

SOCIAL STUDIES VIDEO PROJECTS IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

By

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To the Faculty of Washington State University:

The members of the Committee appointed to examine the thesis of ANTHONY STEPHEN JONAS find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

Chair

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"I read and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand."

-Confucius

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Abstract

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Most studies concerning the use of technology projects do not take into account the perspectives of the students completing the projects. Without this information, it is impossible to form a complete picture of the effects media projects have on students. To remedy this, students in a middle school media technology class were asked to complete video projects that integrated media technology with their social studies curriculum and one self-selected project. Upon completion of their projects, they were asked to share their impressions of this approach.

The students interviewed were 8th graders in a middle school in a Pacific Northwest college town. The interviews focused on the students' perceptions of their projects; what they liked and disliked, what they learned, and how they would adapt the projects if they were teaching the class. The students were also observed over the course of the term as they completed their projects. From an analysis of the student's comments, it was found that the students enjoyed the integration of media and their social studies curriculum more than the social studies curriculum by itself. They found this method of "hands-on" learning to be more interesting, independent, and productive than the traditional social studies class. While minor adjustments to the projects were suggested,

the students asked for an expansion of the projects into other areas of study, and into other classes besides the media technology course.

Results show that in this specific situation, media projects can be an easy to integrate solution to student apathy in the classroom. Further study might include expanding the focus of these projects beyond the social studies curriculum. Additionally, the research supports giving students more control over the lesson to foster active and cooperative learning.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Technology is changing the way teachers interact with, inform, and empower their students. At no other point in history have teachers had the resources that technology now provides. The ability to search digital archives, have access to first-person sources of media, and the ability to create media of their own has given teachers the opportunity to provide greater breadth and depth in their teaching. Unfortunately, because the majority of today's teachers did not grow up in the "information age", many teachers have been slow to bring these resources into their classrooms (Staples, 2005). However, with the rapid maturation and simplification of many digital technologies, these resources are beginning to find their ways into the classroom (Staples, 2005).

Statement of the Problem

Before this happens on a larger scale, teachers want evidence that these new methods will have a positive effect on the education of their students, and rightly so. Much has been written on the observed positive benefits of technology in the classroom, but little data has been collected from the students themselves. The insights of these students can be a valuable resource to researchers, as it allows them to compare and validate their own observations with the perceptions of the students. Therefore, in the interest of discovering these students' perceptions, this study was developed to answer three specific questions concerning the use of technology in the classroom.

Research Questions

- Can having students create video projects related to their social studies curriculum increase student interest in social studies topics?
- In what ways does having students complete social studies video projects increase student enthusiasm concerning social studies subjects?
- What technology and technology skills are required to produce video projects that can increase student's social studies achievement?

Definition of Terms

Within this study there are a number of terms that are commonly used that require definition. Therefore, to assist the reader, definitions of these terms are included.

Digital Archives

An electronic resource available to students for research, including online government archives and libraries.

Digital Technologies

The hardware and software that can be used to help people record, edit, and produce digital videos.

Student Produced Media

Student produced video media that relates to the class curriculum.

Video Production

The process of creating video projects using digital technologies.

Video Projects/Media Projects

These terms are used interchangeable throughout the paper. They describe a project that combines various forms of media together, such as video, music, photos, and the written word to create a completed final product.

Significance of the Study

If the results of this study show a positive effect on student learning, then this study would serve as validation of past research showing the positive effects of technology in the classroom. This study looks at the use of video technology in a social studies classroom, so the results would be significant for this particular discipline. However, the results observed could easily be applied to other uses of technology in

classrooms, not just limited to social studies. Finally, this study was created so student perceptions of video projects could be analyzed, as a partner to previous studies that looked at the quantitative data concerning the use of technology in classrooms.

The answers to these questions can help inform researchers on how technology can be effectively used in a school environment to increase student learning. If results show that video projects do increase student interest in the prescribed subject area, then teachers looking to diversify their instruction or hoping to connect with unmotivated students may use media projects as an effective means of achieving these goals. In addition, if these media projects are shown as an effective way to increase student achievement and involvement, teachers' misconceptions concerning media use in the classroom could be reduced. Finally, if the above questions are found to have positive results, then simple methods for integrating video production can be made available, so that teachers can integrate these media projects into their own lessons, in hopes of achieving similar results. If negative results are seen, additional research would be warranted to determine if the curriculum, technology used, or time required is a mitigating factor.

Past research has shown that technology is able to open up new methods of learning that were previously unavailable (Scot, 2004). Technology has made it easier for students to collaborate on research, editing, and the production of work for the classroom, in much the same way that businesses have seen their productivity rise with the advent of digital technology. Past research has shown that student interest in a subject helps to drive the students' learning of the subject (Berg, 1996). Therefore,

methods to increase a student's interest in a subject should therefore have a positive effect on that student's learning.

For the social studies teacher, the ability to "liven up" the classroom and have students directly interacting with history rather than indirect absorption of information can make all the difference. Students often think of social studies as a rather dreary subject. This often occurs because of the seeming irrelevance of past events to these students' lives. However, if used correctly, technology has the potential to provide alternate methods of learning, in the social studies curriculum and beyond. In addition, the ability of technology to move a student from passively absorbing information to becoming an active learner is something that many teachers hope to achieve in their own classrooms, and should therefore act as a motivation to integrate these digital forms of technology.

Summary

As seen in this study, the use of technology in the classroom is more effective when it takes a back seat to the curriculum. The purpose of having students complete video projects in the classroom is not really to teach them how to be video producers. Rather, the video is only a vehicle for cross curricular learning. Creating active learners, increasing students' interest, and increasing student performance on a project are but a few of the benefits of technology integration in the classroom. Studies and research conducted in the past concerning media technology integration have claimed similar results. Therefore, this study was based on these previous findings.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Media technology has been used in schools for many generations. Sound recordings and illustrated texts were some of the earliest examples of media enhancing student learning. Eight-tracks, film projectors, cassette tapes, photographs, videotapes, CDs, and DVD's are just a few of the many mediums used to distribute this information to students. Over the years, the methods of distributing media to students have become more sophisticated, yet the mission of these materials remains the same, to improve student learning in ways previously impossible without the use of technology.

Video technologies, in the form of film, tape, and various digital media have only made their way into education in the last few decades. Even then, this technology was only available as a passive learning tool, something to be observed and learned from, rather than interacted with. With the advent of the VCR in the 1980's, students finally had the means to create their own video media. However, the consumer hardware required to complete these videos had been prohibitively expensive for most schools up until the 1990's. As such, student produced media including video was an inaccessible method of teaching due to these costs.

With the transition of media to the digital realm, and the rise of the personal computer, it is only in the present that media production has become an economically viable and accessible means of teaching students. As a result of this new possibility, teachers are now beginning to see the benefits of integrating student produced media into their classroom curriculums. While the focus of this paper looks at one such classroom, many other pioneers that led the way in this new method of teaching and learning (Berg, 1996; Matthews, 1991). The early work of these researchers along with their published

findings has demonstrated that media technology not only has a place in the curriculum of the nation's teachers, but that:

- Previous barriers to progress are being broken
- Media provides unique opportunities for learning
- Students realize additional enjoyment and interaction from their classes
- Student performance is increased when using these methods

Past Success

In the last 10 years, technology integration has rapidly gained importance as one of the cornerstones of effective instruction. Teachers have tried various methods to integrate technology into their curricula, with varying levels of success (Berg, 1996; Matthews, 1991). There have been many struggles to integrate technology into the curriculum without the integration feeling forced or "for its own sake". However, one area that seems to have positive results is the use of student produced video projects.

Over the past decade, teachers have used video projects as a way to enhance learning, increase student participation, and add additional breadth and depth to lessons (Matthews, 1991). When the technology was too expensive to own or too complicated to be used effectively in the classroom, a teacher could hire a videographer to guide the class through the video making process. This person would bring their equipment and knowledge of video production to the class, allowing the teacher to focus on the students and their content while the videographer dealt with the technical issues (Matthews, 1991). While this method did allow students to create video projects, much of the independence of creating their own videos, as well as building knowledge in video production and

group management was inhibited because the students were not given full control of their projects.

Eventually, as the equipment became more economical and easier to use, a variety of "How To" books were written, demonstrating to teachers many of the ways video projects can be used to enhance almost any subject. These books surely proved to be invaluable to teachers as ways to initiate these video projects. Books such as *Classroom Close-Ups: A Guide to Using Video Technology in the Classroom* by Bryan Berg (1996) provide a plethora of lesson ideas. Lesson integration ideas such as cultural perspectives videos for a social studies class, a time lapse video showing oxidation for a biology class, or a "Fractions in Daily Life" video are just a few of the ideas proposed in such books (Berg, 1996). While the technology mentioned in these early sources may now be obsolete, many of the lesson ideas presented are still just as relevant today.

With the advent of affordable digital video cameras and computer video editing software, consumer video production has finally come of age. These technologies allow students to communicate a story to others using a method other than simply writing or drawing (Scot, 2004). With the ease of use of these digital technologies, students are able to become the sole authors of their work. For example, in the September 2004 edition of *Learning and Leading with Technology*, an article appeared which showcased how involved students could expand their learning by utilizing these digital technologies (Scot, 2004). As in the past, the students were able to use their knowledge of the writing process in researching a subject, brainstorming, webbing ideas, organizing, drafting, revising, proofreading, editing, and finally publishing. However, inexpensive video equipment means students are now able to check out a video camera for the day to film

after school, rather than borrowing a camera to quickly film in class. In addition, they are no longer required to film their videos all at once and in order; they can now come into class the next day with their raw video, import it into a classroom computer, and edit their footage using easy-to-use video editing software. This allows the students to edit their videos much like they would edit a paper: moving around shots to enhance the story, adding supplemental video to clarify a point, trimming confusing parts, and adding titles and credits where they want (Scot, 2004).

This power to shape and tell your own stories was mentioned in many articles discussing video production in the classroom (Scot, 2004; Berg, 1996; Hofer, 2004). Phrases extolling the virtues of video production as an exciting and involved education tool attempted to convey the levels of interest these students expressed. Scot (2004) commented "Excited voices filled the classroom, heated debates bounce around the tables, and ideas fly as students champion their own concepts of what the class movie should look like" (p. 27). She continued, "We feel grateful when we see our students' engagement and hear their enthusiasm for learning" (p. 31). Berg (1996) also noted the creative power of vide projects when he noted "In the hands of an inspired student, it is a magnificent instrument of creative expression and exploration" (p. 4).

Teachers and researchers have seen the benefits of these video projects in the past. However, they also look to the future in the hopes of even greater curriculum integration. Sending students out after school to film and interact with their community, establishing an application process with resumes and letters of application for their group positions, and conquering remaining technological hurdles are a few of the activities these researchers had hoped to see in the future (Berg, 1996). If these things can be

accomplished effectively and efficiently while building on past success, students will finally have the chance to move beyond previously unsurpassable social constructs, experience otherwise inaccessible hands-on learning experiences; further enjoy and engage with their learning, and increase their academic performance through technology integration.

Breaking the Digital Divide

Over the past decade, much has been written about the digital divide and how society as a whole must work to reduce this gap in accessibility and education. Since this term was popularized in the mid 1990's by the Clinton administration, there have been many advances in technology, affordability, and social changes that have helped to make this problem less severe than it once was (Attewell, 2001; Dimaggio, 2001).

