

AN ASSESSMENT OF PUPIL PROGRESS WITHIN A
MULTI-MEDIA APPROACH TO THE TEACHING OF
A UNIT IN GRADE VI SOCIAL STUDIES

A Thesis

Presented To
the Faculty of Education
The University of Manitoba

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

by

Janice Andria Roch

April 1977

"AN ASSESSMENT OF PUPIL PROGRESS WITHIN A
MULTI-MEDIA APPROACH TO THE TEACHING OF
A UNIT IN GRADE VI SOCIAL STUDIES"

by
JANICE ANDRIA ROCH

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements
of the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

© 1977

Permission has been granted to the LIBRARY OF THE UNIVER-
SITY OF MANITOBA to lend or sell copies of this dissertation, to
the NATIONAL LIBRARY OF CANADA to microfilm this
dissertation and to lend or sell copies of the film, and UNIVERSITY
MICROFILMS to publish an abstract of this dissertation.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the
dissertation nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or other-
wise reproduced without the author's written permission.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my appreciation to Professor Colin Walley, chairman of the thesis committee, for his encouragement, guidance and patience throughout this study; to Professor Stu Seim, member of the thesis committee, for his helpful comments and suggestions; and to Professor Joan Irvine and Professor Marcel Bonneau, also members of the thesis committee, for their assistance in validating certain portions of the study.

Finally, my sincere appreciation to my husband, Richard, and my family for their encouragement, patience and understanding during this educational pursuit.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to assess a multi-media approach to the teaching of a unit in Grade VI Social Studies which utilized the teaching methods of exposition, directed discussion and discovery. The chosen unit of study was presented to the researcher's class of grade V and VI students.

The unit of study, Westward Expansion, was developed by presenting several multi-media resources and experiences to three social studies groups within the class. Many evaluative techniques were utilized to assess the progress of the social studies program. Such assessment methods were related to the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains.

The outcome of such an approach to the teaching of social studies were educationally significant. The multi-media approach was beneficial in that the use of varied learning experiences and materials increased opportunities for learning. By using a combination of teaching techniques (exposition, directed discussion and discovery) various abilities and learning methods were accommodated. As well, a positive feeling toward social studies and personal self-worth developed through the use of local field trips and other forms of multi-media. Finally, group interaction, independent work habits and responsibility did develop but were not achieved in totality.

In conclusion, such an approach to the teaching of Grade VI Social Studies is not flawless, but certainly presents itself as being valuable not only for academic development, but also for social development. During times when technology changes our way of life so rapidly, students need to be aware of knowledge and how to handle such knowledge in a problem-solving manner in relationship to man in society.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	iii
LIST OF TABLES	ix
Chapter	
1. THE PROBLEM	1
Introduction	1
A Statement of Definitions	4
Statement of the Problem	7
Limitations	8
Potential Outcomes	9
Importance of the Study	10
2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	12
Introduction	12
CONCEPT FORMATION AND THE THINKING PROCESS	13
THE INQUIRY METHOD TO CONCEPT FORMATION	25
OBSERVATIONAL TECHNIQUES IN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH	35
3. PROCEDURE (DESIGN OF THE STUDY)	42
Social Skills	46
Academic Skills	50
4. THE STUDY AND THE ANALYSIS	59

Chapter	Page
Introduction	59
Sociometric Test	60
EVALUATION TECHNIQUES	63
Researcher's Checklists	63
Students' Checklists	78
Discussion Groups	81
Personality Inventory	83
Pre-Test and Post-Test	84
MULTI-MEDIA RESOURCES	88
Filmstrips	88
Films	89
Slides	90
Reel Tapes	90
Video Tapes	90
Records	91
Jackdaws	91
Kits	92
Student Evaluation of Multi-Media Resources	92
OTHER EVALUATION TECHNIQUES RELATED TO MULTI-MEDIA	95
Field Trips	95

Chapter	Page
Resource Personnel	102
Note Taking	102
Written Assignments	102
Creative Writing	102
Social Studies Play	103
Project	105
Art	106
Book Selection During Free Reading Periods	106
Researcher's Evaluation of Student Improvement ..	106
5. DISCUSSION: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	112
Introduction	112
AN EVALUATION OF PRE-DETERMINED OBJECTIVES OF MULTI-MEDIA APPROACH ...	112
Multi-Media and Learning Opportunities	112
Instructional Methods	115
Group Effectiveness	119
Positive Feeling Toward Social Studies	121
Independent and Responsible Growth of Individuals and Groups	123
Personal Self-Worth	125
CHECKLISTS	127
CONCLUSION	137

