

Animal Adaptations

Name of Participants: Laura DuBray, Andrea LaTorra, and Wendy Parker

Overview/Purpose: This pilot project will focus on developing a multidisciplinary unit, tying in Science, Social Studies and English Language Arts. Students will be introduced to Unit 2 in the Scott Foresman Reading Series ---which integrates the concepts of animals through the story Penguin Chick.

Students will be shown vocabulary specific to both the story Penguin Chick, as well as Science vocabulary specific to the animal unit. The unit will be taught using both whole group and ability grouping to introduce and reteach main idea, concept vocabulary, context clues, reading for information and details, and the writing process. 6+1 Writing traits will be discussed and used as the students create a research project tied to a specific continent, animal and biome.

Students will be introduced to the process of accessing needed information from the Internet to generate an animal report specific to animal adaptations. Smart board technology will be used to retrieve, process, and communicate information and as a tool to model and enhance the learning experience.

The learner will be expanding the concepts of animals, adaptations and habitats through the following activities: smart board website tutorials, smart board flip chart vocabulary activity, diorama, internet and library research, written animal report, oral animal report, and a higher thinking activity, (such as presentation board, diorama, poster, song, poems, video, play, etc.) The culminating activity for this unit will be the oral and written animal presentation, with a choice of the higher thinking activity listed previously.

Differentiated instruction is key to clarifying for the learner the information being communicated. This multidisciplinary approach to Science, Social Studies, English Language Arts and Technology successfully weaves the material in a fresh and exciting way. We are using multiple measures that allows for the varied types of learners to meet with success. This delivery of instruction connected to the individual learning style of the learner will allow students to develop and deepen their understanding of animal adaptations as they explore this unit.

Length of instructional time: 6 WEEKS

Grade/age level: Grade Three

NYS Learning Standards Addressed:

ELA Standards

Standard 1: Students will read, write, listen and speak for information and understanding—As listeners and readers, students will collect data, facts, and ideas, discover relationships, concepts, and generalizations, and use knowledge generated from oral, written, and electronically produced texts. As speakers and writers, they will use

oral and written language to acquire, interpret, apply, and transmit information.

- LA 3.01.04—Uses ideas
- LA 3.02.03—Writes for literacy responses/expression
- LA 3.04.02---Uses a variety of resources to gather informational
- LA 3.04.04—Shares new information with others
- LA 3.06.02---Reads informational text
- LA 3.06.03---Comprehends written text
- LA 3.06.04—Applies study skills
- LA 3.07.02—Interprets what is read
- LA 3.08.03—Speaks for a variety of purposes

Science Standards

- SCK-4.4.LE.2.A- Recognize that traits of living things are both inherited and acquired or learned
- SCK-4.4.LE.4 .A- Describe the major stages in the life cycles of selected plants and animals
- SCK-4.4.LE.5.B- Describe some survival behaviors of common living specimens

Social Studies Standard

- SSK-4.3.2.A- Ask geographic questions about where places are located, why they are located there, and how their location are related to their location of other people and places

MST Standards

- Standard 2: Information Systems
 - Students will access, generate, process, and transfer information using appropriate technologies.
- Standard 5: Technology
 - Students will apply technological knowledge and skills to design, construct, use, and evaluate products and systems to satisfy human and environmental needs.

PCSD Standards

- Critical Thinker
- Effective Communicator
- Responsible Citizen
- Life Long Learner

Essential Questions

- Why do we need to research and learn about animal adaptation?
- How have animals adapted to solve the problems of their environment?
- How does where animals live influence their specific adaptations?
- How has human influence changed animals' adaptations over time?
- How can the learner use technologies to research a specific topic (animal

adaptations)

CONTENT KNOWLEDGE:

Declarative: The student will. . .

- Students will understand the difference between main idea and detail.
- Students will study various animal adaptations and habitats.
- Students will be able to understand and utilize concept vocabulary: **adaptation, habitat, predator, prey, characteristic, and life span.**
- Students will understand the internet is a resource to research topics.
- Students will learn that various technologies (Smart Board and Internet) enhance the learning experience.

Procedural: The student will. . .

- Students will identify main idea and details in informational texts.
- Students will incorporate this information into graphic organizers.
- Students will formulate specific inquiry questions about animal adaptations.
- Students will develop key words related to their inquiry questions.
- Students will perform an internet search to research their topic.
- Students will organize and communicate information gained in a written and oral report format.
- Students will present work using Smart Board technology.

Assessment Format

- Written Rubric
- Oral Presentation Rubric
- Technology Rubric

Animals, Tame & Wild

Participants: Beth Channell, Laura Buck

Overview/Purpose:

The students will know that people and animals are important to each other. This concept will be established by providing the students with books, media clips, and personal experiences that explain and explore the many kinds of animals (some tame and some wild), the idea that people and animals live near each other, and people and animals need each other.

Length of Instructional time: Six Weeks

Age/grade level: Grade One

NYS Standards Addressed:

Science:

- The students will describe how plants and animals, including humans, depend on each other and the nonliving environment.

Language Arts:

- The students will locate and use classroom and library media center resources to acquire information, with assistance.
- The students will copy words, phrases, and sentences from books, magazines, signs, charts, and own dictation.
- The students will write to respond to text.
- The students will share what they know, want to know, and have learned about a theme or topic.

Reading:

- The students will distinguish between text with stories and texts with information.
- The students will select books to meet informational needs, with assistance.

PCSD Standards

- Critical Thinker
- Effective Communicator
- Responsible Citizen
- Life Long Learner

Essential Question:

How are people and animals important to one another?

Content Knowledge

Declarative

The students will understand...

1. How people take care of their pets.
2. How people can help animals.

3. How animals can help people.
4. How we can learn about animals by watching them.
5. Which wild animals we can find in our neighborhood.
6. How we can help animals around the world.