Perhaps the greatest change helping to reduce the digital divide is the constantly dropping price of technology. A decade ago, a reasonably performing PC may have cost \$3000. However, today a school can buy a basic computer that will perform almost any academic task for around \$500. This not only allows school districts much greater access to technology than in the past, but has allowed families of lower socio-economic status a chance to invest in home computers as well. In fact:

"If computer ownership continues its rapid spread among middle-income families, as seems likely, the digital divide will shift to the bottom fifth of the income distribution, demarcating families with incomes below \$15,000 from the rest of society. Nevertheless, roughly 19 percent of this poor group already has computers, and falling prices may bring this technology to more of them" (Attewell, 2001, page 253).

The shrinking investment required to own a basic computer indicates that access to a computer will move from being a luxury item to a standard appliance of the modern home much like a stove and refrigerator.

Although the digital divide has been reduced, a much more challenging divide has taken its place: the separation between those who know how to effectively use digital technology, and those who do not. This intellectual divide is much more challenging to bridge for a number of reasons. First, the problem cannot be solved through economic means such as economies of scale or lowered production costs. For computers to be effectively used by all segments of society, rather than just the wealthy and middle class, a true culture of change must occur. Schools must commit more to the human aspects of technology, by hiring teachers knowledgeable and comfortable with technology, as well as by providing training for current teachers concerning effective means of teaching with technology (Harlin, 2005; Dimaggio, 2001).

In the past, schools have attempted to supplement teacher technology training with educational software. So called "skill and drill" programs have been shown to increase student performance, but students equate these programs with their despised predecessor, the worksheet. As such, students often find ingenious ways to circumvent the educational merit behind these programs in an effort to avoid work (Attewell, 2001). Without the trained human aspect present to effectively use technology, the hardware investment schools have fought so hard to develop will end up being misused and underutilized.

This situation often repeats itself in the home. Oftentimes, a computer is bought for the home with the intent of it becoming a learning device for the children in the household. Unfortunately, disparities in parents comfort with technology often result in the computer being used for other purposes. While it will be upon parents to provide educational uses for the home computer, teachers can utilize the benefits of technology at

school by becoming better trained in their effective use. By adding this training component, teachers can help to shrink this gap between the "haves" and the have-nots" in this new digital divide (Attewell, 2001; Dimaggio, 2001).

Finally, it has been found that this commitment to utilizing technology must be shared by all involved in a project. If a teacher does not feel equipped or trained to adequately teach using a certain technology, the odds are that project will not succeed if implemented. However, if a teacher has received prior training on the technology, the benefits to students can be great (Staples, 2005). As such, the use of technology will in itself help to reduce this second digital divide. With the inherently rapid improvements in technology pricing and usability, it is only a matter of time before comprehensive and educational access to technology is available to those who seek it out (Harlin, 2005).

Hands-on Learning Through Media

Many people often lambaste the use of technology in the classroom as an inefficient use of resources and class time. Teachers often remark that is unnecessary to have students spend 30 minutes on a technology project when a teacher can just tell the students the information in a few minutes. However, innovative teaching with technology has shown that media can provide otherwise inaccessible means of hands-on learning experiences for students. It is because of these new means of learning that teachers are increasingly being drawn to the use of technology in their classroom (Lipscomb, 2005).

The possible use of the internet as a repository of photographs and other forms of media is being realized by tech-savvy teachers. Previous methods of media dispersion required expensive color-print books or access to outdated and limited district media

libraries. However, the ubiquitous nature of the internet means that teachers now have access to better educational media in terms of quality and quantity, comparable to what was available in the past (Mason, 2000).

Historical speeches, famous photographs, and even video of historical events have found their way online and into the public domain. Ironically, it is only when media have moved from the physical realm to the virtual that students are able to be more "hands-on" with history. One example of this hands-on learning was showcased in the publication *Learning and Leading With Technology*. Using the technology available in their classroom, students constructed historical narratives from the digital information gleaned from the internet. As a result of these hands-on capabilities, students can now use computers to research additional information, make more informed inferences, and therefore ask better questions (van Hover, 2004).

When students use the power of technology to help them collect their own data and synthesize them into a tangible result, they are actively learning the skills of writers, historians, and researchers rather than passively learning about those subjects. This inquiry-based learning can also be extended out into the local community, as was done in a study by Lisa Johnson on the use of technology to enhance intranational studies. Her research showed that by having students use technology to guide and structure activities, it was possible for the creation of "inquiry-based learning adventures... and active simulations that require examining perspectives far different from their own" (Johnson, 2004, p. 37).

This use of technology to perform inquiry is an excellent example of using media to its full potential. Often teachers become disenfranchised with technology when it is

poorly maintained or poorly implemented (Staples, 2005). For students to generate interest in a subject and for teachers to see the benefits of these technologies, they must be used in ways that allow students to both interact with their materials and express what they have learned. For example, Amy Staples produced a study on the effects of a technology integration project at a number of elementary schools. In her research, she remarked that if used incorrectly, technology was just "a replacement for paper and pencil work." However, when the technology was used to its full potential "...it was a tool for pursuing questions, learning content at a deeper level, and sharing what was learned" (Staples, 2005 p. 296).

Indeed, the importance of making sure teachers can use media technology at their schools to their full potential is so great that studies have even been written regarding the best way for professors to teach educational technology, so that their students are prepared to implement technology effectively. One such study by George Lipscomb reiterated the concept of technology being used to extend learning, but also listed the use of technology as one of his five guiding principles of instruction. It therefore seems that to truly allow for hands-on learning through media and technology, teachers must make sure that such lessons are being implemented not for the sake of media and technology themselves, but for the engagement of students and the greater performance that entails (Lipscomb, 2005).

Student Enjoyment and Engagement through Technology

The ability to actively engage one's students is a skill that countless teachers strive for many years to accomplish. Often the disconnect between students and their teachers as well as between students' school and private lives are so great that students have a

hard time relating to anything taught in school. Constant refrains of "When will we ever use this?" and "This is totally useless!" reverberate throughout the classroom when this disconnect happens. As a result, teachers are often so preoccupied with achieving student involvement that student enjoyment is often a distant thought in many teachers' minds. To bridge these disconnects, researchers have suggested the use of first person media sources as a means to both engage students, while increasing the potential for student enjoyment as well (Becker, 2000).

Stephanie van Hover asks in her 2004 article *Digital Images in the Classroom* why, when the human experience is now recorded through the lens of a camera or camcorder, are the majority of students not utilizing these resources in the classroom? van Hover alludes to the fact that it seems odd that history is often taught using a textbook, through which these authoritative first person sources have been filtered and broken down into textbook paragraphs. With the wide availability of such sources through online archives, it seems somewhat archaic to be teaching without the use of these materials.

The average secondary school library cannot realistically hope to achieve either the size or the scope of a library necessary to complete the types of research often asked of students. As such, many teachers do not use their school libraries unless it is in the general context of how to use a library itself. However, imagine the possibilities if the average secondary school library was upgraded to include the Library of Congress, the NASA archives, the GPS satellite network, and the libraries of Harvard and Stanford (van Hover, 2004). If such a school library existed, certainly teachers would try to focus as many lessons as possible around these vast intellectual resources. Unfortunately, it is still

the norm to teach from a textbook that has taken these great resources and distilled them into a few paragraphs and perhaps a diagram. When viewed from this perspective, it is no wonder students disengage from their lessons and find little intellectual enjoyment in the classroom (van Hover, 2004).

It is because these libraries of information do exist digitally in every school library that many researchers are extolling the benefits of using digital media in the classroom. Mark Hofer, in his paper on online digital archives, lists many of these digital archives, as well as more specialized archives such as the September 11 archive, Archimedes archive, and Civil War digital archive as ways for students to effectively engage with and enjoy their education. As Hofer himself remarked "...the potential of online digital archives to support and facilitate a wide variety of student-centered activities makes this opportunity difficult to pass up" (Hofer, 2004, p. 11).

However, the ability to gauge such interest can be hard to discern. Henry Becker (2000), who wrote in his article *Pedagogical Motivations for Student Computer Use that Lead to Student Engagement*, provides a way to measure the effects Hofer speaks of, by saying that "Whether they [students] are personally affected by their experiences in the adult world can in some sense only be measured by examining what they choose to do in their free time" (p. 13). He continues "When students can be found to be taking their school work seriously enough to be investing their energy in academic work outside of class time, then, whether extrinsically motivated by grades or intrinsically motivated by sincere interest in accomplishment, schools have succeeded" (p. 13).

It has been found that technology and media use in the classroom often fails because of the inadvertent misuse of the materials. If technology is used exclusively as a

means of practice, students will begin to equate these resources with that of worksheets and "busywork". However, if media and technology is used as a tool, rather than a means of practice, lessons can become much more engaging and enjoyable for students (Becker, 2000; Tally, 2005). The true importance of media in the classroom occurs when students are able to explore original content and construct their own meaning, "Precisely what we rarely allow students to do in history classrooms" (Tally, 2005, p. 2).

Literary resources can provide a similar experience if used correctly, although their use can be much more challenging for the novice researcher. The formal language and potentially unfamiliar vocabulary of written sources can discourage beginning researchers. However, media can provide a more accessible means of constructing knowledge, as students are able to more easily interpret and integrate these forms of information (Tally, 2005). Therefore, when students are given access to the vast digital media archives available on the internet, and teachers construct lessons that allow them to explore these media in an authentic manner, students will feel a greater investment in the results of their work; and as a result, enjoy the feeling of discovery that researchers experience (Tally, 2005).

Teachers that have integrated media into the classroom using the above guidelines have seen results described by Tally. Scot (2004) commented when reflecting on the experience of the students in her class that "It has been very energizing to see our students become so totally committed to their movie projects, making careful decisions, working together to iron out conflicts, and writing with their audience foremost in their minds" (p. 31). She also comments on how the use of media in the classroom can have a positive influence on student learning. "It is equally satisfying to know that we are

accomplishing so many learning goals at once: learning content, developing writing skills, expressing creativity, and mastering technology tools" (Scot, 2004, p. 31).

Technology and Student Performance

The true goal of using technology in the classroom, as is the common goal of all new educational methods, is to act as a catalyst for an increase in student performance. It has been known for a number of years that the presence and use of a computer by students in the home has had a direct correlation to high performance in school. As stated in Kaveri Subrahmanyam's article, *The Impact of Home Computer Use* "Early home computer use studies found that high school students who used educational software at home scored significantly higher than other students on computer literacy tests. Home computer use has been linked to improvements in general academic performance as well" (Subragmanyam, 2000, p. 128). By including greater computer use in the classroom, schools can provide opportunities for students who do not have these technology tools at their disposal in their homes.

Unfortunately, the effective integration of technology into schools is just beginning to take hold, many years behind its integration into homes and businesses. With these new forms of media and technology only recently making their appearance, research is also expanding concerning the use of technology in schools. In two recent articles that analyzed the use of media in the classroom, both have come away with favorable results in the realm of student performance (Bull, 2005; Boster, 2006). Media utilized in-class through technologies such as projectors and smart boards has shown to be an effective tool to build group inquiry and dialogue (Bull, 2005). In addition, in Franklin Boster's (2006) article *Some Effects of Video Streaming on Educational*

Achievement, Boster commented that the teachers he interviewed "...believed that the increased attention [from video streaming] led to increased retention and motivation, all of which led to improved learning rates and mean improvement in student grades" (Boster, 2006, p. 48). However, Boster went even further in saying that upon the interviewing of students in these classes "On average, students report that the presence of communication technology in their classroom improved their attitudes toward learning (Boster, 2006, p. 49).

