**Statement of Purpose**

**By: Stephanie Fletcher**

 **One problem that I have primarily seen in several classrooms that I have been in, are the limited time that teachers have throughout the school day. Often times when I have taught, I have always said to myself at the end of the day, “there just was not enough time.” I think the solution is to create units that integrate or include multiple subjects so that one can kill two birds with one stone. Therefore, for my curriculum mapping project I designed an integrated unit that incorporated content standards from all of the following subjects: math, language arts/reading, social studies, and science. According to Liu and Wang (as cited in Linn, Eylon, & Davis, 2004), students connect ideas as information is taught to them in the curriculum and therefore an integrated unit would be best to help students construct this knowledge (2010). In addition to this, another problem that I attempted to solve with this project was to integrate more hands on activities into the lessons so that the students would be motivated to want to learn the material. In a book on ‘best practice’ teaching, the authors include attributes of what ‘best practice’ teaching would include and the first one that is mentioned is making learning student centered. Part of it being student centered is to make learning experiential or hands-on so that learning is concrete to better understand the concepts (Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde, 2005). Too often, I have seen teachers overuse worksheets or textbooks, and the students get bored and ultimately get frustrated due to little to no concrete learning experiences.**

**The integrated unit that I have created on chocolate is not only interesting and motivating, it is best practice with the hands on activities that it provides in addition to “out of the box” activities. Some of these ideas include but are not limited to learning about inventions in science and having the student create their own chocolate candy bar. This then would lead into what I put on my map of talking about persuasive writing in language arts and creating an advertisement for their invented chocolate candy bar.**

**I believe that this integrated unit is especially useful for second to third grade students. However, I do believe that it can be modified to meet upper grade level academic content standards. I specifically planned this for a group of third grade students, as this is the grade that I student taught in. I believe that at that age, students need concrete examples in order to help them learn. Therefore, experiential and hands-on learning is the way to go. For example, when I student taught third grade and taught the concept of fractions is was definitely difficult not only to teach, but also for them to learn. A lot of the success I had with the unit I believe had a lot to do with the fact that I used concrete practical examples with them so they could connect what I was teaching to what they experience in daily life. According to Keller, by including hands-on experiences in a large unit, it allows students to construct their own learning which eventually leads them to connect what they are learning with what they can utilize in daily life or their school community (1995).**

**This integrated unit on chocolate definitely incorporates the needs of the learner by addressing experiential hands on learning and concrete examples so that the learner can construct their own knowledge. In this unit, students are not only learning about a fun topic such as chocolate, but they are also learning skills that will help them succeed socially and economically. For example, they will learn about persuasive writing which ultimately could help them in the career world to convince a company to hire them. This unit will help them succeed socially, because they will be keeping a “Hershey Kiss” journal and will share journal writing prompts that they have written about.**

**Not only does this integrated unit on chocolate fulfill the needs of the learner, but it also fulfills societal needs. For instance, in the social studies component of this integrated unit, students will vote on their favorite kind of chocolate and they will then move into the voting processes and talking about government. In addition to this, they will learn about how to respect within a society through an activity in science where they learn about simple machines used to make chocolate. It will teach them about respect and responsibility by discussing different jobs that people have in a chocolate factory and how without each role in the company the chocolate would never be made. It teaches them to respect each job position and that there are different responsibilities that people obtain. Ultimately, this integrated unit on chocolate addresses societal values such as citizenship responsibilities with voting and different roles or jobs people obtain within society.**

**The first subject that this integrated unit addresses is math. In this portion of the curriculum design, this subject is approached by using concrete examples such as a Hershey bar to learn fractions and a variety of chocolate bars to choose from to vote on a favorite kind of chocolate bar to ultimately learn about different types of graphs such as a bar graph and pie graph. The fractions component of this integrated unit is approached by letting students explore a whole Hershey bar and filling out a worksheet of how many pieces total there are on the chocolate bar. Students then work in groups to discuss what happens when they break 1 piece off and so on. They then write the corresponding fraction of what that 1 piece or 2 pieces represent out of the total. We then would come back together as a whole class and they would share the fractions they came up with. A fun activity would then conclude with asking students if they would prefer 1/2 or 1/12. This would be written down and not verbally stated because often times students will have the misconception that 1/12 would be bigger because the bottom number or denominator is a bigger number. In addition to this, the topic of bar and pie graphs will be addressed by having students vote on their favorite type of chocolate bar and creating a graph out of this information. This then later connects to the social studies component of the integrated unit by discussing voting processes. In social studies, students will also talk about economics and the roles of producers and consumers in the world of chocolate. In addition to this, they will learn about the history of chocolate and how it came from Venezuela and we will also locate this on a map. After social studies we move into science by connecting the topic of producers and consumers to forces and motion and how the simple machines producers use to make chocolate, require the force of a push or pull. After this the students will learn about inventions and will invent their own chocolate bar. This will ultimately lead to the final component of the integrated unit: language arts and reading. After students invent their chocolate bar they will make an advertisement for it and we will talk about persuasive writing. Throughout the entire unit, students are reflecting in their “Hershey Kiss” journal which promotes writing skills and in addition to this, as a class we will read Chocolate Fever by Robert Kimmel Smith and we will focus on reading comprehension strategies.**

**I think that all of the topics incorporated into this integrated unit are significant enough to be included because they are all related to the academic content standards. In addition to this, they are significant because they teach the students how to be successful in society. I think it is our job as teachers to not only get students to be successful in the classroom, but also in life. This integrated unit on chocolate does exactly that through its use of teaching the students good civic duties such as voting, being successful in finding a career through persuasive writing, and understanding that there are different roles in society in order for society as a whole to be successful. Overall, all of the subject material included in this integrated unit contributes to the education of young children through its use of promoting success not only in school, but also in life.**

**The goals or intentions of this entire integrated unit on chocolate include: hitting multiple subject areas for the purpose of saving time, using hands on experiential learning activities so the students can construct their own learning, and ultimately teaching students how to be successful in society with the connection of what they are learning in the unit to things they might see in daily life such as voting, commercials or persuasive writing, and the roles that different people can take part in within a society such as the different roles in a chocolate factory. The anticipated results of these goals are for the students to use a fun and motivating topic such as chocolate to visualize how to be successful in daily life. The main vision of this integrated unit are for students to see how school topics such as fractions, persuasive writing, economics, and voting connect with what they experience in daily life. This includes but is not limited to using persuasive writing to learn how to convince a company to hire you or how to contribute citizenship duties by voting.**

**Every topic that is included in this integrated unit contributes to the needs of the learner through the hands on and experiential learning activities that are included within the unit. It contributes to the needs of the society because it includes topics on civic duties such as voting or getting a job. Finally, it contributes to subject matter by hitting several of the academic content standards all in one unit. This integrated unit is designed to incorporate all of those needs and ultimately fulfills not only the purposes of learning within the classroom, but how to also succeed in society.**

**References**

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