Procedural

The students will be able to...

1. Distinguish between animals that are friendly and those that are wild and do not live with people.
2. Describe reason why people and animals need each other.
3. Identify ways in which animals care for other animals.
4. Recognize ways in which animals care for people.
5. Share what they know, want to know, and have learned about how animals and people depend on each other.
6. Write or illustrate to respond to text about the topic.
7. Copy words, phrases, and sentences from books, signs, charts, and own dictation about the topic.
8. Locate and use classroom and library media center resources to acquire information about how animals and people depend on each other, with assistance.

Assessment Evidence

Performance Task: To assess prior knowledge, the students will view a poster that represents each intention (6 posters/6 weeks). The teacher will record information shared about the poster on chart paper. At the end of each week, the teacher will ask the students again what they see in the poster and record the information.

Key Criteria: The description at the end of the week should include key vocabulary from the Amazing Words List (i.e.. Needs, responsibility, shelter, cuddle, tickle, faithful, fetch, and heel) and should include more descriptive and accurate information related the intended focus question.

Note: Due to the timing of this unit the assessments will be primarily observations during targeted activities, and interviews with the children throughout each week. The purpose for conducting a large group assessment is to model using language to describe a topic and to increase vocabulary about a specific theme. As the year progresses, similar assessments will occur; however, the students may demonstrate their knowledge through independent writing tasks.

Enhancing Aural Skills Through Folk & Multicultural Music

Participants: Richard Rabideau, Daryle Redmond

Overview/Purpose: This learning unit is designed to enhance student aural skills (audiation) and ability to use solfege as a means to learn and perform beginning/intermediate repertoire in major and minor tonalities. Through the use of folk and multicultural songs, students will increase their understanding of the role of folk music in cultural literacy. Students will demonstrate understanding through performance (singing and instrumental), discussion (individual and/or group), aural and written assessments.

Grade Level: Elementary/Intermediate (Grades 5-8)

Subject Area: Instrumental Music

NYS Learning Standards Addressed:

- Arts Standard 1 – Creating, Performing, and Participating in the Arts
- Arts Standard 3 - Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art
- Arts Standard 4 – Understanding the Cultural Dimensions and Contributions of the Arts
- English Language Arts Standard 1 - Read, Write, Listen and Speak for Information and Understanding
- English Language Arts Standard 3 - Read, Write, Listen and Speak for Critical Analysis and Evaluation
- Social Studies Standard 1 – The History of New York and the United States
- Social Studies Standard 2 – World History
- Social Studies Standard 2 – Geography
- Social Studies Standard 2 – Economics

PCSD Standards :

- Critical Thinker
- Effective Communicator
- Responsible Citizen
- Life Long Learner

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- Why is it important for musicians to have good aural perception (describe aural perception)?

(**Conductors** - Score reading: What should the piece sound like, etc. **Musicians** - Best performance comes when you know what your part sounds like before attempting to play, improvisation/real-time musical interaction, learning songs “by ear,” etc.)

- Why are folk songs important? What can be learned from folksongs?

(Children throughout the ages have used songs to learn and understand complex relationships. They are an important way to learn aspects of history and to empathize with the plight of others. They help us form connections with our own and the society of others and our own role in the world.)

CONTENT KNOWLEDGE:

Declarative

Students will understand:

- Solfeggio terminology (major & minors)
- Simple key signatures
- The dual role (mirror and vehicle) folk songs play in culture
- The function of work, children and spiritual songs in the repertoire.

Procedural

Students will be able to:

- Sing (solfege) songs in the repertoire
- Perform repertoire songs with their instrument
- Synopsise selected lyrics of songs from repertoire
- Demonstrate enhanced aural perception through interval assessment.

“Folk Literature and Folk Music Music with 6 Traits + 1”

Name of Participants: Sarah McCarty, Sandra Verity

Overview/Purpose: In music class, fourth graders presently learn to sing several folk songs, however, we simply scrape the surface of the origins and meaning of each song. It would be a more thorough and meaningful study if when applicable, students link their study of folk songs to folk literature. This study could incorporate student’s knowledge of sound production, instrumentation, rhythm and music terminology to connect the musical experience and the literature component.

Odyssey ELA participants explore fables in depth in third grade. In fourth grade they expand on this by comparing and contrasting different forms of Folk Literature to Fables. In past years this comparison has not gone beyond a simple introduction and analysis. This project will challenge students to draft original tales representing the criteria of each kind.

It is our intention with this pilot to link the Odyssey ELA and the Music curriculum by jointly doing a unit on fables, fairy tales, just-so stories and tall tales. Each teacher will present fables, fairy tales, just-so stories and tall tales. Odyssey ELA students will continue their original investigation of fables, fairy tales, just-so stories and tall tales. Their research of the literary characteristics of each will comprise only the initial piece of their assignment. The project will extend to the creation of an original tale following literary guidelines and including musical components as studied in music class. Music students will link their pre-existing rhythm unit to a tall tale lyric writing activity that will overlap the folk literature ELA project. Music students will also read a fable and add musical components through a class composition project as well as a small group composition project. Music students will use improvisation to enhance ELA students’ original fairy tales and just-so stories using their knowledge of timbre, tone production and instrumentation.

Length of instructional time: Lessons will occur from February break to late spring.

Grade/age level: Fourth grade population through Music class and Odyssey ELA.

