“Spicing Up” Social Studies:
Teaching Social Studies Through Simulations in a Sixth Grade Classroom

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Description of the Teaching Context

I have had the incredible opportunity to work as a Professional Development School Intern for the 2009-2010 school year at Mount Nittany Middle School, which is located in the rural University town of State College, Pennsylvania. This public school first opened in 1994 and serves grades six through eight. Mount Nittany Middle School offers a wide variety of student resources and extra-curricular activities, and has a very strong parent organization. The school’s population is largely white, and there is some variation in socio-economic status.

I observe, learn, and teach in a largely self-contained sixth-grade classroom located in the sixth grade hallway. Keeping the sixth grade classrooms together creates a sense of community in a non-threatening environment, where students have the year to slowly adjust to the middle school setting. Students in my homeroom are with me for most of the day, but gain independence traveling to different classrooms for science, math and “specials” including art, music, world language and life arts. Having my homeroom students for the majority of the day provides ample time to build a tight-knit community of learners.

In my room, there are eleven boys and twelve girls, ranging in age from eleven to twelve years old. It is most obvious that my students are diverse social beings with strong personalities. Many of them are extremely outspoken and highly motivated individuals. I have nine strong leaders who are very vocal and persuasive. These are students who always play a large role in classroom discussion and are eager to voice their opinions. I also have three shy students, who work hard but try to remain out of the spotlight.
Typically, my students are all friendly and respectful, and they have few problems when working cooperatively with others.

My students vary greatly in academic levels, as half of them receive additional learning services. Since my inquiry focuses largely on our literature-based Social Studies instruction, it is especially important to note my students’ diverse Reading and Writing ability levels. In my class of twenty-three learners, nine of them are reading above grade level and attend learning enrichment during our reading period. Additionally, three of my students are below grade level and leave reading to attend Title 1 Reading support. According to District Writing Exams, seven students write above grade level, twelve students write at grade level, and four students are currently writing below grade level. Two of the students writing below grade level receive Title 1 support in writing (See Appendix A for Inquiry Brief).

**Wonderings and Questions**

**Main Wondering**

Being a social studies enthusiast, I was eager to observe and teach Social Studies in my sixth grade classroom. As the year progressed, I noticed Social Studies topics were taught in remarkably different ways. I observed students approach each new unit with enthusiasm, and then carefully noted the different student reactions as the units progressed. Through informal observations, I realized that certain lessons and activities were more appealing to my students than others. Specifically, most of my students appeared to thrive in lessons where they could actively perform for and among their classmates. After reading and reviewing the upcoming research-heavy *Passports to Understanding* unit, I wondered:
“How can I enrich the sixth grade Passports to Understanding unit, making it more active and engaging, while still meeting objectives and standards?”

Sub Wonderings

- How can simulations increase engagement and motivation in the Passports to Understanding unit?
- In what way can cooking teach a variety of social studies concepts to a group of diverse learners?
- In what way can simulations build community in my sixth grade classroom?
- How can technology be used to further promote engagement among sixth grade students in the Passports to Understanding unit?

Data Collection

Clear Description of Data Collection

I collected several different types of data before, during, and after my inquiry study in order to explore the ways I could enrich the Social Studies curriculum while still meeting state standards. In the “before” phase, I distributed surveys, conducted interviews, and researched best Social Studies teaching practices (See Appendix B for the Annotated Bibliography). This research influenced me to use a simulation as a means of enrichment. For the purpose of this paper, a “simulation” is defined as any lesson where students take on a specific role and complete jobs or tasks associated with that role. For the Passports to Understanding unit, I decided an Ethnic Cooking TV Show simulation would be the most effective avenue for enrichment. In this project, students would take on the role of Host, Cultural Expert, Technology Expert, Chef, or Director and would work collaboratively to research a country, select an ethnic recipe, and write a
spice. Then, students would film themselves cooking in the Teachers’ Lounge and would use *iMovie* technology to edit their footage and produce their TV Show. I collected data during and after this project to help explore some of my sub-wonderings.

**BEFORE**

Prior to implementing my inquiry, I collected a wide range of data in order to develop a compelling enrichment idea that would meet several Pennsylvania state standards. First, I designed and conducted a student survey to gain insight to my students’ lesson preferences. I asked students to rate previous Social Studies assignments and activities on a scale of one to five. Using the scale, students could easily express their likes and dislikes. Then, I provided space for students to write freely about the lessons and activities they enjoyed most and why (*See Appendix C for Student Survey #1*).

I also informally interviewed a few expert teachers. I knew my mentor’s teaching insight, combined with his first hand knowledge of our class, would be incredibly helpful in determining an appropriate educational project. An interview with the Social Studies Curriculum Support Teacher was also conducted, so I could learn the impact state standards have on the development of my district’s Social Studies curriculum (*See Appendix D for Interview Questions*).

To gain a better understanding of simulations, I spent two Social Studies periods engaging in a simulation with my class entitled, “Unequal Resources.” The lesson was designed to teach students about the world economy on a simpler scale. During this sixty-minute exercise, each student was a “Trade Minister” who worked to complete simple tasks simulating providing food, shelter, industry, clothes, and education for their
population. Groups traded, borrowed, and even stole materials in order to complete tasks. Following the simulation, I distributed a lesson reflection sheet, so I could gauge my students’ feelings towards the simulation. I also took anecdotal notes during the follow-up discussion to assess what they learned (See Appendix E for Unequal Resources Reflection Sheet).

DURING

During my inquiry project, I collected a large amount of data in order to determine the effect the Cooking TV Show simulation had on student engagement and learning. To start the project, I gave students a list of twenty country choices and had them circle the five countries they were most interested in studying. I suspected students might be more engaged if they were given the opportunity to research countries they selected. I also presented students with five different “role” choices, including Host, Lead Chef, Director, Technology Expert and Cultural Expert. Allowing students to rank their country and role preferences could help me gather information regarding my students’ interests, so I could create groups and assign roles students would enjoy (See Appendix F-H for Country Selection Worksheet, Role Explanation, and Country/Role Voting Sheet).

As students worked on researching and scriptwriting, I gathered video footage of students working cooperatively. I wanted to use my video as data to analyze my students’ level of interest, engagement, and time on task. I also recorded the number of 45-minute periods that my students spent working on various aspects of the project (See Appendix I for Time Sheet).
Student interviews were conducted during my inquiry project, so I could more precisely assess my students’ progress, thoughts, and feelings. I systematically selected three students based on prior levels of motivation and achievement in the classroom. For this inquiry, I defined “motivation” and “achievement” as interest in the subject and their prior grades in Social Studies. I selected three very different students to interview, so I would have three diverse viewpoints to analyze. I was especially interested to see if my harder-to-reach student was enjoying the project.

AFTER

Following my Inquiry, I collected artifacts of student work. Because of time constraints, I was unable to collect artifacts from all groups. From finished groups, I gathered samples of e-mails, note-taking sheets, and scripts that were shared through GoogleDocs. I also took pictures of the props they created and made a copy of the final iMovie TV episode to see the quality of their work and assess their progress (See Appendices J for Student Artifacts).