As indicated by previous studies, teachers and researchers feel that the use of media technology in the classroom is an effective way to mitigate the digital divide, to provide unique learning experiences, to increase student enjoyment and engagement, and to increase student performance. Unfortunately, input from students on their experiences with media technology in the classroom seems to be woefully unavailable. Therefore, to examine student perceptions of media technology, this study was designed. In this study, students were assigned two media projects to complete over the length of a semester. Upon the completion of these assignments, the students were interviewed concerning their perceptions of these projects. Interviews with a sampling of their teachers were also performed for comparison. Student reflection upon these two media projects will show that students work harder, learn more, and enjoy the standard curriculum with the integration of media to a much greater extent than experiencing the standard curriculum without the benefits of media integration.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Student and Program Background

During the 2005-2006 school year, I had the opportunity to observe the media class of a middle school in rural eastern Washington State. Situated in Pullman, Washington, Lincoln Middle School is home to 479 students. Pullman, Washington is also home to Washington State University, and as such, the middle school serves an unusually educated community for its location. Of these students attending Lincoln, 21.6% are on the free or reduced lunch program. The school is predominantly Caucasian at 77%, with 12% of the student population being Asian American, 5% African American, and 5% Hispanic (Pullman School District, 2005).

The school itself is a brand new facility, and as such was built with specialized classroom spaces including a woodshop and technology lab. However, one of the more impressive components of this new school building is the Media/TV station. This space was designed to provide space for media workstations, editing equipment, and a multi-camera/multi-set studio space.

Students in the Channel 3 media class produce a 5-10 minute daily show comprised of school news and student video projects. These shows are broadcast to all students in the school during the beginning of their homeroom class period. Over the years, the program grew enough to become an offered elective at the school. Eventually, the program became so popular that two periods of the class were offered each day, and enrollment was limited to 8th grade students. These two separate classes would alternate broadcast days, so that students would have one day to write scripts, edit student video projects, and otherwise prepare for filming the following day.

Interestingly enough, the origins of this program were quite humble. The media program was initially started as an after school club. Its equipment included a single TV, camera, and Apple IIe in the back of the social studies classroom. A number of private grants from the Kiwanis Club, Gates Foundation, a 21st Century grant, and funding from the district eventually allowed the program to acquire a number of analog cameras, editing equipment, and computers. With the award of \$10,000 at the beginning of the 2005-2006 school year, the studio was finally able to afford the conversion from analog to digital equipment. This transition drastically increased the productivity of the students in the studio, allowing them to complete two video projects a semester, rather than the one video project previously required.

The Media Project Creation Process

The media class begins its semester with a full month in the classroom. During this month, students are trained on the use of various technologies found in the studio. In addition to technical training, students learn how to write short scripts, produce storyboards (Appendix A), and edit their captured video. In the past, students had successfully edited their videos using Windows Movie Maker, a free movie editing program included with Windows. However, for the 2005-2006 school year students were trained on the use of Adobe Premiere, a much more powerful video editing program.

After the students complete this initial period of instruction in the classroom, the class is moved into the studio and begins to produce shows for broadcast throughout the school. As previously mentioned, the shows often consist of an anchor segment which includes the reading of the daily bulletin, a sports segment which includes reports on school athletic events, and a student produced media project. Students in the class are

normally given creative control over these media projects, and as such, the quality of their content is as unique as the students who produce them. To produce these videos, the students involved must pitch a proposal to the teacher to have their project approved by submitting a feature contract form (Appendix B). With the station manager's approval, the students in the group produce a script and storyboard. Once they have approval of these materials, the students are able to check out a camera to film their raw footage. Upon completion of filming, students then import this footage into one of the editing computers. The students then edit their media project by assembling the raw footage, adding media including media and pictures either taken by themselves or from online sources, and then finish their projects by adding titles and credits. This completed media project is then added to the daily school broadcast, so that the students have an audience for their hard work.

In the past, students were able to focus these media projects on a subject of their choosing. However, with the digital conversion of the studio, each student could now complete two of these media projects per semester. Therefore, in the spring semester of the 2005-2006 school year, students were assigned two media projects to complete for the Channel 3 broadcast. The first assigned media project had to focus on some aspect of the student's social studies curriculum. At Lincoln Middle School the 8th grade students take civics and Pacific Northwest History, which gave them a fair amount of material from which to find a subject. The focus of the second media project of the semester was left open to the students' imaginations.

Data Collection Strategies

Upon completion of their two media projects, the students in the spring semester Channel 3 class participated in semi-structured interviews with the researcher concerning their impressions of the two projects. After obtaining IRB approval (Appendix C), I used parental consent forms (Appendix D) as well as student consent forms (Appendix E) to inform the guardians and the students of the intent of the study. Once permission from the parents, the students, and the school district was obtained, the students worked with the researcher to arrange a convenient time to interview. The students were interviewed in small groups with the same peers they completed their projects with. If the student completed the video on their own, they were interviewed alone as well. During this process, there were 12 interviews conducted to coincide with the 12 social studies and 12 independent video projects that were completed. The shortest interview lasted just under 8 minutes, with the longest interview totaling over 21 minutes. In total, over 2 hours and 21 minutes of interviews were completed with the students, resulting in an average interview length of just less than 12 minutes.

During these interviews the students were asked a number of questions concerning their projects (Appendix F). These questions began with students describing their projects so that the students could have an opportunity to share what they felt was important with the interviewer. Following that were a number of questions that asked the students what they felt was interesting, uninteresting, important, easiest, and hardest about their two projects. The interview then concluded with three questions asking what project they liked more, if their interest in social studies was increased, and what changes they would make to the project. The student was again given a chance to share any

anecdotes concerning their projects, or anything else they felt the researcher would be interested in related to their videos.

This audio from these interviews was digitally recorded, as to allow the researcher time to transcribe the interviews with accuracy. These transcriptions were completed as soon as possible after the completion of the actual interview so the event would be fresh in the researchers mind. Most transcriptions occurred within 24 hours of the actual interview.

Interviews were also conducted with the three teachers of 8th grade social studies. These teachers were also given informed consent forms to sign (Appendix G), although their interviews were scheduled individually. These interviews were scheduled at the end of the school year, once all student projects had been aired on Channel 3. The interview questions for these teachers focused on their impressions of the media projects, and what effects these projects may or may not have had on their own classrooms (Appendix H). These three interviews also lasted on average just over 12 minutes each.

In addition to these interviews, the researcher observed the students in Channel 3 throughout the semester on a daily basis. The students of the previous fall semester were also observed, so that the researcher could fully understand the procedures and activities in the Channel 3 classroom at the start of the spring semester. This also provided the opportunity for the researcher to compare the differences between the students in the fall semester class, who only completed one independent project, and the spring semester students, who were instructed to complete two projects.

Methods Rationale/Assumptions

I chose this research design and means of data collection for a variety of reasons. First, I felt that interviews were essential, as it allowed for active student input. This was preferable to working with observations alone, and helps to reduce the paucity of student input currently available concerning media technology projects. This method of data collection also allowed the students to make a direct comparison of their social studies projects and independently themed projects. The questions asked of students were intentionally left as open as possible, so as to allow students to report their true impressions of the media projects.

However, there are a number of assumptions that must be made that could affect the validity of these results. First, one must assume that the students are responding truthfully to the questions posed in the interviews. A number of controls were put in place in an attempt to minimize the chances of false reporting. Students were informed, both in print and in person, that their participation and their comments would have no bearing on their grades in the class. To help reinforce this, student grades concerning the media projects were entered into the grade book before students were interviewed. Additionally, the interviews were conducted in a room separate from the teacher of Channel 3, so that students would feel open to express their true opinions.

Secondly, for the results of this research to be externally valid, one must assume the results of this singular classroom experience is representative of results at other schools. The rural nature of the school made it impracticable for the study to be conducted at multiple locations. In addition, the upgrading of the studio during the fall semester made the possibility of multiple replications of the study impractical as well.

To counteract this, future replication of this study would dramatically increase the external validity of these results.

Finally, one must assume that this researcher's observations of the classroom are unbiased. In an effort to minimize these effects, the researcher constantly consulted with others on the design of the study and interpretation of results. Additionally, classroom observations were discussed with the classroom teacher each day in an effort to substantiate researcher perceptions.

Chapter 4: Results

Student Interviews

Following are the results of the interviews conducted with the 8th grade students in the two media technology classes at Lincoln Middle School who agreed to participate. 30 students out of the 40 total students in the media class decided to participate and be interviewed for this project. These interviews were completed to address the first two research questions.

- Can having students create video projects related to their social studies curriculum increase student interest in social studies topics?
- In what ways does having students complete social studies video projects increase student enthusiasm concerning social studies subjects?

These interviews were also essential to capture the students perceptions of the projects, rather than relying on researcher observation alone. For their Social Studies projects, students completed videos on a variety of civics and Pacific Northwest themes, as listed here. The project titles listed below were created by students who agreed to participate in the study. Additional video titles created by students who chose not to participate in the study were mentioned during the teacher interviews, but are not listed here.

Group 1 - A Photo Tour of Pullman

This video was comprised of community photos taken by the students and assembled into a photo-montage of Pullman, WA.

Group 2 - Interviewing Residents of Pullman

This group took a video camera downtown and asked residents of the city where they liked to eat, shop, and relax in Pullman, WA.

Group 3 - Interview with a Mt. St. Helens Survivor

This video was based off of an interview with a Pullman, WA resident who was a geologist at Mt. St. Helens when it erupted.

Group 4 - Documentary of "Night of the Notables"

This student took a camera to "The Night of the Notables", a school event where students dress up and speak as a notable historical figure they have researched. The video interviewed both parents and students on their impressions of the event.

Group 5 - Tourism ad for Washington

This was an advertisement created from still photos of locations in Washington State. The photo's were set to music and accompanied with a student voiceover encouraging people to visit Washington.

Group 6 - Tour of Merry Cellars

The students in this video went to a local winery and interviewed the local owner and operator of the wine cellar. The interviewer took the students on a tour of the facility and explained how wine is made.

Group 7 - The Mt. St. Helens Eruption

This student researched Mt. St. Helens and collected a variety of photographs from the event. The student then created a video timeline with titles describing how the volcano erupted.

Group 8 - The History of Pullman

This student interviewed a local resident on the changes the interviewee had witnessed over their lifetime in Pullman.

Group 9 - The Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival

This student took a camera to the world famous Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival in nearby Moscow, Idaho and recorded the events. The video was later edited to showcase many of the groups that performed there, including the school choir and jazz bands.

Group 10 - Interview with a Doctor from the New Pullman Hospital

This video was made by two students who interviewed a doctor at the new Pullman Regional Hospital. The doctor described the new facilities to the students and the additional care provided by the new hospital.

Group 11 - The Missoula Floods

These students made a clay map of the Pacific Northwest and reenacted the ice age flooding of the state. They also included many photographs of the geologic remnants of the flood that can still be seen today.

Group 12 - A Student Debate on the Incoming Wal-Mart

This video features a debate between students concerning the potential building of a Wal-Mart in Pullman. The approval of the store has been met with fierce local opposition.

Question 1a: Which part of your social studies project did you like the most?

Students consistently cited two main aspects of their projects they liked the most.