NYS Learning Standards Addressed:

Music

- Create and perform short pieces consisting of sounds from a variety of traditional and nontraditional instruments. 1a, 2a
- Perform expressively through singing and on a musical instrument maintaining tone quality, pitch, rhythm, tempo, and dynamics. 1b
- Read simple notation. 1c
- Perform in an ensemble. 1d
- Demonstrate appropriate audience behavior, including attentive listening. 2e
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of specific musical works and performances including their own and others. 3a

- Describe music in terms related to basic elements such as melody, rhythm, harmony, dynamics, timbre, form, style, etc. 3b
- Discuss the basic means by which instruments can alter pitch, loudness, duration and timbre. 3c
- Identify and perform a basic repertoire of folk songs. 4a
- Identify the primary cultural, geographical, and historical settings for the music they listen to and perform. 4d

ELA NYS Learning Standards Addressed:

Standard 1: Students will read, write, listen and speak for information and understanding.

- Students will read a minimum of 25 books or the equivalent per year across all content areas and standards.
- Students will write an average of 1,000 words per month across all content areas and standards.
- Students will listen on a daily basis.
- Students will speak on a daily basis.

Standard 2: Students will read, write, listen and speak for literary response and expression.

- *same subcategories as listed in Standard 1*

Standard 3: Students will read, write, listen and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.

- *same subcategories as listed in Standard 1*

Standard 4: Students will read, write, listen and speak for social interaction.

- *same subcategories as listed in Standard 1*

PCSD Standards Addressed:

Lifelong Learner

Critical Thinker

Responsible Citizen

Effective Communicator

Essential Questions

- Why do we need to research and learn about animal adaptation?
- How have animals adapted to solve the problems of their environment?
- How does where animals live influence their specific adaptations?
- How has human influence changed animals' adaptations over time?
- How can the learner use technologies to research a specific topic (animal adaptations)

CONTENT KNOWLEDGE:

Declarative: The student will. . .

- Students will understand the difference between main idea and detail.
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- Students will be able to understand and utilize concept vocabulary: **adaptation, habitat, predator, prey, characteristic, and life span.**
- Students will understand the internet is a resource to research topics.

- Students will learn that various technologies (Smart Board and Internet) enhance the learning experience.

Procedural: The student will. . .

- Students will identify main idea and details in informational texts.
- Students will incorporate this information into graphic organizers.
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- Students will present work using Smart Board technology.

Assessment Format

- Written Rubric
- Oral Presentation Rubric
- Technology Rubric

From The Secrets of The Forbidden City To The Massacre At Tiananmen Square: China, A Journey Through History And Literature

Participants: Chris Boulé, Susan Wilson:

Overview/Purpose:

The 10th grade students are now required to pass the Comprehensive Examination in English and the Global Studies regents exams at the end of their 10th grade year. This has placed additional emphasis on the reading and writing requirements during their 9th grade year. In order to develop and improve upon these skills, it is important to take a comprehensive approach with special education students. This unit is an attempt to better utilize technology to increase student understanding of Chinese culture, geography and history while also improving upon writing skills and fostering comprehension. After attending the Superintendent's Conference Day in March where the expert from Google demonstrated its uses and options, we were excited about the opportunity to integrate this technology into an existing unit. The inclusion of an English teacher into the team and the curriculum mapping done by the English Department at PHS warrants further unit development of the unit on China and *The Forbidden City*, a 9th core text. Students in our classroom have been identified as either special education classified students or AIS Level 1 or 2 students; both categories demonstrating a need for skills based instruction and multiple instruction methods. The combination of both writing and reading programs into our team taught 80 minute 9th grade English/Global class will benefit students by offering creative options to writing while focusing on skill building enhancements and infusing Global Studies content into the application of writing and reading selections.

NYS Learning Standards Addressed:

English Standards-

- **Students will listen, speak, read and write for information and understanding.**
- **Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression**
- **Students will listen, speak, read and write for critical analysis and evaluation.**
- **Students will listen, speak, read and write for social interaction**

Global Studies Standards:

- **Standard 2: World History**
- **Standard 3: Geography**

Mathematics, Science and Technology Standards:

- **Standard 5: Technology**
- **Standard 2: Information Systems**

PCSD Standards:

- **Critical Thinker**
- **Effective Communicator**
- **Healthy Citizen**
- **Lifelong Learner**
- **Responsible Citizen**

Essential Questions:

- What constitutes a hero?
- What makes writing worth reading?
- What unites people behind a certain cause for which they will dearly sacrifice?
- What role does government play in protecting our freedoms?

- How do geography, climate and resources affect the history and development of culture and civilizations?
- How do the decisions of certain leaders affect the long-term future?
- Is our view of other cultures biased by our own way of life?

Declarative knowledge:

Students will know or understand...

- the literary elements: theme, setting, character, conflict, plot, and point of view and how these effect a story
- the 6 traits of writing
- literary techniques (characterization, figurative language, foreshadowing, flashback) and the difference between simile, metaphor, hyperbole and personification.
- point of view and how it affects the reader/adds to the reader's understanding of the intention of the written work.
- Smiley Face Tricks (magic 3, hyphenated modifiers, humor, figurative language, expanded moment and repetition for effect).
- how to read, interpret and write a RAFT.
- methods of characterization (appearance, what others would say, environment, speech, actions and thoughts/feelings)
- the incorporation of *The Forbidden City* into China's history and its present culture.
- the important Chinese leaders and their impact on China's culture today.
- the historical events in China's history relevant to the development from a dynastic culture to the adoption of Communist philosophies to the Tian An Men Square Massacre.
- the key geographic features that affected China's history
- how geographic isolation resulted in choices that led to China's technological downfall
- how geography greatly affected the history, everyday lives, and specific events in Chinese history
- the issues that are part of the controversy over the Beijing Olympics, including Tibet and alleged human rights abuses on behalf of the Chinese communist government

Procedural Knowledge:

Students will be able to...

