

# An Exploration of Song as a Strategy to Engage Elementary Students During Social Studies Lessons

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AN EXPLORATION OF SONG AS A STRATEGY TO ENGAGE  
ELEMENTARY STUDENTS DURING SOCIAL STUDIES LESSONS

by

MORGAN ROME

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Honors in the Major Program in Elementary Education  
in the College of Education  
and in the Burnett Honors College  
at the University of Central Florida  
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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to explore how curriculum-related songs provide an engaging atmosphere for elementary students learning social studies concepts. The investigation done for this thesis examines the resources available to teachers in terms of songs to be used for pedagogical engagement of social studies lessons. Through research and video analyzations it can be concluded that students are overall intrigued by the usage of songs in their social studies lessons. During the social studies lessons observed in the video analyzations, the elementary students are focused, exhibit positive body language, participate, and have fun. Since engagement is documented within the analyzed videos and supported through others' research to be beneficial for students, this thesis researched and found a place for songs in elementary social studies lessons. Since there are a lack of current social studies resources that contain a musical element, eight social studies lesson plans were produced specifically for this thesis to demonstrate how songs can be implemented into the elementary curriculum to engage students.

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my family, friends, and professors who supported me throughout this journey. To my family, especially mom and Spencer, thank you for guiding me through this process and reading my many drafts. To my friends, thank you for being so helpful and listening to me talk about this project for two semesters straight. To my professors, thank you for the insight, wisdom, and inspiration that was constantly shared. This thesis was made possible with all of you as my backbone.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

I attended elementary school about 15 years ago, and to this day I can still remember the songs my teachers taught our class to keep us engaged and to assist in our learning. My favorite teacher in second grade would start every morning with singing a few songs together to set the class mood for the day. The song I explicitly remember singing was *Good Morning* from *Singing in the Rain*. We would sing a few lines of the song to get us excited and stimulated. I would catch myself humming the tune throughout the day and singing the song at home. I have never seen the movie, but the song itself made a lasting impression on me. I always think about this class, my teacher, and the song we would sing. This was the only class I ever had that used music as an engagement tool within the classroom, and it was my absolute favorite. This experience contributed to my admiration and need for music in elementary classrooms. I use a specific playlist to keep me motivated throughout the process of writing this thesis even now.

As I attended school from elementary and beyond, social studies was my least favorite subject. The majority of the time, social studies was taught using workbooks with an abundance of pages that consisted of lengthy text and questions to answer after. I remember in 5th grade the pages in the workbook for that year were beige with black text and few pictures. Furthermore, most of my teachers just followed the workbook content. The whiteboard would say *Read pages 10-12 and answer the questions on page 13, Turn it in when you are done*. This was the complete instruction provided; there was nothing else to expand upon the topic within the pages. Every now and then we would discuss the content as a class. But if that did not happen, the assignment would be graded and we would move on to something new. How is anyone expected to get excited and retain the material when it is presented in such a dull manner? It was very rare to

perform activities that focused on social studies. The activities we would mainly complete focused on reading most of the time.

I remember doing an activity in second grade that dealt with our senses. We went to different centers and would test our sense depending on what the teacher had at each center. For example, the touch center had a few plates with a mysterious material on each. We were not able to see what it was and could only feel it and then determine what we thought it was. I remember being captivated by this activity and feeling curious about what to expect at each center. This activity, with its lack of music integration, shows that when a lesson is meaningful and has a fun element, the student will be excited to learn the material. It is amazing to think I can remember everything about that activity today, but I cannot recall anything from the social studies lessons. All I remember from the workbook pages are the physical aesthetics of the book, not the content inside it.

As I became older, I realized the lack of knowledge I had in social studies content, and I felt unformed when I would be involved in conversations. This realization motivated me to revisit these foundational topics. I eventually understood that social studies can be quite interesting depending on how it is taught. My experience with social studies in the elementary grades motivated me to research this topic of how songs can engage elementary students in social studies lessons and then create this thesis. I want to use this research to create an awareness in educators about how elementary students can be engaged in social studies lessons through the integration of content related songs.

## Professional Rationale

As I volunteered in elementary classrooms, I have noticed an absence of music being used as an instructional tool for students. Realizing the *Good Morning* song left such a lasting impression on me as a young student, I wondered why songs were not being used more often in the elementary classroom as a supplemental resource for learning. Songs can be used in numerous ways to engage, teach, and manage students. Since music is all around us and everyone can relate to at least one song, we can easily proffer that there should be an implementation of this tool in the elementary social studies classrooms to help with keeping our students interested during lessons and retain the information being taught to them. Whether it be a few songs in the morning, background music during independent instruction, or a song parody to teach a topic, music has a place within the classroom and that should be noticed. My main focus for this thesis, however, is using songs in the classroom to support the teaching of specific social studies topics. This is especially my emphasis because social studies can be perceived as boring and songs are stimulating.

Combining these two together would be extremely beneficial to the students' learning. Songs will help make the social studies topics come alive, and the students will be able to remember the information better as opposed to just reading about it from a textbook and answering questions.

### Statement of Purpose

The purpose of my thesis is to explore how songs can be used to engage elementary students in social studies content. This will be done by analyzing internet videos of teachers who have used songs within their classroom to teach curriculum content. This thesis explores

common social studies classroom resources that are used, which are lacking a musical element and recommends how to integrate songs into current resources. The following chapter reviews related research, in regards to social studies instruction and music integration. *Chapter three* provides the procedures of how this thesis was conducted. Whereas *chapter four* outlines the data that was found. Finally, the thesis concludes with *chapter five* which offers the overall takeaways and recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH

The purpose of this thesis is to explore how curriculum-related songs can be used in the classroom to engage elementary students during social studies lessons. Using songs to teach social studies has been known to benefit students' self-achievement, their academic levels, and imagination (NCSS, 2017). Through my own observations during service learning, elementary students' attitudes toward learning social studies seems to be more negative than positive. "Understanding the value of integrating music strategies into curriculum creates an engaging learning environment for students" (Brock, 2013, p. 45).

### Benefits of Social Studies

The following subheadings within this section provide important information about the overall benefits and the need of social studies instruction in the classroom for elementary students: Importance of Social Studies, Critical Thinking, Citizenship, and Literacy.

#### Importance of Social Studies

The National Council for the Social Studies (2017) states that, "The purpose of elementary school social studies is to enable students to understand, participate in, and make informed decisions about their world. (NCSS, 2017, *n.p.*)" Our students need the basic knowledge to become a good citizen for our communities. Students learn these skills through the concepts that are taught within social studies that can be found in one of Florida's official source for standards known as CPALMS; American History, Civics and Government, Economics, Financial Literacy, and Geography (CPALMS, 2015a). From these core topics, students learn basic skills that entail how

to critically think, learn how to be a good citizen, and development of literacy. These core topics equip students with the information they need to know in order to appropriately interact with others within our society.

### Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is a vital skill that students must have in their arsenal to achieve academic success. Critical thinking is a strategy that allows the student to “analyze, assess, and improve thinking” to reach a higher-level of reasoning (Linda, 2007). For example, when fourth grade students are learning about financial literacy, there is a standard that asks the students to “Explain why employers are willing to pay people to do their work” (CPALMS, 2015b). When students are asked to explain why something is the way it is, they must dig deep and think about the variety of factors that can be concluded to answer the question or problem statement at hand. As students are analyzing those factors, they will then be able to assess the problems or benefits that come along with the factors. As students gain all of this information, they can come up with ideas that can solve a problem or reason as to why there is not a problem. When students are critically thinking they are implementing their higher-order thinking skills, such as; analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, to create new ideas. Concluding that students are using the highest objective on the hierarchy of Bloom’s Taxonomy (Westbrook, 2014). Critical thinking allows students to come up with new perspectives they may have not thought about before.

### Citizenship

Citizenship is an important component of social studies instruction. Appropriately interacting within society is learned behavior. Social studies contributes to the ability to act properly within our society. Students are learning topics about different cultures, events, and

perspectives. Comprehending these concepts help develop citizenship by creating a sense of respect and appreciation for others and their differences. For example, there are numerous standards that focus on citizenship, such as the second grade standard for *Civics and Government* that states “Define and apply the characteristics of responsible citizenship” (CPALMS, 2015c). Participating in activities and learning about these concepts assist with the development of interacting in society properly and with ease. Furthermore, students will be able to step out into the world with knowledge on how to work together within our society.