Of the 12 student groups from the two periods, half of the groups felt that they liked

filming and photographing the most in their projects. Following filming was editing, in which four groups felt that was the most interesting aspect.

"I liked editing the video; it was tough because you have to be precise!" "I also liked finding pictures and inserting them in the timeline."

- Student from Group Three

"I liked filming while going on the tour."

- Student from Group Six

"It was fun to make it look nice and polished."

- Student from Group Two

Question 1b: Which was the hardest and easiest part of your social studies project?

Interestingly, the majority of students felt that editing and filming were the easiest parts of the project. Besides one group who felt that coming up with their idea was the easiest part of the project, every other group listed editing or filming as the easiest part of their project.

"Filming, because when something is fun, it's normally easy."

- Student from Group Eleven

"Editing was pretty easy; I thought it was going to be a lot harder but the tools were pretty easy to use."

- Student from Group Seven

Students felt that technical issues and the interviews were their greatest hurdles they had to overcome. Both of these obstacles were mentioned by three of the groups. In addition, two groups felt that time constraints placed the greatest burden on them.

"It was strange going up to people you've never met before and ask them if you can interview them."

- Student from Group Two

"Interviewing and equipment: I brought the camera, but I forgot the tape, so I had to come back a second time with the tape, but then the battery was dead, so I came back a third time with the wall plug and got the interview."

- Student from Group Three

"The guy didn't show up the first time!"

- Student from Group Six

Question 1c: What was the most interesting and least interesting part of your social studies project?

Nine of the 12 groups listed an experience as the most interesting part of their projects, although those individual experiences were quite varied. A number of groups listed watching people's reactions to their projects as the most interesting part of the project for them. Three groups listed technical aspects as the most interesting part of the project.

"The interview, he gave a lot of interesting information about his experience at [Mount Saint] Helens."

- Student from Group Three

"Probably seeing how people reacted to it, I had a bunch of people come up to me in the hall and say 'Oh I saw your project!'"

- Student from Group Nine

"Learning about the Missoula Flood...It was actually pretty cool, I didn't think it was, but it kinda is!"

- Student from Group Eleven

When asked about the least interesting part of the project, the results were split evenly between groups who felt a segment of their program was the least interesting, and groups who felt the part of the process was the least interesting.

The [interviewees] long answers, "There was so much information, it was hard to cut it down to a reasonable time."

- Student in Group Six

"It was probably being the anchor because I'm not very comfortable being on camera."

- Student from Group Ten

"Filming at Wal-Mart!"

- Student from Group Thirteen

Question 1d: What did you learn about your topic by completing this social studies project?

Students listed a cornucopia of things they learned about their topics. However, while their answers were all quite varied, these insightful comments were all expressed with enthusiasm, pride, and sometimes amusement with what they had learned.

"Being friendly helped you get a good interview, being younger helped too!"

- Student from Group Two

"[We] learned the difference between the red and white wine is leaving the skins on the grapes."

- Student from Group Six

"We memorized the dates of when it [Mount Saint Helens] exploded because before we didn't really know, but after putting in titles we had it in memory."

- Student from Group Seven

"I learned that Pullman has changed a lot over the last 60 years and I learned that computers can be a pain in the butt!"

- Student from Group Eight

Question 1e: What is the most important skill that helped you learn about this subject?

Of the 10 groups that could decide on a single skill that helped them the most in completing their projects, eight of them listed editing skills as the most important. The remaining two groups listed time management and backing up work as most important.

"Using the computer when it comes to Premiere."

- Student from Group Eight

"Being able to find sources and being able to put it together."

- Student from Group Eleven

"Being able to tell a story."

- Student from Group Twelve

For their second media projects, the students were able to complete a video that was not limited to the realm of social studies. For continuity, students were asked the same questions as they were for their social studies projects. As listed, students completed a variety of videos, although some decided to continue producing videos with a civic/social studies theme.

Group 1 - A spoof of the Final Destination movies

The students created their own version of the Final Destination movies, enlisting the help of students and teachers in the school to feature as victims.

Group 2 - "A Girl Named Gretchen"

This video chronicles the story of a girl who eats nothing but candy. When she goes to the dentist and is told she has dozens of cavities, she must switch to eating carrots.

Group 3 - "My Little Sister"

A video of the student's little sister, chronicling a day in the life of her toddler-aged sibling.

Group 4 - Highlights from the Pullman Soccer Team

A highlight reel of the middle school's soccer team at a game.

Group 5 - "Eating Gross Things"

A short "Jackass" style video, where the student was dared to eat blended collection of food products.

Group 6 - A Parody of "Super Sweet 16"

These students created a parody of the TV show "Super Sweet 16". The subject of the video is turning 16, and throws a 16th birthday party that no one comes to, except the school janitor.

Group 7 - A Suspense Thriller

This video was a suspense thriller placed in the school. Students would disappear from classes and were locked up in the school attic.

Group 8 - A Slideshow of Car Crashes

A slideshow of auto crashes, with an introduction by the student concerning driving safety.

Group 9 - Interview with a Palouse Farmer

This student visited her grandparents who own a farm on the Palouse, a wheat farming region in Washington State. The student interviewed the farmer and filmed a tour of the farm, including a ride in the family crop-duster.

Group 10 - A 15 Character Claymation Race

This video was made using stop-motion photography to create a race around a kitchen table by 15 clay creatures. Voices and sound effects were added in editing by the students.

Group 11 - "The Human Dogs"

A skit by three girls in the class who created a short situation comedy. All the characters in the video are dogs, as played by the girls themselves.

Group 12 - An Interview with Tom Brokaw

This student had the opportunity to interview Tom Brokaw when he was visiting Pullman. She read the books he had written, and researched some of the people and events he had covered during his career. She then compiled a list of questions and was able to interview him privately for 10 minutes before a press conference on the WSU campus.

Question 2a: Which part of your independent project did you like the most?

When asked this question, seven of the 12 groups replied that they liked the filming of their projects the most. The remaining five groups listed a variety of things they liked best, two groups mentioned editing and three mentioned acting.

"I liked editing the most. It was easier because I knew how to do it better and I liked cutting parts out and fitting it together." "It was way faster the second time!"

- Student from Group Three

"I liked filming because you can come up with your own ideas."

- Student from Group Six

"I liked thinking up all the different ways to make it [the video] dramatic and watching the finished project after planning it all out was really cool."

- Student from Group Seven

Question 2b: Which was the hardest and easiest part of your independent project?

This question had quite interesting results, as they were fairly different from the answers given for their social studies projects. Seven of the 12 groups felt that editing was the easiest part of the project the second time around, with filming being mentioned by the remaining 4 groups (one group couldn't decide on an answer).

"Editing was easier the second time, although it [the project] was more complex."

- Student from Group Six

"Editing: It's not really the easiest, but it's lots of fun, so that makes it seem easy... It's easy but it takes a lot of time."

- Student from Group Seven

"Doing the final editing... It wasn't that hard once you get used to it."

- Student from Group Ten

When students were asked about the hardest part of the second project, a wide range of answers were given, with the greatest majority being filming, which was mentioned by three groups.

"My mom didn't know how to use the camera, so I had to teach her" "I had to use a lot of editing because the camerawork was bad."

- Student from Group Four

"Getting people organized and ready to film, because I have cameramen and people in the film and have things coordinated for scary phone calls. It's hard to have everybody ready in one place as well as being ready yourself."

- Student from Group Seven

"Trying to get the interview tape [from the WSU Communications Department who had filmed the interview], we still haven't gotten it!"

- Student from Group Twelve

Question 2c: What was the most interesting and least interesting part of your independent project?

Students also had fairly unique answers for what they thought was the most interesting part of their second project. Half the groups mentioned technical aspects of their projects to be the most interesting, with the other half mentioning the story as most interesting. No groups mentioned student reactions to be the most interesting, in contrast to the same question asked of the social studies projects.

"I knew what I wanted and I could get it fast." "There was stuff I didn't know in the first one [project]... I did more work in my second feature than my first."

- Student from Group Four

"Probably interviewing my grandma, because I learned a whole bunch of stuff I didn't know before about farming."

- Student from Group Nine

"How difficult it was to get into the interview room, and how there were only a few people allowed in there!"

- Student from Group Twelve

When asked what they thought was the least interesting part of their project, the answers were again quite varied. Interestingly, four groups thought that nothing was uninteresting about their projects. The second most common answer was editing, which was listed by three groups. However, it appeared these groups found editing to be the least interesting because of the volume of editing they were completing, rather than the process of editing itself.

"When we first started editing, there was so much material it was hard to cut down!"

- Student from Group Eleven

"I liked it all"

- Student from Group Three

Question 2d: What did you learn about your topic by completing this independent project?

When students were asked this question, the answers were again quite lively, with many students excited to share their insights on what they had learned from their second videos.

"Our editing became much better" "It took us two afternoons of editing the first project, the second one took half as long" "Camera angles were more interesting in the second [project] because of our experience."

- Student from Group Two

"I learned about using a computer and how to make it more reliable."

- Student from Group Four

"I learned about different aspects of farming. When my grandpa worked, there was way more child labor and time involved... they have machines to do those things now." "All the farmers were deaf in their left ear because of the noise from the [tractor] exhaust!"

- Student from Group Nine

"Now I appreciate the claymation movies because they take a long time!"

- Student from Group Ten

"I learned a lot of things about his [Tom Brokaw's] career and what he has done. I got to meet him and to tell you the truth he looks a little bit older than he does on camera."

- Student from Group Twelve

Question 2e: What is the most important skill that helped you learn about this subject?

Students again listed a variety of skills that helped them in their second projects. However, most of them listed life skills such as planning, experience, patience, and even bravery. Together, these skills were listed by 9 of the groups. The remaining three groups listed technical skills such as camerawork and editing.

"I knew how to use the camera this time and I knew the computer better for editing."

- Student from Group Three

"It's a lot of fun to film the second one, and it's pretty exciting, so the fun and exciting aspect really motivated us." "You're spending a lot of time on it, but you know it'll look good once it's on the air, so you know that all that work you put into it will pay off."

- Student from Group Seven

"Doing the first project helped me a lot because I learned how to do everything in the first project." "The second project was a lot easier to complete."

- Student from Group Eight

"Acting and knowing what to do in editing." "The first time we were kind of lost." "We felt the second one was easier, because we could do it by ourselves."

- Student from Group Eleven

The final three questions asked of the students were more general in their focus, allowing the students to compare between the two projects and comment on changes they would make to the media projects.

Question 3: Which project did you like more? Why?

Every group chose their second project over their first. A number of groups said that they liked both, but when asked to choose one, they all leaned towards their second project.

"I liked doing the second one more, but I liked the first one because it has more information and it's more interesting, but the second was more fun to make."

- Student in Group Five

"I liked the Merry Cellars one, but I liked the other one too because it was funny, that was pretty much the only reason." "They were both fun but I would probably have to choose my second feature."

- Student in Group Six

"I liked doing my second project more, because it's a different type of movie, the first one was informational, but the second one I got to put my own personal touch into the camera angles and sound effects and directing, so it was more... me" "I did like the first one because everyone who was in it helped with getting pictures and stuff and we put a lot of time into it so it turned out really well."

- Student in Group Seven

Question 4: Did completing your social studies video projects increase or decrease your interest in social studies? How did it increase or decrease your interests?

Most students felt that their interests didn't really change because of the projects. However, many students did comment that the projects were much more interesting than their normal social studies curriculum.