- Determine which writing traits are the most important in a specific writing task
- write a selection after being presented with a RAFT- creating their piece for the specified audience, in specified format, developing the content utilizing a determined strong verb.
- while reading and upon completion of the core text, students will identify literary elements and techniques evident in the selection.
- determine how point of view effects a piece of writing
- write personal responses to events in *The Forbidden City* and discuss these responses in groups
- make predictions based on events in *The Forbidden City*
- construct a piece of writing which displays proper placement and uses at least 3 different smiley face tricks.
- create a power point presentation which incorporates a research based model for the acquisition of their information.
- select vocabulary words from the core 9th grade text *The Forbidden City* to define and use in their written work samples.
- synthesize questions for classroom discussion generated through the reading of the core text.
- write a literary analysis paper that focuses on character development.
- accurately identify key geographic features and specific locations that affected China's history

- proficiently explain in writing how the isolation of China led to ethnocentrism in China
- demonstrate proficiency on a quiz in which they must identify “where they are in China” (virtually)
- create a cartoon illustrating the crowded nature of Chinese living, due to their geography
- define “spheres of influence” and create a visual demonstrating how their self-imposed isolation (based on their ethnocentrism) eventually led to China’s loss of sovereignty
- identify Tian An Men Square, the Forbidden City, and briefly explain how the location of the Tian An Men Square protest was symbolic and served to provoke Communist leaders
- write a short piece explaining the importance of students in traditional Chinese culture (Confucianism), and how that history may have led to student overconfidence in the Tiananmen Square Massacre
- complete a writing assignment (RAFT) that will look at the Tiananmen Square Massacre from different perspectives: a Chinese student, Deng Xiaoping, and a neutral observer OR complete a persuasive essay: Deng Xiaoping: reformer or reactionary?
- research and briefly summarize current controversies surrounding China (e.g. Tibet, alleged human rights abuses), and (acting as a US Senator) write a persuasive speech either supporting or denouncing favored trade status with China

Living with the Lake: 400 Years of Champlain Valley Ecology

Name of Participants: Mal Cutaiar, Bryan Gottlob, Kate Messner, Barbara Napper

Overview/Purpose: The purpose of this unit is for students to investigate changing views on ecology of natural resources in the Champlain Valley, from 1609 to 2009. Students will begin their studies with an anthropological and archaeological overview of the Champlain Valley's pre-contact period. They'll compare the land use patterns and other use of resources by Native American tribes to those of the French explorers and British colonists who would arrive beginning in the 16th century. They'll work cooperatively to synthesize historical and scientific resources in order to identify turning points in Champlain Valley ecology.

As a culminating activity, students will take a field trip on board the University of Vermont research vessel *Melosira* in order to participate in scientific experiments to evaluate the modern day ecological health of the lake.

Upon returning from the trip, each student will self-select and design a cumulative project that involves researching a current lake ecology issue and producing a product designed to have an impact on public policy or personal action on that issue. Products may include letters to lawmakers or to the newspaper, public service announcements, speeches to be delivered at public meetings, or other products designed to have a positive impact on lake ecology.

Length of instructional time:

Grade/age level: Grade 7

NYS Learning Standards Addressed:

ELA:

- Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression.
- Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.
- Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.
- Students will read, write, listen, and speak for social interaction.

Social Studies:

- Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in the history of the United States and New York.
- Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the geography of the interdependent world in which we live – local, national, and global – including the distribution of people, places, and environments over the Earth's surface.

MST:

- Students will use mathematical analysis, scientific inquiry, and engineering design, as appropriate, to pose questions, seek answers, and develop solutions.

- Students will access, generate, process, and transfer information using appropriate technologies.
- Students will understand mathematics and become mathematically confident by communicating the reasoning mathematically, by applying mathematics in real-world setting, and by solving problems through the integrated study of number systems, geometry, algebra, data analysis, probability, and trigonometry.
- Students will understand and apply scientific concepts, principles, and theories pertaining to the physical setting and living environment and recognize the historical development of ideas in science.
- Students will understand the relationships and common themes that connect mathematics, science, and technology and apply the themes to these and other areas of learning
- Students will apply the knowledge and thinking skills of mathematics, science, and technology to address real-life problems and make informed decisions.

PCSD Standards Addressed:

Lifelong Learner

Critical Thinker

Responsible Citizen

Effective Communicator

Healthy Citizen

Essential Questions:

- Why is lake ecology worth studying?
- How have attitudes toward lake ecology evolved?
- How do people impact the health of Lake Champlain?
- How do scientists study the health of the lake?

CONTENT KNOWLEDGE

Declarative

Students will know/understand:

- Names of Native tribes that populated the Champlain Valley region before contact with Europeans
- Names, timelines, and accomplishments of European explorers who spent time in the Northeast.
- The impact of European contact on the culture and ecological practices of native peoples.
- Important events that shaped history and ecology of the Champlain Valley, including Champlain's 1609 voyage, the French & Indian War, the American Revolution, the War of 1812 and Battle of Plattsburgh, the development travel by steamboat and railroad, and the Industrial Revolution.
- A list of strategies for improving reading comprehension, including double-entry diaries, Venn diagrams, KWL charts, character charts, cause and effect charts, connection charts, vocabulary concept maps, and other kinds of graphic organizers.
- Definitions of literary devices.

- Steps in using the Scientific Method.
- Steps for using ProbeWare data gathering equipment.
- Steps for using a microscope.
- What a database is and how to use one to gather information.
- Steps for searching the Internet.
- Steps for evaluating the usefulness and validity of a website.
- Strategies for analyzing and understanding primary sources including diaries, journals, letters, and oral histories.