### Literacy

Students’ literacy skills are constantly being developed with every waking moment. Literacy is another way of saying how we use reading, writing, and texts in relation to our prior knowledge to understand concepts and how to react to them (Perry, 2012). Literacy does not only belong to the Language Arts block, literacy can grow in social studies content as well. Social studies contains a variety of informational texts that students will read and learn how to interpret accordingly. Students will be expected to read both fiction and nonfiction material, primary and secondary sources, poems, writings, and textbooks. Reading must have purpose and depending on the text the purpose will change. As students are reading different texts they will begin to learn how to read and acquire text evidence in specific ways. Reading teacher Dixie D. Massey (2004) and social studies teacher Tina L. Heafner (2004) state, “Exposure to these various text structures provides students with multiple perspectives while enriching their understanding of people and the past” (Massey & Heafner, 2004, p. 28). Social studies promotes students’ abilities to comprehend and examine the world around them. Effective social studies



instruction enhances student's social studies knowledge, critical thinking, citizenship, and literacy.

### Benefits of Songs

Songs provide stimulation for elementary students that allows the students to become engaged during lessons and learn the information while eventually gaining long term retention. The subheadings within this section provide important information about why songs have an impact on student success: Engagement, Multiple Intelligence, Information Processing, Sensory Registers, Working Memory/Short-Term Memory, and Long Term Memory.

#### Engagement

The relationship of music and children's engagement is universal (Southcott & Cosaitis, 2015). Songs are used "to entertain, communicate, educate, inspire, and instill a sense of social and communal understanding" (Brown & Brown, 1997, p. 349). Combining the practice of content related songs can ensure that curriculum is interesting for students. Applying songs to instruction can be amusing to students because songs have the ability to break the common teaching routine (Bisk Education, 2017). Using social studies song parodies or songs from specific cultures or time periods are ways to trigger student interest. Making lessons and topics purposeful with implementation of songs can promote students' desire to learn and continue to inspire them. Students' communication improves through songs because songs assist in developing the left side of the brain, where language processing is activated as well (Brown, 2017). "Depending on how one listens, the same stimuli can be perceived as language or music"

(Brandt, Gerbrian, & Slevc, 2012, p. 3). If speaking and music are sounds that have meaning, then both should be beneficial to the progress of being able to communicate accurately. With language proficiency, students will be able to converse with each other which helps with social skills. Being able to interact with others in society results in that need for social and communal understanding. A third grade student discusses the integration of songs in the class perfectly, “I think that it is a very good idea to use music in the classroom. If kids learn with music it will be more exciting! If kids learn with music they will work harder. If they played music for each class, kids would pay more attention” (Brown & Brown, 1997, p. 354). This third grade student summarizes how songs entertain students, help with communication, education, inspiration, and have a sense of social and communal understanding.

### Multiple Intelligences

Howard Gardner (1983), a developmental psychologist, proposed a theory known as Multiple Intelligences (MI). MI is about teaching concepts that call on many of our intelligences. There are seven intelligences that Gardner has identified: bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, logical-Mathematical, musical, verbal-linguistic, and visual-spatial (Slavin, 2015a). Gardner’s theory was controversial at the time he proposed the theory because there was little evidence to support the intelligences. In more recent years, his theory has become more popular especially within education (Slavin, 2015a).

The purpose of MI in education is to recognize that there are more than just one or two ways to express the students’ intelligence. All students learn differently and have their own preferences, meaning not every student will succeed when the linguistic and logical intelligences

are tapped into. Students possess a wide range of intelligences. In order to ensure all students are obtaining their full potential, schools should be applying a variety of activities that in the end use the majority of the intelligences Gardner (1983) has identified.

Since this thesis focuses on songs within the classroom, one of the intelligences that supports the use of songs is musical intelligence. Gardner's musical intelligence (1983) focuses on the overall enjoyment of music; singing, listening, playing instruments, and creating music (Edutopia, 2009). In the article Turn Up the Volume: Boost Memory and Learning with Music, Chris Brewer, the founder of *LifeSounds Educational Services* (2008) is quoted stating "Students of all ages—that includes adults— generally find that music helps them focus more clearly on the task at hand and puts them in a better mood for learning" (Lucas, 2009). When the musical intelligence is utilized along with other intelligences, such as; the linguistic and bodilykinesthetic intelligences, the students will receive engaging benefits associated to their learning.

In Howard Gardner's book *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* he states; "... we human beings are described as having a set of relatively autonomous intelligences (1983)." Gardner proceeds to describe how people do not have one *general-purpose computer* but that people have a *set of discrete computers* which can be thought of as our multiple intelligences (1983). These intelligences work with each other as opposed to being independent. This concept of the intelligences is demonstrated through students singing songs in the classroom. Utilizing music in the classroom will also allow students to explore other multiple intelligences that extend beyond the musical intelligence. For example, while students are singing the songs, they are also tapping into the linguistic and bodily-kinesthetic intelligences. The linguistic intelligence is explored because students are singing the lyrics of songs and

developing their literacy skills. They are making connections within the words and concepts the words represent. Students are also engaging in movements correlated to the songs they are performing. Whether the students are doing hand gestures or getting up from their seats and doing dances, the bodily kinesthetic intelligence is being used through these motions.

### Information-processing Theory

Information-processing theory is a “dominant theory of learning and memory” (Slavin, 2015b, p. 124). Information-processing theory was developed by many cognitive learning theorists beginnings with George A. Miller (1920-2012), Atkinson and Shrifin (1968), Craik and Lockhart (1972), Bransford (1979), and advancing to Rumelhart and McClelland (1986) (David, 2015a). The theorists listed answered questions that related to the process of absorbing information and how knowing the process can be used to ensure students are retaining what is being taught (Slavin, 2015b). So when the theorists were answering questions that involved analyzing how information is processed by people and how teachers can use that information to their advantage, it eventually led them to the information-processing theory. Informationprocessing can be associated with students learning topics through songs, because the songs will help the students remember the information that is presented to them. Three components are included in Information-processing: sensory register which acquires information through our senses, working memory (or short-term memory) is where information is initially thought of and sorted through importance, and long-term memory is where the information we learned is eventually stored (Slavin, 2015b). Envision this: a teacher is standing at the front of the classroom telling the students that they will be learning a song that will help them remember

the reason of why the Declaration of Independence was created. This could be read to students from a textbook, but using a song will stimulate their minds more. Students' sensory registers will use their hearing component to analyze the information of the Declaration of Independence, then the information will be in the working-memory since the students will be focused on this topic. The students will rehearse the lyrics continuously until it finally makes it to their long-term memory.

### Sensory Registers

The sensory register holds information for no more than a couple of seconds. The sensory register acquires information through our senses: taste, smell, sight, hearing, and touch. Most of the information that reaches the sensory registers may not be retained unless it is a conscious focus (Slavin, 2015b). This is important to understand within the classroom because students need to pay attention to the material to acquire the information. In the sensory register, students' attention is tested. If the students are receiving too much information at once, they will be overwhelmed with organizing and retaining that information (Slavin, 2015b). In order to retain information, the student must explicitly focus on what is being taught. The immense amount of information that is given at this point will be filtered by the student based on the importance. Students have a limited attention span to give, so it is vital to monitor their engagement throughout a lesson (Slavin, 2015b). Using songs in the elementary classroom during social studies block will assist with ensuring students' attention is being utilized to the fullest, because students will be "using more of their brain" (Brown, 2017, *n.p.*).

## Working Memory/Short-Term Memory

The information that is first introduced within the sensory registers eventually moves into the working memory or short-term memory. The working memory is a “temporary storage of information” (Ericsson & Kintsch, 1995, p. 211). Information is constantly coming in and leaving. When ideas are being consciously thought of, it is in the working memory. Once we stop thinking about that certain thought, it disappears. Within the working memory, the brain decides whether or not to keep certain information or discard it. Working memory acts as a sorting system as well. The working memory may also receive information from long-term memory. Whenever we think of something; new information or old information, our working memory is involved (Slavin, 2015b).

The concept of the working memory applies to the classroom because students are being given new information on a daily basis, but are also using prior knowledge to make connections. The working memory is constantly being used in the classroom because learning is frequently happening. The method of rehearsal is a way to ensure information in the working memory is eventually stored (David, 2015b). Rehearsal is another way of using repetition. For example, repeating an address many times within one’s head to ensure one does not forget is the practice of rehearsal. With songs, students will be taught lyrics repeatedly so they can remember it. Eventually, the students will practice so much and repeat the lyrics many times to the point where it will then be stored in their long-term memory, and they will be able to recite it on command.