I distributed “Exit-Slips” to groups who completed filming, which asked them to reflect on their experience. I conducted follow-up interviews with the same three students, so they had an opportunity to comment on the simulation in retrospect. I especially wanted to know what students enjoyed about the project, what they learned from the experience, and what changes they would suggest for the future (See Appendix K for Exit Slip Worksheet).
Data Analysis

Steps Taken to Analyze the Data

BEFORE

The first student survey I distributed was very informative in determining which lessons and activities my students enjoyed most. Using their numerical rankings, I created a bar graph so I could easily identify patterns in their responses (See Appendix L for Student Survey 1 Analysis). I noticed more than half the class ranked the Harrisburg Field Trip and the Travel Agency PowerPoint a top ranking of 5, indicating they “loved” the activity. Approximately half the class also said they “loved” creating a skit/song for the PA unit and the Bill Project. Both the Travel Agency PowerPoint and the Bill Proposal Task were simulations and the script(songwriting activity was a performance-based task. This evidence showed that my students enjoyed active, authentic learning experiences.

The data gained through my teacher interviews was also very valuable. My mentor teacher’s passion for simulations, coupled with his suggestion to incorporate cooking into the curriculum, helped me generate stimulating lesson ideas. Together, we decided Inquiry 2 of the Passports to Understanding unit would be the best area to enrich. Analyzing my interview with the Curriculum Support Teacher was beneficial in helping me identify the most important standards that needed to be addressed. Research standards, basic geographic literacy standards, and reading/writing standards were deemed most important. Finally, both my mentor teacher and the Curriculum Support
Teacher said lessons in which students experience learning had high levels of student impact, thus active learning became a priority.

Analyzing and summarizing the books and articles from the library pushed me to further consider simulations. Articles written by teachers from across the country commented on simulations being able to teach a wide variety of standards. Articles also stated simulations promoted high levels of student participation.

I analyzed my students’ “Unequal Resources” simulation reflection sheet to determine what they learned. I also created a bar graph based on their responses showing their level of engagement and participation (See Appendix M for Unequal Resources Bar Graph). All students ranked their level of engagement and participation a three or higher (with 5 being the highest ranking), and the majority of the class claimed to have the highest level of participation possible (5). I also analyzed my students’ quotes during whole group discussion in the table in Appendix M. Their responses showed they learned something and enjoyed themselves, so I became eager to try a large-scale simulation in my room.

**DURING AND AFTER THE SIMULATION**

Using the country and role selection sheets, I analyzed my students’ preferences and created group and role placements. I experienced an abundance of information, as students wrote many side notes about what they wanted most. Some students wanted a certain country more than anything, while others were most passionate about their role choice. Three students even wrote their desire to be with certain friends. Based on my students’ country and selection sheets, I was able to form groups where all students
received one of their top two choices in the area deemed most important to them. My students’ reactions to the groups proved they were excited by the country, the role, or being with their friends. Not a single student complained, and in fact, many of them cheered when I displayed the PowerPoint showing their placements.

My video footage was analyzed using Studiocode video analysis software. I specifically identified footage displaying student engagement, with engagement being defined as student excitement as shown through raising hands, clapping, cheering, and positive statements. I also identified time off-task to help me see whether students were invested in working productively during work sessions. While the room was never quiet, I found students were on task the majority of the time. When students appeared to be off task, they were discussing more frivolous elements of their TV show. Many students, for example, spent a great deal of time selecting native phrases from their country like, “Bon Appetite” to incorporate into their show, so I determined this was not off-task behavior.

The three recorded “during” and “after” student interviews were also analyzed. In the “during” interviews, all students mentioned their excitement about cooking and filming. In the “after” interviews, all three students said they liked working together with their group. Students seemed happy that they got to work with friends and have a choice in the process.

The final step taken to analyze my data was to look at student artifacts. I analyzed student e-mails, note-taking sheets, GoogleDocs, and their final iMovies, so I could assess student work. I graded final projects based on a rubric assessing content, preparation, work ethic, and their presentation (See Appendix N for Cooking TV Show Rubric).
Students’ final projects and grades showed students met prescribed objectives. The rubric scores served as an important indicator of what students were able to do by the end of the unit.

**Explanation of Findings**

**Claim #1: Students with varying interests and abilities enjoyed the Cooking TV Show Simulation, and the cooking premise naturally encouraged self-motivation.**

In video footage, interviews, and student reflection sheets, the word “fun” was regularly used to describe this project, showing that students enjoyed themselves. I have several video clips of students laughing and saying, “this is so fun” and “we shouldn’t be having this much fun.” I also have hours of footage depicting children laughing or smiling on camera, showing their enjoyment.

Student follow-up interviews most clearly showed that students of varying levels of motivation and ability enjoyed the project. The three students I selected to interview all claimed to enjoy some aspect of the project. Two of the students said they enjoyed the whole process, though the last student said he only really liked “the cooking part and tasting the food”. Reflection sheets from these students also support the claim that diverse students enjoyed this simulation experience. For example, one student wrote, “I liked that we could have fun while learning.” Another wrote, “It was fun filming each other and making the show (Especially when we messed up!).” Lastly, when analyzing the fourteen completed exit slips, half of the students wrote there was no “worst” thing.

Since students enjoyed the Cooking TV Show simulation, it provided a natural setting for student motivation. My observations showed students willingly spent free
periods (like Quiet Study and Homeroom) researching and working on their scripts. Furthermore, two students approached me asking if they could make a banner to put in the show. A group of two other students asked if they could design the logo for our aprons. It is clear that students’ excitement for this project pushed them to take on these additional roles.

Another huge indicator of self-motivation occurred during the first week of filming. Students took initiative to take the recipes home and cook with their families. Without my prompting, the Italy group came to school one Thursday with a fully cooked pizza. A student from the group ran into the classroom exclaiming, “We brought the pizza! Does this mean we get to cook tomorrow?” Since this group was obviously ready, I carved out time the following day to film in the Teachers’ Lounge. That Friday morning, the Italy group was excited and prepared to cook, and to my surprise, a student from the Greece group brought in a tray of Greek pastries hoping to cook later that day. The fact that this particular student made Greek pastries was especially surprising, since this student is typically difficult to motivate. Each week, my mentor and I struggle to get him to turn in homework assignments, but his excitement to film the Cooking Show was readily apparent.

Claim #2: Regular verbal and technological communication played an important role in developing this project, while also promoting cooperative learning and building community in our classroom.

Verbal and technological communication among students, teachers, and parents was necessary to complete this simulation. The students spent most periods verbally
conversing to determine appropriate recipes and to develop their scripts. Students also worked collaboratively through *GoogleDocs*, where they could work and edit their scripts simultaneously.

I also relied on verbal and technological communication throughout this process. I created and shared a *GoogleDoc* with students listing online resources, and encouraged students to view the sources and add to the collection. I also had students share their scripts with me through *GoogleDocs*, so I could make corrections and comments. This was an easy way for me to view student progress and make suggestions. Lastly, I regularly e-mailed students so I could see who was bringing what on cooking day. The e-mails were an efficient communication tool and greatly helped with whole-group organization.

I communicated with parents about the project through an online Classroom Update, which is posted bi-weekly on my mentor teacher’s website. I shared the class’ progress with parents and the purpose of the show. I also communicated with parents through a letter further explaining the inquiry and asking for their support in supplying some ingredients and materials *(See Appendix O for Parent Letter)*. This way, parents were involved in the learning process and could provide support from home.

The constant communication and cooperative learning aspect tested and then strengthened our classroom community. At the beginning of this experience, teamwork sometimes proved to be a difficult challenge. Students were dependent on each other, and two of my five groups struggled to agree on recipe selections, or how they would go about writing the script. Video evidence and continued observation of these groups
showed students working through their problems, as they eventually found ways to work together to create a final product. A student in one of the struggling groups wrote in his reflection, “You got to **earn** teamwork. It was really fun.” This insightful comment helps show the progress that was made within his group.