Procedural

Students will:

- Read, summarize, and interpret primary source material.
- Use a wide variety of strategies to improve reading comprehension – targeted for both fiction and non-fiction texts.
- Write literary response journals.
- Use graphic organizers to compare and contrast conditions in various time periods.
- Use data to create charts and graphs.
- Analyze historical documents and use them to draw conclusions.
- Use a microscope.
- Use ProbeWare data collection tools.
- Use the scientific method to form and test a hypothesis.
- Write lab reports.
- Search online databases.
- Take notes into a graphic organizer.
- Use Internet search engines to find sources.
- Evaluate Internet sources for usefulness and validity.
- Synthesize information from a number of sources into a cumulative project.
- Use research to draw conclusions and make recommendations.

Performance Tasks:

Task 1: Students will listen to an excerpt from *Champlain and the Silent One*, which tells the story of Samuel de Champlain's voyage from Quebec to encounter the Iroquois from the point of view of a Montagnais boy who serves as one of Champlain's guides. Students will then read excerpts from Samuel de Champlain's journals that relate to his encounters with Algonquin and Montagnais peoples in the early 17th century, discussing the concept of point of view. Students will rewrite several of these journal passages from the point of view of an Algonquin or Montagnais boy. Journal responses will be evaluated using the attached rubric.

Task 2: Students will write responses to document based questions based on the writings of Samuel de Champlain. These will be modeled after the scaffolding questions on the Grade 8 NYS Social Studies Assessment and will be assessed holistically, using the NYS Assessment rubric.

Task 3: Students will use ProbeWare water monitoring equipment to evaluate the health of Lake Champlain's watershed by finding such values as temperature, turbidity, dissolved oxygen levels, pH, and other indicators. Students will complete a lab packet based on this activity and will be evaluated on the rubric provided.

Task 4: As a culminating activity, students will take a field trip on board the University of Vermont research vessel *Melosira* in order to participate in scientific experiments to evaluate the modern day ecological health of the lake.

Upon returning from the trip, each student will self-select and design a cumulative project that involves researching a current lake ecology issue and producing a product designed to have an impact on public policy or personal action on that issue. Products may include letters to lawmakers or to the newspaper, public service announcements, speeches to be delivered at public meetings, or other products designed to have a positive impact on lake ecology. Projects will be evaluated on the basis of a rubric designed for this purpose.

Other Evidence:

Self-assessment: Students will maintain ongoing response journals, reflecting on class mini-lessons and readings about ecology issues.

Formal observations: Students will fill out graphic organizers and guided reading activities.

Formal observations: Students will participate in Socratic seminar discussions periodically regarding articles, documentary clips, and other texts.

My Ruler Rules: Historical Leaders Tackle Modern Day Campaigning

Name of Participants: Debra Favro, Jason Nisoff, Russell Puschak, Nancy Strack

Overview/Purpose: He wants to expand our empire. She wants to institute freedom of religion. *My Ruler Rules* is a focused inquiry-based learning unit designed to broader student participation in the learning process. This unit takes advantage of the current presidential election to engage students in researching and understanding choices in government, political positions, political challenges, campaign fund management and the elements of campaigning.

The candidates, however, won't be McCain or Obama. Students will work on teams researching and constructing campaigns for figures from the grade six social studies curriculum. Teams will choose candidates by carefully assessing the qualifications, experience and personality of each.

For example, they may research Queen Elizabeth I, recording her achievements, policies and political shortcomings. They may construct a campaign against Julius Caesar, for example, using information about his reign over Rome. Campaigns will include the ingredients of a modern campaign: nomination, policies (manifesto), speeches, press releases, polling, rebuttal of opponent's messages and budgeting resources. Students will use Internet, library and primary sources (when available).

They will utilize *Six plus One Traits of Writing* as they compose messages make campaign posters and debate from a slate of issues. Each team will be given a budget (public campaign financing) and a menu of costs for advertising media For example, posters are less expensive than an afternoon announcement, which is cheaper than a videotaped message or building a Web page. As a group they must decide the most effective and efficient means to advertise. Polling and elections will be held and analyzed, also incorporating mathematics.

Differentiation is inherent as students accept responsibilities within varied modalities, readiness levels, groups or individual efforts and scaffolding levels. *My Ruler Rules* ties together the disciplines of mathematics, English and social studies skills and provides authentic research, computer and presentation experiences. As diversity in our student population increases, we find ourselves seeking avenues to appropriately accommodate all our learners. The focused inquiry and authentic varied tasks in this unit will motivate the advanced learner, challenge the on grade learner and scaffold the struggling learner.

Unit Goal: The goal of this project is twofold, first to encourage our students to decide what they hope to learn and in the end to evaluate what they have learned. The second goal, through the mock election is to empower our students to take responsibility for their own learning then to motivate them with learning activities they find so exciting that they want to go on learning.

Length of instructional time: 3 weeks in late March/April

Grade/age level: Mid and upper elementary, middle, high school. The activities in this unit offer tremendous flexibility and may easily be adapted to many learners.

NYS Learning Standards Addressed:

- ELA Standards:
 - Standard 1: Language for Information and Understanding
 - Standard 2: Language for Literary Response and Expression
 - Standard 3: Language for Critical Analysis and Evaluation
 - Standard 4: Language for Social Interaction
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- MST Standards:
 - Standard 1: Analysis, Inquiry, and Design
 - Standard 2: Information Systems
 - Standard 3: Mathematics
 - Standard 5: Technology
 - Standard 6: Interconnectedness: Common Themes
 - Standard 7: Interdisciplinary Problem Solving
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- Social Studies Standards
 - Standard 2: World History
 - Standard 3: Geography
 - Standard 4: Economics
 - Standard 5: Civics, Citizenship, and Government

PCSD Standards Addressed:

Lifelong Learner

Critical Thinker

Effective Communicator

Essential Questions:

1. How does student driven learning influence the educational process?
2. How can group members organize their individual strengths and experiences to work together productively?
3. What makes a fair campaign?