"It was definitely a lot better than writing a paper." "It's the best social studies project I've ever done." "It's out there and asking people, rather than just researching... it's different."

- Student in Group Two

"Actually, I liked it more than my normal classes because it was more interactive and hands on. I hate going through the books and it's question after another question and you never get to decide what you want to do. This lets you decide what you want to do and what you want to learn about because if you learn about something you think is dumb in social studies class, then you fall asleep and you don't learn anything!"

- Student in Group Four

"I do think it was more interesting because we had to go out there and get information ourselves and put together a video that is educational, yet fun to work on, and most social studies classes are just looking at your history texts, memorizing, and taking a test... that's not very fun. And you usually don't get to work with other people either." "It was more interesting because we actually provided the information, rather than watching a video that someone else made. We learned a lot more with this than we did in a textbook because we were able to see how the volcano erupted rather than just reading about it and picturing it in your head."

- Student in Group Seven

"Probably the same, social studies isn't really my favorite subject at all." "It kind of goes in one ear and out the other..." "I hate 'open the book, read chapter one, answer the questions 1-5, due next Friday', I hate doing that! I like more hands on like what we are doing here."

- Student in Group Nine

"I found out how you could do the project and make it fun because sometimes in class it's not fun at all. But then when you are enjoying what you are doing it's really fun and you want to learn more."

- Student in Group Eleven

Question 5: Do you think these social studies projects should be assigned to future students of Channel 3? If so, what changes or modifications if any would you suggest for the project?

On the whole, students felt that the social studies projects should be repeated in next year's class. However, some students felt it would be better if the social studies project was after the independent project. Others would have liked to see the social studies project expand to include any academic subject being taught in the school.

Finally, some students asked to have the project moved out of the media class, and instead be run by the social studies teachers themselves.

"I would have them do one long social studies video for social studies class, and one short social studies video for Channel 3" "Then the class would benefit from a longer video and you would learn a lot of subjects and have more detail, but then the short segment would go on Channel 3 and then the whole school benefits."

- Student in Group Four

"I would keep it the same." "The social studies one allows you to learn and do something fun." "I like the way we did it because it's more interactive with the video and in social studies classes it's pretty much reading and that can get boring."

- Student in Group Five

"Most definitely, because I think it's a really good way to get information across to everyone else in the school because they have to watch it, and it's more interesting than social studies class, plus it's fun to see what students come up with, their interesting take on things."

- Student in Group Nine

"At first when she said we were doing a social studies project I was kind of bummed because that didn't sound fun at all, but when we did it, it was really fun." "I would do a social studies project but not narrow it down to Pacific Northwest History or social studies... just something educational."

- Student in Group Eleven

Throughout the interviews, students made a number of interesting comments that didn't directly apply to any one question. Therefore, included here are some of those students' insights and comments. They are generally categorized under the subjects they addressed, such as the perceptions of other students in the school and their own personal reflections on the projects.

Reflecting on other student's reactions and perceptions of the media projects after airing throughout the school:

"The students tell you 'Nice job!'"

- Student in Group Two

"I hope it makes people want to learn more, because Washington is a pretty cool state."

- Student in Group Five

"[I was pretty] nervous, but after it went on it was pretty cool."

- Student in Group Nine

Reflections on their projects:

"I'm excited to see it on the air!"

- Student in Group Eleven

"I think we're pretty proud of the claymation and we did a good job on the hospital video."

- Student in Group Ten

"I was SO excited! When I first heard I was able to do that, I didn't know who he [Tom Brokaw] was. I had seen him on the news, but I didn't really know what he had done, so I did a lot of research on him over a month or so. I looked at about 5 biographies people had done on him and I got so excited about meeting him and nervous because he has had so many accomplishments in his career and you could only wish you would be able to do the same thing!"

- Student in Group Twelve

Teacher Interviews

The second component of the data collection was interviews with the three teachers at Lincoln Middle School who taught 8th grade social studies. These interviews were conducted in the last week of the school year; after all of the students' features had gone on the air.

General observations in regards to the social studies media projects:

All three teachers seemed to think that students were learning about social studies from the projects they had completed. However, they did think that the videos could have been more informational if students had come to them for information.

"It seems to make sense to me that it would be a good complement to what they are learning because Channel 3 allows them quite a bit of creativity, so I think you

would be able to get into more depth than you could in the classroom. It seems like a good idea overall"

- Teacher One

"I like the idea that the students have to do the two different genres of videos. In the past it seemed that the projects had been very silly and this seemed to keep them more focused on the process."

- Teacher Two

"The two videos I really remember were the Winery and Whitman Massacre videos. After the video aired I asked the student who produced it if I could have a copy of it so I could use it for future reference. It would have been nice for the students to come to me to ask what kinds of projects were out there."

- Teacher Three

Question 1: Do you think having students complete video projects concerning the PNW/Civics course of study increased students understanding of the course concepts?

Both teachers who answered this question felt that, based on their own personal observations, that the videos were a positive educational experience for those students. Both teachers saw the videos as a good way to make cross-curriculum learning possible, as well as help students use what they have learned.

"Yeah, I think it's great because it's often something I would like to assign to my students but because of limited access or equal access to the technology that isn't possible. I've had kids that were able to do videos for projects in my class, but not all kids have access to that [technology]. So being able to make that curriculum connection with another class was really great."

- Teacher Two

"I think it does [have a beneficial effect]. I think once you take something in and then put it back in a different format to educate other people, that's when you need to be sure of your own facts and be sure of what you are presenting. So I do think it helps to solidify a lot of information the students get."

- Teacher Three

Question 2: Have you identified any beneficial or negative effects of these social studies projects in your classroom?

Two of the teachers that answered this question mentioned the Whitman Massacre as a project they felt was quite creative, yet still conveyed historical information. They felt that the addition of creativity into social studies subjects was the main change observed by those students. When that creativity was lacking, students who were watching the broadcast would stop paying attention.

"They [the students] watch the show, but it [their attention] depends on the quality of the project."

- Teacher One

"I don't think there were any negative ones. You have to have a pretty good grasp of a concept to make light of it, such as was done with the Whitman Massacre or Donner Party videos. I guess my only concern is whether or not the facts are accurately represented. But on the other hand, it makes a serious subject that students may find boring more fun."

- Teacher Two

"With the Whitman Massacre video, I did see that they enjoyed having a creative outlet to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. I think that showed some kids what they could do. The Merry Cellars video showed a very doable piece that other kids could do. It was a nice solid piece where students could see the economy at play in Pullman."

- Teacher Three

Question 3: In what ways has student performance changed in your class (such as grades or homework) because of these media projects?

Neither teacher saw a concrete change in student performance in their classes. Teacher two felt that there was a fair amount of enthusiasm and excitement about the projects, while teacher three felt that greater communication between the media and social studies teachers would have increased performance on a more concrete level.

"I know there was definitely some enthusiasm particularly for the Donner Party and Whitman Massacre groups. They talked about it and how they planned it and how it carries over. I think other students saw when they were doing other projects they were like "Oh, well if they can do that there..." Not so much with the interviews of businesses. To get 8th graders excited about the Chamber of Commerce and business downtown isn't really their thing."

- Teacher Two

"I only have a few students from Channel 3 in my class, so I didn't really observe that. If the social studies teachers had a heads up as to what the students were going to do, we probably could have seen better shows."

- Teacher Three

Question 4: Has there been a noticeable increase/decrease in students coming to see you with questions about the class projects? If so, what types of questions have they asked?

Neither of the two teachers who answered this question saw a great influx of students coming to ask them questions. They had somewhat different answers to why this was. Teacher two felt that close collaboration between the teachers would have helped, as was mentioned by teacher three in the previous question. Teacher three felt that the students could collect their information without the help of the teachers.

"Little other than the few times they asked to borrow a book because they wanted to go back and double check some stuff." "If we had prior knowledge of the projects we could have identified those students and worked in here to make connections with the resources they were using."

- Teacher Two

"Nope, but the kids who work hard in Channel 3 tend to be self motivated, so they don't need a lot of help from us."

- Teacher Three

Question 5: What is your perception of what students have learned about Pacific Northwest history and Civics through creating their social studies video projects?

All three teachers felt that the social studies media projects increased students' knowledge and awareness of the issues they were researching. They felt this was true

because of the discussions they observed their students having about their projects in class. One teacher noticed that students were understanding and expressing social studies concepts in their projects that he had been unsuccessfully trying to teach for years.

"In civics we try to get students to buy into the idea of local participation and involvement. With the city council member project and others that the students can do individually that they can't do with the whole class, I think that is great way to add to their knowledge of the curriculum. It [the logistics] makes it hard to do with a big group, but you can do it with a small group. I think it would be a valuable tool for a teacher to have."

- Teacher One

"Watching it they definitely got more awareness of some businesses and who runs them and some different aspects of the town. Some of the kids would say "Oh, I didn't know so and so's dad did that" so they had a little more awareness. It will be interesting to see if the 6th and 7th graders recall some of those features next year when we talk about those events in this class."

- Teacher Two

"I like it and I'd like to see more of it. I think it reinforces the knowledge of the students who do the project and helps reinforce the knowledge of the students who view the projects. Hopefully it will hit different interest levels too, where students will see creativity or something they didn't previously relate to social studies. I think it's more a synergistic thing for the class, because students will see something I've been saying for days or weeks or years and they just didn't clue in, but they'll see it from a different perspective, and they'll take off."

- Teacher Three

Question 6: What is your perception of what students have learned through video projects on a subject of their choosing?

All three teachers had fairly similar answers for this question. They felt that the well-produced segments were an acceptable use of teaching time because of the effort students put into them. However, the projects that were more fun for the students to make than they were to watch could be done without.

"You get better quality of work if you have objectives. What is fun for the kids isn't always fun for the viewers. I think it would be better to keep a mix of projects, and keep them on focused issues."

- Teacher One

"I think they have such a wide range. Some of them are just "wow", some of them I didn't appreciate the amount of time [absent from class] that went into them. But when I found out the technical nature of it, such as with the claymation videos when they were describing to me what that takes, I was impressed. I've appreciated them [the independent videos] more this year. In previous years the videos have been more towards the edgy/silly/kamikaze style nature."

- Teacher Two

"I think they are necessary in some ways. People don't recognize the work that goes into them. Some students are able to take pop culture and transform it into good entertainment."

- Teacher Three

Question 7: Which of the two projects did you think students learned the most from? Why?

Two of the teachers gave definitive answers stating that they felt the social studies projects were more educational because of the denser curriculum. Teacher two felt that it depended on the student as to which project they learned more from.

"I would say from the more focused one because in both projects they are learning the concepts of video and editing, but when they have a research element to it and a purpose-driven project topic, they will learn more from it."

- Teacher One

"I like the idea that both are being used, because it gives some balance to the program."

- Teacher Two

"I think the social studies one, [because] they are hitting multiple targets. They need to learn the basics of video editing, but at the same time they should know how to produce a product that could be used by other people."

- Teacher Three

Supplemental Question 1: What are your perceptions of producing videos in social studies class, instead of in a media class?

This question was asked as a result of the large number of students who suggested that the social studies projects be a part of their social studies classes. The teachers felt

that while they would like to integrate social studies video projects into their classroom, there were a number of obstacles that were preventing them from doing that. Some felt that they would not be able to produce videos of comparable quality, while others felt that they would want a video lab to allow equal access.

