Social Studies and Art Integration Through Cooperative Learning Groups

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By

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Table of Contents

SIGNATURE PAGE ........................................ II

ABSTRACT ..................................................... V

INTRODUCTION ............................................... 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT ...................................... 3
RESEARCH QUESTION ...................................... 4
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ................................ 4
COGNITIVE GROWTH ....................................... 4
DEFINITION OF TERMS ..................................... 5
ASSUMPTIONS ............................................... 7
SCOPE ....................................................... 7
DELIMITATIONS ............................................. 8
LIMITATIONS ............................................... 9
SIGNIFICANCE .............................................. 9

REVIEW OF LITERATURE ................................... 11

WHAT IS SOCIAL STUDIES? ................................ 11
WHAT IS ART? ............................................... 13
SOCIAL STUDIES/ART INTEGRATION .................... 16
STUDENT LEARNING PROCESS ............................ 19
TEACHERS’ ROLE ......................................... 19
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT ................................... 21
COOPERATIVE LEARNING GROUPS ....................... 24

METHODOLOGY ............................................. 29

RESEARCH QUESTION ..................................... 29
RESEARCH SETTING ........................................ 29
RESEARCH SAMPLE ........................................ 29
INSTRUMENTS AND PROCEDURES ....................... 30
ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER ............................... 33

FINDINGS ..................................................... 34

BEHAVIORAL ENGAGEMENT ................................ 34
EMOTIONAL ENGAGEMENT ................................ 36
COGNITIVE ENGAGEMENT ................................ 39
SUMMARY OF RESULTS ................................... 40

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .................. 43

REFERENCES ................................................. 45
Abstract

How does integrating Social Studies within the Arts using cooperative learning groups influence student engagement?

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Our current classrooms are on the verge of change with the pedagogical shifts demanded by the common core state standards. The use of integration and seamless teaching throughout multiple content is becoming increasingly more apparent within the classroom. This study looks at the use of integration of the arts and Social Studies through the use of cooperative learning groups which help students achieve cognitive engagement and a deeper understanding of content. The researcher observed a third grade teacher deliver a lesson to a group of third grade students. After the lesson the students were to work as individuals or within a cooperative learning group. The researcher then interviewed the students about their experience either working independently or with their peers in a cooperative learning group. The data suggested that the use of cooperative learning groups has a positive effect on student learning and mastery of specific learning targets.

Key terms: art integration, social studies, engagement, cooperative learning groups
Introduction

This research examined the effects of integrating the arts with social studies using cooperative learning groups. The goal of the study was to compare students working both in groups and individually on the same assignment.

Research has examined art integration programs both as stand-alone programs as well as incorporated programs that involve the integration of the arts with other core curricula. It has been found that the integration of the arts with other core curricula produces better results (Sousa, 2006). Changing Education through the Arts Program defines arts integration “as an approach to teaching in which students construct and demonstrate their understanding through an art form. Students engage in a creative process which connects an art form and another subject area and meets evolving objectives in both” (The Kennedy Center, n.d., para. 1). Integration of the arts helps students have a deeper understanding of concepts and allows students an opportunity to show mastery of specific learning targets. Integration promotes more rigorous in-depth conversations and learning within the classroom. Integration also supports the development of critical thinking skills, creativity, and the ability to make decisions.

Through the use of integration, students are more reflective and involved within their learning (Why Arts Integration, n.d., para. 2).

Utilizing art integration has shown that:

- students have a greater emotional investment in their classes;
- students work more diligently and learn from each other;
- cooperative learning groups turn classrooms into learning communities;
- parents become more involved;
- teachers collaborate more;
- art and music teachers become the center of multi-class projects;
- learning in
all subjects becomes attainable through the arts; curriculum becomes more authentic, hands-on, and project-based; assessment is more thoughtful and varied; and teachers' expectations for their students rise” (Sousa, 2006 para. 39).

Utilizing cooperative learning groups to integrate the arts within the classroom engages students and builds a more cognitive foundation for student learning.

Along with the integration of the arts, research has shown advantages in integrating Social Studies within the classroom. The integration of Social Studies allows students an opportunity to connect new information to prior knowledge as well as improve reading skills by identifying cause and effect relationships, sequencing, and comparing (About Best Practices in Social Studies Content Integration, n.d.). According to Harris and Hofer (2009), integration of Social Studies allows students to, “combine knowledge-building with knowledge-expression activity types to form engaging learning experiences that help students develop and communicate social studies knowledge” (p. 1). Social Studies offers students an opportunity to connect their own prior knowledge and learning experiences to new information and create connections that stem into lifelong learning.

Integrating Social Studies within the arts is very beneficial for student learning. According to Sizemore (n.d.), “integrating arts into the social studies curriculum is an excellent way to allow students with diverse learning modalities to become more effective learners” (p. 1). The arts and Social Studies align so well with one another because through the lens of the arts, students can better understand and connect times and places within Social Studies. As Sizemore (n.d.) finds, “artists respond to and impact the societies in which they live and create, the arts provide a window into other times and
places” (p.1). The arts allow students to create connections with the content and understand the material using images that they can create and relate to.

Using art integration within core content subject areas allows students an opportunity to connect with learning within a more complex approach. According to Marshall (2014), “art integration is a rich and complex approach to teaching and learning that not only aligns with new initiatives in education that prioritize conceptual and procedural skills but could also contribute to education’s transformations” (p. 104). As the teaching profession is changing within the classrooms with the pedagogical shifts within common core the use of the integration of the arts can help support student learning.

**Problem Statement**

Social studies is cooperative in that knowledge can be actively constructed and meaning can be derived from real-world, relevant experiences and dialogue steeped in prior experience. Meaning, learning, and knowledge become about making sense out of experiences, having a perspective on the facts, and creating those experiences in personal and relevant ways. Cooperative learning is about forming truly collaborative, positively interdependent groups that still allow students to demonstrate individual accountability in their learning. Collaboration requires that members of cooperative groups give formative feedback to each other, work to help problem-solve each other’s tasks, and solicit input from other group members, rather than working solely independently on a task. Learners should discuss ideas and concepts, clarify points, and build a collective understanding through making connections and making the content culturally and personally relevant. This study hopes to investigate how students both engage and achieve when social
studies and the arts are integrated into a cooperative learning activity. Social studies is minimally present in many schools today and often times teachers do not know how to make social studies hands on and contextualized. Utilizing cooperative groups appropriately is an effective way to fill this gap. This study sought to discover the utility, efficiency, and effectiveness of this practice so that teachers can best integrate this strategy into their elementary classrooms.

Research Question

While the primary goal of this study is to support the ideas of cooperative learning through engagement, the fundamental research question in the study asks: How does integrating Social Studies within the Arts using cooperative learning groups influence student engagement?

Theoretical Framework

Cognitive Growth.

This study draws upon the work of Sousa (2006) and his theory about cognitive growth. Development of the arts throughout a child’s life enhances cognitive growth and human development. According to Sousa (2006), “during the brain's early years, neural connections are being made at a rapid rate. Much of what young children do as play — singing, drawing, dancing — are natural forms of art. These activities engage all the senses and wire the brain for successful learning” (para. 6). Children begin their developmental stages as early as birth. Children’s exposure to different elements and ‘child play’ is the beginning of the foundational blocks for their development, both cognitively and physically. It has been said that, “when children enter school, these art
activities need to be continued and enhanced” (Sousa, 2006, para. 7). Studies have shown that students grow developmentally through the integration of the arts. Brain development occurs when children learn different songs, rhymes, creative drawing, and finger painting (Sousa, 2006, December). Children’s ability to express themselves using dance or play helps develop gross motor skills. Another study conducted by Ozturk and Erden (2011) found that, “visual arts activities provide experience and practice in developing and refining gross motor or large muscle skills” (p. 895). When students are given opportunities to share their artwork, it enhances their social skills and builds relations. Sousa (2006, December) states that, “the arts are not just expressive and affective, they are deeply cognitive” (para. 8). This framework is useful for examining cooperative grouping and social studies integration because students develop cognitively when they are interactive and a part of a social group.

