This paper focuses on helping social studies teachers discover ways to help second language students comprehend, use, and learn language as well as content in the classroom. Activities conducive to this purpose include: providing contextual support such as pictures, globes, videotapes, diagrams, body and facial gestures, pantomime and role playing; helping students activate or construct background knowledge through class elections, field trips and simulations; use of historical fiction, diaries and group discussion with Americans and students from other cultures; reading from textbooks that provide support that builds authentic mental images; teacher assistance in helping students construct relevant background knowledge and contrast concepts in their culture and in American culture; presenting students with definitions of difficult textbook words; semantic maps that introduce key words and a visual scheme to represent relationships among important events, people, or other historical facts; use of the Experience-Text-Relationship approach; teacher observation of classroom tasks to analyze the discourse, interaction, and the language demands of tasks; teacher development and use of reading guides that help students simplify difficult material; and formal writing assignments. Another goal of language-sensitive social studies classes is to make the class conducive to language development through increased opportunities for language production and the development of the skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Finally, it is important for social studies and other content teachers to collaborate in ensuring continued language and literacy development of language minority students. (Contains 49 references.) (CK)
Integrating Language and Content Learning in the Social Studies Classroom

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Faced with growing numbers of second language students, many teachers and administrators are becoming increasingly aware of the needs of second language students and of the need for all teachers to take collective responsibility for their education. As language classes cannot provide enough support for the development of academic language proficiency (a process which may take between 4 and 7 years for Limited English Proficient students), content-area teachers and classrooms must play an essential role in this development (Mohan, 1990, p. 115). This role involves integrating language and content learning, including not only making content classrooms language sensitive and conducive to language development but also collaboration with language teachers and other teachers to promote language development across the curriculum. As Tovey and Weible (1981) put it, language development shouldn't be seen as skillwork that is relegated to part of the school day:

...children's ability to communicate can be enhanced significantly if language is considered a process which cuts across and connects everything that is taught and learned in school, including social studies. (p. 367)

The way teachers can help students acquire the type of academic language necessary to succeed in social studies and other classes is through integrating language and content learning. For English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, this entails incorporating content material into the curriculum. For content area teachers, integrating language and content learning involves making the content and language of the class comprehensible to second language students as well as providing opportunities for students to use language in meaningful ways in the process of learning content. The main focus of this paper will be on helping social studies teachers discover ways to help second language students comprehend, use, and learn language as well as content in the classroom.

**Providing Contextual Support and Comprehensible Input**

Making language comprehensible is one of the main ways to not only help students understand and learn the social studies content but also to facilitate their acquisition of academic language as well. According to Krashen (1982), language is acquired through receiving comprehensible input. Comprehensible input is based on prior knowledge, extralinguistic clues, context, and linguistic competence (Krashen, 1982). One way of ensuring that lessons are comprehensible to second language students is adapting the language of the lessons to students’ needs or proficiency levels and checking frequently for understanding. Such adaptation can include using a slower rate of speech, clear enunciation, controlled vocabulary, controlled sentence length, controlled syntax, use of cognates, limited use of idiomatic expressions, definition of words with double meanings, providing synonyms or other descriptive clues, use of longer and natural pauses, repeat and review, use of fewer pronouns, stressing high frequency words, and, if lecture style is necessary, presenting information in simplified, shorter lecture form. Checking frequently for understanding of concepts can include checking for comprehension, eliciting requests for clarification, repeating information, paraphrasing statements of information, expanding statements of information,
posing a variety of questions, posing questions at different levels, and facilitating teacher-to-student and student-to-student interaction. Other things to consider when presenting information to students include announcing the lesson's objectives and activities, writing legibly, developing and maintaining routines, listing and reviewing instructions step-by-step, and providing frequent summations of the salient points of the lesson (Short, 1991, p. 4). Using lesson markers that signal a: 'let students know where they are at in a lesson is also useful (Wong Fillmore, 1985; cited in Faltil, 1993).