"I think it would be beneficial for them to do it in Channel 3 because it would be a higher level of professionalism. You could ask a bit more of them. It would be helpful to have in the classroom but you would have to have teachers with the same knowledge and the same equipment. With the whole class, even if I broke them up, and we had enough equipment, it would take us an entire year what would take Channel 3 one semester."

- Teacher One

"Not all of my students are in the media class. My ideal school situation would be to do a joint program where we make that available and all students have the opportunity to do that sort of video production."

- Teacher Two

"I think it would be great, a couple of problems though: not all teachers are going to have the tech savvy to get in there and do it. I think there does need to be a component that is a collaborative model between Channel 3 and SS or any subject, where kids can utilize Channel 3 throughout the day for their other classes. In years past I have done stuff with video, but it is a management headache. It would be nice to have Channel 3 as a tech library where students could be set up with directions, and you had a technician to help them with the editing process. One thing I've been asking for is more access from classrooms to Channel 3. In the future, I would like to see more collaboration between the video class and the other teachers."

- Teacher Three

Supplemental Question 2: Are the technology or logistical aspects of media projects more of a hurdle in regards to integrating these projects into your own classroom?

When probed further on what they felt was their greatest hurdle, both teachers who had more to say suggested solutions to the problems they had listed. Teacher three felt that the creation of a media lab for teachers to access throughout the day could alleviate access problems, while teacher two suggested scheduling students who are in the media class into a single social studies class.

"Keeping things equitable is my main issue. In my honors class I have a bit easier time of doing that because students have more equal access [to technology]. Who knows, perhaps we could set things up so that the kids who are placed in Channel 3 all have a particular block for SS and then it would work."

- Teacher Two

I think it's the logistics of giving teachers time to work together. I think it's something we really need to look at because I think the kids would really benefit from integrating what they learned in that class with their other classes. To have someone who is in charge of that [a media technology lab], perhaps even expand the Channel 3 room so you have more editing stations, would be cool. The technical side is figured out by kids pretty quickly so those hurdles could be easily overcome."

- Teacher Three

Chapter 5: Analysis and Discussion

These interviews led to a number of conclusions about the use of video and media projects in schools. As seen, both students and teachers see the merit in using video in the classroom, yet both also have comments on how to improve them. In addition, we see that there are some basic technology skills in addition to the physical hardware that is required to effectively implement these projects in the classroom. Finally, we see that this study has a number of implications for teaching and future research, as well as a number of conclusions that can be drawn from this study.

Student Interviews

The results of these interviews seem to be consistent with past research showing that technology use can be an effective means to improve and enhance student learning of social studies subject matter. In addition, from these student and teacher interviews, there are a number of interesting conclusions that can be drawn. Perhaps the most obvious is that the students enjoyed both of their media projects, not just their independent project. In fact, some groups liked the idea of social studies projects so much that they used opportunities open to them to focus their second project on educational and civics issues. The independent project, *An Interview with a Palouse Farmer* was possible because that student's grandparents were farmers and she was going out to visit with them for a weekend. She saw an opportunity for an interesting segment and brought a video camera with her. Additionally, the project *An Interview with Tom Brokaw* was possible because he had come to Washington State University to accept the Edward R. Murrow Award from the school of communication. This student was interested in who Tom Brokaw was so she decided to go to a press conference he was hosting. Through a stroke of luck, she

was able to obtain a private interview with him before the press conference, from which the video of that event became her independent feature.

Students also commented that they felt the technical aspects of their projects were not the most challenging, but rather, that organizing their peers, setting up interviews, and other non-technical aspects of the projects were their main hurdles. With both projects, students commented that they felt the videotaping and editing of their projects was easier than the humanities aspects of the projects, such as interviewing, research, and scriptwriting. In addition, students commented that although they thought the technical aspects of the projects would be most challenging, they were quickly able to learn the ins and outs of video editing. Interestingly, most students reported finishing the filming and editing of their independent projects much more quickly than their social studies projects, even through their second projects were more complex. Students attributed this to the technical skills they had learned from the completion of their first project, and said that they don't think it was attributed to the subject matter.

Student responses on what they felt were the most interesting and least interesting aspects of the media projects were quite varied. With the social studies projects, students seemed to find the showing of their projects to the rest of the student body was the most interesting. In contrast, during the second project students listed a wide variety of responses. While students felt that their interest in social studies was not increased by the projects, their interest level in the projects themselves was much higher because of their interactive and hands-on nature.

Perhaps the greatest results came from student responses to what they had learned. In reference to the social studies projects, students listed a variety of facts and

opinions they had formed from completing these projects. In addition to being able to discuss the events and results of their projects, the students also felt that what they had learned was much more authentic than the curriculum they had been receiving in their social studies classes. They felt this occurred because the learning they were taking part in was much more hands on, which many felt more closely aligned with their learning styles. This active researching of a topic is also much more like what a true historian accomplishes with their research, and the students responded that they enjoyed that authenticity. They enjoyed the group aspect of research as well, as it allowed them to work together to discover why an event occurred, rather than just being told.

Students also reported a progression in what they felt were the most important skills needed to complete their projects. With the first project they completed, they felt that learning how to use the editing program was the most important skill, as most students had never used a computer program like that before. Interestingly, when asked the same question about their second project, students reported utilizing writing and creative skills much more. They divulged that this shift occurred because they felt comfortable enough with the software after the first project that they didn't need to worry about completing all the steps in the project, as they had done it once before. Students said that because they felt more comfortable with the process, they were able to become more efficient and creative when creating their second project.

Perhaps somewhat predictably, every student reported that they liked completing their second independent project more than their first project. Students reported that they liked completing their second project because they were able to shape the projects more specifically to what they had imagined. However, during the interview many students

said they did like their social studies projects quite a bit, and that they certainly enjoyed them more than their social studies classes, as well as more than they thought they would at the start of the projects.

Perhaps the students validation of the projects was most evident when asked if they would assign these projects to future students if they were the teacher. Every student in every group felt that they would want to continue having two projects per semester, and that one should be academically based. They did suggest that the projects be moved into the curriculum of whatever subject the project focuses on, so they could have more help with research aspect of the media projects.

Overall, the students reported being quite interested and engaged with their projects, excited to see them through to completion, as well as excited to share them with their friends through the daily news program. In addition, students felt that they worked much harder, and learned much more through completion of their social studies media projects than they did through normal class time.

Teacher Interviews

Through interviewing the 8th grade social studies teachers at Lincoln Middle School, very interesting data were collected concerning the teacher's perceptions of media projects.

Overall, the teachers felt that they recognized the educational worth of these media projects, both through previous experiences, as well as through seeing student involvement and excitement concerning the projects when the students were in their classes. One teacher even felt a student project was of sufficient academic quality that that teacher asked for a copy of the student's project on DVD to show to future classes.

All three teachers also felt that the quality of the social studies projects was variable, as is often seen with any collection of students. They also recognized the opportunities for students to be creative with the projects, while still learning about the subjects themselves. Some teachers also noticed that students would tune out from videos that were not of sufficient quality, but would be quite attentive to the projects that were both informative and engaging.

Concerning the students in their classes who were also in the Channel 3 media class, they did not see an improvement in the students grades. However, they did notice the student's enthusiasm for their projects, which the students themselves had mentioned in their interviews. They were unanimous in that they felt social studies video projects helped their students learn additional content, raised their awareness of state and local issues, as well as reinforcing knowledge that the students had already learned in their social studies classes.

The teachers did state that they did not see many students come to them for information on their subjects, other than a few students that asked for a book. However, the students were not required to go to their social studies teachers for advice, nor were the social studies teachers aware of the social studies video projects until they began airing to the full student body. All three teachers suggested that the quality of the material presented could be raised if the media projects were to be run by both the media teacher and content-area teacher. Teacher communication is certainly an area that these projects could be improved upon, as it could result in even greater student learning with greater teacher collaboration.

These teacher comments are interesting in comparison to student comments on this issue, as most students reported that they would like to see the teachers in their content areas implement video projects in their classrooms. Students felt they would have learned more from having the projects based in their content area classes, rather than in their media class. However, the teachers reported that they would rather implement the projects in conjunction with the media teacher, because of the technological and logistical barriers they perceive.

When asked about the logistics of implementing such a program in their own classroom, all three teachers expressed hope that such a project could be implemented, but listed a variety of technical and logistical problems that were keeping them from that implementation, such as access to the required technologies and time constraints. The teachers themselves suggested a number of solutions to these problems, through better teacher communication, class scheduling, or availability of the media computers for content-area teachers to use.

Implementing Video Projects

For many teachers, the use of new technologies in the classroom can be a challenging experience. Technology can be overly complicated, equipment can break, and the lack of technology skills are all factors that can lead teachers to have negative experiences with technology in the classroom. Sadly, this almost never needs to be the case. If a teacher comes into integrating technology with an open mind and is open to the inevitable bumps and changes in course along the way, technology can open many windows towards a more productive and interactive school day.

Technology Skills

The first step towards integrating new technologies in the classroom, such as social studies media projects, is to feel comfortable working with technology on your own. Just as teachers must be masters of their respective content areas in order to teach effectively, teachers must feel comfortable working with a specific technology before they can effectively instruct their students on its use. This is perhaps the most essential part of using technology in education, for if you don't feel comfortable working by yourself with the technology, frustrations will quickly rise when a student asks you to assist them and you can't help them.

That is not to say that teachers must be experts on the technology being used. Students can prove to be an invaluable resource to teachers, as there will almost always be a few students that are more technologically savvy than the teacher. Allowing students with the prior knowledge and motivation to explore a new piece of software or equipment during their lunch or after school can be one of the best things you can do to foster this type of student empowerment. When given this freedom, students often develop faster and creative ways to accomplish tasks, are given new opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge, and gives them the chance to act as a teacher to others. This of course has the added benefit of giving the teacher more free time to accomplish other tasks in the classroom.

There are a number of other things teachers can do to increase this awareness of new technologies as well as comfort levels with them. To start with, you would want to be comfortable working with a computer for basic tasks, such as writing e-mails, finding files on the computer, and looking up information using search engines. If tasks such as

these can be accomplished with ease, then it is only a small step to integrating media projects in the classroom. The second thing you would want to do is to form a stronger relationship with your school or district computer technician. This is the person that will help you when something stops working, can recommend new products to help you achieve your educational objectives, and can act as a general technology resource.

If you have a technology teacher in your school, a good way to ease yourself into using technology would be to co-teach a lesson between your classes. By talking to this person, such as talking to your district technician, highly interactive lessons can be designed and implemented while giving the novice teacher an opportunity to teach with a safety net in case something doesn't go as planned.

If you find yourself in a school without either a technology teacher or a district technician, your learning curve might be more challenging than others, but success is still certainly within reach. Cousins, nieces, and nephews can be an excellent resource to give you a crash course in the technology you are hoping to implement in your classroom. You can also use opportunities such as these to see what you like and dislike about their teaching methods. Often while teaching with students at a computer, it is hard to resist grabbing the mouse and performing an action when a student asks for your assistance. However, by forcing yourself to vocalize your instructions, it will help you as a teacher explain why and how an action is performed. While it may be quicker to just do it yourself, the student may not understand why or what you just did, and will therefore need your assistance again when the problem arises in the future. If you try to maintain direct control over the class, and position yourself as the sole source of technology solutions, you may well find yourself bouncing around the classroom like a ping pong

ball as you try to help students. If a student comes to you with a question, and you have already helped another student solve that same question, direct the student to the student you previously helped. You can also construct an “experts chart” to help students become self-reliant. An “experts chart” lists in one column a skill students need to know, and in the other column the names of the students that have learned that skill. If a student has a question, they can reference the chart, and find the identified student for their answer. Once they have learned how to perform the task, they can then add their name to the list of experts. This will allow the instructing student to reinforce their previous knowledge, and it keeps you free to help students with creative input, rather than acting as a technician. If allowed to continue like this for a period of time, a class can become entirely self-sustaining, allowing the teacher to step back and observe students taking control of their own learning.