**Definition of Terms**

The following key terms will be used in this study: Social Studies, Art, integration, cognitive engagement, non-cognitive engagement, and cooperative learning groups. Although each of these terms has several definitions from many different authors, the terms defined here are the definitions that the researcher chose to use in this study. A more in-depth discussion of the terms by key theorists will be discussed in chapter two.

Although a few definitions of Social Studies exist, the researcher has used the following:

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) defines social studies as:
the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. Within the school program, social studies provides the coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and the natural sciences. The primary purpose of social studies is the help young people make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world. (NCSS, 2010, p. 9)

Arts education is described by Burstein and Knotts (2011) as, “composed of the four strands of arts that include visual arts, music, drama, and dance. These art forms contain the elements or structure of each art form, the knowledge base, vocabulary, and process skills” (p. 39-40).

Integration is when “there is a seamless blending of content and skills between” two core curriculums (Why Arts Integration, n.d., para 1).

Cognitive engagement has been defined as one set of definitions focused on psychological investment in learning, a desire to go beyond the requirements, and a preference for challenge (Connell & Wellborn, 1991; Newmann et al., 1992; Wehlage et al., 1989).

Cooperative learning is “known to be an effective educational strategy in enhancing the learning performance of students. The goal of a cooperative learning group is to maximize all members’ learning efficacy” (Hwang, Hwang, & Tsai, 2008, p. 148). These terms are essential in the discussion of the effectiveness of Social Studies and
cooperative learning because they define the ways in which the terms are discussed and used within this research.

**Assumptions**

This study was based on several assumptions. One assumption was that students would be more inclined to participate in the study when the teacher explained the research project to the class before sending home consent forms. This assumption was important to the amount of participation needed for this study. Another assumption was that the researcher would have more than enough students and parent consent forms than we could use, although this was not the case at all. In fact, we had to lower the amount of students within our focus group. Finally, an assumption was made that all students would be engaged throughout the entire lesson. The acquisition of student engagement is essential in supporting the proposed research question.

**Scope**

Cooperative learning has been examined in a variety of contexts. While many have explored Social Studies, cooperative learning and arts integration on the middle school level, few have examined the effectiveness within the Elementary School setting. This study fills that void and analyzes student behaviors and content knowledge based on the use of cooperative learning groups and art integration though social studies.

Before beginning the research project, informed consent forms were distributed, signed, and collected. A third-grade instructor at Del Verde Elementary School conducted the social studies and arts integration lesson provided by the researcher. The lesson took the instructor approximately 30 minutes to complete. After the lesson was
taught to students, the teacher assigned one group of five students to complete the social studies/art integrated assignment independently. The teacher then assigned another group of five students in the same class to complete the same integrated assignment together in a cooperative learning group. The researcher then conducted one-on-one interviews with the third-grade participants, which discussed their experience with working either independently or within a cooperative learning group.

**Delimitations**

As defined by Mauch and Birch (1993), delimitations are factors that may affect the study, but are controlled by the researcher. In order to maximize the amount of student engagement along with comparing individual work to those in cooperative learning groups, the teacher was given a scripted lesson with set goals and outcomes listed for the lesson. The teacher was guided to obtain an expected outcome within the lesson delivery.

The population used in this study was not intentional nor did it come into the conversation in our preliminary discussions. Our intention was not to focus on a particular population, but all students. We offered all students the opportunity to participate in the study, however we only used students with signed consent forms.

Originally the researcher’s intention was to also incorporate a survey for students to fill out prior to the lesson, but found that adding a survey to the study would take additional time within the classroom and time was limited to only a few days. The first day was the observation of the lesson and the second day was used to conduct interviews. Another factor in the elimination of the survey portion was the small amount of consent forms that were returned.
Limitations

A limitation is defined as “a factor that may or will affect the study in an important way, but is not under control of the researcher” (Roberts, 2012, p. 139). Some of the limitations in this study include the fact that the study was conducted at only one school within Ventura County, which only included one third grade classroom, and only ten students participated in the study. There were only a small amount of students who returned the consent forms in order to participate in the study. The researcher could not control other students in the room that were not a part of the study from distracting those selected to participate as individuals in the study, nor could the researcher control who was in the room during the lesson. The researcher was unable to isolate the students participating in the study.

Significance

Social studies is cooperative in that knowledge can be actively constructed and meaning can be derived from real-world, relevant experiences and dialogue, steeped in prior experience. Meaning, learning, and knowledge become about making sense out of experiences, having a perspective on the facts, and creating those experiences in personal and relevant ways. Cooperative learning is about forming truly collaborative, positively interdependent groups that still allow students to demonstrate individual accountability in their learning. Collaboration requires that members of cooperative groups give formative feedback to each other, work to help problem-solve each other’s tasks, and solicit input from other group members, rather than working solely independently on a task. Learners should discuss ideas and concepts, clarify points, and build a collective understanding through making connections and making the content culturally and personally relevant.
This study hopes to investigate how students both engage and achieve when social studies and the arts are integrated into a cooperative learning activity. This study hopes to discover the utility, efficiency, and effectiveness of this practice so that teachers can best integrate this strategy into their elementary classrooms.
Review of Literature

What is Social Studies?

Social Studies is among the core subjects students take in order to prepare themselves to make informed decisions as an adult within society. The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) defines social studies as:

…the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. Within the school program, social studies provides the coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and the natural sciences. The primary purpose of social studies is the help young people make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world. (NCSS, 2010, p. 9, as cited in Burstein & Knotts, 20011, p. 92-93)

Social Studies is more than a subject that students study in order to learn about the past. Social Studies is more than facts and dates, it is about educating children as a whole. The purpose of Social Studies is to, “help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an independent world” (NCSS, para.1). Social Studies allow students an opportunity to grow and develop as young individuals. Teaching children about the past and discovering how laws and rules were created help children understand why society has certain expectations and rules today.
Social Studies is more than studying about things that have occurred in our past. According to Zarrillo (2013), “people are the domain of social studies. This includes people as nearby as family and as far away as those who live in the most distant nations. It includes people living now, those who lived long ago, and those who will live in the future” (p. 2). Enabling students the ability to understand that Social Studies goes beyond what is written in the text books will allow a deeper connection with the content.

Social Studies also supports students in their ability to interact with one another. As Burstein and Knotts (2011) state, “Social Studies is the study of human beings, their interaction with each other, and their environment” (p. 92). Allowing students an opportunity to study how other people in our past interacted with each other and their environment enables them to become more knowledgeable about their surroundings and have a better understanding of how our society has developed over time. Without Social Studies, students would not be able to understand our current systems, cultures, and traditions. According to NCSS, “the more accurately the K-12 Social Studies program addresses the contemporary conditions of real life and of academic scholarship, the more likely such a program is to help students develop a deeper understanding of how to know, how to apply what they know, and how to participate in building a future” (n.d., para. 6). The Social Studies curriculum has a clear focus within the NCSS standard, which explicitly states that students are learning about Social Studies in order to develop as young individuals that understand more than just our history, but how it applies to our community, and are capable of making rational decisions for themselves.

Through the education of Social Studies, “children will learn how to participate in a community and to understand how to work for the common good of all people”
Social Studies is to be taught in a way that educates students about relationships, democracy, and culture; “no one social science such as history or geography is studied in isolation but in context with how people experienced the world” (Burstein & Knotts, 2011, p. 93). Showing students how the content is related to society and experiences helps deepen students’ understanding of content.

The importance of studying Social Studies goes beyond teaching students about past history and dates. According to Burstein and Knotts (2011), “the Social Studies curriculum provides an integrated view of human beings across historical time periods, geographic locations, and cultural backdrops” (p. 92). This in-depth analysis of the curriculum allows students the ability to become critical thinkers and synthesize information about the past. Along with Social Studies, the arts allow students the ability to enhance thinking skills and develop as an individual.

**What is Art?**

Visual and performing arts are arranged into four categories: dance, music, theatre, and visual arts. In teaching the arts, students are able to grow beyond the classroom. As stated by Smithrim and Upitis (2005), “a growing body of evidence suggests that arts education positively affects aspects of living and learning beyond the intrinsic values of the arts themselves” (p. 110). The arts help teach students about interacting with each other and reflecting upon their work. According to Gullatt (2008), “the arts also were viewed as instrumental in enhancing student communication while increasing student ability to interact and reflect” (p. 14). In teaching the different components of the arts, students become well rounded. As cited in Gullatt (2008), researchers have found that when teaching the arts it is connected to the education of the “whole child” (p.12).
Utilizing all four categories of the arts within the classroom helps support student learning in a variety of ways.