BIBLIOGRAPHY	139
APPENDIX A: Social Skills Checklist	146
Academic Skills Checklist	148
APPENDIX B: Personality Inventory - Seven Oaks School Division	152
APPENDIX C: Pre-Test and Post-Test	158
APPENDIX D: Examples of Concept Development	159
APPENDIX E: Student Evaluation of Multi-Media Resources..	160

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Analysis of Researcher's Social Skills Checklist	65
2. Analysis of Researcher's Academic Skills Checklist...	70
3. Student Response to Social Skills Checklist.....	78
4. Concept Word Count from Pre-Test to Post-Test	85
5. Total Concept Word Count and The Number of Words Increased from Pre-Test to Post-Test	87
6. Multi-Media Resources Usefulness	94
7. Reasons Why Social Skills Items Were Not Achieved and Program Alteration	128
8. Reasons Why Academic Skills Items Were Not Achieved and Program Alteration	131

Chapter 1

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

"Although no single approach can continuously motivate students, new technology is rapidly providing a diversity of techniques and materials for bridging the gap between theory and practice."¹

Multi-media resources are increasingly being utilized in the social studies classroom. The atmosphere of the classroom is one in which learning through multi-media is exciting and interesting; one where through presentation, the student feels he has nearly reached reality and has experienced something that he can relate to. Multi-media brings to the classroom the inaccessible events, things and people far removed in space and time.² Exposure to varied multi-media experiences makes it possible for various learning opportunities to occur. Varied resources

¹ Earl G. Bagley and David A. Piepfy, Simulation Games and Role-Playing: Social Studies for the Elementary School Proficiency Module 6, Department of Social Sciences Education, Georgia University, Athens, ERIC Document ED 073 987, 1972.

² John B. Haney and Eldon J. Ullmer. Educational Media and the Teacher. Dubuque: Wm. C. Brown Company Publishers, 1972, p. 20.

create experiences for the learner. These experiences provide a basis for conceptualization to occur. It is not guaranteed as to what the experiences will be in totality, but the use of varied resources is one of guided discovery or guided experiences in which the teacher must assume the job of predicting the behavior of the student. No matter what the teaching strategy, the learning experience is subject to variables which exert their influence.³

Experiences which are in the real world are beneficial in creating an environment conducive to problem-solving and critical thinking.

By utilizing a multi-media approach a combination of instructional methods is necessary. The use of many print and non-print materials comprising multi-media needs to take place through a number of teaching techniques. The teacher can control the social studies class completely through exposition, direct class or group discussion while the students participate in the discussion, or lastly the teacher can also have the students direct their own learning by discovering for themselves.

Pure discovery exercises have limited use for the teaching of inquiry. Discovery exercises demand sophisticated students with considerable knowledge of facts and generalizations. In order

³ Ibid.

to inquire about cues without direction from the teacher, the students must develop their critical thinking skills to a maximum and have retained a mass of knowledge to trigger and test hypotheses. Without skills and knowledge, no student can discover without the teacher.⁴

Burner argues that discovery is necessary for "real possession" of knowledge, that discovery has certain motivational advantages, and organizes knowledge effectively for latter use, and promotes long-term retention.

Ausubel agrees that the discovery method is necessary for the development of problem-solving abilities but he feels that it is too time consuming to be used efficiently as a primary method of instruction in the classroom. He indicates that exposition plays a large role in classroom instruction and should continue to do so because few problem-solvers can be trained in comparison with the number of people who can acquire a meaningful grasp of various subjects through reception learning (exposition).

Therefore one individual instructional method is thought to be insufficient and a combination of exposition, directed dis-

⁴Edwin Fenton, The New Social Studies, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., Toronto, 1967, p. 48.

cussion and discovery are used in this study. By using these teaching methods and exposing the students to many concrete learning experiences (by utilizing multi-media) the greater the possibility for students of varying abilities and learning styles to form ideas, generalizations and concepts in social studies.

A Statement of Definitions

The following definitions are explained in specific reference to their use in the study.

Affective Domain. Refers to that area of thinking which involves feelings and attitudes.

Abstract or Formal Level. Refers to the level of thinking which is higher order and has only intrinsic form with little or no attempt at pictorial representation.