Students in the other three groups verbalized how much they enjoyed working together with group members during the Cooking Show simulation. Since students experienced choice in selecting their group, many students worked in a group with one or two friends. It is interesting to note, however, that this simulation also built the entire classes’ sense of community. Not only were students interested in what was happening within their group, they were curious about other groups as well. One day, five students approached me to ask when they could watch the other groups’ *iMovie*. Additionally, an e-mail from a student said, “Okay that’s good!!!!! Yeah I really want to see *****,** ****,** ****,** and *****’s group’s cooking show!!!!!!! I can’t wait to go!!” This clearly shows her excitement to not only cook herself, but to see the work of others as well. Lastly, when each group finished cooking, the group got to explain their food dish to the class and distribute samples. During this time, students could show-off their work and share their cooking creations with classmates.

**Claim #3: The Cooking TV Show simulation took more time to plan and implement, yet it was able to meet geography, writing, speaking, listening, and technology standards.**

When I first discovered instruction would need to take place outside of Social Studies, I was concerned that I would be taking valuable academic learning time away
from my students. Students worked during Social Studies periods, and also spent several homeroom periods working on the project. Additionally, students told me they chose to spend quiet studies working on their scripts. When looking at the number of standards I met, however, I felt instantly relieved. My students incorporated the same amount of information they would put on a poster, in a big book, or in a brochure, but they did so in a more unique, creative way. Moreover, this simulation was able to meet standards and objectives beyond what the original unit was designed to meet.

My lesson plans showed geography, research, reading, writing, family and consumer science, technology, speaking, and listening standards were addressed during this unit (See Appendix P for List of Addressed Standards). Students met research standards by selecting a topic to research and using informational texts. Each group had information on culture, geography, climate, people, and history in their scripts, and used higher order thinking skills to discuss how these things impact a country’s cuisine. My students’ scripts clearly show reading and writing standards have been met. They incorporated factual information into the scripts, yet wrote them in a very entertaining way. They included stage directions and camera angles as well.

In student interviews, students also suggested their learning extended outside the Social Studies curriculum. One student said, “We just took our technology test, so it is important, and we definitely learned more about using technology.” Students learned to use flip cams, tri-pods and iMovie HD when engaging in this assignment. They also used their knowledge of GoogleDocs, e-mail, and typing skills to complete the tasks. Family and Consumer Sciences standards were met through the cooking component.
Speaking and listening standards were perhaps the most obvious standards that were met. Students had to conference with each other to develop ideas and come to consensus on what could be appropriately filmed. I had many conversations with students about the need to make eye contact with the camera, speak loudly and clearly, and to appear energetic on camera. Their final products show they did an excellent job!

**Reflections and Implications for Future Practice**

In completing this inquiry study, I discovered the great importance of planning ahead and being flexible. Initially, I hoped my enrichment project would occur earlier in the school year, but the unpredictability of planning altered my plans. Also, when creating the unit, I found myself regularly readjusting plans based on my students’ progress and lack of time.

I learned first-hand the trade-offs teachers make when implementing a large-scale simulation in their classroom. A great amount of in and out of class time is needed, along with an abundance of passion and planning energy. In the end, however, I felt my efforts were well worth the cost. In the future, I would love to do another Social Studies simulation in my classroom. I learned simulations provide a unique, memorable opportunity for students to take responsibility for a role and be actively engaged in the learning process. They also add an element of excitement to the classroom, and they certainly made teaching more fun.

Of course, my inquiry doesn’t stop here. I am still wondering how I might complete this project if I was the only teacher in the classroom. Many times, my mentor teacher facilitated work time, while I took a group of four or five students to the
Teachers’ Lounge to film. Without his assistance, this project may not have been as successful. In the future, perhaps I could partner with another teacher who would be able to help manage students as I filmed with a group. Another option would be to have my students silently read in the hall outside of the Teachers’ Lounge, so I could monitor my entire class at once. With some collaboration and additional planning, I believe this project has the potential to be successful in a single teacher classroom.

I also now wonder what place simulations have in other subject areas. In what way can simulations promote engagement and motivation in math and science? Already, I have been brainstorming simulation ideas in these curricular areas. I also continue to wonder the effect simulations have on student learning. During my study, I tried to measure student learning, but I feel even more data is needed in order to make accurate claims. Nonetheless, I am excited for a teaching future in which I feel comfortable enriching units to provide unique learning opportunities for my students. When implementing a carefully planned simulation, I know I can increase motivation and engagement, while still meeting a variety of Pennsylvania State standards and objectives.
Appendix A: Inquiry Brief

Kristin Sterns  
February 24, 2010

Inquiry Brief

I. Context

Mount Nittany Middle School is located in the rural University town of State College, Pennsylvania. This public school opened in 2001 and is designed to serve grades six through eight. Mount Nittany Middle School is unique in that it offers a wide variety of student resources and extra-curricular activities. It also has a very strong parent organization. The school’s population is largely white, yet there is some variation in socio-economic status.

My classroom is a sixth-grade room located in the sixth grade hallway. Keeping the sixth grade classrooms together helps create a sense of community in a non-threatening environment, where students have the year to slowly adjust to the middle school setting. Students in my homeroom are with me for most of the day, but gain independence traveling to different classrooms for science, math and specials, including art, music, world language and life arts. Having my homeroom students for the majority of the day provides us with ample time to build a tight-knit community of learners.

In my room, there are eleven boys and twelve girls, ranging in age from eleven to twelve years old. It is most obvious that my students are diverse social beings with strong personalities. Many of them are extremely outspoken and highly motivated individuals. I have nine strong leaders who are very vocal and persuasive. These are students who always play a large role in classroom discussion and are eager to voice their opinions. I also have four shyer students, who work hard but try to remain out of the spotlight. Typically, my students are all friendly and respectful, and they have few problems when working cooperatively with others.

These students vary greatly in academic levels, as half of them receive additional learning services. Since my inquiry focuses largely on Social Studies instruction, it is especially important to note my students’ diverse Reading and Writing ability levels. State College Area School District integrates the Social Studies and Language Arts curriculum as much as possible, so thematic units of study often require students to read authentic trade books to gather and learn information. Out of my class of twenty-three learners, nine of them are reading above grade level and attend learning enrichment during our reading period. Additionally, three of my students are below grade level and leave reading to attend Title 1 Reading support. According to District Writing Exams, seven students perform above grade level, twelve students perform at grade level, and four students are currently writing below grade level. Two of the students writing below grade level are receiving Title 1 support in writing.

Lastly, two of my students (one boy and one girl) have Individualized Education Plans and can be greater behavioral challenges. The girl in my room sometimes struggles to remain focused and demonstrate appropriate classroom behavior. The boy in my class is incredibly gifted, but often calls out and can be a greater behavioral challenge during group work and whole group discussion.
II. Rationale

Throughout the school year, I have been very interested in the social studies curriculum. Being a social studies enthusiast, I was eager to observe and then teach social studies in my classroom. As the year progressed, I noticed a wide variety of social studies topics were being taught in remarkably different ways. I observed students approach each new unit with enthusiasm, and then carefully observed the different reactions as the units progressed.