Adaptation through addition rather than simplification is another way of ensuring the comprehensibility of lessons. Many academic tasks found in the social studies classroom, such as teacher lectures, social science texts, and other classroom activities, are what Cummins (1992) describes as context-reduced and cognitively demanding. Providing contextual support is the primary way to help make the language and content of lessons and texts comprehensible. Contextual support includes visuals such as pictures, globes, maps, photographs, slides, videotape, videodisk, CD-ROM, filmstrips, graphics, diagrams, timelines, props, real objects and materials, overheads, graphic organizers, illustrations, artifacts, models, bulletin boards, tape recordings. They can also include body and facial gestures and expressions, dramatization of meaning through pantomime, acting out, and role playing.

Addition instead of simplification as a way of ensuring comprehension can be done with written text as well. Instead of the rewriting of text in a form incorporating less complex syntax and reduced vocabulary load, additional material, including expansions of ideas, direct definitions, added simplifications, and comparisons to build in redundancy, can be included (Richard-Amato and Snow, 1992). This may not only serve to help make the material more comprehensible, but also to help build proficiency as well:

It should be noted here that adding new elements in the discourse rather than replacing difficult items with simpler forms will help the student stretch toward higher levels of language proficiency.
(Richard-Amato and Snow, 1992, p. 151)

Such additions can be included in glosses and reading guides to be used during reading. Also, pictures, diagrams, graphs, and other visuals can supply extralinguistic contexts for helping ESL students grasp the intended meaning (Kessler & Quinn, 1987), and reading guides can direct students' attention to these comprehension aids.

Providing contextual support also includes helping students activate or construct background knowledge. Teachers have to consider how much knowledge and experience ESL students have previously gained. ESL students may come to this country with varying amounts of social studies instruction in their native countries, the content of prior social studies instruction may differ from the content of American social studies instruction, and students may not have had much of a chance to develop certain social studies concepts in previous classes in American schools (King, Fagan, Bratt, & Baer, 1987).
Equally important to consider is the kind of background knowledge that students may have. Though they may not possess the amount of background knowledge that some textbook authors and teachers may presume, American students bring to the classroom a wealth of background knowledge that is built up through experience and interaction in American culture (including popular culture such as TV, movies, literature, etc.). Imagine the situation that many ESL students, with much of their knowledge and experience gained through interaction in a different culture, face when attempting to comprehend written text and oral lessons. The background knowledge and experiences that ESL students bring to the classroom may be quite different from the knowledge and experiences that native speakers bring to the classroom and that teachers or authors may take for granted. Language minority students' beliefs, ideas, values, etc., about such concepts as individualism and independence may be very different from what a student from this culture may hold. It may be difficult to relate a certain concept to one's own knowledge or experience if there is a gap between them, and students' activation of knowledge and experience that may be specific to their own culture may lead to interpretations different than what a textbook author or teacher had intended for students to learn. Learners may construct a different main idea than intended in text. They may interpret content on the basis of their own strong beliefs and attitudes rather than by reference to the author's point of view.

Both language and social studies teachers can help students build necessary background experiences directly through role play, class and school activities (such as elections), field trips, simulations, etc. Experience with historical fiction, biographies, diaries, pictorial essays, etc., can give second language learners indirect and vicarious experiences that native speaking students may take for granted. Tradebooks can provide real world examples to help students understand abstract concepts:

When students can correctly relate their ordinary life experiences and prior knowledge to content concepts, their understanding of new information is facilitated. Tradebooks can assist students with this process by providing typical, real world examples of concepts that students find familiar and can link to their own situations. (McGowan and Guzzetti, 1991).

Though the ordinary life experiences and background knowledge of second language students may be different from those of American students, it is possible for student to compare and contrast such real world examples of concepts (through, for example, group discussion with Americans and student from other cultures) and then link them to their own situations. It is easier to link real world examples of concepts to life experience and background knowledge than to attempt to link broad, abstract concepts from one culture to those of another (knowledge of which may be perhaps vague and incomplete).

Instructional approaches and activities for reading are major ways to help students activate and construct knowledge. In facilitating students' learning from lessons and texts, it is important that teachers focus on the process of knowledge construction:
....learning involves the active and purposeful process of constructing knowledge and language...[students] construct knowledge by processing questioning and interpreting, by themselves and in interaction with others, and they incorporate new knowledge by making connections between it and their existing framework. As they continue to learn they make stronger connections and thereby build more extended and more generative frameworks of knowledge. The connections which students make among concepts and procedures are constructed and expressed through language, so that they build ever stronger and more generative communicative frameworks for representing knowledge." (Clark & Scarino, 1993).