Physical Hardware

To use video projects as a means to enhance a social studies curriculum, some equipment will have to be acquired. The first essential piece of equipment is a computer capable of handling digital video. Most computers built since 2004 would be capable of handling standard definition digital video. The specific components needed for the video projects are a Pentium III computer with a Firewire connector (also known as IEEE1394 or i.Link). This connector can be found on the back of a computer, and enables the data to be sent to the computer from a camcorder. While there is no minimum hard drive size required for video transfer, digital video does take up 250MB of hard drive space for every minute of video captured. Therefore, a computer with at least a 30GB hard drive is

recommended for capturing enough video for a student project. Of course, if multiple groups are using the same computer for their projects, more space would be required.

The second requirement for capturing video for a media project would be a camcorder with a Firewire output. Most cameras made since the late 1990's would have this connection. Most schools have at least one camera available, but if such a resource is not available to students, a basic camcorder can be obtained for as little as \$300. If funding cannot be obtained for a camcorder, a digital camera can be used to record still shots for a still-frame movie.

Finally, some form of editing software is required to combine the students captured video and images, and compile it together with titles, credits, and a soundtrack. Included with each copy of Windows XP and Vista is Windows Movie Maker. This program is quite easy to use, so one can learn to use the program within an hour. If your school utilizes Apple computers, iMovie can be an acceptable substitute for Windows Movie Maker.

There are many 3rd party video editor programs on the market, ranging anywhere from \$20-\$100. Unfortunately, these programs are generally of poor quality, and are harder to use than Movie Maker or iMovie. However, if you are beginning to feel constrained by the simplicity of Movie Maker or iMovie, Adobe Premiere is an excellent program used by professional video editors that can dramatically improve the visual quality of student programs. Adobe Premiere is a professional video editing program, and as such, costs approximately \$600. If your school is equipped with a TV production lab, the district may already have a license for the program, which would allow you to

install the program for free. If such a resource is not available, used copies can be obtained both online and through brick and mortar stores for less than \$100.

Of course, these are the minimums for setting up such a program. If the program is being built from scratch without any equipment, about \$800 will be required to buy a computer and camcorder. If your classroom has relatively new computers, and has digital camcorders available for student checkout, such a lesson could be taught without any monetary output required. Of course, there is an almost limitless market for upgrades. Faster computers with larger hard drives can speed up the editing process for students. If the computers have a DVD burner built in, students can also have the option of burning a DVD of their projects for submission, as well as a personal copy to show to their parents. In addition, more expensive camcorders will have more features that can improve the quality of student projects. Features such as 3CCD sensors that capture much more vibrant colors, lenses that allow for manual focusing, and higher quality materials to resist the rough handling that the cameras will invariably sustain can expand the creative possibilities of the projects, as well as minimize the possibilities of technical problems. If additional funding is available, extra camcorder batteries, a handheld microphone, and a camera bag would be good initial upgrades. Additionally, while it is reasonably easy to share a camera between groups in a class, each group should have their own computer for editing to maximize their productivity in the short amount of class time available.

While the cost of these technologies can be an obstacle, the use of outdated or obsolete video technology can be even more costly. Teachers may try to use older equipment the school had already purchased, but this may lead to more problems than it

is worth. Time lost trying to maintain aging and hard to use equipment can lead to many of the frustrations teachers often report when using technology. From my own observations and experience with the transition of the Channel 3 studio from analog to digital equipment, new technologies are almost always easier to use and implement than the technologies they replaced. This was evidenced with the ability of the students to complete two video projects in the classroom with the new digital equipment, while only one project was possible when using the old analog equipment. The buying of high-quality equipment that is simple to operate is one of the easiest ways to avoid headaches with the implementation of video projects, as well as technology in general.

As seen, while there are certain skills and hardware required to implement video projects in the classroom, they are certainly not outside the means of the average teacher or school. The time needed to learn the skills of video editing would certainly not take more than an hour or two with a technologically competent friend. Additionally, most schools probably already have the basic resources required to create video or multimedia projects, or the means to acquire these technologies through technology grants or other sources of funding. When the time and monetary commitment required of these projects are spread out over the hundreds of students given access to these technologies over a number of years, the price per student can be much less than a yearly fieldtrip or other comparable event. Technology has become inexpensive and simple enough that such projects are finally within the reach of virtually any teacher who has the ambition to integrate such a project into their classroom curriculum.

Implications for Further Research

The realities of conducting research in an active school environment meant the results of this experiment were limited by the constraints of time and logistics. As such, the researcher was given access to a non-random sample of students who had been enrolled in the Lincoln Middle School media class, which made the control of extraneous variables difficult. As the media class itself lasts one school semester, time constraints and the intent to limit as many variables as possible limited the scope of this research to a single subject area.

Despite the observed effectiveness of these media projects, there remains the possibility that such results may be unique to the school, students, or school subjects. However, the result of a limited sample was mitigated somewhat by the researcher's observation of both the students in the media class during the semester prior to the social studies media projects, as well as the students who participated in the study the following semester. These observations helped to validate the results reported by the students, as well as confirm the social studies teachers past perceptions of the non-social studies media projects.

While past research suggests that the results seen in this classroom are not unusual, there remains the unlikely possibility that the research conducted is not valid for schools in different locales. As it stands, there is no evidence to suggest that students from the rural northwest vary in any measurable regard to other regions of the United States that would change the results of this study. Unfortunately, the lack of a comparable media classroom in other locally accessible middle schools, as well as the time required

to interview additional students and teachers, made further verification of this impossible with the time made available for this study.

This study was limited to students in the 8th grade as well. This occurred because there is limited time in the school schedule for classes like the media class that was observed. As such, enrollment was limited by the school to two periods of 8th grade students. The extent to which students in other grades would exhibit similar results is unknown; although it is likely similar results would be seen with students in higher grades than students in lower grades, because of the organizational and people skills listed as important by the interviewed students.

While this research was conducted using video and still cameras, it seems reasonable that similar results could be obtained using alternate media technologies, such as audio recordings and news articles. This is assumed because some students used still pictures exclusively in their projects, from both the internet and of their own, and the results of their interviews were indistinguishable from those who used video. However, because these alternate technologies were not utilized exclusively; further research would be warranted for confirmation.

Finally, the results of this research might not be applicable to other subject areas. The limitation of the study to the subject of social studies means that this research barely scratches the surface of potential subjects such media projects could be applied to. However, because students themselves suggested the expansion of the media projects to include alternate subject areas, it seems quite likely that similar results in regard to student enthusiasm and interest would be seen if replicated.

If this research was to be conducted with greater funding and a team of researchers, a greater sample of students, access to multiple schools, and expansion of the research into multiple subject areas would greatly enhance the validity of this study. While the results of this study were limited in size and scope, many new opportunities for fruitful research concerning student and teacher perceptions of video projects have come to light.

Conclusions

The outcomes of this research seem to align with the initial assumption that student achievement in a subject area can be raised, as measured by student enthusiasm, through the use of video projects in middle school classrooms. In addition, student interest in academic work can be increased through the use of video projects. Finally, while most teachers see real obstacles to integrating technology into their classroom, these obstacles are easier to overcome than perceived. Hopefully this paper will therefore act as a validation of hypothesis as well as a guide to implementing these exciting new technologies in classrooms to the benefit of both students and teachers.

The reality that students use technology daily in their lives as well as the evolving technologies themselves have meant that teachers must diversify their teaching methods to include these new technologies. By integrating into the classroom the technologies that students are already using in their everyday lives, students will feel more engaged and interested with what they are learning. Additionally, collaborating with content area teachers and having them serve as subject matter experts on the student produced videos will add relevance to the curriculum. The major findings are identified in Table 1.

Major Findings	
Students	Teachers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students feel more engaged and interested with what they are learning when completing content area video projects. • Students felt that what they had learned was much more authentic than the curriculum they had been receiving in their social studies classes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional collaboration with the content area teachers could help students conduct more meaningful background research and find additional exciting topics to pursue. • Teachers felt the projects helped students learn additional content, raised student awareness of state and local issues, as well as reinforce prior knowledge.

Table 1

Video projects are just one of many ways that teachers can provide this additional engagement and learning in their classroom. As a result, these video projects may be one of the memorable learning experiences students recall later in life. If properly implemented, video projects can empower students to conduct more authentic and realistic research, writing, editing, and production of academic work, while allowing them the self-direction and creativity that can drive them to succeed.

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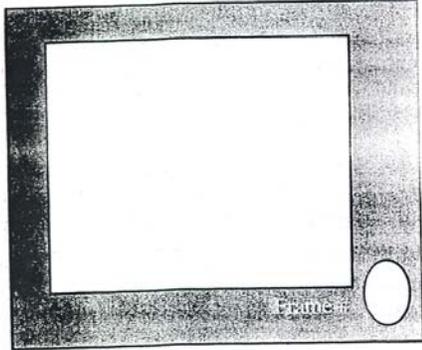
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Miller, L. (1997) Computer integration by vocational teacher educators. *Journal of Vocational and Technical Education*, 14(1)

APPENDIX A - STORYBOARD WORKSHEET

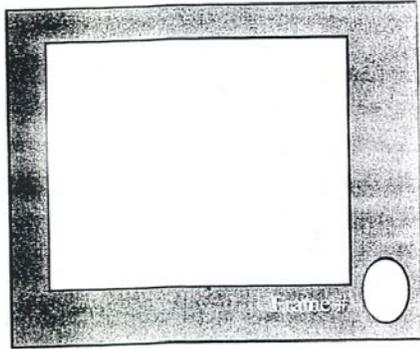
Project: _____ Date: ____/____/____



VIDEO: _____

AUDIO: _____

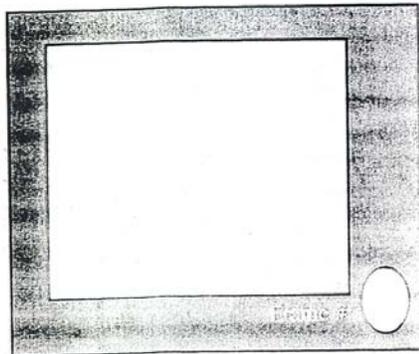
VOCAL: _____



VIDEO: _____

AUDIO: _____

VOCAL: _____



VIDEO: _____

AUDIO: _____

VOCAL: _____

APPENDIX B - PROJECT APPROVAL FORM

Feature Contract

To receive credit for completing your feature, the following needs to be agreed on and signed off by Ms. Ayre-Svingen or a designee. It is the responsibility of the producers of the feature to present the completed contract for a grade by the air date. **No contract—no grade.**

1. Producers: (Please list)

Each must be part of the planning, taping and editing of the completed feature

2. Feature pre-approval (Shot sheet must be signed by Ms. Ayre-Svingen or a designee in order to check out equipment and begin taping.)