In the beginning of the year, reading *Iqbal* by Francesco D’Amamo and holding “silent discussions” on a web-based forum excited students while prompting collaboration. Students seemed thrilled to use technology during the lesson and often begged for more time to respond to classmates on the forum. When the *Iqbal* unit concluded, we transitioned to the Pennsylvania unit. Students had a great deal of prior knowledge about Pennsylvania and were excited to share the information they learned in fourth grade. In sixth grade, this unit’s main objectives are to introduce students to a textbook, and to teach them how to take notes and answer questions. The first few Pennsylvania lessons were well accepted by our students, but I soon realized these lessons were unable to meet the interests of my lively and outspoken class. The students vocalized their disinterest in reading the textbook and note-taking and answering questions. They expressed their interest in learning the information and then applying it in some creative way.

My mentor and I often discussed ways we could make the lessons more active and enjoyable for our particular students. We craved lessons that provide the opportunity for our students to share their diverse and unique talents. We wanted them to be fully engrossed in each lesson. We were able to incorporate two simulations into the existing curriculum, including writing and presenting legislative bills in the auditorium. Students spent three weeks drafting a bill they would like to see enacted by either the school district or the national government. Students voted on the best bills, which eventually moved to the Vice Principal for an executive decision. At last, this seemed to cater to our student’s interests. I had a hunch that this experience engaged and motivated my students, and may have brought about a higher quality of work. Following this experience, I wondered what effect simulations have on student motivation. Then, I questioned the impact motivation might have on student achievement and learning.

After reading and reviewing our next social studies unit, *Passports to Understanding*, I began contemplating ways I could meet lesson objectives in an even more entertaining, hands-on way. This lesson focuses on researching and studying countries around the world, and then students are supposed to create a travel brochure on a country of their choice. After much deliberation, I realized I could effectively explore my wonderings while enriching this portion of the upcoming *Passports to Understanding* unit. I wanted to teach through a simulation, so I could then systematically research the effects it has on motivation and achievement. I also toyed with the idea of incorporating technology into the simulation, based on my student’s apparent interest in all things relating to gadgets and computers. On-going conversations between my mentor and me led to the shared wondering, “In what way can a cooking show simulation teach social studies concepts to our students?” I suddenly imagined students cooking, videotaping,
and tasting a variety of ethnic recipes, while studying how they relate to the country’s culture, climate, and geographic location. Using iMovie technology to create a class cooking show could make the experience even more real and enticing for my students.

III. Main-Wondering and Sub-Wonderings

- How can I enrich the sixth grade Passports to Understanding unit, making it more active and engaging, while still meeting objectives and standards?
  - In what way can cooking teach a variety of social studies concepts to a group of diverse learners?
  - How can simulations increase motivation and engagement in our students?
  - How can technology be used to further promote engagement among sixth grade students in the Passports to Understanding unit?
  - What role does motivation have on learning and achievement in the Passports to Understanding unit?

IV. Data Collection

Throughout my inquiry, I plan on using a variety of data collection methods to help me answer my many wonderings. Each of these methods will help me gather evidence so I can deduce accurate claims about simulations, motivation, and learning. Data collection will occur before, during and after students engage in the Passports to Understanding simulation, which will take place during the second phase of the unit, termed Inquiry II. The following data collection tools will be used:

**Student Surveys**

Student surveys will help me further understand my student’s feelings towards their social studies curriculum. I am obviously very interested in my students’ prior engagement levels and how this affected their learning. I will first create a student survey asking students to rate a variety of social studies assignments and activities on a preference scale of one to five. Then, an open-ended question will ask students to elaborate on their favorite assignments or activities, explaining why they enjoyed each one. This will give me further insight into their preferences, and follow-up interviews can be conducted to gain an even better understanding. I am hoping that in retrospect, students can effectively assess which lessons were fun, and which lessons were educational. I can also match student interest level with their grades on previous assignments, and see if any pattern exists. This information will help me further construct my lessons and formulate ideas for enrichment. It will also help me determine if my hunches about curriculum and learning are correct.

During the “enriched” Passports to Understanding unit, I will create another survey asking students to gauge their current level of motivation. I will also ask students to try and self-assess their work ethic and information learned. At the end of the unit, I will assess the students’ attitudes and content knowledge. I hope these responses, coupled with other forms of evidence, will help me formulate answers to my wonderings.

**Interviews**

Student interviews will also serve as an important piece of evidence for my inquiry. Interviews can help me more clearly assess my students’ thoughts and feelings.
Face to face conversation may be more accurate than student surveys, but will also be more time consuming. For this reason, I plan on interviewing a few select individuals from my room at various stages of instruction. I will interview students before any social studies “enrichment” occurs, asking what motivates them and which social studies lessons they most enjoyed throughout schooling. As the simulation occurs, I will interview these same students, asking them to honestly assess the lessons. Finally, I will interview students at the end of the unit, so they can share any concluding thoughts.

Students will be selected based on current levels of motivation and achievement in the classroom. “Motivation” will be defined as the student’s observed interest in the subject and time on task during lessons. A student’s level of participation can also be an indicator of motivation, but I will be careful not to use just that. “Achievement” will be based on students’ prior grades in Social Studies. I will select three very different students, so I have three diverse viewpoints. I also want to see whether a simulation can change all students’ motivation, including those who are typically harder to reach.

Finally, teacher interviews can help me gain insight into the beliefs of my colleagues. I can ask teachers which lessons they enjoy most and why. Then, I can ask what they believe engages sixth grade students, and which lessons they think are most successful in terms of student impact. From these interviews, I can gain insight into what they believe motivates learners and can obtain other enrichment ideas.

**Artifacts**

Samples of student work will be collected and assessed to see if students are meeting objectives and standards. These will lend insight into the quality of their learning, and their ability to use their research in a meaningful way. Randomized work samples will be collected, so I have a valid representation of student work.

Artifacts that can be collected include any graphic organizers my students use when researching their country, along with the raw footage and final versions of their cooking TV show.

**Observations**

I plan on using a number of note-taking sheets to help me collect observations of my students as they are working through the simulation. I can observe time on task using a simple check-sheet, or can take anecdotal notes on different students. These notes can include more elaborate descriptions of student activity, or can include student quotes speaking to levels of engagement, motivation, or learning.

V. Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Week 1</strong></th>
<th>February 1-5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Finalize Wonderings</td>
<td>- Finalize Wonderings</td>
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<td>- Create Sub-Wonderings</td>
<td>- Create Sub-Wonderings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Brainstorm Data Collection Methods for Sub-Wonderings</td>
<td>- Brainstorm Data Collection Methods for Sub-Wonderings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Create Student Survey</td>
<td>- Create Student Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Collect Research for Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>- Collect Research for Annotated Bibliography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>February 8-12th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Write Inquiry Brief</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Distribute Student Survey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Interview 3 students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Consult a “Social Studies” Expert</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Edit Inquiry Brief</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Write Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>February 15-19th</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Make sense of Student Survey data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Design interview questions for students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Design interview questions for “expert”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Observe students, looking for 3 diverse students to interview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Edit Inquiry Brief and Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>February 22-26</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- E-mail PDA Final Draft of Inquiry Brief and Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Select and Interview Students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Interview Expert Teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Start selecting countries and picking recipes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Select appropriate websites/books for students to use throughout unit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Begin Planning Kick-Off Lesson to Inquiry 2 of the Passports Unit (where my inquiry will largely take place)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>March 1-5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Send home parent letter describing the enriched Passports to Understanding unit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Observe students during social studies lesson simulations (look for quotes, levels of participation)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Continue selecting appropriate material for students, planning lessons, and organizing materials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Develop Interview Questions for Students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 6</th>
<th>March 8-12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Spring Break</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 7</th>
<th>March 15-19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Data Analysis: look for patterns, themes in data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Take pictures of student work (artifacts)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Interview Students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Draft Second Student Survey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Develop Interview Questions for Students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| Week 8 | March 22-26 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 9      | March 29- April 2 | - Analyze Data: look for patterns, themes  
          |              | - Draft Inquiry Paper  
          |              | - Administer Student Survey (reflecting on Passports Unit- Inquiry 2)  
          |              | - Final Interviews with Students |
| 10     | April 5-9   | - Draft/Edit Inquiry Paper  
          |              |                                                   |
| 11     | April 12-16 | - E-mail Inquiry Paper Draft to PDA  
          |              | - Peer Edit Inquiry Paper |
| 12     | April 19-23 | - Revise Paper  
          |              | - Prepare for Inquiry Conference |
| 13     | April 26-30 | - Finalize Inquiry Paper  
          |              | - Submit Hard Copy to Grader  
          |              | - Revise Draft and Abstract  
          |              | - Prepare for Conference |
| 14     | May 3-8     | - Prepare for Conference  
          |              | - Present at Conference! |