## Long-Term Memory

The long-term memory is where we store all our information for long periods of times because of its large capacity for information (Slavin, 2015b). Our long-term memory has information we may never forget, but may have difficulty sifting through and reacquiring the information. Long-term memory is divided into three types: episodic memory, semantic memory, and procedural memory. Episodic memory entails memory that is based on our personal experiences (Tulving, 1993). For instance, a birthday party you had as a child or a family trip you took during the summer. These are examples of episodic memories because it is something that you experienced yourself. You may associate these memories to something someone says or does because you have that existing knowledge on that particular thing. Semantic memory are the facts and general knowledge we know (Patterson, Nestor, & Rogers, 2007). We usually acquire information that belongs in the semantic memory through information we learned in school (Slavin, 2015b). The type of information stored within this long-term memory are things similar to: knowing how to read from left to right, understanding the concept of cheating being bad, and knowing that PEMDAS is an acronym associated to math. Procedural memory is the information stored that pertains to knowing how to do something (Do, 2015). Knowing how to ride a bike, drive a car, tie your shoes, and other procedures are examples of what is stored in this memory. Long-term memory is important because this is where we store the concepts we learn over time. We pull the information from our long-term memory to make connections and continue to acquire new ideas.

## Social Studies and Songs

Students' responses to learning social studies content is usually not very positive, the topics can be difficult to comprehend and the information can be boring (Vinas, 2017). Using songs along with teaching social studies is a perfect way to ensure these topics are being taught and learned by students. In the *Social Studies Research and Practice* journal, On Borrowed Time: How Four Elementary Preservice Teachers Learned to Teach Social Studies in the NCLB Era (Fry, 2009), a preservice teacher named Helen discusses her use of songs to teach a lesson about Colonial America. Helen collaborated with a music teacher to see what songs would be appropriate for this lesson's social studies goal, and they came up with "Yankee Doodle." Her "students examined the history and meaning of song lyrics, and at the conclusion of the lesson, they sang and marched to the song" (Fry, 2009, p. 37). By doing this, her students were able to tackle many social studies skills, including development of literacy and retention of concept. Helen reflected on this and expressed how her students enjoyed this lesson, and how she was confident in utilizing songs to teach lessons.

Students of all ages have expressed on a number of occasions how songs help them remember and actually make them enjoy what they are being taught. An eighth grader from Georgia said that her teacher's songs are "catchy so you really remember them like during the tests or anything when you need them" (WCBD News, 2017). A young elementary student mentions "we have fun together when we are singing; we like the music" (Kids Are Awesome, 2015). These two students touch upon the two main benefits of songs with social studies: retention of information and the implementation of songs in the elementary classroom being enjoyable and stimulating for students. Songs allow our elementary students to stay engaged and



learn important concepts during lessons. Therefore, this thesis explores how content related songs provide engagement to elementary students during social studies lessons. The following chapter provides the methodology that includes the procedures for completing this thesis' research. Chapter three focuses on the design of study which highlights the key steps in conducting the qualitative research needed for the collection of data. The chapter proceeds to point out a few limitations within in this thesis' research.

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This thesis explores how songs can be used to engage elementary students in social studies content, and I will examine this by analyzing internet videos of classrooms that have used songs to teach social studies topics. This thesis explores common classroom resources that are applied, but are lacking the musical element and recommend how to integrate songs into current resources. Each video was set in an elementary classroom teaching social studies. Examinations of the teacher and the on-task student engagement were taken into consideration when being reviewed.

### Design of Study

The purpose of this research was to analyze how songs containing social studies content could be engaging for student learning. In order to gather data for analysis, the examination of YouTube videos of social studies elementary classrooms will be used. Three elements of focus for video selection are: the song, unit/topic, and student engagement. To test the authenticity of the content during the lesson, I correlated each song to a Florida state social studies standard. Also, student engagement will be assessed by a rubric.

The videos were searched on *YouTube*. Other video sites, such as *TeacherTube*, *Vimeo*, and *SchoolTube* were checked, but did not provide necessary results. The key phrase of “elementary social studies class observations of songs” was used to search for the videos in *YouTube*. The process of selecting the videos for evidence needed to conduct this qualitative research was scrolling through and watching videos that pertained to elementary social studies classrooms utilizing songs in their lesson. Each video was selected for evaluation if they met the three criteria: the song, unit/topic, and student engagement.

A rubric was created based on the investigations of previously-created engagement rubrics. Using a rubric will provide consistency for the video analysis of student engagement. In order for the rubric to be specific to this research, there will be modifications made from the original rubrics chosen. For instance, the original rubric focuses on general student engagement. Since the videos selected for this thesis focus on student engagement through song, the rubric was adapted to be more specific in terms of how students display engagement when interacting with songs. Student engagement will then be examined and scored. Student engagement is defined as showing “sustained behavioral involvement in learning activities accompanied by a positive emotional tone” (Chapman, 2003, p. 2). The rubric scored each video as a “one”, “two”, “three”, or “four”. A score of “one” is identified as unsatisfactory engagement, and a score of “four” is identified as exemplary engagement. The definition of what student engagement is will identify how a score is given for what is seen in each video chosen.

Performing this investigation of videos and scoring the engagement aspect of students allowed me to witness how songs promote student stimulation and test whether or not social studies songs are of value in the elementary classroom. Connecting Florida Social Studies State Standards to the songs acts as the testing phase of this research. If a song can match a standard, then the song is able to be implemented within a social studies lesson. The Florida Department of Education (2017) states, “Higher standards that challenge and motivate our students are essential” (Florida Department of Education, 2017, *n.p.*). The standard may focus on a vital topic, but the method of teaching the topic may challenge and motivate the student. One method could be the implementation of social studies songs in the elementary classroom.

Once the social studies songs are evaluated for their value, this thesis discusses how teachers can utilize their current social studies instructional tools with songs attached to them. Resources that teachers are presently using have the capacity to incorporate songs within them. I searched to identify 10 instructional tools teachers are using for social studies that could imbed songs for engagement. Using songs in the classroom does not have to be a complicated production; teachers do not have to develop songs on their own. A variety of resources are available for teachers to implement in their classroom.

#### Limitations

There are two limitations I acknowledge with the research I am conducting. The limited availability of videos that have social studies songs utilized in an elementary classroom created some difficulty in finding evidence for the video analysis. Being able to find videos from only one source I tried limited my findings to one source; YouTube. Furthermore few elementary classroom observation videos use social studies songs. There are enough videos to complete my research, but can pose difficulties for future or further similar studies. The other limitation is using videos instead of surveying educators or completing in-person observations of elementary classrooms. Using videos as my system for acquiring information allowed for simpler access to evidence, whereas more direct observations would have needed an Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. If I elect to continue this thesis project in the future, an IRB is something I would likely consider to support the research I will complete for this particular project.

The following chapter outlines the results from conducting the YouTube video analyzations. The process of searching for videos and what was discovered is explained. Data from the engagement rubric is shown. With these findings, eight lesson plans were created to

demonstrate the implementation of songs in social studies content. These lesson plans are listed within the next chapter.

## CHAPTER: FOUR FINDINGS

This thesis explored how songs are used to engage elementary students in social studies content by analyzing internet videos of elementary classrooms that used songs to teach social studies topics. Once the videos were analyzed based on the three criteria and scored using an engagement rubric, applied common classroom resources that lacked the musical elements were identified. Based on the lack of songs in curriculum content, recommendations on how to integrate music into social studies were given this thesis even more importance.

### The Search of YouTube Videos

The search to find applicable videos according to the predetermined criteria; the song, unit/topic, and student engagement, was challenging. The search began with going through multiple video search engines, such as; Vimeo, SchoolTube, and YouTube. I looked for videos that met my predetermined criteria. As I completed this initial process, I determined YouTube was the only search engine that contained videos that met my criteria. I continued the search by examining YouTube videos of social studies elementary classrooms that used songs in their particular lesson. I typed the key phrase “elementary social studies class observations of songs” into the YouTube search engine. From there, I clicked on videos that came up and were identified by the key phrase. I sifted through a multitude of videos and selected the videos that met at least one of the predetermined criteria. Ten videos were chosen, but not strictly followed because videos were needed for analysis. While searching for videos, I had the expectation of seeing whole group instruction that discussed the unit, followed by the explicit teaching of the song, continuing with the usage of the song, and ending with a comprehension check to see if

students understood the correlation of the song with the lesson. Since a shortage of videos met this expectation, the majority of the videos chosen focused on the performance of the song rather than the entire lesson plan. The performance aspect is especially important to this thesis because it shows that students are engaged with what they are doing which is one of the purposes of exploring these videos.