It is imperative when teaching the arts that students understand the different building blocks or elements that compose art (Burstein & Knotts, 2011). Learning through the arts has an impact on students’ development of the imagination along with the ability to increase students’ motivation to learn. Studies have shown the effects of learning through the arts, which include lower dropout rates and increased social skills (Smithrim & Upitis, 2005). Implementing and utilizing the arts in schools help students become more active and engaged in their learning.

An important aspect of teaching through the arts is the ability to allow students to demonstrate conceptual understanding in any of the four categories where they feel most comfortable (Eisner, 2000). According to Kosky and Curtis (2008), “a majority of the students have strengths in bodily/kinesthetic or verbal/linguistic skills and are not often given opportunities to practice those through the arts” (p. 24). Giving students a chance to freely express themselves allows students the ability to create deep relationships and comprehension within the content. In allowing students to freely express themselves, teachers can determine the children’s understanding by analyzing the “students’ products as a basis to show their progress in learning new content” (Dever & Jared, 1996, as cited in Ozturk & Erden, 2011, p. 895). Since the arts’ standards progress across the grade levels and students are introduced to elements starting with the basics, each year students build upon their knowledge. With this style of introduction to the arts, students are able to find which aspect of the four domains fits them best. The problem that arises is the lack of comfort teachers have with teaching the arts. Oreck (2004) found that, “K-12
teachers indicated that teachers believe the arts are important in education, but use them rarely” (p. 55). The teacher’s capability to use the arts in the classroom will affect students’ ability to “understand other times, places, people and events” (Chicola & Smith, 2005/2006, p. 168).

When using the arts to teach both concrete and abstract ideas in the classroom, like most things, mastery of the skill sets needed to instruct students to their optimal potential develop with time. An important aspect of teaching using the arts is the ability to understand that art needs to be consistently taught throughout the time students are in school. In this way, the effects of the arts help improve a student’s scores. These developments are not sudden; they happen over a period of time. As Smithrim and Upitis (2005) found, “the results of the arts effecting math scores came after three years of integration. The study states that these kinds of effects are not sudden, but gradual” (p. 124).

Learning through the arts opens a multitude of outlets for student learning. As Gulatt (2008) states, “learning through the arts would involve activities such as dramatization of stories or historical events and the use of paintings to investigate different aspects of time periods” (p. 16). Permitting students the opportunity to act out historical events not only engages students, but it also creates a connection between the text and abstract ideas. Adding the element of dramatization to the classroom builds students’ confidence and creates a form of student self-evaluation. According to Holmes and Brooks (2010, as cited in Burstein & Knotts 2011), “when students use drama and character portrayal to demonstrate their knowledge and skills, they develop self-confidence and gain a better understanding of the events they are enacting” (p. 412).
Gullat (2008), also found, “while students are dramatizing a particular narrative, they are continually analyzing and evaluating their work to decide whether they are convincing enough in their role” (p. 16). Providing students an opportunity to conduct self-evaluations enhances student learning. More importantly, the integration of Social Studies and the arts allows students an opportunity to become deep critical thinkers and enables students an opportunity to connect with content and gain a deeper understanding.

**Social Studies/Art Integration**

Researchers defined art integration as, “instruction that integrated content and skills from the arts - dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts – with other core subjects” (Why Arts Integration, nd, para. 1). The ability to combine multiple curricula is important in integration through the arts. Many times teachers will add a small component of the arts to a lesson and call it integration. What many do not realize is that the “integration of visual arts into the curriculum refers to a harmonious combination of art concepts and activities with other academic subjects such as mathematics, languages, Social Studies and science” (Ingram & Riede, 2003 as cited in Ozturk and Erden, 2011, pp. 894-895).

Integration of the arts can be utilized in multiple subject areas to help students gain a deeper understanding within the content area. According to Brewer and Brown (2009), “teaching Social Studies with the integration of the arts will allow students an opportunity to connect with the content and gain a deeper understanding although it is important that each content area maintains its integrity and is split evenly” (p. 136). An important aspect of integration is to allow each subject to have an equal part in the lesson. One content area should not overpower the other. An effective approach to utilizing integration is to create seamless blending of the content and skills between an art form
and another co-curricular subject (Why Arts Integration, nd, para. 1). Integration of the arts helps students enhance critical thinking and decision-making skills, and supports creativity.

Implementing integration of the arts with a core subject helps create a fun learning environment for students. According to Chicola and Smith (2005/2006), “there are a number of ways that integrating the visual arts into instruction can actually increase learning while promoting enjoyment” (p. 167). Using the arts helps students take abstract ideas and create concrete connections to ideas and concepts. Integrating the Arts allows students the ability to explore and think outside of the box.

There are many positive outcomes resulting from integrating the arts with the core subjects. Students’ academic content knowledge increases and builds upon previously learned concepts. According to Appel (2006, as cited in Ozturk & Erden, 2011), “effective integration of visual arts helps children improve their reading and interpretation skills, develop their writing skills, enhance their mathematical and scientific reasoning abilities, develop their ability to focuses on details in context, and enhance their skills to find inconsistencies related to math and science” (p. 895).

Integration of the arts has a positive effect in all content areas. Students use the arts as an outlet to express themselves and improve their ability to become critical thinkers. Abstract ideas and events are not natural to students, so giving them multiple opportunities to work with the ideas and concepts will help student’s gain concrete understanding (Chicola & Smith, 2005/2006).

Using the arts in the classroom can help students reduce frustrations, acquire healthier relationships with one another, and allow them to express themselves freely
using creativity (Montgomery & Rule, 2011). Burstein and Knotts (2011) stated that integrating the arts with Social Studies allows students an opportunity to make meaning of the learning and use their multiple intelligences. Integrating the arts within Social Studies increase student comprehension of Social Studies concepts and ideas (Vitulli & Santoli 2013). Visual arts can help students of all learning styles have an opportunity to fully grasp and understand what core content standards are being taught. Integration of the arts allows students the opportunity to create their own individual representations or express themselves freely (Ozturk & Erden, 2011). Integrating the arts with other core curriculums helps students discover a multitude of ways to express their own thoughts, and allow them opportunities to understand their own cultures as well as improve analytical thinking skills (Ozturk & Erden, 2011). When integration of the arts becomes a part of everyday teaching in the classroom, students are able to create their own ideas, express themselves, and build relationships with other classmates.

Social study teachers sometimes forget that students learn more from visuals and pictures as opposed to words (Vitulli & Santoli 2013). Adding images to Social Studies helps promote student learning and allows students an opportunity to critical think, make decisions and communicate their learning. Often times the content that is presenting to students within Social Studies is detached and abstract to students with little to no context to their daily lives and has no meaning. According to Brustein and Knotts (2010), “a co-equal use of the arts and social studies instruction extends student understanding by providing a context, often in the form of a tangible product, which then connects students to the content in concrete, real, and relevant ways” (p. 23). Creating a classroom environment where the learning and concepts are real to students helps empower student
learning. Instead of presenting history as a list of facts, it is important that teachers create a curriculum that engages students and presents history in a tangible manner. In order for integration to become a success in the classroom, educators need to understand how students learn.

**Student Learning Process**

Making certain curriculum topics attainable for students to gain a deep understanding can be a challenge for both teachers and the students themselves. Often concepts being taught are abstract ideas and conceptions that are difficult for students to fully comprehend and acquire. Chicola and Smith (2005/2006) found, “these abstract ideas and events are not natural to students and so giving students multiple opportunities to work with the ideas and concepts will help students gain concrete ideas” (p. 168). Providing students the opportunity to use a variety of learning modalities will greatly increase the students’ mastery of a specific learning target. According to Burstein and Knotts (2011), “the common process skills are creating, interpreting/performing, and responding” (p. 40). A teacher’s capability to open up and see things visually helps students create a natural learning process in which they are able to build upon their prior experiences and knowledge in order to build new knowledge (Chicola & Smith, 2005/2006). Teachers’ use of building upon prior knowledge becomes crucial in the ability to build concepts and knowledge for students. With the use of cooperative learning groups, the teacher’s role differs than that of a normal classroom setting.