This book stresses the importance of carefully choosing and developing clear objectives before planning social studies lessons. Setting expectations at the start of the planning process will help the teacher create lessons that meet objectives. This book also focuses on the value of creating objectives other than “knowledge objectives.” Knowledge objectives focus on content and are often stressed most in school; however there is tremendous value in also creating skill and attitudinal objectives. Skill objectives include critical thinking and problem solving. Attitudinal objectives are more long-term, focusing on instilling positive attitudes in students so they become involved, interested, and self-motivated to learn the subject matter. These ideas align with my own philosophy of good social studies teaching, and I plan on developing knowledge, skill, and attitudinal objectives before planning the Passports to Understanding unit.


This newspaper article focuses around the question, “Can a marriage between food and traditional academic scholarship really work?” It explores a University’s attempt to offer graduate classes centered on studying food. The program extended the study of food to include its impact on the development and complexities of civilizations. The article explored all sides of the topic and suggested that serious study of food could teach a wide range of social studies concepts, including history, folklore, anthropology, and even ethnobotany. My inquiry asks similar questions, as I hope to use food with my sixth graders to promote the learning of diverse social studies concepts. Studying ways different country’s cultures, climate, and geography impact their cuisine can provide a rich context for student learning to occur.

This article focuses on an eighth grade English teacher’s struggle to have real, authentic learning take place in her classroom. After trying a myriad of strategies, she took time to reflect on her own learning and realized she learned the most when she had the opportunity to be active and imaginative. She transferred this philosophy to her history teachings of the Civil War. After much planning, she created an opportunity for students to engage in an authentic Civil War simulation. Students invented authentic personas from that time period and wrote letters to unknown individuals in the class. Authentic role-play prompted excitement and a feeling of wonder among her students, while also teaching them important history concepts. I thought this was an inspiring piece that gave me several ideas for curriculum development. It also pushed me to see the value in imaginative and authentic learning, and gave me hope to continue looking for original ways to prompt student learning.


This teacher-resource book discusses the ten thematic strands of social studies. For each strand, there is a list of children’s trade books along with a brief synopsis of the book. I focused my attention on the People, Places, and Environments and the Global Connections strand, since they best relate to my inquiry development. This information showed the value of giving students authentic trade books to research from, and prompted me to check out a number of cookbooks and food atlas books from our school’s library. I also gave special attention to Chapter 3 of this book, which explains the importance of catering lessons to student’s multiple intelligences. It reviewed Howard Gardner’s eight learning styles and offered ideas on how these can be incorporated into literature response activities. Since our social studies curriculum is largely literature-based, books will be used throughout this unit during mini-lessons and as student resources. As I incorporate these trade books into the unit, I will keep Howard Gardner’s ideas in mind.


This book presents many ways to create an inquiry based social studies classroom. It is full of unique lesson ideas where authentic learning can thrive. Unit 1 focuses on building research skills, which is one of the major objectives in the Passports to Understanding Unit. Unit 5, “Understanding Our World,” was also particularly interesting, since it provided many ideas for studying countries and geography. I also took notice to the format of each lesson and the many modifications and extensions that existed. Separate sections of the lessons were centered on how to meet the needs of special-needs children. This will be particularly important in the lessons I create for the Passports to Understanding Unit, and I will use these ideas when planning my lessons. Differentiating instruction in this way will hopefully help the unit be more meaningful and appropriate for all of my diverse learners.

http://www.highlightsteachers.com/archives/articles/using_literaturerelated_cooking_experiences_to_foster_the_development_of_communication_skills.html

This online *Highlights* article clearly describes the many benefits of incorporating food into the school curriculum. According to the article, cooking in school can meet a wide number of learning goals, including building student interest and catering to children’s diverse needs. Short examples in the article show food is able to provide an interesting, meaningful context for students, where students can learn through different modalities. It can also be a cross-curricular learning experience, where students learn new cooking vocabulary, cooperation, critical thinking, sequence, and of course researching skills. These standards are all important for me to address in the Passports to Understanding Unit, and based on this article, cooking would be an excellent, stimulating way to meet these standards.


http://www.ifood.tv/video/the_country_cooking_of_france

This brief two-minute video clip was created to showcase a French recipe book created by France Ruffenach. This book is described as being “rich in content, not just recipes”. The video most clearly shows how recipes are greatly intertwined with the countries they come from. The recipes of France, for example, can tell stories about the country of France and the growers that make the food. I think this is important to share with my students because I want them to embody the same “rich in content” mindset when creating their own cooking show. Additionally, this video provides exceptional pictures of French food from a number of artistic, flattering angles. I think sharing this model (and others) would be an interesting way to kick off the Passports to Understanding Unit. Finally, this video also shows students the many roles they can take on when we create our cooking show. Students who don’t want to get in front of the camera can share their artistry through taking pictures of the final product, which can be added to into the *iMovie* we create.


This adult cookbook provides a number of excellent recipes from around the world. Even more importantly, it contains detailed information on each country that the dishes are from. All countries have informative sections such as, “A taste of history,”
“spice foods,” “specialties” and more. The book also shows how the region effects which foods are able to be grown. I think my higher-level readers will enjoy using this resource to discover how food affects a country’s culture, history, and daily living. This resource will help students see the connection between foods and a country’s history and geography. It is a fantastic teaching tool, and using this book aligns with my desire to give students access to a great number of authentic trade books throughout this unit.


This book offers a number of creative, hands-on social studies lessons for students of all ages. It is full of unique ideas covering a wide variety of topics. Chapter 3 was particularly interesting because it relates directly to the Passports to Understanding Unit. The chapter is entitled, “Tasting” and shares a lesson where a teacher took students on a “cultural and culinary journey to Italy”. This lesson is intended for elementary and middle school students, which is perfect for my inquiry. The lesson reinforced my belief that studying food is an excellent and interesting way to study various aspects of countries around the world, including culture, language, geography, and climate. The various activities and the large number of learning outcomes were particularly impressive. With this lesson as an exemplar, I became very aware of what my lessons need to include. Specifically, I realized that additions like music, maps, posters, and any other props relating to the country would help make the unit come alive. Finally, I saw how easily language arts could be incorporated into the social studies curriculum by having students describe the food they cooked using all five of their senses.


This TV show preview features professional chef and cookbook author Marcela Valladolid. Mexican Made Easy is an increasingly popular TV show on the Food Network that teaches viewers how to make authentic, healthy, and easy to cook Mexican meals. This video can serve as another example of what our own classroom’s final product could be. I think it is especially appropriate since our students just recently finished studying Mexico as a class. Although the preview is only thirty seconds long, it gives students an example of upbeat, enjoyable cooking. It also shows Marcela using creative, fun descriptive language to explain the food to her audience. This is something I want to focus on with my students, since it will surely help make our own cooking show come alive.


