guide or the textbook you are following, it makes sense to break away and explore significant events. For example, students who have coped with earthquakes and floods should be challenged to consider the social aspects of those natural disasters (e.g., public agencies that address emergencies, private organizations that assist, the role of individual citizens in helping out, and the possible future consequences of the event).

- Primarily through television but also through the Internet, other media, and daily conversation, your students vicariously experience important events as they happen. Students will have considerable curiosity about significant events, and the social studies curriculum should respond to their questions. In the aftermath of

September 11, 2001, for example, a great deal was written about how teachers should teach about what transpired on the day itself, what preceded it, and what has happened since (Berson & Berson, 2001; Mehlinger, 2002; Simpson, 2001a; Singleton, 2001; Stevens, 2002; Webeck, Black, Davis, & Field, 2002).

- Students could look at newspapers to find events that parallel those they are studying. For example, Short, Mahrer, Elfin, Liten-Tejada, and Montone (1994), in their junior high school unit on the American Revolution, ask students to search newspapers for articles about current political unrest in a lesson about colonial protests to British policies.

Consumer Goods. Articles of clothing, toys, cans of food, and other consumer goods can be the starting point for lessons in geography and economics. Students will see that the goods they use every day come from many countries. For example, several children in a second-grade classroom had shirts made in Sri Lanka (they found this information on the labels sewn into the collars). This led to a mini-unit on that nation. Where is Sri Lanka? What resources does it have? What is life like for the workers who made the shirts? How do the shirts arrive in the United States? Why is it less expensive to make the shirts in Sri Lanka than in the United States?

Adapting a Traditional Unit of Study

Almost all fifth graders study the history of the United States. An important unit of study during the year is the American Revolution. How could a standard unit be transformed so that the scope of the unit, its geographic boundaries, and the people discussed become more multiculturally focused?

First, the activities in the unit should go beyond those suggested in a traditional teacher's edition of a basal social studies textbook series. We need to gather ideas and information from other sources, like a middle school unit on the American Revolution prepared at the Center for Applied Linguistics (Short et al., 1994). Designed for English learners, this material is a good example of a curriculum that relates to today's diverse classrooms. This material and others can help fifth graders see the perspectives of people often left out of traditional units of study, such as children and teenagers, women, Native Americans, African Americans, and, in this case, colonial loyalists. Review the following examples.

Expand the Resources Found in Traditional Units. Additional resources, beyond the textbook, can be added to a traditional unit to enhance information and descriptions of people, events, and ideas. McCormick (2004) showed how primary source material, written in 1776, could be used successfully to teach fifth graders about the Battle of Trenton. Also, earlier in this chapter, I noted that a lesson on Paul Revere could be expanded to introduce Sybil Ludington. In 1777, 14-year-old Ludington warned the militia in Danbury, Connecticut, of the movements of a British raiding party. Good sources of information on Ludington are (a) a children's book, *Sybil's Night Ride* (Winnick, 2000); (b) two simple picture books, one by Drollene Brown (1985), *Sybil Rides for Independence*, and the other by Marsha Amster (2000), *Sybil*

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Ludington's Midnight Ride; (c) a poem by Cindy Mahrer, located in a unit published by the Center for Applied Linguistics (Short et al., 1994); and (d) Internet sites, like the site for the museum of the town of Patterson, New York, www.historicpatterson.org.

The Internet continues to grow as a significant resource for a transformed social studies. For example, the best source of information on the experiences of African Americans during the Revolutionary War is "Revolution," a Website created by the Public Broadcasting System as part of the "Africans in America" television series (www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/tguide). Many fifth graders can read the text on this Website, which also includes reproductions of historical documents. Students could read about Prince Hall and Colonel Tye, African Americans who fought on opposing sides during the war.

Provide More Than One Perspective on Historical Events. A transformed curriculum can help students understand a wider range of perspectives. Several activities could accomplish this goal. For example, students could use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the political views of the colonists who remained loyal to the British king (loyalists) with those of the rebels. The students will see that while these two groups differed fundamentally on some issues, there were some areas of agreement (e.g., both groups in the South supported slavery). Otherwise, the class can divide into two groups of equal number—one group being loyalists, the other group being rebels—and each loyalist can pair up with a rebel. Throughout the unit, the "two cousins" of each pair can write one another—the loyalist urging fidelity to the crown, the rebel advocating revolution. Sara's letter at the beginning of the chapter was completed as part of this unit. A unique children's book that shows multiple perspectives on the same events compares the views of King George III and George Washington, *George vs. George: The Revolutionary War as Seen by Both Sides* (Schanzer, 2004).