While watching these videos, an observation rubric that was adapted from the *International Center for Leadership in Education* (2015) was used to score student engagement in the activity. The rubric was sectioned into two parts; *Observations* and *Perceptions* and had scored students by *Very High, High, Medium, Low, and Very Low*. For the purpose of this thesis, the observation section is being used and perceptions will be omitted along with the scoring system being changed to a number score that is portrayed as a “one” being “unsatisfactory” and a “four” being “exemplary”. Ideally the perceptions section would be beneficial to this exploration, however, the majority of the videos did not have the appropriate elements to provide this information for scoring. The topics included in the observations section of the rubric were: *Positive Body Language, Consistent Focus, Verbal Participation, Student Confidence, and Fun and Excitement*. Positive Body Language focused on the postures the students exhibited while performing the song. Consistent Focus dealt with if students were paying attention and had minimal disruptions. Verbal Participation had to do with if the students were singing along. Student Confidence indicated how the students sang the song, if they were able to initiate correlating movements, or do partner work, depending on the video. Fun and Excitement is a key topic, scoring the students’ enthusiasm during their performance. Once the videos were observed

and analyzed, the rubric was used to score and evaluate if the students were exhibiting engaged behavior during their lesson.

### The Data

The rubric was used in order to ensure consistency in scoring each video. Each video was different based on many aspects, for example; grade level, size of class, type of song, how the song is used, the way the song is presented, or the topic of the song. These components were taken into account during the analyzations because although there are different elements of each video, the purpose the videos displayed of engaging students through social studies songs remains the same. The rubric helped keep the scoring uniform, so all videos are judged on the same level. The main focus when scoring each video was to observe whether or not these students were excited, concentrated, and engaged. These topics were included in the original rubric, I added a few changes to *Verbal Participation* and *Student Confidence* to make it more specific to the videos.

The topics that were chosen were kept because they fit in the three components of engagement: behavioral, cognitive, and emotional (Conner, 2016). Behavioral engagement refers to the participation of the student during an activity, cognitive engagement refers to the effort being put in to achieve the knowledge of complex ideas, and emotional engagement is the reactions towards different features of school (Conner, 2016). The topics that are related to behavioral engagement are Verbal Participation and Student Confidence. These fall under behavioral categories because students will be actively participating in the lesson. For example, the students were singing out loud, doing hand movements, and asking or answering questions. These are actions the students exhibit in the videos.



The topics related to cognitive engagements are Positive Body Language and Consistent Focus. Positive Body Language and Consistent Focus are cognitive topics because they are choosing to pay attention and focus on the activity in front of them. Students are involving themselves in the activity and do not disrupt the flow in order for them to understand the concepts taught.

In terms of emotional engagement, Fun and Excitement is an exact fit because the students feel a certain way about an activity. These five components target the three types of engagement involved within the lessons.

Table 1: Student Engagement Rubric

Student Engagement Walkthrough Checklist				
Observations				
	1 Unsatisfactory	2 Developing	3 Satisfactory	4 Exemplary
<b>Positive Body Language-</b> Students exhibit body postures that indicate they are paying attention to the teacher and/or other students.				
<b>Consistent Focus-</b> All students are focused on the learning activity with minimum distractions.				
<b>Verbal Participation-</b> Students are singing along or participating in the song activity. Students may express thoughtful ideas, reflective answers, and questions relevant or appropriate to learning.				
<b>Student Confidence-</b> Students are using hand movements or participating in dance movements that correlate to the song. Students may exhibit confidence through initiating the task at hand (singing/performing the song).				
<b>Fun and Excitement-</b> Students exhibit interest and enthusiasm and are positive throughout.				

Adapted from International Center for Leadership in Education

[http://www.okee.k12.fl.us/\\_cache/files/0/7/07cc0358-22ad-4a77-8f6c-eb493c21b13a/4706A5528165FB3E53B3D23D4861680A.cir-rubrics-msc2015.pdf](http://www.okee.k12.fl.us/_cache/files/0/7/07cc0358-22ad-4a77-8f6c-eb493c21b13a/4706A5528165FB3E53B3D23D4861680A.cir-rubrics-msc2015.pdf)

p. 3

The chart below breaks down the scores for each video observed and analyzed. The 10 videos were assessed across each topic and received a high score of either three or four. The overall engagement was extremely high from each video that was observed. Students were

singing loudly, doing correlating hand or dance movements, smiling, answering questions when prompted, and creating their own ideas. All of these characteristics met the five foci of the rubric. The data displays that music is a form of engagement for students, and there is a place for it within the elementary social studies classroom.

Table 2: Engagement Scores from YouTube Videos

<b>YouTube Videos Observation Score</b>					
	<b>Positive Body Language</b>	<b>Consistent Focus</b>	<b>Verbal Participation</b>	<b>Student Confidence</b>	<b>Fun and Excitement</b>
<b>1. Mrs. McGinnis's Class Singing a Social Studies Song</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H-602MKp_Ns">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H-602MKp_Ns</a>					
<b>2. George Washington Lesson for Kindergarten</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FVYMA08wExI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FVYMA08wExI</a>					
<b>3. George Washington Rap</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nF7G9YAwqjI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nF7G9YAwqjI</a>					

<b>4. 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Explorer Song</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8v4tBQFP-RU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8v4tBQFP-RU</a>					
<b>5. Explorer Rap</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6OAfoCy07tM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6OAfoCy07tM</a>					
<b>6. The Landforms Song</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oVmd_Up8Lc8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oVmd_Up8Lc8</a>					
<b>7. The Continents Song for Art Night</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nwENrvWbOHE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nwENrvWbOHE</a>					
<b>8. Seven Continents Song</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6HT2usL8wY0">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6HT2usL8wY0</a>					
<b>9. Continents Song</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7L-Sg0ZKahY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7L-Sg0ZKahY</a>					
<b>10. Social Studies- Geography</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>
<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vOy3UZwcJwg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vOy3UZwcJwg</a>					

## The Lesson Plans

After identifying the 10 prior songs used in elementary social studies lessons, this thesis opted to create eight related lesson plans using songs from the websites: *Flocabulary* and *SongsforTeaching*. In this section, the lesson plans that were created specifically for this thesis are listed below in Table 3. The lesson plans incorporate social studies songs as an element of engagement for the students. The songs selected for the lesson plans were not found from the YouTube video analyzations, but from websites that contained already-made social studies songs. Additionally, the lesson plans also integrate children’s literature. A total of eight lesson plans created that focus on different social studies concepts and grade levels. All lesson plans have been aligned to the Florida State Standards ([www.cpalms.org/Public/search/Standard](http://www.cpalms.org/Public/search/Standard)).

*Table 3: List of Eight Social Studies Lesson Plans*

<b>Social Studies Concept</b>	<b>Song</b>	<b>Picture Book</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Lesson Plan Title</b>
Geography	Map Skills (from Flocabulary)	<i>How I Learned Geography</i> by Uri Shulevitz	SS.3.G.1.4 Name and identify the purpose of maps (physical, political, elevation, population).	Learning Geography

Economics	Getting Things Done by Frank Bruen	<i>Caps for Sale</i> by Esphyr Slobodkina	SS.4.FL.1.1 People have many different types of jobs from which to choose. Identify different jobs requiring people to have different skills.	What Are Jobs?
American History	Age of Exploration (from Flocabulary)	<i>Encounter</i> by Jane Yolen	SS.4.A.3.1 Identify explorers who came to Florida and the motivations for their expeditions.	Explore the Florida Explorers

Economics	A Marigold for Company by Frank Bruen	<i>A New Coat for Anna</i> by Harriet Ziefert	SS.3.E.1.3 Recognize that buyers and sellers interact to exchange goods and services through the use of trade or money.	Buyers and Sellers
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American History	Civil Rights (from Flocabulary)	<i>The Sneetches</i> by Dr. Seuss	SS.5.A.1.1 Use primary and secondary sources to understand history.	Civil Rights  Sneetches
Civics and Government	Government by Jim Thompson	<i>If I Were President</i> by Catherine Stier	SS.3.C.1.1  Explain the purpose and need for government.	Why do we need a Government?
Geography	Directions to Nowhere by Joan Maute	<i>Knuffle Bunny</i> by Mo Willems	SS.3.G.1.6  Use maps to identify different types of scale to measure distances between two places.	Mapping out  Locations
Financial Literacy	Money, Money by Frank Bruen	<i>You Can't Buy a Dinosaur with a Dime</i> by Harriet Ziefert	SS.4.FL.3.4 Identify savings goals people set as incentives to save. One savings goal might be to buy goods and services in the future.	Saving Money to  Reach Goals

Following the Table 3 listing are the eight social studies lessons in order of how the table presents them.