This inclusive, informative children’s cookbook offers a number of wonderful recipes appropriate for my students. The recipes are even labeled based on difficulty and number of ingredients used. This book will definitely be helpful in picking recipes that my students and I could realistically make. In addition to stating the ingredients and the directions, each recipe comes with a blurb about the dish and why it is popular in the country where it originated. This will serve as an excellent resource for my students to use and select recipes from. Additionally, it is written on an approximate fourth grade reading level, so even my lowest students should not have difficulty interpreting and gathering information from the text.
Appendix C- Student Survey 1

**Student Survey**

Rate each social studies assignment/activity on a scale of 1-5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Strongly Disliked It</th>
<th>Disliked It</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Liked It</th>
<th>Loved It</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Iqbal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Scoodle for Online Discussion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Pennsylvania Textbook</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding to Questions in Textbook</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating A Skit/Song for PA Unit</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating and Presenting Bill Project</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel Agency PowerPoint</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrisburg Field Trip</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which assignments/activities did you enjoy the most so far? Why?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Appendix D- Teacher Interview Questions
CST Questions:

What makes a good social studies lesson?

Which social studies lessons do you enjoy teaching the most and why?

What do you believe engages sixth grade students?

Which lessons do you think are most successful in terms of student impact?

What are your thoughts on using simulations in the classroom to teach social studies concepts and ideas?

What impact do the Pennsylvania state standards have on curriculum development? What standards are most important to address in Inquiry 2 of *Passports to Understanding*?

Appendix E- Unequal Resources Reflection Sheet
Unequal Resources Travel Log

1. Answer one of the following…
   I enjoyed this activity because
   I disliked this activity because
   I was surprised by

2. How did this simulation relate to the real world?

3. Rate your level of engagement in this lesson:
   1   2   3   4   5

4. Rate your level of participation in this lesson:
   1   2   3   4   5

Appendix F- Country Selection Sheet
Name: ______________________________

Circle your top five choices. Star (*) your first choice. If your choice isn’t on the list, add it to the bottom where it says “other”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other: ______________________________

Appendix G- Role Explanations
TV Show Roles

Everyone will be a researcher, plus one of the following:

- Host
- Lead Chef
- Technology Expert
- Director
- Cultural Expert

Host:

The Host is responsible for bringing life to the big screen. The Host should be a vocal and energetic person who doesn’t get nervous in front of the camera. The Host must practice reading the script and can work to memorize lines, although cue cards can also be made. Prior to filming, the Host is a major component of the scriptwriting process, ensuring that the lines are fun, authentic, and informative.

Lead Chef:

The Lead Chef will serve as the Host’s hands in the kitchen. This person will measure ingredients and will help the Host with any real cooking. After all, it’s hard to talk and cook at the same time! It is the Lead Chef’s responsibility to know the recipe inside and out. Prior to filming, the Lead Chef will spend time searching for the perfect recipe that is both easy and reasonable (meaning there aren’t too many ingredients!). The Lead Chef will work with the Host to develop the script and will add stage directions.

Technology Expert:

The Technology Expert will be responsible for filming the TV show and using assorted technological devices. This behind-the-scenes expert will have to set up tripods and video cameras. This person must be willing to reshoot scenes and have a creative eye. Still photographs of the food may also be taken to add an artistic effect. Unique camera angles are a must! Once the filming is complete, this person will be the driving force behind putting the iMovie TV show together. Experience with computers (and perhaps iMovie) is helpful!

Director:
The *Director* is in charge of making sure everything runs smoothly. This person will work to ensure that their group members are organized on filming day and that all ingredients are ready. The *Director* will also call the shots as to whether a scene needs to be re-shot or re-worked. The *Director* may choose to pick culturally appropriate music to add to the set, along with posters, flags, or maps. The *Director* will work closely with all group members, and will greatly help the *Technology Expert* when putting together the final *iMovie*.

**Cultural Expert/Taste-Tester:**

The *Cultural Expert’s* job includes tasting the food on camera and describing it to the audience. Therefore, this person *must* be willing to eat the food made by the group! Since people watching the show at home cannot actually taste the food, this person needs to use rich descriptive language to explain its taste and texture. This can be incredibly difficult, so a well-written script is necessary! The *Cultural Expert* will help the *Host* and the *Lead Chef* produce an accurate, informative script.
**Name:** ____________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank the following countries in order of preference (from 1 to 8):</th>
<th>Rank the following “roles” in order of preference (from 1 to 5):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>_____ France</td>
<td>_____ Host</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ Greece</td>
<td>_____ Head Chef</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ Egypt</td>
<td>_____ Technology Expert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ Russia</td>
<td>_____ Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ Italy</td>
<td>_____ Cultural Expert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ Jamaica</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ Australia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ Germany</td>
<td>*Any other notes?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Any other notes?*

___________________________________

___________________________________

___________________________________

Appendix I- Time Sheet
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number of Periods (45 minutes)</th>
<th>Brief Description of Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3/30/10</td>
<td>1 Period</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/5/10</td>
<td>1 Period</td>
<td>Sharing Clips and Starting Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/13/10</td>
<td>1 Period</td>
<td>Researching/Answering Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/15/10</td>
<td>1 Period</td>
<td>Students were encouraged to begin script-writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/16/10</td>
<td>1 Period (Reading)</td>
<td>Used reading period to continue scriptwriting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/19/10</td>
<td>2 Periods (SS Block)</td>
<td>Work on Script/ Start iMovie, Make Materials List</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/21/10</td>
<td>1 period</td>
<td>Work Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/23/10</td>
<td>1 Period</td>
<td>Work Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/27/10</td>
<td>2 periods (Double)</td>
<td>Russia group cooks! Rest of the class continues rehearsing in room. Also make props</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/29/10</td>
<td>1 period</td>
<td>Jamaica group cooks! Rest of class continues working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/30/10</td>
<td>2 periods (Double)</td>
<td>Italy group cooks! Rest of class is in Science</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix J- Student Artifacts
“Spicing Up” Social Studies 38

Scripts

Google docs  Host: Preeti! And welcome to channel Updated 4/21/10 2:27 PM by KRISTIN STERNS  Saved  Share

Cultural Expert: Mmmmmmm! It’s so good. It’s like crepes but so much better! Our France group will not be happy to hear this! -KRISTIN STERNS 4/21/10 12:28 PM
They’re so thin and light. The texture melts in my mouth.

Cultural Expert: This dish is very popular in Russia as a breakfast and is often topped with jams, jellies, cream, chocolate, sour cream, and much more. This recipe was passed down through Russian generations for years.

Host: In Russia there is little amounts of warm weather. This is because it is located in the north, so Russia often cooks warm food. Oh I think it’s time for a commercial break.