Most units on the Revolution fail to present the perspectives of the common, ordinary foot soldiers in the colonial army. Some of these soldiers, however, were not much older than today's fifth graders. To provide the perspectives of these young people, use Milton Meltzer's (1987) *The American Revolutionaries: A History in Their Own Words, 1750–1800*. Two passages that I suggest for inclusion are those written by 16-year-old colonial soldiers James Collins and Thomas Young. They describe the bloody battle of Kings Mountain, where a rebel army defeated an army of colonial loyalists. A good activity is to have students participate in a readers' theater project, with students reading aloud in dramatic fashion excerpts from the passages dictated by Collins and Young. A more elaborate readers' theater presentation could use a script taken from many of the oral histories and documents preserved in Meltzer's book.

Include a Wider Spectrum of Biographies. Our students should learn about a wide spectrum of Revolutionary War personalities including:

- Deborah Sampson, who fought in the Revolutionary War disguised as a male soldier. See the children's books *I'm Deborah Sampson: A Soldier in the War of Revolution*, by Clapp (1977); *The Secret Soldier: The Story of*

Deborah Sampson, by McGovern (1975); and *Deborah Sampson Goes to War*, by Stephens (1984);

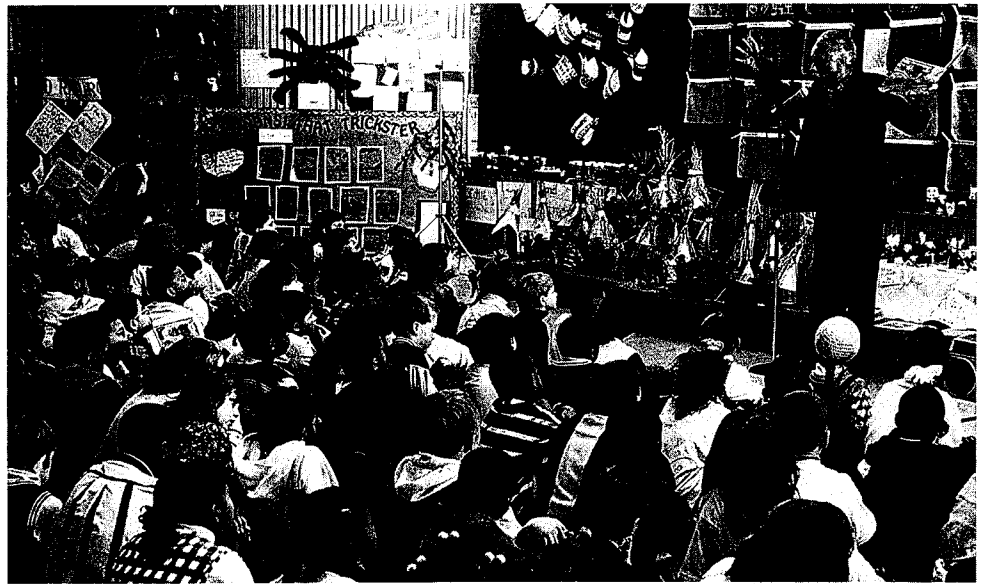
- Prominent colonial women, such as Abigail Adams (see the biographies by St. George, 2001 & Wallner, 2001) and Mercy Otis Warren;
- Margaret Corbin and Molly Pitcher (see the biography by Rockwell, 2002), who participated in Revolutionary battles;
- African Americans like James Armistead, Austin Dabney, Saul Matthews, and Salem Poor, who all served in the colonial army (see the children's book, *Come All You Brave Soldiers: Blacks in the Revolutionary War*, by Cox, 1999);
- British military leaders, such as John Burgoyne, Lord Cornwallis, and Banastre Tarleton; and
- Native American leader Thayendanegea (Joseph Brant), who sided with the British.

Students could create biographies, complete with clipped portraits, and post them on a unit Website.

Reveal a Wider Range of Events. Traditional social studies units on the American Revolution are, for the most part, limited to political and military events. Again, no good unit can ignore the signing of the Declaration of Independence or the battle of Yorktown. A unit on the American Revolution, however, also could include information that most adults, much less elementary children, do not know. How many of us, for example, are aware that the central problem for those who remained at home during the war was runaway inflation, or knew that women at home assumed new roles, such as running the businesses their husbands left behind when they went to war? To embellish textbook coverage of the home front, I suggest four excellent children's books: Brandon Miller's (2005) *Declaring Independence: Life During the American Revolution*; Kay Moore's (1998) *If You Lived in the Time of the American Revolution*; Barbara Brenner's (1994) *If You Were There in 1776*; and John Loeper's (1973) *Going to School in 1776*.