Critical Thinking. Refers to the ability to make valid judgements and to apply knowledge following assessment.

Cognitive Domain. Refers to that area of thinking involving knowledge, problem-solving and higher mental processes.

Concept. An abstract or generic idea generalized from particular instances.

Concept Attainment. The ability to remember concepts

and use them in new situations (transfer).

Concept Formation. The process of teaching the connotative aspects of concepts by using a wide range of experiences with a particular concept.

Concrete Level. Refers to the level of thinking involving experiences that occur in reality such as smelling, tasting, seeing and any other learning experience that involves manipulating objects, places or things in order to teach concepts.

Deductive Method of Teaching. Emphasizes the use of authoritative statements of the rules of operation combined with extensive practice or drill. No attempt was made, before practice with the respective processes was begun, to explain why the rules operated to give the correct results. Through the process of working with the rules in many exercises the pupil was expected to gain operative efficiency and to acquire understanding of the principles in the area under consideration.

Directed Discussion. Teaching techniques where the teacher acts as the mediator or director of a discussion while the students are active participants.

Discovery or Inquiry. Teaching technique where learning is done through a problem-solving approach either by inductive or

deductive sequencing of the learning.

Exposition. Teaching technique where the teacher controls the lesson content and presentation while the student participation is at minimum.

Facts. Facts are relatively objective relations among objects, events and concepts--relations which tend to be specific to a time or place and which are so well accepted that there is little or no dispute over their truth.

Generalization. A generalization is a statement of relationships between or among concepts, usually qualified by condition. Generalizations differ from facts in that while facts are based on observation at some point in time, generalizations are based on inference or suggestion.

Inductive Method. Emphasizes the use of exercises in thinking built around familiar situations. Through the use of these exercises, the pupils are expected to discover and understand the fundamental principles and relationships to be learned. The use of numerous practice exercises to bring about efficiency in the operations is supposed to follow discovery.

Multi-Media. All available resources of the school and community including print and non print-materials.

Psychomotor Domain. That area of thinking related to motor action directly proceeding from mental activity.

Statement of the Problem

The teaching of social studies in the elementary grades requires the use of many concrete experiences by using all available multi-media resources. It is important that multi-media material be pre-viewed and evaluated by the teacher before it is used in the classroom as some of the multi-media resources may not be suitable for a particular class or ability level.

A combination of teaching methods (exposition, directed discussion and discovery) should be utilized throughout a unit of study in social studies. Which method to use would depend on what topic is being taught and what types of activities the teacher wants to emphasize. To provide a variety of approaches should help accommodate varying student needs.

The problem is one of assessing a multi-media approach to the teaching of a unit in Grade VI Social Studies which utilizes exposition, directed discussion and discovery as teaching methods. By using multi-media and three methods of instruction, many learning opportunities are developed. Assessment is to be done by utilizing the following forms of evaluation; (1) sociometric test (2) social and academic skills checklists (3) students' checklists

(4) personality inventory (5) pre-test and post-test (6) field trips (7) large (class) and small group discussions (8) multi-media resources (9) resource personnel (10) student evaluation of multi-media resources (11) samples of note taking (12) samples of written assignments (13) creative writing samples (14) social studies plays (15) project study questions (16) art (17) book selection during free reading periods and (18) researcher's evaluation of student improvement.

Limitations

1. The ideal situation would have been to observe each of the twenty-eight students during every social studies class partaking in as many multi-media activities as possible for the eight week time period of the unit, but the teacher and the researcher were one in the same person and she was only able to observe one group specifically per day.
2. The descriptive observations of this study and the choice of multi-media were made by the classroom teacher, thus making the interpretation of the unit subject to possible bias.
3. The incoming Grade V students may have had substantial background knowledge about the historical develop-

ment of Manitoba or they may not have had such knowledge depending on what project topics were chosen and developed from the Grade V Social Studies Curriculum.

4. Only one unit of study from the Grade VI Social Studies Program was chosen for presentation in this thesis work. Had another unit been chosen, the observations of academic and social skills may have been greatly different.

Potential Outcomes

1. Group effectiveness will develop from students working in group situations as they will discover that an enormous amount of give and take is essential. The leader in each group assumes some responsibility for group cohesion.
2. By using a combination of teaching techniques (exposition, directed discussion and discovery) various student needs and abilities will be accommodated. The use of such methods will provide necessary confidence for even the weak or quiet student.
3. A positive feeling toward social studies will develop by the use of local field trips and other forms of

multi-media.