Text authors have been criticized for assuming unrealistic amounts of background knowledge and for failing to provide young students of history with textual support for organizing information, drawing relationships, and using their own relevant background information in the meaning construction process (Beck and McKeown, 1988). In the absence of considerate text that supports the building of authentic mental images, the teacher has a crucial responsibility to provide instructional leadership. In activities leading up to lessons or reading assignments in textbooks, the main focus of teachers should be on helping students activate and organize what they already know about the topic or concepts to be focused on in the lesson or text. This may lead to helping students construct relevant background knowledge if it isn't present, and then finally to helping students relate the experiences and knowledge they know or have constructed to the new material to be learned (Thean, 1987).

Questions must induce students to think about personal meanings that are relevant to the central or salient themes in text and build a connection with those themes. Cognitive and affective ties must be established between what is already known or believed and what is about to be read. Teachers must listen carefully to students' meaning representations and prepare them to anticipate text representations (Camperell, 1991). Teachers also should help students compare and contrast concepts in their culture and in American culture in order to help students see how those concepts relate to their lives (Freeman and Freeman, 1991).

Prereading activities can serve to help students activate or construct knowledge of both vocabulary and content knowledge. Though it may be helpful to make students aware of vocabulary that they may not be familiar with and that may be crucial to understanding a text, selecting words you predict the students may not know and simply presenting students with definitions of the words before they read the selection is not always effective. Some studies with ESL readers (Hudson, 1982; Johnson, 1982) have shown that teaching the definitions of words in pre-reading activities had little measurable effect upon the subjects' comprehension of the text. According to Nagy (1988), there are two possible reasons that preteaching vocabulary may not increase reading comprehension:
... many types of vocabulary instruction have been found not to increase reading comprehension. Comprehension of text often requires much richer knowledge of a word than simple definitional knowledge. Another consideration ... is the redundancy of text – the fact that readers can tolerate a certain proportion of unknown words in text without comprehension being disrupted ... readers may be able to tolerate texts in which as many as 15 percent of the words are not fully known ...

Exactly what proportion of unknown words readers can tolerate depends on the nature of the text, the role of the unfamiliar words in the text, and the purpose for reading. (p. 29)

To provide richer meanings of words beyond definitions, activities that activate or construct both vocabulary and background knowledge may be more effective. Johnson (1982) found that activating or building students' background knowledge was as or more effective than simply glossing or previewing vocabulary. Among the suggestions Carrell (1988) makes for successful preteaching of vocabulary to increase learning from text include limiting words to be taught to key words in the target passage and teaching the words in semantically and topically related sets to improve word meanings and background knowledge concurrently. Two such activities are semantic maps and structured overviews. Semantic maps are a way to not only introduce key vocabulary but also a “visual scheme to represent relationships among important events, people, or other historical facts or concepts” (King et al., 1987). Advance organizers include any device used to help students organize, remember, and relate prior knowledge to new material (Martorella, 1990).

Such activities are also a way of informally assessing what information and language students may know and determining what knowledge or vocabulary may need to be further developed.

Another activity that serves to activate background knowledge and help students tie new information to their own knowledge is the Experience-Text-Relationship (ETR) approach. Literacy instruction that models an experience-text-relationship approach exemplifies meaning construction with shared ownership (Au & Kawakami, 1991; Au, 1993). Teachers begin lessons by tapping students' relevant background experiences, then guide reading and discussion of text, and, finally, help students draw relationships between the text presentation and their own meaning representations. Students' voices are validated, because they contribute prominent and worthy content. A social studies example is provided by a team of researchers who reported the techniques of a teacher who used a collaborative instructional approach in working with Latino students (Torres-Guzman, Mercado, Quinteros, & Viera, 1994). The teacher developed the topic of civil rights by inviting students to elaborate their ideas about racism, segregation, emancipation, and other relevant concepts before introducing the textbook exposition of the topic. Often, social studies teachers wait until after students have read and then base classroom discussion on the meanings that students are presumed to have derived from text. This instructional sequence implies that text meanings have greater inherent authority than students' lives. Students may quickly reject meanings that, at face value, seem to contradict their own real experience.
Graphic representations of the organization of knowledge can also facilitate the comprehension and learning of text and lessons. Mohan (1990) describes six knowledge structures (classification, principles, evaluation, description, sequence, and choice) that have unique linguistic features, underlie spoken or written genre or text structure, and can be graphically represented. These can be used to facilitate the integration of language and content in classroom tasks and activities:

Exploring a topic through the six categories for constructing student tasks which integrate the development of academic discourse and the development of subject area knowledge. The key visuals are useful as links between language and content (Early, 1991).

These structures can be used to help students understand content-area knowledge and read or write academic discourse (Early, 1991).

Making the Social Studies Classroom Conducive to Language Development

As well as making language and content comprehensible, another goal of language-sensitive social studies classes is to make the class conducive to language development through increased opportunities for language production and the development of the skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Providing opportunities for students to try out and use language as well as providing comprehensible input is important for language development. It is important to provide a classroom environment that promotes interaction and language use among students and between teachers and students.

The traditional social studies class is dominated by teacher lecture, recitation, and reliance on textbooks (Rossi, 1992). In a lecture and recitation format, little attention is paid to students attempts to construct meaning from text and discourse (Rueda, Goldenberg, & Gallimore, 1992). Beyond answering questions and displaying knowledge, there are few opportunities for students to interact with other students and interact with teachers in meaningful, connected discourse in such teacher centered instructional situations.

According to Saville-Troike (1984), the most important factor that affects academic achievement in a second language is knowledge of vocabulary. For students to have opportunities to acquire knowledge of not only vocabulary but also structure and discourse functions, other instructional formats besides recitation instruction need to be incorporated into lessons. Teachers need to develop and provide instructional situations that expose learners to vocabulary and concepts in more of a natural language environment:

Students need many experiences, real and vicarious, to develop word meanings and concepts. They need to use, test, and manipulate technical terms in instructional situations which capitalize on reading, writing, speaking, and listening activities. In having students do these things, the teacher creates the kind of natural language environment that is needed to reinforce vocabulary and concept development. (Vacca & Vacca, 1989, p. 302)
One way to incorporate more of a natural language environment in student-teacher interaction and communication is through the use of formats such as instructional conversations (Rueda, Goldenberg, & Gallimore, 1992). Instructional conversations can be characterized by provision of challenging but non-threatening atmosphere, teacher responsiveness to student contributions, promotion of discussion and connected discourse, general participation among students in which they influence the selection of turns, focus on a theme, activation and use of students' background knowledge, promotion of more complex language and expression through a variety of elicitation techniques, and promotion of students' supporting their positions with text, pictures, reasoning, etc. (pp. 5 and 6).

Another important way to provide experiences in which students can develop language skills is through the use of groupwork and cooperative learning activities. Students need opportunities to use language that is related to the task at hand and to negotiate for meaning. Cooperative groups can expose learners to increased amounts of complex language input and provide more opportunities for the learners to refine their communication skills through natural second language practice and negotiation of meaning through talk (McGroarty, 1992). Cooperative activities provide content support for linguistically diverse students and can help maximize the rate at which secondary students acquire the English language, content area knowledge, and interpersonal skills needed for success in school (Holt, Chips, & Wallace, 1991).

Care should be taken in designing cooperative and group activities to ensure that all students can participate. Second language students need a task at which they can contribute to the group and feel a sense of accomplishment (Short, 1990). It is important to find tasks, even nonverbal ones such as diagramming or drawing, that students at varying degrees of language proficiency can accomplish in cooperative groups.

Also, Cohen (1994) describes how status problems of dominance and nonparticipation may occur because of different status orderings within groups (that reflect academic, peer, and social status) and different expectations for competence from high and low status peers. Low status students may have limited access to the task and fewer opportunities to talk and contribute. Cohen recommends assigning tasks that require a range of intellectual abilities while convincing students that no one student will have all the necessary abilities but that everyone will have some of the necessary abilities. She also suggests another method of assigning competence to low status students by observing and evaluating students' contributions to the group and making the evaluation of the contribution known to other students. Training students for cooperation is also recommended.