Encourage the Reading of Juvenile Novels. Students should be encouraged to read fiction with characters who are young people, loyalists, or African Americans. For example, James Lincoln Collier and Christopher Collier have written a trilogy that tells of the wartime and postwar experiences of African Americans in the North (*Jump Ship to Freedom* [1981], *War Comes to Willy Freeman* [1983], and *Who Is Carrie?* [1984]). Another book by the same authors, *My Brother Sam Is Dead* (1974), tells the story of Sam, the only rebel in a family led by a loyalist father. Two juvenile novels written by well-known authors also focus on the tension between loyalists and rebels (*Early Thunder* by Jean Fritz [1967] and *Johnny Treegate's Musket* by Leonard Wibberly [1959]).

Expand the Study of Prominent People and Events. Even people, events, and ideas covered traditionally in a unit on the American Revolution can be transformed by offering a different perspective. George Washington, for example, is usually presented as a political and military leader. To many children, I suspect, he seems as lifeless as his image on a dollar bill. I suggest two children's books to help students see the "human" side of Washington. Miriam Anne Bourne's (1983)



Scott Cunningham/Merrill

The transformed curriculum connects students with a wide spectrum of cultural groups. Here, a gifted storyteller introduces children to a trickster tale from the Ashanti of West Africa.

Uncle George Washington and Harriet's Guitar is based on the Washington family letters written from 1790 to 1795. We see Washington from the perspective of his nieces and nephews. *George Washington's Teeth* by Deborah Chandra and Madeline Comora (2003) does more than cover his dental problems, it provides insight on the daily routines of his life. Finally, while all units should emphasize Washington's unique contributions to U.S. history and his rightful status as "father of our country," students also should examine Washington's economic interests as a slaveholder and the consistent criticism of his leadership of the Continental army (see the children's books *George Washington: An Illustrated Biography* [Adler, 2004] and *George Washington and the Birth of Our Nation* by Meltzer [1986]).

◆ Summary of Key Points

- James Banks described four levels of integration of multicultural content: contributions, additive, transformation, and social action.
- To transform the curriculum, reconsider the scope of what we teach, introduce our students to a wide variety of people and to their experiences and perspectives, and expand the geographic boundaries of our instructional units.
- To have a curriculum that is truly multicultural, we should be sure our students are exposed to firsthand accounts of events written by African

Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, members of religious minorities, women, children, and people living outside the United States.

- Another way to transform the curriculum is to have students collect oral histories. Oral history expands the social studies curriculum by incorporating the histories of the students themselves, their families, and their communities.
- The transformed curriculum incorporates the personal experiences of our students.

FOR FURTHER READING

- Though the tragedy of 9–11 is no longer a “current” event, the advice that authorities in the field of social studies gave to elementary teachers is important reading. These articles provide guidance on how to teach any major event and should continue to guide teachers on how to deal with the aftermath of 9–11. Articles written soon after the event address three main topics: dealing with tragedy, searching for facts, and responding as citizens. The article by Mehlinger (2002) did an excellent job of summarizing four approaches teachers could have used in dealing with September 11 and its aftermath. Webeck et al. (2002) reviewed how elementary teachers responded. Berson and Berson (2001) discussed the psychological and emotional health of children in the wake of September 11. Three more recent articles are Jaffee (2004) on resources for teaching about the Middle East and Elinour and Bashir-Ali (2003) on the challenges faced by Muslim girls in American schools; and Chick (2004) on children’s books about 9–11.
- Hickey and Kolterman (2006) described several activities, including a family history project, that teach children about the roles of women in personal, local, national, and international history. With the same goal, Sincero and Woyshner (2003) provided good ideas for teaching women’s history to upper-grade elementary school students. See also the January/February 2003 theme issue of *Social Education*, “Women of the World” (Merryfield & Crocco, 2003, and Tyson & Hinton-Johnson, 2003, for children’s books about women and social justice.
- Many journal articles provide examples of how a topic can be transformed so that a variety of perspectives and experiences are incorporated. For example, Fertig (2005) described a unit of study that challenged children to write letters from the perspective of 19th century homesteaders on the Great Plains. Dever, Sorenson, & Broderick (2005) and Sandmann (2004) wrote about children’s books that promote social justice. Warren (2006) offered suggestions for incorporating the voices of Native Americans. VanFossen (2003b) discussed how to use children’s literature to teach about the experiences of immigrants to the United States.
- The October 1998 issue of *Social Education* has several excellent articles on the African American experience in the United States, including

important background information, Internet resources, and teaching ideas (Barss, 1998).