Content Knowledge:

Declarative

- Students will understand the value of communicating ideas with clarity and precision.
- Students will understand the importance of accurate research.
- Students will understand writing as a method of learning.
- Students will understand types of government.
- Students will understand the importance of organizing key information.
- Students will understand words and phrases pertinent to a campaign.

- Students will understand the value of relaying information in an engaging manner.
- Students will understand the value of organizing material to relate to a particular audience.
- Students will understand the concept of a political cartoon.
- Students will understand their roles as individual learners.
- Students will understand their roles as learners in cooperative groups.
- Students will understand the democratic electoral process.
- Students will understand the role of mathematics in the electoral process.
- Students will understand various types of voting methods.

Procedural

- Students will be able to identify the elements of a campaign.
- Students will be able to use technology to complete an electronic survey.
- Students will create a political cartoon.
- Students will be able to cite sources using MLA style.
- Students will be able to glean information from a reference document.
- Students will be able to use present information in multiple formats and modalities.
- Students will be able to write a speech incorporating the elements of a presentation.
- Students will be able to work independently and in small groups
- Students will be able to maintain on-task behavior.
- Students will be able to use mathematics to analyze results.
- Students will be able to evaluate other team members.

Assessment Format: Assessments will vary, based on assignment and levels of readiness, but will include rubrics including, criterion-based student self-assessment, goal setting, peer assessments. Teacher observation and teacher criterion-based assessments will be used to assess student growth and participation.

Reading: A Contact Sport

Participants: Jerri Charlebois, Jackie Cianfrocco, Heather Sullivan

Overview/Purpose:

Tackling difficult text can be a very challenging, frustrating experience for many students. This unit focuses on providing each student strategies that will help him/her conquer their reading assignments and understand their own personal strengths and weaknesses when it comes to reading. Students will learn that successful readers interact with the text to truly understand the message. The goal is to have students become self-aware, confident, and independent readers.

The first stage of this unit will involve an assessment of each student's reading comprehension abilities. Then, using differentiated instruction, students will learn how to use strategies and techniques to help them become active thinkers and readers. Students will utilize a checklist of strategies to help them understand and complete reading tasks in the resource room setting and across the curriculum. By modeling and using direct instruction, teachers will demonstrate how to be active readers. Quarterly, students will be given an assessment to determine progress.

Length of instructional time: One to two weeks to assess students abilities and teach the various reading techniques and strategies, then continue implementing checklist through school year.

Grade level/audience: This unit may be utilized at grades nine through twelve.

Standards Addressed:

New York State Standards:

English Language Arts

Standard 1: Language for Information and Understanding

Standard 2: Language for Literary Response and

Standard 3: Language for Critical Analysis and Evaluation

Standard 4: Language for Social Interaction

Plattsburgh City School District Standards:

Critical Thinker

Lifelong Learner

Effective Communicator

Understandings:

1. Students will understand that successful readers are actively engaged in reading text through multiple modalities.
2. Students will understand effective readers use strategies and techniques to comprehend written text.

Essential Questions:

1. Why read?
2. In what ways do effective readers obtain information from text?
3. What do readers do when they don't understand what they have read?

Declarative Knowledge:

1. Students will understand that there are different purposes to reading.
2. Students will understand that there are different stages of reading: pre-reading, during reading, and post reading.
3. Students will understand that all information on the text page is important, such as headings, tables, illustrations, and graphs.
4. Students will understand the importance of imagery in understanding text.
5. Students will understand the value of graphic organizers when trying to construct meaning from the text.
6. Students will understand how to use a dictionary or online dictionary site.
7. Students will understand how authors use figurative language to convey meaning.
8. Students will understand the importance of investigating the information that they may not understand.
9. Students will understand the concept of foreshadowing.
10. Students will understand the concept of prediction.
11. Students will understand what kind of learner they are (visual, kinesthetic, auditory, etc.)

Procedural Knowledge:

1. Students will be able to identify their purpose of reading
2. Students will be able to identify the main idea of the reading.
3. Students will be able to identify facts and details in the reading.
4. Students will be able to explain the sequencing of the reading.
5. Students will be able to identify vocabulary that they do not understand and seek out definition.
6. Students will be able to identify figurative language in a reading passage and seek assistance if confused.
7. Students will be able to explain inferences within the reading.
8. Students will be able to use prediction when reading.
9. Students will be able to use study guides to help them construct meaning of reading passages.
10. Students will be able to use highlighters to identify important aspect of the reading.
11. Students will be able to use moodle and navigate site.
12. Students will be able to access many sources of reference to uncover information.

A Scientific Inquiry about the Water Cycle

Participants: Kristie Hulbert, Brenda Bezio, Lori Darst

Overview/Purpose:

Students in Grades K and One along with students receiving special class instruction in grades K-2 will actively participate in a cross-curricular unit on Weather, specifically the Water Cycle. Students will be engaged in hands-on experiments, reading of expository texts and fiction; ending with a product-based assessment of an “All-About” non-fiction writing. SmartBoard technology will be included as additional resource become available.

Length of Instructional time: approximately 6 weeks.

Age/grade level: Students in Grades K and One along with students receiving special class instruction in grades K-2

NYS Standards Addressed:

MST

Standard 4

ELA

Standard 1

Standard 2

PCSD Standards

- Critical Thinker
- Effective Communicator
- Life Long Learner

Essential Questions:

- What is the water cycle?
- What makes the weather?
- How does the weather change from day to day?
- Where does the rain come from and where does it go?

Content Knowledge

Declarative

The students will understand...

- The water cycle and what its relationship to weather is
- Patterns to the weather
- How to use features of non-fiction texts to synthesize, determine importance and find main ideas
- How to question the explanations they hear from others and read about, seeking clarification and comparing them with their own observations and understandings.
- That writers approach writing to convey meaning.