4. Individuals as well as groups will develop themselves independently by utilizing the multi-media resources provided for them or sought out by themselves. The students will progress in their ability to be responsible for use of equipment and materials, completion of assignments and responsibility to one another.
5. Personal self-worth will be developed by such an approach (multi-media). Each student in a group will be assigned a particular set of study questions to complete or have a job to accomplish for the group leader. By having discussions within the small group setting, individual feelings will be brought out into the open and dealt with accordingly.

Importance of the Study

In reviewing the Manitoba Department of Education Curriculum for Grade VI Social Studies, it seems evident that many resources in the form of outdoor education, audio-visual materials, drama and resource personnel are all necessary in developing learning opportunities.

Students and teachers are living in a highly sophisticated society. Much of the learner's experience outside the school

environment is in mediated form. By the end of high school it is estimated that the student will undergo 15,000 hours of television experience, 500 hours of motion picture exposure and will only experience 11,000 hours in the classroom.⁵

Today the text book as the mainstay of education is being challenged. The print culture is being supplemented by a vast quantity of varied media including those already mentioned. By re-living the past in drama, in creative writing, in the outdoors and the like, students will have greater opportunities to be able to relate better to what happened in the past as well as to what is happening in the here and now.

⁵ Ibid., p. 1.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

An examination of the literature investigating concept formation in the teaching of social studies reveals a concern with three major questions: 1) What is a concept and how does concept formation in thinking occur? 2) Can an inquiry approach applying multi-media resources to the teaching of Grade VI Social Studies enhance concept formation? Although some research regarding concept formation and attainment is not in complete agreement, many studies do indicate that concepts are learned developmentally and that inquiry procedures of teaching in a problem-centred conceptually-based curriculum do enhance the formation of concepts. 3) What are observational techniques in educational research and why are they used?

The following review of literature is divided into three sections. The first section presents findings of studies related to concept formation and the thinking process. The second section deals with studies which have investigated the relationships between formation and the application of the inquiry method in the teaching of social studies. Both sections include investigations related to

the formation of concepts which is the basis for the case study in this thesis. As this study describes the reactions of students in a descriptive evaluative form during presentation of a unit of study from the Grade VI Social Studies Curriculum, a third section discussing observational techniques in educational research is included.

CONCEPT FORMATION AND THE THINKING PROCESS

A concept is a unitary idea, usually labelled with a single word. Principles relate concepts to each other and have a high degree of generality across settings and times. Facts are relatively objective relations among objects, events and concepts, relations which tend to be specific to a time or place and which are so well accepted that there is little or no dispute over their truth.¹

Jerome Burner states, "The working definition of a concept is a network of inferences that are or may be set into play by an act of categorization" while Byron C. Massialas and C. Benjamin Cox say, "A concept may refer to a logical structure which groups objects or phenomena within one class or category."²

A social studies concept is a word or phrase which generally has two levels of meaning associated with it, the denotative and the connotative levels. The denotative level is the dictionary definition

¹ Vincent N. Campbell and Others, "Plan Social Studies: The Match Between Long-Range Objectives and the 1970-71 Curriculum," ERIC Document ED 045 491, July, 1970.

² Barry K. Beyer and Anthony N. Penna, eds., Concepts in the Social Studies, ERIC Document ED 049 151, 1971.

of the word. The connotative level is a higher level of meaning which students must be trained to understand.

The process of teaching the connotative aspects of concepts is called concept formation. This process requires introducing students to concepts over long periods of time in varied settings so that they will discover for themselves the diverse connotations of a concept.³

Concepts are obtained through a refined and continual process of discrimination and organization of factual data. Both discrimination and abstraction of an essential or characteristic in one set of experiences and generalizations are involved in the acquisition of concepts. The process may or may not be conscious. A fully adequate concept involves recognition of its defining attributes (the similarities among the members composing the class of objects or events involved in the concept), the differences that can also be encompassed within the class, and finally the recognition of possible multiple class memberships.⁴

It is unusual for an individual to form or learn a concept by being presented with the definition only. Experiences are the basis

³Robert H. Watford, "Resources in Social Studies for Elementary Teachers," ERIC Document ED 081 690, August, 1973.

⁴"Research Needs in Geographic Education: Suggestions and Possibilities." Geographic Education Series, No. 7 (1967), 52.