- I mentioned interviewing grandparents as part of an oral history project. Hittleman and Hittleman (1998) provided a unit on "Bringing Grandparents into Social Studies." On teaching the American Revolution I mentioned McCormick's (2004) excellent article on how to use primary sources to teach about the battle of Trenton (when Washington crossed the Delaware on Christmas night, 1776). It has many valuable suggestions for using primary source material with elementary school children.

LESSON PLANS AND INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

This chapter concludes with a lesson plan and a group project that are good examples of a transformed curriculum and culturally responsive teaching: (a) A lesson plan for fifth graders using the narratives of enslaved people found in *To Be A Slave*; and (b) An oral history project for a third-grade classroom on the history of their elementary school.

LESSON PLAN

Grade Five: From *To Be a Slave*

Overview: This lesson is a part of a fifth-grade unit on the southern colonies and uses a book, *To Be a Slave*, to identify first-person accounts of life as a slave. Working with a modification of Jigsaw (a cooperative learning structure discussed in Chapter 5), all 30 students will take part in reading and responding to narratives dictated by enslaved people in the 19th century.

Resources and Materials: (a) copy of *To Be a Slave*; (b) copies of the following narratives: (1) Moses Grandy (p. 43), (2) Anonymous (pp. 44–45), (3) Josiah Henson (pp. 48–49), (4) Charles Ball (p. 54), (5) Sis Shackelford (p. 56); (c) time line for the unit; (d) map of the United States in 1859. Note: This lesson can be done with any collection of narratives from enslaved people. For example, portions of Charles Ball's narrative are included in a Website called "Excerpts from Slave Narratives" (<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/wpa/wpahome.html>).

Standard: From the *National Standards for History*, grades 5 to 12, Era 4 (Expansion and Reform, 1801–1861), Standard 2d: "The student understands the rapid growth of the 'peculiar institution' after 1800 and the varied experiences of African Americans under slavery. Therefore, the student is able to describe the plantation system and the roles of their owners, their families, hired white workers, and the enslaved African Americans" (National Center for History in the Schools, 1996, p. 95).

Content Objectives: Students will understand the history and economics of slavery. They should reach the generalization that African American slaves in the United States were bought and sold like other "goods." Facts presented in the lesson will include that (a) slaves were transported from Africa in inhuman conditions; (b) slaves were bought and sold without regard to the status of other members of their families; (c) some slaves were sold privately, from neighbor to neighbor; (d) many slaves were auctioned; and (e) slaveholders would give extra food to slaves about to be auctioned.

Process Objectives: Students will (a) *listen* to their teacher read the background information, (b) work in groups to *analyze* one of the slave narratives, (c) *answer* three questions about the narrative, and (d) *compare and contrast* their answers with those of groups who analyzed different narratives. A member of each group will report to the whole group.

Values Objectives: Your students should believe that all people have fundamental human rights, such as liberty. In this lesson, they will learn more about a period in U.S. history when human rights were denied to enslaved African Americans.

Teaching Sequence:

1. Be sure all teaching resources are in place. You will need six copies of each of the five narratives.
2. A few days before the lesson, select one child from each group to be a "reader." The reader will read the narrative to the rest of the group. The readers should have 2 or 3 days to rehearse their oral reading. If you prefer, you can have your readers record their readings of the narratives on audiotape.
3. Start the lesson by referring to the time line and the map. This lesson should be preceded by others on (a) the cultures of West African tribal groups and (b) the "middle passage" from Africa to colonial America. Subsequent lessons would cover the working and living conditions of enslaved people in the American South.
4. Tell the class that today they will learn about how slaves were bought and sold. Read to the whole class Lester's explanatory comments from Chapter 2. It is not necessary to read all his commentary, but be sure to include the text on pages 39, 40, 43, 44, and 46. Some of the slave narratives include the defamatory "n" word. Discuss the historical context of this word and emphasize that it is insulting and should never be used today. You might also check to see if your school district has a policy in place regarding the use of that and other inflammatory words.
5. Write the following questions on the chalkboard:
 1. Who dictated the narrative you read? Was the slave a man or a woman, a grown-up or a child?
 2. In your narrative, what happened to the slaves?
 3. If a slave master is mentioned in your narrative, what did he or she do?