**Teachers’ Role**

Creating a learning environment that is engaging and comprehensible can be a challenge. As cited in Gehlback (2006), researchers stated, “Social Studies teachers are
faced with two challenging tasks: Not only do they have to teach their subject matter, but they also have to convince their students that their discipline is worth learning in the first place. Students often perceive Social Studies as boring and unimportant in comparison with other subject areas” (Schug, Todd, & Beery, 1984; Stodolsky, Salk, & Glaessner, 1991, p. 358). Students’ understanding and conceptual ideals about Social Studies have come from many years of misguided teaching within the classroom. As Burstein and Knotts (2011) state, “Social Studies is the study of human beings, their interaction with each other, and their environment” (p. 92). In order to fully adapt students to this concept and ideology, they need to have the experience of working collaboratively with one another to explore new ideas and synthesize past experiences.

Often teachers do not utilize cooperative learning groups based on fears of losing instructional minutes and/or classroom management. According to Sharon, Shachar, and Levine (1999, as cited in Gillies, 2006), “a reluctance to embrace small group work may also be due to lack of understanding of how to embed cooperative learning strategies into the curricula to foster open communication and engagement between teachers and students, promote cooperative investigation and problem solving, and provide students with emotionally and intellectually stimulating learning environments” (p. 273). The ability to use cooperative learning groups is essential in teaching students how to interact with one another and develop relationships within the classroom. In many primary schools, students’ seating arrangements are often set up in small groups to provide for students working in cooperative learning groups, but the instruction avoids this form of student interaction (Gillies, 2006).
Using cooperative learning groups in the classroom derives from the teacher’s ability to facilitate student interaction and engagement. According to Gilles (2006), “teachers (who) establish cooperative learning in their classrooms engage in more mediated-learning behaviors and direct fewer disciplinary remarks to their students than teachers who establish small-group work only” (p. 285). Creating an environment in which students are learning from one another and the teacher becomes a facilitator as opposed to following a direct instruction approach helps enhance student learning. When teachers use the form of direct instruction to teach, which often occurs in the traditional classroom setting, the language in which the teachers use is often rigid and authoritarian which can create a distance between the educator and students (Gillies, 2006). Using the cooperative learning approach allows teachers the opportunity to step back as the main speaker and allows students an opportunity to share and work together. Using this method in the classroom helps students feel more comfortable and confident in the classroom. The role of the teacher is to become a facilitator to students rather than teach from the center stage (Gillies, 2006). Teachers play a critical role in their ability to promote positive interactions between students as well as creating an engaging environment for the learning process. Cooperative learning groups along with the teacher’s role lend themselves to building and creating student engagement.

**Student Engagement**

Along with cooperative learning groups, student engagement is a form of incorporating students in learning. Student engagement is impressionable, and an improved predictor of student learning as well as academic achievement in general (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; Lutz, Guthrie, & Davis, 2006). Researchers have
described student engagement as behavioral, emotional, cognitive, affective, and social involvement in the instructional activities amongst teachers and fellow classmates (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; Lutz, Guthrie, & Davis, 2006). Including behavior, emotion, and cognition with the idea of engagement is extremely valuable in how we observe student learning in the classroom. In utilizing student engagement in the classroom, students are not being alienated and disengaged in the learning process (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). Student engagement assures that all students are being acknowledged and included in class conversations, activities, and discussions.

Behavioral engagement has several definitions that relate to student engagement, some of which involve student behaviors in the classroom and others that evaluate student involvement outside of the classroom. In the first definition, student engagement refers to the students’ ability to exert positive conduct, follow the rules, participate in classroom norms, and refrain from disruptive behaviors in the classroom environment (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). A student’s capability to participate in the classroom or follow the lesson can be classified as a form of behavioral engagement. According to Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004), “behavioral engagement can range from simply doing the work and following the rules to participating in the student council” (p. 61). Student relationships with school and abiding by rules are forms of behavioral engagement.

The second definition pertains more to the student’s ability to not only perform the task at hand, but to also become involved with the learning and academic tasks. Behaviors to look for within this definition include: the students ability to participate in
class discussions by asking questions, showing an amount of effort and persistence in understanding and completing tasks (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004)

Another component of student engagement involves emotional engagement. Emotional engagement includes the students’ feelings such as boredom, happiness, sadness, levels of anxiety, and the students’ reactions within the classroom (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). Throughout the day, students can identify with multiple feelings depending upon the amount of engagement that is provided in the lesson as well as the interest level of the student.

Student engagement relies heavily on the student’s ability to be cognitively engaged. Researchers Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004) describe cognitive engagement as a form of engagement that “can range from simple memorization to the use of self-regulated learning strategies that promote deep understanding and expertise” (p. 61). Many educators value a student’s ability to create deep understanding of and expertise regarding the standards being addressed. A student’s ability to connect with the content relies on engagement and his/her ability to become a critical thinker. Cognitive engagement requires the students’ drive to go above and beyond the requirements of an assignment (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004).

The effects of student engagement have had a positive impact on students in the classroom. Researchers have found that “the concept of school engagement has attracted increasing attention as representing a possible antidote to declining academic motivation and achievement” (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004, p. 59). When students are actively engaged within the classroom, their cognitive ability to understand and their motivation to learn increases.
Engagement is a way to increase student interest, reduce levels of student boredom, and lower dropout rates. Not engaging students in the classroom will result in the inability to effectively teach students how to connect with content and expand their learning capacity. Many students view school as boring and they try to get by with putting forth as little effort as possible (Burkett, 2002; Pope, 2002). When student engagement is not evident in the classrooms, studies have found a decline in student motivation across all grade levels (Eccles, Midgley, & Adler, 1984; Fredericks & Eccles, 2002). Not having students engaged within the classroom will lead to problems in the future for students. With the fast-paced economy and society, students are required to be knowledgeable citizens who can synthesize and evaluate new information, become critical thinkers, and have the ability to solve problems (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). When students do not learn these essential components of engagement and critical thinking skills in school, their ability to become self-informed citizens that can make rational decisions is at risk.

On the contrary, researchers have also pointed out that “there has been considerable research on how students behave, feel, and think… the attempt to conceptualize and examine portions of the literature under the label "engagement" is potentially problematic; it can result in a proliferation of constructs, definitions, and measures of concepts that differ slightly, thereby doing little to improve conceptual clarity” (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004, p. 60).

**Cooperative Learning Groups**

Cooperative learning plays a key role in students’ education within the classroom. Utilizing the correct form of cooperative learning can be challenging to both students and
teachers. According to Gillies (2006), “teachers play a critical role in promoting interactions between students and engaging them in the learning process” (p. 271). A part of cooperative learning is the focus being on the students and their ability to interact with one another. The teacher’s role is to facilitate and guide students along the way to promote critical thinking. When students are given the opportunity to “work cooperatively together, they show increased participation in group discussions, demonstrate a more sophisticated level of discourse, engage in fewer interruptions when others speak and provide more intellectually valuable contributions to those discussions” (As cited in Gillies, 2006, p. 271-272 Shachar & Sharan, 1994; Webb & Farivar, 1999).

Collective conversations where the students are involved and engaged within the classroom do not just happen. These forms of dialogs are purposefully taught and modeled by the teacher.

The conversations that stem from students working in cooperative learning groups differ from regular conversations that take place within the classroom. “Dialogues in cooperative groups are multidirectional rather than bidirectional, as normally occurs in traditional classrooms, or unidirectional, as can occur in peer tutoring dyads” (Cohen, 1994; Damon & Phelps, 1989 as cited in Gillies, 2006, p. 272). It is imperative that teachers set up a learning environment that lends itself to create a form of conversation in which students feel free to express themselves.

Cooperative learning groups change the culture within the classroom and student expectations of engagement, thus their ability to interact with others increases. Researchers have found that having the “open discussion that occurs in cooperative groups enables participants to clarify ideas and perspectives in a context that is free of the
perpetual security of the teacher and the wider class group” (Howe, 1990 as cited in Gillies, 2006, p. 272).