## Lesson Plan 1

Name: Morgan Rome

Grade Level: 3rd

Subject: Social Studies

Unit Title: Geography

Lesson Title: Learning Geography

Estimated Time: 45-60 minutes

Standard:

SS.3.G.1.4 Name and identify the purpose of maps (physical, political, elevation, population).

Learning Objective:

Students will be able to name types of maps using their specific features.

Students will be able to identify key features on maps.

Students will be able to explain the purpose of using a map.

Essential/Guiding Question(s):

What is geography?

What is a map? Are there different types?

Did you ever have to go somewhere that you had never been to?

How did you know how to get to that place?

Could you explain the purpose of specific maps?

How could you compare/contrast the different types of maps?

Why do you think maps are a necessary tool?

Key Vocabulary:

Geography

Map (physical, political, elevation, population)

Coordinate grid

Cardinal and Intermediate directions

Title

Compass rose

Scale

Key/legend with symbols

Characteristics

Procedures:

1. Activate prior knowledge:



- Play the song “Map Skills” by Floccabulary to peak student interest. - Ask students follow- up questions:
    - What maps can you recall from the song?
    - In your own words, could you explain what each map’s purpose is?
    - Have you ever needed to use a map, if so when? (Use Kagan’s Think, Pair, Share to let students discuss their experiences with each other) Monitor the conversations and input wherever necessary.
  - Pass out the lyrics to the students so they can follow along during the second time playing the song.
  - Play the song one more time so they can sing out loud this time around. This will ensure students are focused while the song is playing and will help with learning the lyrics.
2. Input:
- Class will transition into the usage of literature to extend the song they are introduced to in the beginning.
  - Teacher will read aloud the book *How I learned Geography* by Uri Shulevitz.
  - Teacher will stop on certain pages to ensure students are making the connections between song and book.
3. Modeling:
- Place a big world map at the front of the classroom.
    - In whole group, go over the type of map, the features of the map, and the tools on the map (focusing on our key vocabulary).
  - Split students into groups (this case: 4 groups of 4).
  - Tell students they will work together to pick a place *they want to visit* (although the book focuses on Asia and Europe) and discuss what they know about this place using the maps provided and their prior knowledge only.
  - They will eventually present their information to the class. (Assign jobs to each student if need be: recorder, reporter, time-keeper, etc.)
    - For example: This is what students would be expected to figure out by using their maps. They will find information and infer.
      - Destination: Peru
      - Characteristics using physical map: Mountainous, coastal, has rivers and lakes, and some large cities.
      - Characteristics using political map: Peru is located towards the top of South America on the West side. This country is bordered by 5 other countries, but is not landlocked. There are many rivers that run through the country and many main roads.
      - Characteristics using elevation map: Peru has ranging altitude levels, towards the coast the altitude is higher than the area that is more landlocked.

- Characteristics using population map: Towards Peru’s capital is the most population dense. We can use this information to infer that this area most likely has an abundant amount of resources and could even be more city-like than rural.
4. Check for understanding:
- As students are working, walk around to monitor the on-task behaviors and conversations.
  - Ask students specific questions to check their understanding of the different maps they are using and the features on the maps that are necessary for interpreting information.
  - Also ask students “why” or “what” questions.
    - Why did you choose this place?
    - Why did you put mountainous as a characteristic? Or Why did you put coastal as a characteristic?
    - What did you use to identify the region of the place?
    - What made you think this place was city-like or rural?
    - These questions will allow students to show what they know and explain their thinking.
5. Guided practice:
- The students will be working together in groups to come up with information about a place they chose.
  - The teacher will be facilitating where students may show some signs of misunderstanding or struggle.
  - Students will work together also to organize what they are going to present. Each group should have no more than 5 minutes to briefly share their findings.
6. Independent practice:
- In order to tie in the purpose of the book and song to teach the concept of geography, students will be assigned a narrative writing piece.
  - Students will write to the prompt: Write a story about anything that utilizes a map and a voyage. Use your knowledge about map features to make your voyage come alive.
7. Closure:
- Students will participate in a Kahoot online quiz game that goes over key terms and purposes of different types of maps.

Assessment and Monitoring:

Formative:

Monitoring students’ conversations during small group.

Seeing what the students created and presented.

The Kahoot quiz.

Summative:

The narrative writing piece.

Materials:

Song: Map Skills

Book: *How I Learned Geography*

Song lyrics

Maps

Writing paper

Writing tool

Access to Kahoot

References:

<https://www.flocabulary.com/unit/map-skills/>

<https://kahoot.it/>

## Lesson Plan 2

Name: Morgan Rome

Grade Level: 4th

Subject: Social Studies

Unit Title: Economics

Lesson Title: What Are Jobs?

Estimated Time: 45-60 minutes

### Standard:

SS.4.FL.1.1 People have many different types of jobs from which to choose. Identify different jobs requiring people to have different skills.

### Learning Objective:

Students will be able to identify a variety of jobs people perform.

Students will be able to determine the skills necessary for specific jobs.

Students will be able to come up with common skills that are appropriate for certain jobs.

### Essential/Guiding Question(s):

What are some jobs that come to mind?

Do you know where some skills can be applicable to more than one job?

How does one job compare/contrast to a different job?

How would you decide which job needs certain skills?

In your opinion, what are the best skills to have?

### Key Vocabulary:

Job

Skill

Economics

### Procedures:

#### 1. Activate prior knowledge:

- Ask the students what they think a job is?
- Ask the students what they think a skill is?
  - o Use Kagan's Think Pair Share for both times to allow them to discuss these two questions.
- Then ask the students to think about how do these two concepts correlate with each other?
- Do some jobs need specific skills?

#### 2. Input:

- Now, play the song “Getting Things Done” by Frank Bruen.
- This song really just lists different jobs and says one thing they do.
  - o For example: I’m a farmer, I grow potatoes.
- Allow the students to sing along a couple times so they understand what jobs are.
- Then ask the students do these jobs require skills, if so what are they?
- Also ask why do you think those skills are needed for that job?
  - o Allow the students to come up with reasoning as to why a skill is appropriate for a certain job and not appropriate for another job.

### 3. Modeling:

- Students will be separated into groups (this case 4 groups of 4).
- Each group will be a place of occupation.
  - For example: Group 1: Hospital, Group 2: School, Group 3: Hotel, and Group 4: Airport
- The students will think about these places and come up with the different jobs that are in each place of occupation.
- With that, each student will then pick a role for themselves to list skills that are needed for that job.
- Students will be working together still even when they have their own individual role. They will ask each other questions and help each other figure out what skills go well with that job. They will talk about how they compare or contrast.
- A list of skills can be provided if necessary for some students.

### 4. Check for understanding:

- Teacher will come around to each group while they are working, and ask the students what they have come up with so far.
- The students will be recording their answers on a diagram that is provided for them.
  - o Teacher will be able to see what skills were written for the role, and the teacher will be prompted to ask the student for reasoning.

### 5. Guided practice:

- After the group activity is over, students will be back in their seats to participate in a read aloud with the teacher.
- The teacher will read *Caps for Sale* by Esphyr Slobodkina.
- The teacher will stop on certain pages to put focus on the concept of jobs and skills.
- The class will finish the read aloud with a discussion about what the main character’s job is and what skills did he possess.
  - o Students will be able to also add other skills that were not presented, but are needed for the job of focus from the text.

### 6. Independent practice:

- Students will end this unit with a writing piece: What job do you want when you grow up, and what skills will you need to perform this job exceptionally?

- Students will have the criteria of picking one job and coming up with three skills discussed throughout all the activities or any new ones they thought of. They will have to back up each of their skills with an explanation.
7. Closure:
- Students will be asked to write on sticky note a job they learned about and one skill associated with it.

Assessment and Monitoring:

Formative:

The group work where students had a role and came up with skills.

The discussion had after the read aloud.

Summative:

The writing piece done individually.

Materials:

Song: Getting Things Done

Book: *Caps for Sale*

Writing paper

Writing tool

Sticky notes

References:

<http://www.songsforteaching.com/math/moneycurrency/gettingthingsdone.htm>

### Lesson Plan 3

Name: Morgan Rome

Grade Level: 4th

Subject: Social Studies

Unit Title: American History

Lesson Title: Explore the Florida Explorers

Estimated Time: 60 minutes

Standard:

SS.4.A.3.1 Identify explorers who came to Florida and the motivations for their expeditions.

Learning Objective:

Students will be able to identify key explorers that came to Florida.

Students will be able to identify the motivations of each key explorer that came to Florida.