Topic: _____

Approved by: _____

Date Signed: _____

3. Editing & titling completed (Signed by producer)

Approved by: _____

Scheduled for air date: _____

4. Aired (Signed by producer or Station Manager)

Date: _____

Verified by: _____

Total Points

APPENDIX C - IRB APPROVAL FORM



Research Compliance Office

MEMORANDUM

TO: Anthony Jonas
Education, WSU Pullman (2103)

FROM: Malathi Jandhyala (for) Kris Miller, Chair, WSU Institutional Review Board (3140) *MJ*

DATE: 27 April 2006

SUBJECT: Approved Human Subjects Protocol - New Protocol

Your Human Subjects Review Summary Form and additional information provided for the proposal titled "Social Studies Video Projects in the Middle School," IRB File Number **9080-a** was reviewed for the protection of the subjects participating in the study. Based on the information received from you, the WSU-IRB **approved** your human subjects protocol on **27 April 2006**.

IRB approval indicates that the study protocol as presented in the Human Subjects Form by the investigator, is designed to adequately protect the subjects participating in the study. This approval does not relieve the investigator from the responsibility of providing continuing attention to ethical considerations involved in the utilization of human subjects participating in the study.

This approval expires on 26 April 2007. If any significant changes are made to the study protocol you must notify the IRB before implementation. Request for modification forms are available online at <http://www.ogrd.wsu.edu/Forms.asp>.

In accordance with federal regulations, this approval letter and a copy of the approved protocol must be kept with any copies of signed consent forms by the principal investigator for THREE years after completion of the project.

Washington State University is covered under Human Subjects Assurance Number FWA00002946 which is on file with the Office for Human Research Protections.

If you have questions, please contact the Institutional Review Board at (509) 335-9661. Any revised materials can be mailed to the Research Compliance Office (Campus Zip 3140), faxed to (509) 335-1676, or in some cases by electronic mail, to irb@mail.wsu.edu.

Review Type: NEW
Review Category: EXP
Date Received: 3 April 2006

OGRD No.: NF
Agency: NA

APPENDIX D - PARENTAL ASSENT FORM

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY CONSENT FORM

Social Studies Video Projects In The Middle School

Researchers: Anthony Jonas 206-369-0600 and Guy Westhoff, Ph.D. (College of Education 509-335-8845)

Researchers' Statement

We the researchers are asking you to grant us permission to approach your child and ask them to participate in a study, as well as for you to give permission for your child to take part in the study if your child indicates they are willing to take part. The purpose of this consent form is to give you the information you will need to help you decide whether you want your child to be in the study or not. Please read the form carefully. You may ask questions about the purpose of the research, what we would ask your child to do, the possible risks and benefits, your rights as a volunteer, and anything else about the research or this form that is not clear. When we have answered all of your questions, you can decide if you want your child to be in the study or not and provide us with your informed consent. We will give you a copy of this form for your records.

PURPOSE AND BENEFITS

This project focuses on social studies video projects that are a required component of the Lincoln Middle School Channel 3 class. These video projects ask the students of Channel 3 to complete a short video that focus on subjects that relate to your child's social studies classes. We will be observing and interviewing students at Lincoln Middle School concerning these projects, both because of its proximity to Washington State University, as well as Lincoln's unique position as one of the premier middle school video production classes in Washington State. In conjunction with Lincoln Middle School, we would like to interview Channel 3 students and ask about their involvement within their social studies video project in comparison to video projects of their own choosing. We are looking at the relationships among social studies video projects, student learning, and student enjoyment of the course. Identifying these relationships can inform technology infused programs, such as those currently in place at Lincoln Middle School and assist in the development of guidelines for student produced videos.

PROCEDURES

Your child's participation in this study will involve completion of an audio-recorded interview with the group of students with whom they completed their Channel 3 video projects. The interview will be conducting once the videos are finished and held during the regular Channel 3 class period. The interview questions will address your child's video project, the video production techniques learned throughout the project, and their level of interest in the subject matter of their video. The interview will be tape recorded

to allow the researcher the ability to review the content of the interview and capture the conversation. If either you or your child does not want their voice to be recorded, your child will not be asked to participate. Your child can refuse to participate in the interview at anytime and may refuse to answer some or all of the interview questions without reprisal. The results of the research study may be published but your child's name or identity will not be revealed.

RISKS, STRESS, OR DISCOMFORT

The research in which your child will be participating does not involve more than the foreseeable risks involved in the day-to-day teaching and learning environment of your child's classroom.

OTHER INFORMATION

Data from your child's participation will remain confidential in a secured computer that is accessible only to the researcher and his advisor. The researchers will have access to this information for research purposes and the data and results may be published, but without any identifiers to your child or other participants.

Neither you nor your child will be compensated for your child's participation in the study.

Printed name of researcher

Signature of researcher

Date

Parent's statement

I understand the requirements of the research study. I grant the researchers permission to approach your child and ask them to participate in a study, as well as give permission for my child to take part in the study if they indicate they are willing to take part. If I have general questions about the research, I can ask one of the researchers listed above. If I have questions regarding my child's rights as a participant, I can call the WSU Institutional Review Board at (509) 335-9661. This project has been reviewed and approved for human participation by the WSU IRB. I will receive a copy of this consent form.

Printed name of parent

Signature of Parent

Date

APPENDIX E - STUDENT CONSENT FORM

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY ASSENT FORM

Social Studies Video Projects In The Middle School

Researchers: Anthony Jonas (206-369-0600) and Guy Westhoff, Ph.D. (College of Education 509-335-8845)

We are doing a research study about how middle school students develop video production skills to produce videos related to social studies topics and how the content of the video projects influence their interest in the course. A research study is a way to learn more about a situation. If you decide that you want to be part of this study, you will be asked to participate in an interview with 3 or 4 other students during class time.

In this interview, you will discuss a number of questions posed by the researcher in the same groups you completed your video projects. This interview is expected to take about 20 minutes to complete and will be audio-recorded so the researcher can review the interview as they write their report.

There are some things about this study that you should know. There may be some risk from participation, but not generally more than what you experience day-to-day in your classrooms. These risks may include such things as concern about the interviews affecting your grades, or nervousness about being tape recorded. You have some options to protect yourself from these risks, such as not participating in the study, or withdrawing from the interview at any time. However, whether you participate or not, this interview will have no effect on your grade or any other aspect of the class.

Not everyone who takes part in this study will benefit, which means that something good happens to him or her. We think that some of the benefits might be an understanding of the real-world application of social studies class material and an appreciation of the skills needed to produce a video project.

If you do not want to be in this research study, you will continue in your regular daily routine for the Channel 3 class.

When we finish this research study, we will write a report about what was learned. This report will not include your name or that you were in the study.

You do not have to be in the study if you do not want to be. If you decide to stop after we begin, that is okay too.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the WSU Institutional Review Board (IRB). If you have questions about this study, contact the researcher at (206-369-0600). If you have questions about your rights as a participant, please contact the WSU IRB at (509) 335-9661.

If you decide you want to be in this study and agree to have your voice recorded during the interview, please sign your name.

I, _____, want to be in this research study.
(Print your name here)

(Sign your name here)

(Date)

APPENDIX F - STUDENT INTERVIEW SCRIPT

Interview Script for 8th Grade PNW and Civics Students

1. Tell me about your Social Studies project
 - a. Which part of your social studies project did you like the most?
 - b. Which was the hardest and easiest part of your social studies project?
 - c. What was the most interesting and least interesting part of your social studies project?
 - d. What did you learn about your TOPIC by completing this social studies project?
 - e. What is the most important skill that helped you learn about this subject?
2. Tell me about your independent project
 - a. Which part of your independent project did you like the most?
 - b. Which was the hardest and easiest part of your independent project?
 - c. What was the most interesting and least interesting part of your independent project?
 - d. What did you learn about your TOPIC by completing this independent project?
 - e. What is the most important skill that helped you learn about this subject?
3. Which project did you like more? Why?
4. Did completing your social studies video projects increase or decrease your interest in social studies? How did it increase or decrease your interests?
5. Do you think these social studies projects should be assigned to future students of Channel 3? If so, what changes or modifications if any would you suggest?

APPENDIX G - TEACHER CONSENT FORM

Teacher Permission Form

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
Social Studies Video Projects In The Middle School

Researchers: Anthony Jonas 206-369-0600 and Guy Westhoff, Ph.D. (College of Education 509-335-8845)

Researchers' Statement

We are asking you to agree to be in a research study. The purpose of this consent form is to give you the information you will need to help you decide whether to be in the study or not. Please read the form carefully. You may ask questions about the purpose of the research, what we would ask you to do, the possible risks and benefits, your rights as a participant, and anything else about the research or this form that is not clear. When we have answered all your questions, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not and provide us with your informed consent. We will give you a copy of this form for your records.

PURPOSE AND BENEFITS

This project focuses on social studies video projects that are a required component of the Lincoln Middle School Channel 3 class. These video projects ask the students of Channel 3 to complete a short video that focus on subjects that relate to your social studies classes. We will be observing and interviewing students at Lincoln Middle School concerning these projects, both because of its proximity to Washington State University, as well as Lincoln's unique position as one of the premier middle school video production classes in Washington State. In conjunction with Lincoln Middle School, we would like to interview social studies teachers and ask about their observations and perceptions of their students' involvement within their social studies video project in comparison to video projects of their own choosing. We are looking for relationships among these social studies video projects, student learning, and student enjoyment of the course. Identifying these relationships can inform technology infused programs, such as those currently in place at Lincoln Middle School and assist in the development of guidelines for student produced videos.

PROCEDURES

You will complete an informal interview once the student's video project has been shown. The interview will address your perceptions of the students' video projects and video production techniques learned throughout the semester. The interview will be tape recorded to allow the researcher the ability to review the content of the interview and capture the conversation. You can refuse to participate in the interviews at anytime and

may refuse to answer some or all of the interview questions without reprisal. The results of the research study may be published but your name or identity will not be revealed.

RISKS, STRESS, OR DISCOMFORT

The research in which you will be participating does not involve more than the foreseeable risks involved in the day-to-day teaching and learning environment of your classroom.

OTHER INFORMATION

Data from your participation will remain confidential in a secured computer that is accessible only to the research and his advisor. The researchers will have access to this information for research purposes and the data and results may be published, but without any identifiers to yourself or other participants.

You will not be compensated for your participation in the study.

Printed name of researcher

Signature of researcher

Date

Teacher's statement

I understand the requirements of the research study. I volunteer to take part in this research. If I have general questions about the research, I can ask one of the researchers listed above. If I have questions regarding my rights as a participant, I can ask one of the researchers or contact the WSU Institutional Review Board at (509) 335-9661. This project has been reviewed and approved for human participation by the WSU IRB. I understand I will receive a copy of this consent form.

_____ I give permission to audiotape my participation in the interview.

Printed name of subject

Signature of subject

Date

APPENDIX H - TEACHER INTERVIEW SCRIPT

Interview Script for 8th Grade PNW and Civics Teachers

1. Do you think having students complete video projects concerning the PNW/Civics course of study increased students understanding of the course concepts?
2. Have you identified any beneficial or negative effects of these social studies projects in your classroom?
3. In what ways has student performance changed in your class (such as grades or homework) because of these media projects?
4. Has there been a noticeable increase/decrease in students coming to see you with questions about the class projects? If so, what types of questions have they asked?
5. What is your perception of what students have learned about PNW history and Civics through creating their social studies video projects?
6. What is your perception of what students have learned about PNW history and Civics through video projects on a subject of their choosing?
7. Which of the two projects did you think students learned the most from? Why?