Another way of helping second language students be successful in cooperative and group work is to include tasks at which culturally and linguistically diverse students may be more knowledgeable than other members of the groups. Incorporating multicultural and international perspectives to
social studies can put culturally and linguistically diverse students in the role of cultural expert. It can serve to validate these students' cultures as they learn about American culture and can serve to enrich the content of the class. As well as a way of helping language minority students learn about American society and values, social studies can also be a way of helping all students develop multicultural awareness and knowledge of different cultures.

For content area teachers, being language sensitive also means to observe, analyze and evaluate classroom tasks to analyze the discourse, interaction, and the language demands of tasks to assess the value of the tasks or activities and find ways of improving their design (Mohan, 1990). It means to evaluate and, when necessary, adapt tasks and activities to allow for negotiation of meaning, exposure of students to comprehensible input, integration of content and language development, and opportunities for all students to participate.

Besides the development of language and listening/speaking skills, reading is another skill that social studies teachers can help not only ESL students but also native-speaking students as well. As mentioned above, content-area texts can be difficult to process and comprehend. Another way social studies texts are inconsiderate is that they compartmentalize information and provide few aids in connecting passages or helping students distinguish more important information from less important information (Martorella, 1990). Texts also sometimes contain far too many concepts and presents concepts in list-like fashion (McGowan & Guzzetti, 1991). It is important to help our students process and comprehend these texts as well as develop effective reading skills.

There are various prereading, during reading, and post reading tasks and activities that can help promote comprehension and development of reading skills. Prereading activities of the type discussed above are very important in helping students comprehend text. We also need to help students develop previewing skills on their own. During reading activities include approaches such as the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) and reciprocal teaching approach.

One way social studies teachers can help students comprehend and develop reading skills during the reading process is the development and use of reading guides. Guides are transitional aids that can help guide students' reading of subject matter by helping to simplify difficult material (through adding material for increased redundancy), focusing students' attention on words, phrases or parts of the passage which are important to understand and learn, helping students perceive text patterns and relationships between ideas in a passage, setting purposes for reading, and helping to teach and reinforce skills and strategies needed to comprehend and learn from content area text (Vacca and Vacca, 1989; Herber, 1978). Guides may provide immediate help for readers to deal with and respond to text that may be at their frustration level and longer-term help for achieving learning and development goals, not only by providing support and direction for student to comprehend text, but also by stimulating learning of content and language as well as helping students develop the reading skills to become independent readers of content material.
As with native-speaking students, ESL students could benefit from post-reading activities that reinforce and extend both language and conceptual relationships. There are a number of activities, such as semantic webbing, feature analysis, or other classifying and categorizing activities, that can be used to extend and reinforce students' knowledge of vocabulary and concepts. Discussion, particularly in small cooperative groups, can provide a forum for students to use the language they learned during the reading of content material in meaningful and useful contexts. Such activities can not only help learners further develop their knowledge of technical vocabulary and concepts, but help to extend and reinforce general vocabulary and structure that ESL students may encounter and learn during the reading lesson. Reading guides that students used during their reading of the text can also serve as a basis for discussion in cooperative groups or other small-group arrangements and facilitate the reinforcement of new and familiar vocabulary, since students have to use the vocabulary in order to discuss their responses to statements in the guides (Herber, 1978, p. 150).

Writing development can also be integrated within social studies instruction. Writing activities can not only help students develop writing abilities but also help with their learning of social studies material:

Writing assists learning because it provides a visual product that permits opportunities for revising, promotes active involvement that enables the writer to make connections and see relationships, demands exactness of meaning if it is to be clearly understood, and encourages learners to put ideas into their own words (Davis, Rooze, & Runnels ).

In formal writing assignments, teachers can engage students in process-oriented writing activities in the stages of prewriting, writing, and revision. Process-oriented writing doesn't necessarily have to preclude the use of writing models as well. Approaches such as the Guided Writing Procedure (GWP), which includes brainstorming ideas and guided writing together with reading assignments, can be utilized (Reyes & Molner, 1991). Through writing journals, students can relate personal experiences to the information they read in their social studies textbook. (Davis, Rooze, Runnels). Story summaries, character diaries, personal diaries, personal histories and records, and writing imagined dialogue between historical characters are other ways that students can express themselves (Short, 1991; Abel, Hauwiller, & Vandeventer, 1989).