Utilizing this form of instruction requires that the teacher becomes a facilitator rather than the center of the class discussion and or lesson (Gillies, 2006). Researchers have found that, “teachers play a critical role in promoting interactions between students and engaging them in the learning process” (Gillies, 2006, p. 271). Without a proper setting, cooperative learning groups will not be successful in the way that they are intended to work. According to Bolukbas, Kesin and Polat (2011), “cooperative learning is a process through which students with various abilities, gender, nationalities and different level of social skills carry out their learning process by working in small groups and helping each other” (p. 330). It is essential that teachers use cooperative learning groups in a way that differentiates student learning. The way in which students are grouped together is intentional as well as the roles in which they play when working within the group setting. A key factor in cooperative learning groups is working and helping one another in order to reach a common objective. (Bolukbas, Keskin & Polat, 2011). Cooperative learning takes place within the classroom and creates a culture in which the group of students experience success as a group as opposed to individually.

Using cooperative learning groups within the classroom has had a positive effect on students both cognitively and developmentally. A solid foundation of comprehension and a deeper understanding happens when students are able to work with their peers in order to discuss and jointly discover new understandings. The goal of working with peers is to help support each other’s learning and understanding (Gillies, 2006). Promoting
student learning in cooperative learning groups has a positive impact on students’ ability to interact with one another and promote positive behavior within the classroom.

Research has shown that students who partake in cooperative learning groups show increased participation in group discussions, demonstrate a more sophisticated level of discourse, and engage in fewer interruptions when others speak (Gillies, 2006). Once the use of cooperative learning groups has been implemented and used often within the classroom, the culture of the classroom changes and students become more comfortable opening up and sharing their thoughts. Past research has shown that positive peer relationships in cooperative learning are “an essential element of success” (Hwang, Yin, Hwang, & Tsai, 2008, p. 148). Cooperative learning allows students the ability to learn together, overcome academic conflicts, work as a team, experience the opportunity to participate within group research, created discovery and the ability to learn together (Bolukbas, Keskin & Polat, 2011). Cooperative learning changes the culture of the classroom and student learning expectations in a positive way.

The use of cooperative learning groups in the classroom promotes positive student interactions with one another. Students are able to express themselves and encourage others within their groups. Cooperative learning groups offer students the opportunity to become engaged with their learning for several different reasons such as promoting each other’s success, assisting each other, sharing, mentoring, explaining, and receiving encouragement from others (Hwang, Yin, Hwang, & Tsai, 2008). The upside to utilizing cooperative learning in the classroom is that it has been found to promote positive learning outcomes for all students, including students with a range of diverse learning and adjustment needs (Gillies, 2006). The ultimate goal of cooperative learning groups is to
be able to maximize all students’ learning and allow for deep conceptual understanding of specific learning targets.
Methodology

This chapter will elaborate on the effects of utilizing Art and Social Studies integration with the use of cooperative learning groups versus independent work.

Research Question

While the primary goal of this study is to support the ideas of cooperative learning through engagement, the fundamental research question in the study asks: How does integrating Social Studies within the Arts using cooperative learning groups influence student engagement?

Research Setting

The study was conducted at Del Verde Elementary School within the Valmont Unified School District in Ventura County. Del Verde Elementary School is a brand new facility that just opened its doors to staff and students this year. Del Verde Elementary School serves a diverse community of approximately 525 learners in Transitional Kindergarten through 5th grade, of which approximately 83% or more are eligible for free and reduced lunch. 92% of the student population is Hispanic/Latino; the Caucasian population comprises 7%; mix/other comprises 1%. Del Verde’s English Language Learner population is 42% and the Students with Disabilities population is 9%.

Research Sample

The researcher proposed the research question and components of the research process to teachers at Del Verde Elementary School and requested a third grade teacher to volunteer her class to participate in the research. A third grade teacher offered her class for the research proposed. The class of the volunteer teacher is comprised of 25 students,
with 14 boys and 11 girls, ages 8-9 years old, with a variety of ethnic backgrounds. The class has a total of 12 English Language Learners. The goal of the research within the lesson portion was to ask all of the students to participate in the study for the researcher to gather qualitative data from observations and interviews conducted with potential students. In recruiting students to participate in the study, a considerable effort was made to recruit both genders and a variety of ethnic backgrounds by allowing all students in the classroom an opportunity to participate. The researcher only received consent from 10 parents, so those were the students selected to participate in the study.

The sample group of ten students was made up of five boys and five girls all of the age of eight. The group was composed of five English Language Learners and all students were of Hispanic backgrounds. The students ELD levels were all level 2.

**Instruments and Procedures**

In order to conduct this study, the classroom teacher needed to provide students and parents with the correct information, assent forms, and consent forms prior to the study being implemented. Before permission from students or parents was asked for, the teacher explained what the research project entailed to the class as a whole. The teacher talked directly to students and explained what participating in the lesson entailed. She described how a one-on-one interview with the researcher would occur the same day.

The students in the volunteered classroom who were eight years of age were able to submit verbal assent when asked if they wanted to participate in the study. The researcher said, “I would like you to be a part of a study I am conducting. You would need to participate in a lesson and then talk to me in an interview after you are all done so you can tell me what you have learned. Would you like to participate?” Additionally, the
parents of the eight-year-olds were presented with consent forms to sign allowing their child to participate in the study.

Nine-year-olds filled out a child assent form given to them by the teacher. After student assent forms were obtained, the teacher wrote a letter to parents with the parental consent from attached so that the invitation to participate was more friendly and inviting. Parents would also be able to read the letter to understand the context of the research project conducted by the researcher. Students who provided the researcher with all of the appropriate consent and assent forms were allowed to participate in the study.

Prior to the study, the researcher sat down with the instructor, and reviewed a scripted lesson plan written by the researcher (Appendix B) to be taught during the social studies hour of the day. The lesson focused on a series of how a community changes over time. Students read a section of their social studies textbook, *How have people helped places in your region grow?*, together as a class. After reading and discussing the lesson, students were asked to draw an illustration showing the change over time of a restaurant from the 1950’s compared to the present day. The assignment reflects one of the focal points of the study indicating an integrated social studies and arts assignment.

Out of the 25 students in the classroom, only ten returned the correct assent and consent forms. The select ten students were split into two groups of five. One group worked as a cooperative learning group, while the other group worked independently. The students who were chosen to work in a cooperative group were mixed in terms of gender. Students who worked independently on their assignment were also mixed in terms of gender.

During the 30 minutes students were given to complete their social studies and
art-integrated assignment, the researcher observed the select ten students who volunteered to participate in the study. Behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement characteristics were sought through observation using the theoretical framework of cognitive and non-cognitive engagement. As the students were working on the project the researcher kept notes of the student’s behaviors, interactions with one another and emotional connection to the project itself. The researcher observed students interactions with one another, their cognitive understanding of the assignment and feelings towards the subject and activity. The researcher also noted student’s ability to share ideas, gender integration and engagement with the overall assignment and peers. All student work was collected after the project concluded. The notes taken were simply observational and did not contain any bias or interpretation from the researcher. The notes were analyzed and organized after the project was over.

After the time allotted to complete the assignment was over, students participated in five-minute one-on-one interviews with the researcher. The open-ended questions asked throughout the interview focused on the student’s feelings, preferences, and opinions about working either independently or in a group. Students were asked to recall how often cooperative learning groups was used as a learning strategy in the classroom each week. Finally, students were asked about the level of difficulty in completing the assignment either independently or in a cooperative learning group. In regards to the activity students were asked, “What was easy or hard?” A student named Maria answered, “Easy because it was easy to draw pictures.” The researcher was able to gage the students cognitive engagement by they way Maria answered this question.
During the lesson, the researcher observed students working both independently and within a group setting. The researcher recorded student actions during the activity for later analysis. After the lesson was completed, the researcher met with each student individually and conducted one-on-one interviews. Students were asked questions about their experiences working in a group or as an individual. The researcher recorded all student answers and no probing questions were added in the interview process. Data for this study was collected from open-ended interviews with participants and from observation notes taken by the researcher. The researcher conducted all interviews face-to-face with participating students. The observation notes were recorded during the activity and are based solely on student actions during the activity.