Students will be able to explain why these explorers and their contributions are important.

Essential/Guiding Question(s):

Who are the key explorers of Florida?

Why are the explorers significant to the history of Florida?

Identify the explorers to the contribution they made.

Who is the most important explorer in your opinion?

Key Vocabulary:

Explorer

Motivation

Expedition

Florida

Contributions

Procedures:

**1. Activate prior knowledge:**

- Play the song “Age of Exploration” by Flocabulary.
- This song is not specific to explorers coming to Florida, it gives more of a gist of some famous explorers and what explorers did.

**2. Input:**

- There will be photos placed around the classroom of famous explorers who contributed to Florida.

- Under each photo there will be a short biography followed by some key facts about the person.

**3. Modeling:**

- Students will conduct a gallery walk and learn the information about each explorer they encounter.
- They will have a notebook in hand and take notes about key details about the explorer they are reading and observing about.

**4. Check for understanding:**

- The students will pick from a list an explorer that intrigued them the most.
- They will group up and discuss the information they had learned about.
- The students will be given a chance to do further research on their explorer and present the information to their fellow classmates.

**5. Guided practice:**

- The students will work together in their group to organize the information they will present to the class.
- They will come up with a way on how they want to present it. (Ex: skit, poster board, timeline, etc.)
- Students will be given a few minutes to present at the end of the activity.

**6. Independent practice:**

- The book *Encounter* by Jane Yolen will be played for students in an audio form provided by YouTube.
- The book reinforces the lesson about explorers, but gives the information through a different perspective.
- Students will be asked to use what they know about the explorers' contributions and the perspective of the child in the story to write about their own perspective about the importance of exploration.

**7. Closure:**

- The teacher will have a closing conversation with the students about the activity, what they wrote, the conversations they were having on their own.

**Assessment and Monitoring:**

**Formative:**

The note taking during the gallery walk.

The conversations students were having.

**Summative:**

The writing piece on their own perspective of the importance of exploration.

The group presentations.

**Materials:**



Song: Age of Exploration

Book: *Encounter*

Photos of explorers

Notebook

Writing tool

References: <https://www.flocabulary.com/unit/age-of-exploration/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NSRvWICwIKU>

## Lesson Plan 4

Name: Morgan Rome

Grade Level: 3rd

Subject: Social Studies

Unit Title: Economics

Lesson Title: Buyers and Sellers

Estimated Time: 30-45 minutes

Standard:

SS.3.E.1.3 Recognize that buyers and sellers interact to exchange goods and services through the use of trade or money.

Learning Objective:

Students will be able to identify that buyers and sellers interact to acquire goods and services.  
Students will be able to identify that buyers and sellers acquire these goods and services through two methods: trade or money.

Essential/Guiding Question(s):

Who are buyers? Who are sellers?

What does it mean to trade something?

What are considered a type of good or service?

How does trading something compare to buying it?

What is the difference between a good and a service?

How would you decide when to trade something or buy it?

Key Vocabulary:

Buyers

Sellers

Goods

Services

Trade

Money

Procedures:

1. Activate prior knowledge:

- The students will follow along to a read aloud of *A New Coat for Anna* by Harriet Ziefert on YouTube.
- Students will talk to their shoulder partners about what they thought about the book and why I may have introduced this story to them.

- o What was the purpose of using this story based on the main idea of the text?
- 2. Input:**
- Explicitly tell the students there was a reason we read this story according to what they will be learning today.
  - Play the song “A Marigold for Company” by Frank Bruen so the students get an extra understanding and connection about buyers, sellers, trading, and buying.
    - o Allow a few students to share what connection they made from song and story.
  - Introduce the activity the students will be doing that will assist in teaching how buyers and sellers interact to exchange goods and services with trade or money.
  - Students will be filling out a graphic organizer that pertains to the trading that happened throughout the story.
    - o The students will fill out this organizer to show what Anna’s mother traded in return for what.
    - o They will easily be able to see how trading works with the organizer.
- 3. Modeling:**
- Go through the book again with the students and guide them to the first thing Anna’s mother traded and for what.
    - o Reread the page where the students can identify this.
- 4. Check for understanding:**
- When the students complete the first item traded, ask the students what they wrote down so you can check to see if they understand what is the thing traded and what was the thing she wanted in return.
- 5. Guided practice:**
- The students will fill out the rest of the graphic organizer worksheet with their shoulder partner.
    - o One student could find the item being traded whereas the other student could identify what was gained for the trade.
    - o Or the students could discuss together why they think a certain item was the trade item and what they thought was the thing wanted.
  - Go over the graphic organizer with the students to ensure they wrote down the correct traded items and the correct items gained through trade.
- 6. Independent practice:**
- Students will write a sentence or two for each question:
    - o How do buyers and sellers interact with each other through trade or money?
    - o Why do you think people trade goods or services instead of just buying with money?
    - o Have you ever traded anything with someone, if so what?

7. Closure:

- On a slip of paper students will tell me if they could trade one thing they have right now for something else, what would it be?

Assessment and Monitoring:

Formative:

The graphic organizer students will fill out.

The conversations during partner work.

Summative:

The three independent short response questions.

Materials:

Song: A Marigold for Company

Book: *A New Coat for Anna*

Graphic organizer

Writing paper

Writing tool

References:

<http://www.songsforteaching.com/math/moneycurrency/amarigoldforcompany.htm>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cu2i8LBqUJ8>

## Lesson Plan 5

Name: Morgan Rome

Grade Level: 5th

Subject: Social Studies

Unit Title: American History

Lesson Title: Civil Rights Sneetches

Estimated Time: 45-60 minutes

Standard:

SS.5.A.1.1 Use primary and secondary sources to understand history.

Learning Objective:

Students will be able to utilize primary and secondary to complete the activities in the lesson. Students will be able to define what segregation is and explain the concept. Students will be able to explain what the Civil Rights Movement is.

Essential/Guiding Question(s):

What is the difference between a primary and secondary resource?

How can we use primary resources to understand concepts?

How are secondary resources used?

Define segregation and what is its importance?

How did segregation effect people?

Key Vocabulary:

Primary resources

Secondary resources

Civil rights

Segregation

Jim Crow laws

Civil Rights Movement

Procedures:

**1.** Activate prior knowledge:

- Play the song “Civil Rights Movement” from Flocabulary.
  - o Focus on the topic of segregation.
- Define segregation and discuss what this means and why it was such a vital aspect of the Civil Rights Movement.

**2.** Input:

- Use *The Sneetches* by Dr. Seuss to provide an example of segregation. (Do not explicitly tell students we are reading this book to look at an example of segregation: simply read the story as you would beginning a lesson).
  - Read the story to the students.
- 3. Modeling:**
- Pass out a worksheet to the students (Metacognition Think Sheet):
    - o I'm thinking, I'm wondering, I'm noticing, I'm seeing, I'm feeling, I'm understanding.
    - o These are the different boxes students will be filling out collaboratively and with the teacher's help.
  - Model I'm thinking and let the students follow up with I'm wondering.
    - o Students may need some leading in this part because they will have to make connections from the main idea to segregation.
    - o For example, reiterate to students to think back to our conversation and the song we listened to in the beginning of the lesson.
- 4. Check for understanding:**
- Have students continue to the remaining boxes.
  - Monitor if students are on-task and are understanding the material.
  - Ask open ended questions to students.
    - o Ex: Why did you write this on your paper, what made you think about that?
- 6. Guided practice:**
- In the remaining boxes students will be working with a face or shoulder partner.
  - Students will have these conversations to gain different perspectives.
  - When students are finishing up, allow them to get into small groups so they can talk about what they answered and what they thought about in terms of the book and the message it sort of has.
- 7. Independent practice:**
- Bring the class together to discuss the next part of the activity.
  - Display images that exemplify how people were segregated.
    - o Ex: Jim Crow Drinking Fountain by John Vachon and Rex Theatre by Dorothea Lange.
  - Explain to the students that these are real images that captured what life was like for colored people.
  - Students will use these primary resources to make connections with the song and book they encountered in the beginning of the lesson.
  - Students will write an opinion essay to the prompt of: Using your knowledge about the Sneetches and what these images are showing, do you believe these laws or rules are fair to have against people?
- 8. Closure:**

- Students will write or draw about what stuck to them the most about the lesson.
- These will be displayed onto a board in order to refer back to these feelings when this topic is brought up again.

Assessment and Monitoring:

Formative:

The Metacognitive worksheet done collaboratively.

Summative:

The writing prompt done individually.