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Explain that each group is to answer these three questions for the narrative they have read. Distribute the copies of the narratives to the group. Allow time for the readers to read the narratives to other members of their groups. Then have each group select a reporter to share their answers with the class.

6. For each of the five narratives, first have the reader read the narrative to the whole class, then have the reporter share the group's answers to the three questions.

Evaluation: Take notes as you circulate among the groups, recording the names of students who do a good job of answering the questions. Take notes as well on the oral reading performance of each of the readers. This type of anecdotal record keeping will provide useful information if you gather data on an ongoing basis over the course of the year.



Effective Teaching in Today's Diverse Classroom: Small-group work is essential in a diverse classroom. Research shows that regular experiences in cooperative learning improve intercultural relations. Students from different cultural groups will get along better if they work together to accomplish common goals (see Chapter 5 for a review of the research). One other note: If the class were homogeneous in reading ability, then you could have each student read the narratives on his or her own rather than using a group reader. On the other, the use of a "reader," who has practiced reading the narrative aloud in advance, will be of great assistance to children with mild learning disabilities. It is an example of *adapting instructional materials*. This allows students to access the narratives not just by reading, but through the auditory modality as well.

GROUP PROJECT

Grade Three: An Oral History Project—The History of Our School

Project Description: A third-grade teacher decided to have her class write a history of their school, Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School. The children used old photographs, school records, and newspaper articles as sources, but they needed more information. Oral history seemed essential to provide a more complete story. The class made a list of people who might provide oral histories. When two children showed the list to the principal, she steered them toward specific people with whom they would want to talk. The roster of interviewees included the following:

- The superintendent of schools at the time the school was built (1965). Though in his 80s, the superintendent still lived in the community.
- Three teachers who were on the first faculty. These teachers could share the memories of the first year of Roosevelt School.

- One teacher who had taught at the school from 1970 to 1992. Her longevity would make her an important source for "longitudinal" data on changes over time at the school.
- A school board member at the time the school was built. In his 80s, he would be a valuable source because there was a heated debate over the naming of the school. One faction wanted to name the school after a former mayor who had just died, and another faction wanted to name the school after a famous baseball player who had grown up in the community. Roosevelt was chosen as a compromise.
- Two principals in the school district, one at a junior high and the other at the local high school. Both had gone to Roosevelt School as children and could offer a "child's-eye view" of Roosevelt in previous decades.
- A member of the school board and her brother, the city attorney. These two prominent members of the community were among the first African American students to attend Roosevelt in 1974.
- A group of current sixth graders. These students at Roosevelt could provide information on the more recent history of the school.
- Five current faculty members, each of whom had taught at the school for at least 10 years. Like the sixth graders, members of the current faculty could comment on recent events at the school, and the interviews would be easy to arrange.

Project Activities

1. The children developed questions for the interviews. Each person was asked a very broad opening question: "What is the first thing that comes to your mind about Roosevelt Elementary School?" Then more specific questions were written for each interviewee.
2. The interviews were scheduled. Some of the interviews took place outside of school. These had to be approved by the principal, and each student was accompanied by a parent.
3. The interviews revealed fascinating details. For example, the African American students and the teachers who were at the school at the time remembered both acts of kindness and resentment when the African American students first attended. The superintendent told of how difficult it was to decide on the design of the school. The teacher who taught at Roosevelt commented on how different the students have dressed over the years.
4. In addition to personal interviews, some children researched old newspaper articles that provided more specific historical details. School records revealed the number of students who had attended the school at various times and the number of classrooms.
5. The children gathered all this information and wrote a book about their school, illustrated with copies of old photographs. The oral histories brought the book to life through the stories that people told.



Effective Teaching in Today's Diverse Classroom: This project is a good example of a transformed social studies curriculum. In learning about their school, the students learned a great deal about the social history of their city and our nation, and they learned it by listening to voices that would never be included in a textbook. Although some members of the community would have preferred to ignore the racism that greeted the first African American residents of this city, the book written by this group of students tackled the issue head on.

This would be a difficult project for children with mild learning disabilities. It would help them if the interviews were conducted by a small group of students. Redesigning tasks that might otherwise be completed individually so that they are completed in *small groups* is an important strategy to help students with challenging conditions. The children would definitely need to tape record the interview, and children with disabilities might well need to listen to the interview more than once. Then, the members of the group can work together to analyze the results of the interview.