**Role of the Researcher**

The researcher was aware of biases and assumptions about interpreting observations and how it could affect the project. The data collected during the observation were the actions of the students without any interpretation and/or analysis by the researcher. Analysis of the data will consist of locating themes and patterns, or lack thereof, in the responses of students working independently and working in groups. Although the responses from ten students will indicate a clear analysis of a percentage of the class, a limitation could be the narrow amount of students participating out of a class of 25.
Findings

This subsection will include the findings of participant responses based upon the one-on-one interviews that took place with the researcher as well as the observations that were recorded by the researcher during the lesson. The names of all participants have been excluded to provide anonymity.

During the study I found that students engaged in behavioral, cognitive and emotional ways differently based on certain circumstances. Students were working both independently and within a cooperative group. Students within each setting had a different experience with the assignment. In order to code the data, I looked at the findings from both the interviews and classroom observations of student actions during the lesson and activity (Appendix A). The findings were then categorized in three sections: behavioral engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement. The table in Figure 3.1 was generated based on these findings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavioral Engagement</th>
<th>Emotional Engagement</th>
<th>Cognitive Engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Off-task behavior</td>
<td>Lack of gender interaction</td>
<td>Inconsistencies with how often group activities take place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-engagement</td>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>Student learning is unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copying the teacher</td>
<td>Not wanting to work alone</td>
<td>Understanding through art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sharing Ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liked working alone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preferred working in a group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.1

Behavioral Engagement

During the activity there were a few findings that developed with students who were working independently. Students were off-task and not engaged within the activity.
Behavioral engagement is defined as a positive experience where students are following classroom rules and norms as well as avoiding disruptive behaviors (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). Students who worked independently lacked the ability to display a great amount of effort, persistence, attention to detail, and question generation, which are key components of behavioral engagement. Students that were working independently had problems finishing the assignment. The first question asked, “How did you feel working independently?” The student, Danny responded by saying, “a little hard because I was thinking but couldn’t concentrate. People were fighting at my table so I couldn’t really concentrate.” The actions of other students working affected this student from completing the assignment.

Some students that were working independently were talking to others at the table about topics unrelated to the assignment. Some of the students folded the paper in half and copied the teacher’s headings and stopped working. Others had to be asked by the teacher to draw something and complied until the teacher walked away, at which point they stopped working. The students’ lack of engagement was very evident.

During the interview process, students that were working alone were asked if they prefer to work independently or within a cooperative learning group. All students answered that they would prefer to work with other students so that they could share ideas and work together. Hector said that he would prefer to work in a “group so we could learn more things from them and then listen to people talking so we could get information.” Another student, Jorge said that it would be “good [to work in groups] because you could tell each other ideas about what to do and gather all-important
information on what we are doing.” And Jessica said that it would be “difficult [to work alone] because I wouldn’t have people to work with to help me.”

Some individual students noted that working alone was difficult and un-engaging. Many students working independently showed signs of “simply doing the work” (Fredricks, Bluemenfeld, & Paris, 2004, p. 61). There was a lack of engagement with almost all of the students that were working independently.

However, students that were working in the cooperative learning group showed high signs of engagement and all were actively involved with the activity. Students were following directions and completing the assignment as instructed.

**Emotional Engagement**

In analyzing the data, the researcher analyzed the students’ feelings about working alone on the project during the lesson. Through the analysis of the student interviews, it was revealed that five out of ten students did not want to work alone on the project. The data suggested that students felt as if they did not understand the activity that was to be completed. When students were asked what part of the assignment they found easier or more difficult, Ruby answered by saying, “hard because mostly we didn’t learn about this. We mostly learned about the moon.” Which shows that she had no conceptual understanding of the assignment or task, as nothing from the lesson referred to the moon.

This feeling was transparent in the students’ lack of work. When asked about the difference between working alone or within a group, Lily responded by saying that it would be “difficult [to work alone] because I wouldn’t have people to work with to help me.” Students working both independently and in a group stated that it would be more
difficult to work alone and that working alone means that no one can help each other out. One of the students, Danny who was working in the independently was asked what it was like to work independently and his response was, “well if I needed help, no one could help me. If I was in a group we could share ideas.”

Working independently appeared to be of significant concern to students. Students that were working independently were not motivated to complete the assignment and mainly sat there most of the time. Students that were working independently were very quiet and seemed to be drawn back.

Students that were working alone did not have the opportunity to share ideas and work with others. The students that were working independently looked bored and uninterested in completing the assignment. Students often referred back to the teacher’s example and copied what the teacher had done as a model to the class. All five students working independently stated that they would prefer to complete the assignment with others rather than alone. Students felt frustrated and indicated that the assignment was hard to complete on their own. When talking to students it was revealed that they were unable to finish the assignment because they were unclear as to what they were supposed to be doing and they felt it would have been easier if they had the opportunity to work with others.

An interesting finding that arose in talking to students was the idea of working alone versus with other students. The data based on student responses indicated that three out of ten students specified that they liked to work alone. An interesting connection that came out of the interview process was that all students who said that they like to work alone also said that they prefer to work in a group, which shows that these students have
no preference to working alone or within a group. The other seven students were definitive in their preference to work in groups and not independently at all.

All students in the study talked about sharing ideas with one another. One of the students that was working on the project independently was asked what it would be like to work in a group and her response was, “good because you could tell each other ideas about what to do…” During the interview the data was clear that every student preferred to work in a group so that idea sharing and group conversations could occur.

Although students began the assignment collaborating as a whole, it was noticeable that during the actual work process the group separated into two groups. There were three girls working on one side of the poster while the other two boys worked on their side. The girls worked on drawing the inside of the diner from ‘then’ and focused on the dining area while the boys drew on the ‘now’ side and focused on drawing motorcycles out in front of the restaurant. The students seemed to feel more comfortable working with the same gender.

Students were able to talk to one another and share ideas about what they wanted to draw and incorporate into the project. Although toward the end it was interesting to see that some of the students in the group began to argue about what they wanted to draw and one student became upset and stepped out to the side while the others continued to work. The most shocking observation was when the group split genders within their group and started to only work with boys and/or girls. Overall the cooperative group was able to produce a more complete project than those that worked independently.
Cognitive Engagement

When speaking to students, all reported that they enjoyed the ability to share ideas and talk with other students during the art component of the lesson. Students shared with the researcher their love of drawing and how the ability to show understanding through pictures was easier for them rather than writing. One student said, “I learned that doing art is really fun. It’s not a game but an activity. You should try your best and do it with all you got.” Students’ understanding was very evident within the activity. However, the majority of students working independently showed signs of not understanding whereas the students working in the cooperative group did show signs of understanding.

An interesting finding was the students’ inability to create on their own. The teacher had drawn a sample picture on the board to help students understand the activity, but instead of helping students, her example became a crutch for students. Students were simply emulating what the teacher had done as an example instead of creating on their own. One student working independently stated that the assignment was “easy, we copied Miss Hernandez’s…” Some reasoning as to why students had that problem could have been the lack of clear instructions given to students prior to them beginning the task. As the teacher walked around the room, she tried to clarify the directions regarding the students’ permission to draw freely, but students did not understand. When students were asked about how often they have an opportunity to participate in integrated lessons, there were a lot of inconsistencies in the students’ answers. All of the students’ answers were so different that the researcher could not identify any form of consistency surrounding group work within the classroom. The class may participate in
group work on a regular basis, but the data is inconsistent so that no analysis can be created based on student responses from the interview process.

Another inconsistent form of data, based on the interviews, focused on the students’ learning and whether the lesson objectives were unclear. When students were asked about what they had learned, the answers were vague. The researcher was unable to make any connections between the students’ answers. Although students were not able to verbally explain their learning in a way that was significant to the lesson, students were able to show their conceptual understanding through the pictures they drew during the activity. Based on the students’ work, the cooperative learning group had the highest amount of understanding. A student that was working in the cooperative learning group said, “(I) learned about community and what they do. How Camarillo got its name… we also learned about new restaurants and stores.” Students that were working in a group had a far more positive experience with the activity. That group of students showed more of a cognitive understanding than those that worked independently.