Materials:

Song: Civil Rights Movement

Book: *The Sneetches*

Worksheet

Writing paper

Writing tool

References: <https://www.flocabulary.com/unit/civil-rights/>

<https://www.theteachertreasury.com/free-downloads/the-sneetches-and-segregation-shortextended-response-activities-a-dr-seuss-inspired-lesson-for-black-history-month>

[http://www.ducksters.com/history/civil\\_rights/jim\\_crow\\_laws.php](http://www.ducksters.com/history/civil_rights/jim_crow_laws.php)

## Lesson Plan 6

Name: Morgan Rome

Grade Level: 3rd

Subject: Social Studies

Unit Title: Civics and Government

Lesson Title: Why do we need a Government?

Estimated Time: 30-45 minutes

Standard:

SS.3.C.1.1 Explain the purpose and need for government.

Learning Objective:

Students will be able to explain the purpose of a government.

Students will be able to explain the need for a government.

Students will be able to define what government means.

Students will be able to identify the branches of government and their purpose.

Essential/Guiding Question(s):

What is a democratic government?

What does a government do?

What are the different parts of the government?

What is the significance of a government?

Is there protocols you would change within our current government?

Key Vocabulary:

Government

Law

Branches

Judicial

Executive

Legislative

President

Responsibilities

Democracy

Procedures:

1. Activate prior knowledge:

- The song "Government" by Jim Thompson will be played for the students for them to get a quick rundown of what the government is.



- Ask the students what each branch is and what are they responsible for to see if the student focused on the meaning of the song.

**2. Input:**

- Have the students partake in a collaborative activity where they will simulate an election.
  - o This activity will be done quickly to transition them into the next section.
- Students will vote for their class president and vice president.
- Once they are chosen, the students will be put into different branches of government.
- The students will have review laws that should be in place for their classroom rules or should not.
  - o The students will be exercising the appropriate power and responsibilities they have according to their branch.

**3. Modeling:**

- For the first law to be reviewed, the teacher will guide this.
- This will be step by step to ensure students know what is expected of them.

**4. Check for understanding:**

- Continue to monitor the students and ask questions that will allow them to respond.

**5. Guided practice:**

- Continue with the other laws, but allow the students to collaborate with each other.
- Teacher will be there to facilitate if necessary.
- Students will use their branch responsibilities to come up with classroom laws together.
  - o They will work together and see how the government is needed to work together to approve laws.

**6. Independent practice:**

- Students will respond to a prompt: What is the purpose of the government? And Why do we need a government?

**7. Closure:**

- The teacher will do a read aloud to close up the activity.
- The teacher will read *If I Were President* by Catherine Stier.
- Use an exit slip to ask students to write one question they still have, what they learned from the activity, and what branch the president is involved in.

**Assessment and Monitoring:**

**Formative:**

The activity of coming up with classroom laws.

The student discussions during the collaborative activity.

**Summative:**

The writing piece about the purpose of the government and why we need it.

**Materials:**

Song: Government

Book: If I Were President

Writing paper

Writing tool

References:

<http://www.songsforteaching.com/socialstudies/unitedstates/3branchesofgovernment.htm>

## Lesson Plan 7

Name: Morgan Rome

Grade Level: 3rd

Subject: Social Studies

Unit Title: Geography

Lesson Title: Mapping out Locations

Estimated Time: 45 minutes

Standard:

SS.3.G.1.6 Use maps to identify different types of scale to measure distances between two places.

Learning Objective:

Students will be able to use a map to identify the distance of two places using different scales.

Students will be able to identify which scale is being used to measure the distance of two places.

Students will be able to use the three scales to measure the distance between one pair of locations.

Essential/Guiding Question(s):

What is a map?

How do we use maps?

What is a scale?

Can anyone identify or give an example of a scale from a map?

How is one scale type different than another scale type?

Do you have a preference in the scale type you use for certain distances?

Key Vocabulary:

Map

Scale

Linear

Fractional

Word

Distance

Procedures:

**1. Activate prior knowledge:**

- Teacher will read *Knuffle Bunny* by Mo Willems out loud to the students.

**2. Input:**

- The teacher will explain to the students that the locations in the book are important to our activity.

- Students will have pre-made maps of the places that the family in the text went through in order to get to the laundromat and back.
  - Students will measure the distances between the house and the laundromat using different types of scales.
- 3. Modeling:**
- Teacher will model the fractional scale because it is the most difficult to interpret.
  - Students will be helping the teacher come up with the scale measurements and asking questions along the way.
- 4. Check for understanding:**
- Students will be able to follow along with the teacher and participating during the model.
  - Teacher will also prompt students' questions to monitor responses.
- 5. Guided practice:**
- Students will break into groups to work on the remaining scales: word and linear. - The students will switch when time is up to go work on the other scale.
- 6. Independent practice:**
- Students will write a couple sentences about which scale is most appropriate to see the distance between places and why.
- 7. Closure:**
- The song "Directions to Nowhere" by Joan Maute will be played at the end and the students will have the lyrics.
  - On a sticky note, the students will write one sentence to make a connection between song and activity.

**Assessment and Monitoring:**

Formative: The collaboration between students to work on the different scales.

Summative: The writing piece about which scale is most appropriate according to the activity.

**Materials:**

Song: Directions to Nowhere

Book: *Knuffle Bunny*

Maps

Writing paper

Writing tool

Sticky notes

**References:**

<http://www.songsforteaching.com/geography/howtoreadamap/directionstonowhere.htm>

## Lesson Plan 8

Name: Morgan Rome

Grade Level: 4th

Subject: Social Studies

Unit Title: Financial Literacy

Lesson Title: Saving Money to Reach Goals

Estimated Time: 30-45 minutes

Standard:

SS.4.FL.3.4 Identify savings goals people set as incentives to save. One savings goal might be to buy goods and services in the future.

Learning Objective:

Students will be able to identify what a savings goal is.

Students will be able to identify what goods and services are.

Students will be able to identify certain incentives people have to reach their savings goal.

Essential/Guiding Question(s):

What are savings goals?

What is the difference between a good and a service?

Have you ever had to make a savings goal for something?

Classify what a good is and what a service is?

How do you save in order to reach your incentive?

Key Vocabulary:

Savings goal

Goods

Services

Amount

Incentive

Procedures:

**1. Activate prior knowledge:**

- Students will read *You Can't Buy a Dinosaur with a Dime* by Harriet Ziefert.
- The students will take part in a 5 minute literature circle to discuss the purpose of the book and what they learned.

**2. Input:**

- The teacher will give the students a set amount of money (monopoly money).

- There will be a selection of items with a price that would ensure students need to save their money to acquire the item.
    - o Student is given an initial amount of 23 dollars. The item they choose are a pair of new sneakers for 65 dollars. They will have to figure out how much money they will need to save in order to be able to buy the item.
  - The students will be given obstacles like going to the ice cream shop and choosing whether or not to splurge or save.
- 3. Modeling:**
- The teacher will model this activity by doing it him/herself first.
  - Students will ask questions in between for clarification.
- 4. Check for understanding:**
- Ask the students to retell what they are supposed to do for this activity.
- 5. Guided practice:**
- The activity will be done with three separate savings goals and items.
  - The students can work together if they choose the same item or if they need help with their goals depending on obstacles they receive.
- 6. Independent practice:**
- The students will be given a scenario about saving goals and they will have to map out what the person will have to do in order to reach their goal.
- 7. Closure:**
- End the activity with the “Money, Money” song by Frank Bruen for a few times so the students can get a hang of the lyrics.
  - Ask the students why do we have saving goals?

Assessment and Monitoring:

Formative:

The activity about savings goals scenarios.

Summative:

The independent practice scenario where they will map out how to save accordingly.

Materials:

Song: Money Money

Book: *You Can't Buy a Dinosaur with a Dime*

Monopoly money

Writing paper

Writing tool

References:

<http://www.songsforteaching.com/math/moneycurrency/moneymoney.htm>

## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

### Concluding Remarks

The purpose of this thesis was to explore how songs can be integrated into elementary classrooms in order to engage students during social studies lessons. One of my objectives was to provide a strong rationale that songs provide an engaging element to social studies. I completed background research that supported the idea of songs having an engaging element. The background research concentrated on the importance of songs in the classroom, the need for social studies, and the benefits of songs combined with social studies. This thesis then explored research that determined songs have a countless amount of extending benefits for student success. An important benefit that must be noted, other than the engagement factor and retention of information, is students are acquiring literacy skills during these social studies lessons. Therefore, social studies lessons integrating songs have a place in the elementary classroom.