Commercial starts:

Man on couch: Where should we go for our vacation?
Boy: I don’t know. Pops.
(frisky flies through window)
Man: It says come to Russia- hey there’s a speck of dirt on it (he rubs it)
(Poof a genie flies out) Creative! We can even add special effects in (movie :) -KRISTIN STERNS 4/21/10 12:29 PM
Genie: how may I help you
Boy: We want to go to Russia!
Genie: Okay
(Poof- they go outside to “Russia”)
Boy: What a beautiful place! Look, we’re on Red Square! Look at the cool people with their awesome hats on! Can probably show an Internet picture here so the audience gets a better sense of what it is. Also, explain what it is a bit. -KRISTIN STERNS 4/21/10 12:29 PM
Genie: My magic is nothing compared to the magic of Russia!
(end)

You need a welcome back to the show! Say something like, “We are now enlivening our wonderful Russian dish, blini. You all can be sitting at a table eating it. It’s not too difficult to cook, and with some practice, those of you at home can make it too! Then you can say hope you enjoyed the show...” -KRISTIN STERNS 4/21/10 12:36 PM

Google docs  Jamaican Cooking Show Script Updated 4/23/10 9:54 AM by LENA HELLER  Saved  Share

Good use of information! Hopefully you can try to make the punch sometime at home, so you can master how much of each spice/sure you need to put in. It wasn’t clear in your script. It looks like you really thought this through. Are you interested in creating a commercial? (it’s not necessary, but may be helpful) I can’t wait to see it in action! -KRISTIN STERNS 4/19/10 2:59 PM

YES, LENA, LETS MAKE A COMMERCIAL!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

(Bob Marley is softly playing in the background, creating a lively, laid back Caribbean atmosphere.)

Host: Eig dere, and welcome to Channel 118’s Cooking Around the World: Jamaica! I’m your host, Lena, and this is our cook, Megan!
Hmm... -KRISTIN STERNS 4/19/10 2:49 PM

Cook: Hi Lena! Today we will be making Spiced Punch, a tek Jamaican drink! What does “tek” mean? Please write out the definition. In (movie, we can display the definition on the screen to help our audience:) It will be a nice effect. -KRISTIN STERNS 4/19/10 2:49 PM

(The definition of Tek [fabulous] scrolls across bottom of screen)

Host: Jessica, will you tell us more about Jamaica and our drink? (Motions towards her general direction)

(Camera pans to Jessica)

Cultural Expert: Sure, Lena! Jamaica is located in the Caribbean Sea, near Haiti and the Dominican Republic. The Caribbean Sea is nestled between North and South America, also known as Central America. Great! I am envisioning using the (movie maps special effect here... -KRISTIN STERNS 4/19/10 2:52 PM
Jamaica is a big tourist hot spot! They have a population of over two million six hundred eighty nine thousand! Their capital is a city called Kingston, but the tourists tend to stay by the miles and miles of luxurious beach. Although the national language is English, they have created a slang language called Patois, a cross between English and Spanish. Good research! -KRISTIN STERNS 4/19/10 2:53 PM
There is a very warm, tropical climate, which allows them to grow many tropical fruits. We will be using some of these fruits in our drink! Perfect. -KRISTIN STERNS 4/19/10 2:53 PM

(Camera pans back to Lena and Megan.)

Transcript was taken from ed.google.analysts.com.
GoogleDoc Resource List

General Resources for Food Dishes:

http://www.globalgourmet.com/destinations/
A fantastic starting point! This website includes recipes, customs, influences, and more.

http://www.cliffordwright.com/raw/food/topics/
A generic food history site that is perfect when first starting your search! Contains recipes and food histories by search-able countries.

More Specific Pages (in alphabetical order by country):

FRANCE
This is an information-packed site explaining the history of French cuisine and the regional influences on French food.
Read the bulleted points! They may be nice “tips” to include in your diet.

GREECE
http://www.greeklandscapes.com/travel/food.html
This website highlights a number of Greek food dishes. It explores restaurants and atmospheres as well.
http://www.greekfood.com/basics/index.htm
If your recipe includes olives, olive oil, or bread– read this!

ITALY
http://www.gonnafly.com/italian_food/italian_food.htm

Student-Made Banner

![Student-Made Banner](image1)

Student Made Apron

![Student Made Apron](image2)
Appendix K- Exit Slip Worksheet

Country: ________________

Cooking TV Show “Exit Slip”

Best Thing About Cooking Show (What you liked, learned, etc.):

_________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________

Worst Thing:

_________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________

Hardest Thing:

_________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________

Other Comments Relating to the Project:

_________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________
Appendix L- Student Survey 1 Chart Analysis

First Student Survey: Data Collected on Monday, February 15, 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Studies Lessons/Activities</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Iqbal</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Scoodle for...</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading...</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding to...</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating A Skit/Song...</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating and...</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel Agency...</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrisburg Field Trip</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key:

1- Strongly Disliked It
2- Disliked It
3- Not Sure
4- Liked It
5- Loved It
Appendix M- Unequal Resources Bar Graph/Notes Chart

### Unequal Resources Response Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Level of Engagement</th>
<th>Level of Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Anecdotal Notes (Taken During Whole Group Discussion)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>RAW DATA</th>
<th>COOKED DATA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/5/2010</td>
<td>“World one did a lot of arguing, whereas world two worked together.”</td>
<td>Students made comparisons between two simulated worlds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/5/2010</td>
<td>“At the end, we could help each other or add on more checkmarks, or we could overproduce. Real countries sometimes do both.”</td>
<td>Students made comparisons to the real world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/5/2010</td>
<td>There was arguing at first, but we worked well together after. I think it was good that we argued first because we heard everyone’s best ideas and then made a plan.”</td>
<td>Students engaged in whole-group problem solving. They took arguing as a way to share ideas, and then picked the best ideas and went from there. Cooperative learning encouraged them to work together and listen to each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/5/2010</td>
<td>“We argue over pencils, they argue over uranium, troops, etc. You wonder, ‘how does Congress deal with it all?’”</td>
<td>Students made direct comparison to the real world. Students were able to take the simulation and apply it to something larger. Suddenly, they empathized with Congress because they felt the struggles that trading and economics brings. I was amazed with how easily students were able to empathize when making connections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/5/2010</td>
<td>“In World 2, D-Country was a mass producer. They are like the United States or Japan.” “C-Country is like Haiti.”</td>
<td>Students looked at each country’s productivity and related it to countries in the real world. America and Japan were described as mass producers. On the other hand, Haiti was compared to a struggling country that didn’t get to complete all 5 tasks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix N- Cooking TV Show Rubric

“Channel 118’s Cooking Around the World” Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A (10 Points Each)</th>
<th>B (8 Points)</th>
<th>C (6 Points)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
<td>All information in the script/show is accurate and all the requirements have been met. In other words, there is sufficient content in the video to learn about the country.</td>
<td>Almost all the information in the script/show is accurate, or almost all of the requirements have been met.</td>
<td>There is little information in the script/show, and a few major components are missing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preparation</strong></td>
<td>It is obvious that the group practiced and rehearsed their script. All materials are present on presentation day.</td>
<td>There is little evidence of practice, or some materials are not present on presentation day.</td>
<td>There is no evidence of practice, and/or some materials are not present on presentation day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work Ethic</strong></td>
<td>Students always use classroom project time well. Conversations are primarily focused on the project and things needed to get the work done. Conversations are also held in a manner that does not disrupt others.</td>
<td>Students usually use classroom project time well. Most conversations are focused on the project and things needed to get the work done. Conversations are held in a manner that typically does not disrupt others.</td>
<td>Students usually use classroom project time well, but occasionally distract others from their work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presentation</strong></td>
<td>Students speak clearly and errors do not detract from the viewing of the film.</td>
<td>There are a few areas where students are laughing or not speaking clearly.</td>
<td>There are several areas where students are laughing and/or not speaking clearly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Final Grade: _______/40
Appendix O- Parent Letter

Dear Parent(s),

Throughout this school year, I have been engaging in an inquiry study looking at the effects simulations have on the Social Studies curriculum. Already, your children have taken on the role of Legislators, Travel Agents, and Trade Ministers through various simulation opportunities. I found that simulations prove to be memorable learning experiences and add an element of excitement to our room. Most of our students also love the chance to act and perform.