Summary of Results

Students that were able to participate in a cooperative learning group were able to achieve higher academic results and seemed to enjoy the project more than those that worked independently. As research shows, “there are a number of ways that integrating the visual arts into instruction can actually increase learning while promoting enjoyment” (Chicola & Smith, 2005/2006, p. 167). The data collected from this research shows that students working in a cooperative learning group had higher levels of learning along with engagement.
Although the students working in the cooperative learning group did have a more positive experience, the data revealed that students still do not utilize cooperative learning groups in the most effective form. Students separated themselves by gender during the assignment as well as argued with one another. In an ideal setting, the purpose of utilizing cooperative learning groups is to not only raise students’ understanding of curriculum but to also, “work cooperatively together… show increased participation in group discussions… engage in fewer interruptions when others speak and provide more intellectually valuable contributions to those discussions” (Gillies, 2006, p. 271-272). The data shows that students were unable to master this form of cooperative learning group procedures. As students have more time to practice and incorporate these theories, their ability to master such concepts will deepen.

When asking students about opportunities to utilize art integration in the classroom, both the data from interviews and observations revealed that students are not able to use art integration in the classroom on a regular basis. This affected the outcomes of this study as well. Integration of the arts is meant to be a seamless bond between two core curriculums and “without this type of integration, students may view school as a place where they learn in isolated, unrelated content facts and miss the opportunity for infusion of the arts into the learning process” (Gullatt, 2008, p. 15). Creating a one-time lesson of integration will not give students the deep understanding that is desired; students need ongoing implementation integrating the arts in the classroom in order to achieve high levels of cognitive development.

In using the arts within this lesson, students were able to visually see Social Studies and their communities come alive. During the activity, the photos intrigued
students and the researcher had high hopes for student connections. However, students struggled in their ability to show full comprehension utilizing the arts. Some students were able to perform better than others. This inconsistency of results can possibly stem from the way the instructions were given to students along with the example created by the teacher. Many students had the assumption that they were to copy the teacher’s example instead of creating their own interpretation.
Conclusions and Recommendations

Using cooperative learning groups that integrate the arts increases cognitive engagement. Results suggested that students working independently, with the same activity and given the same instructions, struggled without the ability to collaborate with others. In looking at the two scenarios, the students working in a cooperative learning group were much more cognitively engaged than those who were working independently. Students working independently also had less emotional engagement, which included poor attitudes and feelings toward the assignment, than those working in a cooperative learning group. Students working independently looked as if they were bored and uninterested whereas the students working within the cooperative learning group described their experiences as fun and exciting. The use of integrating the arts within cooperative learning groups helped students have a better understanding of the Social Studies concepts being taught.

The data collected from this study shows that students enjoy drawing and found the concepts easier to understand utilizing the art form with the activity. The data also revealed that students work better when they have the opportunity to share and work together with others. Students discussed the positives in being able to work collaboratively with one another. The data was inconclusive in the area in which students were asked if their teachers integrated arts regularly in the classroom. Using cooperative learning and integration of the arts is something that is to be taught and routinely practiced within the classroom. This form of learning becomes the culture of the classroom rather than a fun activity once in a while. It is recommended that teachers use the strategy of cooperative learning groups with the integration of the arts, but it is also
imperative when teachers implement cooperative groups, that they use best practices of cooperative learning and ensure a positively interdependent task so that students have something they are collectively working toward.

When integration is taught appropriately, students become actively involved in their learning. However, the teacher must be able to effectively integrate the two subject matters together while still meeting grade level learning targets and standards. When a teacher is able to effectively integrative the arts within Social Studies utilizing cooperative learning, the student learning outcomes can be incredible. Burstein and Knotts (2011) stated that integrating the arts within Social Studies allows students an opportunity to make meaning of the learning and allows students to use their multiple intelligences. Utilizing the arts within the classroom allows students multiple opportunities to express and demonstrate mastery of specific learning targets. A seamless integration of the arts with Social Studies includes learning targets and objectives from both content areas, instructional content in both subjects, and an assessment piece that assesses both areas of instruction (Sizemore n.d.). It is important to give students guidelines and scaffolding if needed. When teachers are able to make a seamless blend between the arts and a core subject, the learning becomes a reality for students and more personal.
References


Thousand Oaks, CA.


Upper Sattle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
## Appendix A

### A. Observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent (2 females, 3 males)</th>
<th>Group (3 females, 2 males)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Quietly observing photos</td>
<td>- All five students were involved with the discussion and were sharing and reading aloud with other students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Student practiced drawing on notes before drawing on paper</td>
<td>- Students discussed what side of the paper to draw on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- On student drew four boxes rather than the two the teacher instructed</td>
<td>- “Can I write ‘then’?” one student asked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Not all were willing: some student left their paper blank, folded, drew with a pencil but didn’t color, just kept redrawing abstract lines</td>
<td>- “She was supposed to write that…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- One student drew with a pencil only after being prompted by the instructor</td>
<td>- Materials manager designated by the group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Students keep referring back to the teacher’s model on the board</td>
<td>- “Can I draw something upside down?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- One student (female) was not working on anything, only folded but labeled both sides</td>
<td>- “Don’t push too hard!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Not talking to others</td>
<td>- Students drew a restaurant on one side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Working alone</td>
<td>- All five students were engaged, participating and laughing together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Copying the teachers model on the board</td>
<td>- Students moved around to sit at the end of the table to draw right-side up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Telling another student what to draw</td>
<td>- half of the group completed one side of the poster while the other half of the group completed the other (however, each half was 3 females on one side and 2 males on the other)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Student looks at the board and asks themselves, what else do I have to draw?</td>
<td>- Students began to argue about which items to draw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- One student who couldn’t find a place to draw began to just stand by herself not doing anything</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Female group kept drawing a dining area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Male group drew motorcycles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Students split up the activity into two sections. Girls did the then side and the boys did the now side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Girls were only talking to girls and boys were only talking to boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- There was not a lot of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Each student was doing their own drawing.
- No collaboration was going on
- One student told the other, I draw the outside, you draw the inside
- The boys began to draw together one said lets draw pancakes and the other said lets draw bacon
- Should I draw orange juice? Ya, orange juice!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B. Interviews</th>
<th>Question 1: How did you feel working independently/in a group?</th>
<th>Question 2: How often do you do group activities per week?</th>
<th>Question 3: What did you learn from the Social Studies &amp; Art lesson?</th>
<th>Question 4: What was easy or hard?</th>
<th>Question 5: What would it be like to work in a group? Independently?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student 1 (Independent)</strong></td>
<td>Good- we drew pictures and something else with crayons.</td>
<td>Every day.</td>
<td>I learned that there was a restaurant; there were new chairs and tables, old sinks, old chairs in the first picture.</td>
<td>Easy, we copied Miss Hernandez’s and needed to think about our own.</td>
<td>Group so we could learn more things from them and then listen to people talking so we could get information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student 2 (Independent)</strong></td>
<td>A little hard because I was thinking but couldn’t concentrate. People were fighting at my table so I couldn’t really concentrate.</td>
<td>4 to 5 times per week.</td>
<td>I learned how and when stuff was built and changed. Like when it started to like... this picture looks dead and crusty (pointing at THEN photo) but this one looks new and shiny.</td>
<td>To be honest, it was hard because all the kids, especially next to me, was yelling so I couldn’t really concentrate.</td>
<td>Independently because I can’t really focus and it would be better to do it by myself. I actually think that everyone should do it by themselves.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Student 3 (Independent)</strong></td>
<td>Good- I like to work by myself.</td>
<td>Once a week.</td>
<td>I learned about new and old.</td>
<td>It was kind of hard because of the pictures.</td>
<td>Group so that they can help me.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Student 4 (Independent)</strong></td>
<td>Well because nobody could</td>
<td>Sometimes a lot.</td>
<td>I learned that doing art is</td>
<td>Easy because all we had to</td>
<td>Yes it would be more fun and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 3 (Group)</td>
<td>Good – I had to cooperate with people.</td>
<td>13 times all year.</td>
<td>I don’t know.</td>
<td>Easy because it was easy to draw pictures.</td>
<td>Difficult because I wouldn’t have people to work with to help me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student 4 (Group)</td>
<td>Good – because we get to talk to them and not be alone.</td>
<td>Sometimes.</td>
<td>Different places and new things.</td>
<td>Easy because we didn’t have to write, only coloring.</td>
<td>Boring because you can’t talk to anyone.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student 5 (Group)</td>
<td>Fun because we didn’t have to do it alone and if we didn’t know the answer, we could ask for help. If we did it alone, I could get it wrong.</td>
<td>Like 5 times.</td>
<td>I learned what it was like then and now and how it looks now.</td>
<td>Easy – it was in a fun way to learn.</td>
<td>Probably would have been a lot harder and took a lot longer alone.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Student 5 (Independent)</strong></td>
<td>Well if I needed help, no one could help me. If I was in a group we could share ideas.</td>
<td>All the time.</td>
<td>There are a lot of things in our community that can always help us and serve us.</td>
<td>Kinda easy because we just have to tell our favorite restaurant and what’s new from now and then.</td>
<td>Good because you could tell each other ideas about what to do and gather all important information on what we are doing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student 1 (Group)</strong></td>
<td>Good – because I like learning about restaurants.</td>
<td>Mostly every day, but not every day</td>
<td>Drawing with a group, reading about Miss H’s pictures</td>
<td>Hard because mostly we didn’t learn about this. We mostly learned about the moon.</td>
<td>Sometimes in a group because it could be easier because we can share the learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student 2 (Group)</strong></td>
<td>Good – because when we share our ideas it helps us learn more. And we can think the way they’re thinking.</td>
<td>Probably once a month</td>
<td>Learned about community and what they do. How Camarillo got its name. How missions turned into churches. We also learned about new restaurants and stores.</td>
<td>Pretty easy because we did this. I’m good at Social Studies and I enjoy it.</td>
<td>Actually, kind of in the middle because when I work independently, it might be too hard. But if I work in a group, it might take too long because of arguing.</td>
</tr>
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Appendix B