This thesis discovered that songs and social studies have a positive impact on student learning. This research continued through the analyzations of YouTube videos. The YouTube videos were the qualitative data needed to observe the level of engagement students have during social studies lessons utilizing songs. After watching a copious amount of videos, I compiled a list of the top ten videos that met my predetermined criteria and expectations. After scoring each video with the adapted engagement rubric, the purpose of this thesis was supported once again. The ten videos I analyzed presented the characteristics of engagement and were scored high based on the key points stated within the rubric.

After compiling data from the background information and the analyzations of the YouTube videos, the purpose of this thesis was supported. One solution coming from the compiled data refers to the statement of songs having a place in an elementary social studies classroom. Originally I had proposed that I would identify common classroom resources that are used in social studies and would then recommend how to integrate songs into those resources. However minimal resources were found and they contained unrelated content specific to this thesis. Ultimately this helped me realize I needed another option to demonstrate how songs can be integrated into social studies lessons and deliver the engaging element while teaching social studies themes effectively. With that knowledge in mind, I decided to create eight lesson plans that did just that. Each lesson plan created incorporated Florida State Standards ([www.cpalms.org/Public/search/Standard](http://www.cpalms.org/Public/search/Standard)), a social studies related song, and children's literature. The standards are aligned because it ensures that the lessons are purposeful, consistent, and have a predetermined academic focus. A social studies song is associated to the lesson plan since it is essential to this thesis. Each lesson plan includes a piece of children's literature to add another enriching element to the plans. Students' prior knowledge and what they read in trade books could assist in the learning of important social studies concepts (Almerico, 2013). In addition, the combination of content related songs and trade books enhance how students learn social studies.

This thesis explores how songs are used as a strategy to engage elementary students in social studies lessons. Based on what I have learned during this process, I believe that if songs are used effectively in lessons they can provide an essential tool for successful learning.



### Recommendations for Future Research

As I stated in the *Methodology* section, there are two limitations within my thesis. The two limitations identified were having limited availability to video sources and observing videos as opposed to observing human subjects. Recognizing these two factors added restrictions to further conclusions, different methods can be taken for future research. For example, in the future if I am able to continue this research, I would repeat the *methodology* section with the same protocol to scoring real classroom observations. The collection of data is altered by conducting in-class observations of students during social studies lessons as opposed to watching the YouTube videos. The videos are a limited resource as opposed to being immersed into an actual classroom and being able to control specific factors.

In the future, I hope to utilize these lesson plans in the elementary classroom where I will serve as a classroom teacher. I cannot wait to teach students the important concepts of social studies and assist in their growth of knowledge. From this thesis, I have acquired an immense amount of information that I am able to apply in the classroom. I am able to provide a valuable, fun, and engaging education to my future students.

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<http://www.cambridge.org/elt/blog/2014/04/18/teaching-critical-thinking->

[usingbloomstaxonomy](http://www.cambridge.org/elt/blog/2014/04/18/teaching-critical-thinking-usingbloomstaxonomy)

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<b>All Lesson Plans</b>
<p>Critical Think Skills (Question Stems)  <a href="https://www.teachthought.com/learning-models/25-question-stems-framed-aroundblooms-taxonomy/">https://www.teachthought.com/learning-models/25-question-stems-framed-aroundblooms-taxonomy/</a></p>
<b>Lesson Plan 1</b>
<p>Song: Map Skills by Flocabulary  <a href="https://www.flocabulary.com/unit/map-skills/">https://www.flocabulary.com/unit/map-skills/</a></p>
<p>Book: <i>How I Learned Geography</i> by Uri Shulevitz          Shulevitz, Uri. (2008). <i>How I learned geography</i>. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux          ISBN: 9780374334994</p>
<p>Kahoot Quiz  <a href="https://kahoot.it/">https://kahoot.it/</a></p>
<p>CPALMS Standard:          SS.3.G.1.4 Name and identify the purpose of maps (physical, political, elevation, population).  <a href="http://www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewStandard/Preview/2967">http://www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewStandard/Preview/2967</a></p>
<b>Lesson Plan 2</b>
<p>Song: Getting Things Done by Frank Bruen  <a href="http://www.songsforteaching.com/math/moneycurrency/gettingthingsdone.htm">http://www.songsforteaching.com/math/moneycurrency/gettingthingsdone.htm</a></p>
<p>Book: <i>Caps for Sale</i> by Esphyr Slobodkina          Slobodkina, E. (1987). <i>Caps for sale</i>. New York: Harper &amp; Row          ISBN: 978-0064431439</p>
<p>CPALMS Standard:          SS.4.FL.1.1 People have many different types of jobs from which to choose. Identify different jobs requiring people to have different skills.  <a href="http://www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewStandard/Preview/8492">http://www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewStandard/Preview/8492</a></p>
<b>Lesson Plan 3</b>
<p>Song: Age of Exploration by Flocabulary  <a href="https://www.flocabulary.com/unit/age-of-exploration/">https://www.flocabulary.com/unit/age-of-exploration/</a></p>
<p>Book: <i>Encounter</i> by Jane Yolen          Yolen, J. (1992). <i>Encounter</i>. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.          ISBN: 978-0152013899</p>
<p>CPALMS Standard:          SS.4.A.3.1 Identify explorers who came to Florida and the motivations for their expeditions.  <a href="http://www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewStandard/Preview/2997">http://www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewStandard/Preview/2997</a></p>

#### Lesson Plan 4

Song: A Marigold for Company by Frank Bruen

<http://www.songsforteaching.com/math/moneycurrency/amarigoldforcompany.htm>

Book: *A New Coat for Anna* by Harriet Ziefert

Ziefert, H. (1988). *A new coat for Anna*. New York: Dragonfly Books.

ISBN: 978-0394898612

CPALMS Standard:

SS.3.E.1.3 Recognize that buyers and sellers interact to exchange goods and services through the use of trade or money.

<http://www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewStandard/Preview/2984>

#### Lesson Plan 5

Song: Civil Rights Movement by Flocabulary <https://www.flocabulary.com/unit/civil-rights/>

Book: *The Sneetches* by Dr. Seuss

Seuss, Dr. (1961). *The sneetches*. New York: Random House.

ISBN: 978-0394800899

Worksheets/Handouts: <https://www.theteachertreasury.com/free-downloads/the-sneetches-and-segregationshortextended-response-activities-a-dr-seuss-inspired-lesson-for-black-history-month> [http://www.ducksters.com/history/civil\\_rights/jim\\_crow\\_laws.php](http://www.ducksters.com/history/civil_rights/jim_crow_laws.php)

CPALMS Standard:

SS.5.A.1.1 Use primary and secondary sources to understand history.

[www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewStandard/Preview/3034](http://www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewStandard/Preview/3034)

#### Lesson Plan 6

Song: Government by Jim Thompson

<http://www.songsforteaching.com/socialstudies/unitedstates/3branchesofgovernment.htm>

Book: *If I Were President* by Catherine Stier

Stier, C. (1999). *If I were president*. Albert Whitman & Company.

ISBN: 978-0807535424

CPALMS Standard:

SS.3.C.1.1 Explain the purpose and need for government.

[www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewStandard/Preview/2986](http://www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewStandard/Preview/2986)

#### Lesson Plan 7

Song: Directions to Nowhere by Joan Maute

[www.songsforteaching.com/geography/howtoreadamap/directionstonowhere.htm](http://www.songsforteaching.com/geography/howtoreadamap/directionstonowhere.htm)

<p>Book: <i>Knuffle Bunny</i> by Mo Willems  Willems, M. (2004). <i>Knuffle bunny</i>. New York: Hyperion Books for Children.  ISBN: 978-0786818709</p>
<p>CPALMS Standard:</p>
<p>SS.3.G.1.6 Use maps to identify different types of scale to measure distances between two places.  <a href="http://www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewStandard/Preview/2969">www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewStandard/Preview/2969</a></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Lesson Plan 8</b></p>
<p>Song: Money, Money by Frank Bruen  <a href="http://www.songsforteaching.com/math/moneycurrency/moneymoney.htm">www.songsforteaching.com/math/moneycurrency/moneymoney.htm</a></p>
<p>Book: <i>You Can't Buy a Dinosaur with a Dime</i> by Harriet Ziefert  Ziefert, H. (2003). <i>You can't buy a dinosaur with a dime</i>. Blue Apple Books.  ISBN: 978-1609051464</p>
<p>CPALMS Standard:</p>
<p>SS.4.FL.3.4 Identify savings goals people set as incentives to save. One savings goal might be to buy goods and services in the future.  <a href="http://www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewStandard/Preview/8510">www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewStandard/Preview/8510</a></p>