Procedural

The students will be able to...

- Participate in class experiments and whole group discussions
- Identify and correctly sequence the pattern of the water cycle
- Explain the water cycle process correctly using pictures and taught vocabulary
- Ask “why” questions in an attempt to seek greater understanding concerning objects and events they have observed/heard about
- Develop relationships along observations to construct descriptions of objects and events and to form their own tentative explanations of what they have observed
- Read non-fiction texts for authentic purposes
- Write an informational book (and/or a class book) about weather and/or water cycle
- Record and report observations through oral language, numbers and pictures
- Use features of non-fiction text to help them find information.

Assessment Evidence

The Student will produce an “All-About” non-fiction text that includes, but is not limited to: a table of contents, a two-page spread, a special age numbering, captions, fun facts, bold lettering, diagrams, photographs, and zoom-in, zoom-out features.

The student will accurately chart daily weather on a worksheet

The Civil Rights Movement: A Time for Change

Participants: Neil Bowlen, Jennifer McCoy, Kathleen Stark

Overview/Purpose:

This unit includes documents, literature, and integrated lessons to develop a solid unit for teaching the Civil Rights Era in grade eleven American History classes. This unit brings to life the time of unrest and anticipation that dominated the Civil Rights Movement. This will become an integral part of our lessons. This “Decade of Change” will be added to “The Cold War 1946-1989: Living on the Brink.” This unit explores the origins for the unrest, turmoil and compromises made on domestic issues. The students will learn how this quest for equality by minorities is seen today with changes in procedures including, but not limited to segregation, affirmative action, and equal job opportunities. The team has developed a unit that uses a multitude of strategies to challenge every student, at every level of understanding.

Length of Instructional time: Classroom time for this piece will encompass 2-3 weeks.

Age/grade level: Regents class, CTM class and Advanced Placement Class

NYS Standards Addressed:

Social Studies Standards

Standard 1: History of the United States and New York

Standard 5: Civics, Citizenship, and Government

English Standards:

- Standard 1: Language for Information and Understanding
- Standard 2: Language for Literary Response and Expression
- Standard 3: Language for Critical Analysis and Evaluation

Mathematics, Science, and Technology Standards

Standard 2: Information Systems

PCSD Standards:

1. Critical thinker
2. Effective Communicator
3. Healthy citizen
4. Lifelong Learner
5. Responsible Citizen

Understandings:

1. Students will understand the impact and significance of Civil Rights movement.
2. Students will understand the differing views behind movement.
3. Students will understand the impact of inequalities/tensions and affects on lifestyle
4. Students will understand the concept of equality.

Essential Questions:

1. Why did the evolution of rights progress at such a slow rate?
2. What are different strategies used by proponents and opponents?
3. Is this a catalyst for change?
4. How can past history be portrayed through technology?

Content Knowledge**Declaratory:**

1. State changes in progress of individual liberties from Reconstruction through the 1960's
2. State why the racial tensions surfaced during the 1950's and '60's
3. Specify the role of governments (local, state, and federal) in the Civil Rights movement
4. Understand the impact of the Civil Rights movement on both rural and urban neighborhoods
4. Understand the various methods and approaches used to address problems surfacing with the Civil Rights Movement
5. To reflect on this never ending quest for freedom/equality
6. To recognize acceptance of cultural diversity within society
7. To understand the difficulty of many to accept change
8. To demonstrate how technological features can be used to portray changes
9. Understand and demonstrate knowledge of concepts used on Regents exams

Procedural:

1. Complete a timeline to show various steps in quest for civil rights
2. Utilize technical resources to gather, organize, and display information
3. Create a power point presentation using text elements, background, storyboard, graphics, animation, timings, and sound
4. Determine how rubrics will be used in grading of power point project
5. Interpreting primary documents through class discussion and written assignments
6. Reading assignments with worksheets to show comprehension
7. Use of time management skills
8. While viewing teacher power points students will record and highlight information on to slide note taking sheets provided
9. Analyze sample Regents multiple choice questions and warm up exercises
10. Teacher display and class discussion on sample thematic and DBQ essays (taken from old Regents exams) on the Civil Rights Movement (student writing of rough draft or finished copy will be assigned depending on time)
11. Demonstrate proficiency in locating and viewing rubrics from teacher website for both DBQ and thematic essay
12. View DVD clips in order to discuss the impact of change on society in the Civil Rights Movement
13. Use of attentive and proper behavior displayed with guest speaker presentation
14. Demonstrate proficiency on a quiz after each of the four sections

Assessment Format:

Power point presentation which highlights technology, history, and text usage
Unit exam on Civil Rights
Quizzes, homework assignments, and participation grades

This Middle School Life: Finding Voice through Writing Creative Nonfiction

Participants: Andrew Ducharme, English 8, Karen Rock, English 8, Brett LaValley, Special Education, Aimee McLane, Special Education

Overview/Purpose: We have developed a differentiated unit for eighth grade ELA on creative nonfiction writing, focusing on the value of finding a distinct written voice for the purposes of self-expression and sharing personal experiences.

The unit will span four weeks, culminating with a podcast recording of a group-designed episode modeled after NPR's *This American Life*. The episode will be centered around a theme selected by the students, and will contain three segments. Each segment will consist of a reading of a student memoir related to the overall theme, and music will be used to connect the three segments and reinforce the overall topic of the episode. Prior to the writing of the episode, students will read a number of memoirs to experience a variety of voices.

They will complete a series of writing exercises to practice some of the same strategies they will have read in the works of authors such as David Sedaris, Patrick McManus, Bill Bryson and Paul Zindel. Reading selections and the requirements of the written episode will be differentiated according to reading level and student ability. This unit meets district goals of providing differentiated instruction for students of varying abilities, and using 6+1 traits of writing in the classroom with a specific emphasis on the traits of Voice and Word Choice.