The integration of writing with content area reading can also provide situations for students to reinforce and extend vocabulary and structure. It can help them develop skills to communicate for different purposes and with different audiences (Conley, 1992). Learners can get more experience and ability with recognizing and using organizational patterns through writing as well as reading activities. Guides can provide questions to encourage more cognitive and affective involvement with the text as well as help connect and extend the ideas and information in the text to ideas for compositions and essays. In short, guides can help make some of the connections between the processes of reading and writing more obvious to students.
Collaboration

The final point here is that social studies and other content-area teachers should also take the responsibility for the continued language and literacy development of language minority students:

...instruction, support, and guidance for the ESL learner in the development of second language and literacy skills should not be divided up into areas of responsibilities to be taken care of by teachers and specialists in classes that are isolated from each other, but can and should be a collaborative effort among content area teachers, ESL teachers/language development specialists, and reading teachers/specialists. While none of them alone may have the expertise to deal with the variety of potential language, knowledge, and literacy problems that ESL students may face, collectively they can combine their knowledge and expertise to more effectively implement the kinds of assessment, analysis, planning, and creation of resources needed to help ESL students succeed in reading and learning content area text. While none alone may have the time to even consider taking on such tasks, splitting up the tasks and concentrating on those they are most capable of doing will help make the time problem more manageable. Developing the awareness that content, language, and reading development can be integrated, and showing how teachers can collaborate to make such integration a reality may help change attitudes against collective responsibilities for the total education of ESL students (Kang, 1994).

Teachers can collaborate in the education of second language students in several ways. In the area of coordination of curriculum and instruction, teachers and specialists can collaborate to organize and implement curriculum in a way that each teacher's efforts builds upon, supports, and reinforces the efforts of others. Instead of organizing the structure and language that is being taught in ESL classes according to some arbitrary structure, the structure taught in the ESL class can be sequenced to reflect the needs of the students in their content area class. Both ESL and content area teachers can become more sensitive to the demands that specific registers of different content areas place upon students.

In terms of collaborative efforts to create resources, teachers can share the time, expertise, and responsibilities for joint creation of resources to help ESL student in mainstream classes. ESL teachers/specialists and content area teachers can work together as resource personnel to provide, adapt, and supplement material that can make subject matter more comprehensible as well as more conducive to language and reading development.

Also, training, consultation, and research can be a collaborative effort. Channels and forums for consultation can be set up so that regular content area teachers can get advice on specific students, problems, materials, etc., from reading and language teachers. Inservice training sessions can be set up so that content area teachers can receive training on how to integrate content, reading,
and language development. Language and content area teachers can collaborate to conduct action research to find out what works with specific classes and students.

The education of language minority students should be the responsibility of all teachers. Collaboration among teachers can provide an environment in which second language and literacy development can exist across the curriculum and school day, leading to increased opportunities for academic success among ESL students.

Sources for Information and Materials

The Center for Applied Linguistics, 1118 22nd Street N. W., Washington, D.C., 20037 is the place for teacher resources, guides, handbooks, reports, etc. This address is the same for the Center for Language Education and Research (CLEAR), National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, and the National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning, all of which publish guides and reports concerning the education of language minority students.

Melissa King, Barbara Fagan, Terry Bratt, and Rod Baer have an excellent article, "ESL and Social Studies Instruction," in JoAnn Crandall (Ed.), ESL through content-area instruction. (Prentice-Hall, 1987). The article includes a list of resources for social studies and ESL teachers.

Sample lessons written by Melissa King, Stephen Matthiesen, and Joseph Bellino can be gotten from ERIC ED 311 687.

Three excellent books on teaching language minority students that are written for content area teachers are:


A good handbook for integrating language and content instruction is:

Another good, brief handbook is:


A good handbook for cooperative learning in the secondary school (written with language minority students in mind) is:


Another excellent article on teaching language minority students is:

References