Lesson Plan

Department of Elementary Education

Lesson Plan

Content Objective/s:
After reading the lesson *How have people helped places in your region grow?* and examining photographs of the Saugus Café from the 1890’s to 2013, the learner will draw a Then vs. Now illustration of the Saugus Café from the 1920’s to 2013 to show understanding of how history develops through shops and restaurants serving the community.

Lesson Goal:
Essential Question(s):

How has your community changed over time?

The 5-part lesson series begins in chronological order scaffolding lessons beginning with the founding and exploration of California and funnelling down to the local community of students in the Santa Clarita Valley. Students will have learned about explorers and the influx of population in California along with a mixture of culture spread across the state. After students learn about business and economy in the state of California, we move onto communities and specifically at three key aspects of growth in community that could not exist without the members the city working together.

To introduce the idea of community in a contextual way for students to understand, I hope to dig deeper and guide students to think critically about the importance of people working together within a community and hopefully answer the Essential Question:

How have people helped places in your region grow?

Content Standard/s:

*Social Studies*

3.3 Students draw from historical and community resources to organize the sequence of local historical events and describe how each period of settlement left its mark on the land.

3. Trace why their community was established, how individuals and families contributed to its founding and development, and how the community has changed over time, drawing on maps, photographs, oral histories, letters, newspapers, and other primary sources.

*California English Language Development Standard/s:*

*Reading Comprehension*

Intermediate: Understand and follow some multiple-step directions for classroom-related activities.

*Fluency and Systematic Vocabulary Development*

Intermediate: Read grade-appropriate narrative and expository texts aloud with appropriate pacing, intonation, and expression.

*Strategies and Applications*

Intermediate: Listen attentively to stories and information and identify important details and concepts by using both verbal and nonverbal responses.

*Materials, Technology, Visual Aids:*

- History-Social Science for California: Our Communities Textbook
- Multiple sets of 4 photographs dating between 1890 – 1950 of the same location of the Saugus Café
- Multiple sets of 2 current photographs of the Saugus Café in the year 2013
- 1 sheet of white drawing paper
- pencils
- markers
- crayons

Classroom Management Strategies, Room Arrangements, and/or Student Grouping Plan:
The learner will complete the drawing independently but sit in small groups of 3-4 to share photographs and supplies with classmates sitting nearby. The teacher will read instructions aloud and model a sketch of the Then vs. Now. Complete models will be clipped on the board for students to use as references.

Differentiation, Modifications, and/or SDAIE/ELD Strategies to be implemented:
SDAIE Level 2 Strategies will be implemented throughout the lesson when the teacher labels the primary source photographs, scenes or events with short sentences. Names of the subject or location will be written on the board for students to use as a reference. Photographs will be described as a group discussion.

Academic Language and/or Vocabulary to be introduced:
Explorer, culture, ownership, property, laborer, good, service, community, founded

Procedure:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Action</th>
<th>Student Action</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>(INTO):</strong></td>
<td><strong>(INTO):</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Motivation: (6 minutes)</td>
<td>Students will discuss with peers what their favorite restaurants are in their neighborhoods.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I will engage students in the lesson by asking them a question written on the board: What is your favorite restaurant? As students discuss with one another, I will ask for volunteers to introduce to the class their favorite restaurant in the community. This activity will introduce the idea of restaurants in the community to students. I will write the names of 6 restaurants on the board. At the end of the introduction to the lesson, I will say that my favorite restaurant in the community is Saugus Café. I will post a picture I took as a primary source of the exterior of the Café and post it on the board for students to see.</td>
<td>Students will participate in recalling previously read material from the class and offer their suggestions as to what the vocabulary terms <strong>community</strong> and <strong>founded</strong> mean. When asked to guess how long ago the Saugus Café was built, students will participate and give their best educated guess.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preview: (3 minutes)</td>
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<td>I will review the textbook material and lessons read together as a class previously and go over key terms in the lesson such as <strong>community</strong> and <strong>founded</strong>. These terms will be written on the board. To spark inquiry, I will ask students how long ago they think the Saugus Café was built. I will take their educated guesses and write them on the board. I will tell students we will get to that answer shortly after the reading.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(THROUGH)</em></td>
<td><em>(THROUGH)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review: (10 minutes)</td>
<td>Students will listen to the reading and respond to comprehension questions. Students will be actively listening and predicting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will read <em>The First Towns and Families and Communities</em> with the whole class and pause to ask comprehension questions along the way.</td>
<td>Students will raise their hands and share with the class the local shops and restaurants that are familiar to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After <em>Families and Communities</em>, I will ask</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
students to share local shops and restaurants they know of that serve the community. Names of the hops and restaurants shared will be written down on the board.

Elaborate: (6 minutes)
After a list has been made on the board, I will ask how long students think these shops and restaurants have been in business. I will point out in the text that the town of Camarillo was founded in 1899 to give students an idea of context in terms of time. Students will guess when a select few of the names on the list were founded and I will prompt the class to focus on the Saugus Café and show them a photograph of the dining room of the Saugus Café in the 1890s and share that the Saugus Café was built over 125 years ago in 1887.

PRESENT CONTENT IN DIFFERENT WAYS:
I will give students 4 more photographs showing the same Saugus Café at different time periods with the years written on the back of each photograph. For deeper analysis, I will prompt students to think critically in terms of how businesses and communities have grown by asking: “What are the clues from the objects in the photograph that tell you about the past?” “How is this photograph different from other photographs you have seen of the Saugus Café today?” “How does this photograph show change over time?” and “How do you think the Café will look 125 years from now?”

(BEYOND)
Closure: (5 minutes)
I will give oral directions and write requirements on the board for students to complete a Then vs. Now drawing of the Saugus Café after folding their paper in half and using the art materials at their tables. I will show two models, one of a sketch and one completely done Then vs. Now drawing and leave on the board for students to walk up to for reference.

Elaborate:
Students will participate in guessing how long certain businesses have been open in the area. When the photograph of the Saugus Café in the 1890s is shared with the class, students will contribute their best educated guess as to when the business opened based on their observation and analysis of the photograph in front of them.

When prompted with questions to analyze the various photographs of the Saugus Café, students will draw upon the differences of the photographs and share how the restaurant has changed over time.

(BEYOND)
Closure:
Students will practice active listening and comprehension during the oral instructions given.

Students will demonstrate their understanding of change over time by showing a contrast of the Saugus from the 1890’s to 2013. On one side of the drawing, students will draw either the interior or exterior of the Saugus Café with simple illustrations showing the limited materials of the 1890s. On the opposite side of the drawing, students will show a modern day Saugus Café. This is a single-day activity. The details of the drawings will be where differentiation will show.