Length of instructional time: This unit will span a four week period that will begin in November

Grade/age level: Eighth grade students, including both regular and special education students.

NYS Learning Standards Addressed:

ELA Standards:

- **Standard 1)** Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.
- **Standard 2)** Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression.
- **Standard 3)** Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation
- **Standard 4)** Students will read, write, listen and speak for social interaction.

MST Standards:

- **Standard 2)** Students will access, generate, process, and transfer information using appropriate technologies.

PCSD Standards Addressed:

Lifelong Learner

Critical Thinker

Effective Communicator

Responsible Citizen

Essential Questions:

- How do we create personal voice in our writing?
- How can nonfiction be creative?
- What makes a good story?

Content Knowledge:**Declarative**

1. Students will understand the importance of developing a strong voice in writing.
2. Students will know how creative nonfiction differs from fiction and regular nonfiction.
3. Students will understand the definition and components of a biography, autobiography, travel narrative, and memoir.
4. Students will comprehend a variety of writing strategies for effective storytelling through memoir.
5. Students will understand the components of the 6+1 writing model.
6. Students will know how to utilize podcast technology.

Procedural

1. Students will read and analyze the voice in several works of creative nonfiction, including comic memoirs such as excerpts from David Sedaris, *A Good Deed Goes Wrong* by Patrick McManus, *The Day it Rained Cockroaches* by Paul Zindel, and excerpts from *A Walk in the Woods* by Bill Bryson.
2. Students will identify effective strategies that authors use to relate personal stories in an interesting and unique way.
3. Students will complete several short writing exercises that focus on the skills of developing voice, choosing words carefully, and showing rather than telling in writing.
4. Students will brainstorm to create lists of their unique personal experiences and significant memories.
5. Students will evaluate their lists to determine which topics could best be turned into a longer memoir with scenes, dialogue, and description.
6. Students will draft, revise and synthesize a final copy of a memoir dealing with a unique personal experience.

7. Students will collaborate to synthesize and record a podcast for which they must write and deliver memoirs that share a common theme.
8. Students will practice vocal techniques for effectively recording a podcast.
9. Students will listen to and evaluate their podcasts and the podcasts of other groups.

Assessment Format:

- A 6 + 1 traits rubric will be used to assess student performance on writing exercises.
- Reading comprehension quizzes will assess student understanding of the required creative nonfiction reading.
- For the group project, a 6 +1 traits rubric will be used to provide students with individual grades for the written components of the project. A second rubric will be used to assign a group grade for the overall product and collaborative performance.

Using Technology within the Differentiated Math Classroom

Participants: Mary Fortin, Carol Ensel, Peg Eaglefeather, Jocelyne LaVigne, Anita Squier

Overview/Purpose: : This unit is designed to demonstrate how using technologies such as the Smartboard and interactive internet sites can enrich the math learning and understanding all levels of math learners, from advanced math students as well as students who are struggling.

By choosing one specific skill, a lesson template will be created which will allow teachers to design leveled math instruction within a specific content area skill. This format will be useable for any math skill area. Due to the abstract nature of the concept of fractions, decimals and percents, traditionally elementary age students have performed poorly on this skill concept.

As stated by the National Teachers of Mathematics in a 2006 report ...*"Americans fall short, especially, in the handling of fractions."* citing almost half of America's 8th graders are not able to divide fractions when embedded in a word problem. By the end of 5th grade, this commission recommends that students be proficient with comparing fractions and decimals and common percent, and with addition and subtraction of fractions and decimals. The manipulative characteristics of Smartboard and internet technology make this skill topic ideal for this project.

Length of Instructional time: Each lesson will consist of a 45-60 minute session. There will be approximately 5 sessions per grade level in this unit. The lessons will be implemented in sequence and will build understanding of the previous lesson.

Age/grade level: The targeted level would be 4th and 5th grade regular and special education students as well as AIS students. The activities will be tiered to accommodate basic as well as more advanced learners resulting in a broader spectrum of student abilities.

NYS Standards Addressed:

MST

- PROBLEM SOLVING STRAND (4th And 5th)
- COMMUNICATIONS STRAND (4th And 5th)
- ALGEBRA STRAND (4th And 5th)
- NUMBER SENSE-4TH GRADE
- NUMBER SENSE-5TH GRADE
- TECHNOLOGY STANDARDS (MST 5)

PCSD Standards

- Critical Thinker
- Effective Communicator
- Life Long Learner

Essential Questions:

- How does technology enhance the learning of mathematics?
- How can the understanding and use of fractions benefit our daily lives?

Content Knowledge

Declarative

The students will understand...

- Understand that fractions are part of the whole
- Manipulate Smartboard technology
- Reduce a fraction to simplest form
- List equivalent fractions
- Add and subtract like and unlike fractions
- Compare fractions using a variety of forms
- Change improper fractions to mixed numbers
- Express ratios in different forms
- Read, write, and order decimals to thousandths
- Compare fractions using $<$, $>$, or $=$
- Compare decimals using $<$, $>$, or $=$
- Use the computer as a tool for generating and drawing ideas
- Use appropriate graphic and electronic tools and techniques to process information
- Understand the concept of ratio
- Understand that percent means part of 100, and write percents as fractions and decimals

Procedural

The students will be able to...

- Identify equivalent fractions
- Identify simplest form fractions
- Identify Improper and Mixed fractions

Assessment Evidence

Informal daily classroom assessment and monitoring will be ongoing. Formal assessments will include quizzes and an end of unit test as well as a hands on project in which the students will have to demonstrate the use of fractions in real life situations.