For these reasons, I planned to enrich the Passports to Understanding unit by encouraging students to engage in an Ethnic Cooking TV Show simulation. Students were excited to begin and have already selected countries to study. They also took on a role as the Chef, Host, Director, Technology Expert, or Cultural Expert. Students are working in groups to research how a country’s history, geography, culture, economy and climate impacts its cuisine. Students began the researching process in the beginning of April, and are now using their notes to produce an informative and entertaining script for the show.

Eventually, each group will spend one Social Studies period filming and cooking their recipe selection. It will be largely student-directed, and all of the cooking and eating will take place in school. Once the cooking show is filmed, we will use the iMovie computer program to add effects and edit our clips.

It is my hope that with your support, this ongoing simulation will be a great success. I will help students gather ingredients, but I am hoping students can bring some ingredients and cooking utensils from home. Each group needs ingredients to create one food dish. Your child has a list of all the ingredients and materials needed. Hopefully, this list will be shared with you, and you can help in the gathering process. The day before filming, I will take inventory of what was collected and will supply any missing ingredients and/or supplies. I am incredibly excited for this unique enrichment opportunity, and I know your children are too!

Thank you for your continued support,

Kristin Sterns
PDS Intern
Appendix P- List of Addressed Standards

Standards addressed by entire unit

**PA- Pennsylvania Academic Standards**

- **Subject**: Family and Consumer Science
  - **Area 11.3**: Food Science and Nutrition
    - **Grade**: GRADE 6
      - **Standard B.**: Describe safe food handling techniques.
      - **Standard C.**: Analyze factors that effect food choices.
      - **Standard F.**: Analyze basic food preparation techniques and food-handling procedures.

- **Subject**: Geography
  - **Area 7.1**: Basic Geographic Literacy
    - **Grade 7.1.6**: Grade 6
      - **Standard B.**: Describe and locate places and regions.
      - **Coordinate systems** (e.g., latitude and longitude, time zones)
      - **Physical features**
        - In Pennsylvania (e.g., Coastal Plain, Piedmont, Appalachian)
        - In the United States (e.g., Great Lakes, Rocky Mountains, Great Plains)
        - **Human features**
          - Countries (e.g., United Kingdom, Argentina, Egypt)
          - States (e.g., California, Massachusetts, Florida)
          - Provinces (e.g., Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia)
          - Major human regions (e.g., Mid Atlantic, New England, Southwest)
          - Counties (e.g., Lancaster, Lackawanna, Jefferson)
          - Townships (e.g., Dickinson, Lower Mifflin, Southampton)
          - Major cities (e.g., London, Los Angeles, Tokyo)
          - Ways in which different people look at places and regions (e.g., as places to visit or to avoid)
          - Community connections to other places
          - Dependence and interdependence
          - Access and movement
Area 7.3: The Human Characteristics of Places and Regions

Grade 7.3.6: Grade 6

- Standard B.: Describe the human characteristics of places and regions by their cultural characteristics.
  - Ethnicity of people at the county and state levels (e.g., customs, celebrations, languages, religions)
  - Spatial arrangement of cultures creates distinctive landscapes (e.g., cultural regions based on languages, customs, religion, building styles as in the Pennsylvania German region)

Subject: Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening

Area 1.2: Reading Critically in All Content Areas

Grade 1.2.8: Grade 8

- Standard A.: Read and understand essential content of informational texts and documents in all academic areas.
  - Differentiate fact from opinion utilizing resources that go beyond traditional text (e.g., newspapers, magazines and periodicals) to electronic media.
  - Distinguish between essential and nonessential information across texts and going beyond texts to a variety of media; identify bias and propaganda where present.
  - Draw inferences based on a variety of information sources.
  - Evaluate text organization and content to determine the author’s purpose and effectiveness according to the author’s theses, accuracy and thoroughness.

Area 1.4: Types of Writing

Grade 1.4.8: Grade 8

- Standard A.: Write short stories, poems and plays.
  - Apply varying organizational methods.
  - Use relevant illustrations.
  - Utilize dialogue.
  - Apply literary conflict.
  - Include literary elements (Standard 1.3.8.B.).
  - Use literary devices (Standard 1.3.8.C.).
• **Area 1.5: Quality of Writing**
  • **Grade 1.5.8: Grade 8**
    ■ **Standard B.:** Write using well-developed content appropriate for the topic.
      ․ Gather, determine validity and reliability of and organize information.
      ․ Employ the most effective format for purpose and audience.
      ․ Write paragraphs that have details and information specific to the topic and relevant to the focus.
    ■ **Standard F.** Edit writing using the conventions of language.
      ․ Spell common, frequently used words correctly.
      ․ Use capital letters correctly.
      ․ Punctuate correctly (periods, exclamation points, question marks, commas, quotation marks, apostrophes, colons, semicolons, parentheses).
      ․ Use nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions and interjections properly.
      ․ Use complete sentences (simple, compound, complex, declarative, interrogative, exclamatory and imperative).

• **Area 1.6: Speaking and Listening**
  • **Grade 1.6.8: Grade 8**
    ■ **Standard A.** Listen to others.
      ․ Ask probing questions.
      ․ Analyze information, ideas and opinions to determine relevancy.
      ․ Take notes when needed.
    ■ **Standard C.** Speak using skills appropriate to formal speech situations.
      ․ Use complete sentences.
      ․ Pronounce words correctly.
      ․ Adjust volume to purpose and audience.
      ․ Adjust pace to convey meaning.
      ․ Add stress (emphasis) and inflection to enhance meaning.
    ■ **Standard F.** Use media for learning purposes.
      ․ Describe how the media provides information that is sometimes accurate, sometimes biased based on a point of view or by the opinion or beliefs of the presenter.
      ․ Analyze the role of advertising in the media.
      ․ Create a multimedia (e.g., film, music, computer-graphic) presentation for display or transmission.
Area 1.8: Research

Grade 1.8.8: Grade 8

- **Standard A.**: Select and refine a topic for research.
- **Standard B.**: Locate information using appropriate sources and strategies.
  - Determine valid resources for researching the topic, including primary and secondary sources.
  - Evaluate the importance and quality of the sources.
  - Select essential sources (e.g., dictionaries, encyclopedias, other reference materials, interviews, observations, computer databases).
  - Use tables of contents, indices, key words, cross-references and appendices.
  - Use traditional and electronic search tools.
- **Standard C.**: Organize, summarize and present the main ideas from research.
  - Identify the steps necessary to carry out a research project.
  - Take relevant notes from sources.
  - Develop a thesis statement based on research.
  - Give precise, formal credit for others’ ideas, images or information using a standard method of documentation.
  - Use formatting techniques to create an understandable presentation for a designated audience.

Subject: Science and Technology

Area 3.7: Technological Devices

Grade 3.7.7: Grade 7

- **Standard D.**: Apply computer software to solve specific problems.
  - Identify software designed to meet specific needs (e.g., Computer Aided Drafting, design software, tutorial, financial, presentation software).
  - Identify and solve basic software problems relevant to specific software applications.
  - Identify basic multimedia applications.
  - Demonstrate a basic knowledge of desktop publishing applications.
  - Apply intermediate skills in utilizing word processing, database and spreadsheet software.
  - Apply basic graphic manipulation techniques.