

INCREASING STUDENT LEARNING THROUGH LITERACY STRATEGIES IN
SECONDARY SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSROOMS

By

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Literacy

Learning social studies in the secondary classroom is an opportunity for students to relate with content that connects the past with the present. Lessons can share similarities and differences across decades to thousands of years, all while helping students grow to become a stronger part of society. Social studies in a secondary classroom is a gateway to not just understand the past, but also the present and the future (Wineburg, 2001). By increasing the learning of students in social studies classes, teachers are able to increase content awareness and understanding, and can also help students become lifelong learners and global citizens. In this capstone, it is my goal to find background, research, and a resource answering the question, *What literacy strategies can be incorporated into secondary social studies classrooms to increase student learning?*

Many experts agree that literacy can be a gateway in all content areas, as aspects of literacy can be seen in all subject areas (Alvermann, Phelps, & Ridgeway, 2007; Kottler & Gallavan, 2008; Schneider, 1994). Within social studies, as there are foci on primary and secondary documents, writing, and speaking, a deep look at increasing literacy can help secondary students in their learning potential (Kottler & Gallavan, 2008). The literacy strategies that are specifically focused on are for reading

comprehension, writing, and speaking and listening. The reading comprehension focus details skills and strategies needed to increase reading comprehension in a social studies class at pre-reading, during reading, and post-reading stages. Writing strategies and skills focus on the writing process as well as informal and formal strategies to increase learning, and speaking and listening strategies detail improved discussion and debate skills. As students strengthen their literacy skills in a social studies classroom, they will provide more insights into classroom discussion, knowledge, and overall learning. This chapter focuses on the reasons and background of my interest in literacy within social studies classrooms as well as introduce why the topic is important within education.

My Own Background

Throughout my own time in middle school and high school, social studies was one of my favorite subjects. I took Advanced Placement (AP) history classes in high school and loved the challenge of tying past events together and seeing the ramifications in my own life or in the world. I began to have a passion for social studies in my 7th grade Minnesota Studies class. We were asked to create an “A-Z project”. This called upon us to find a piece of history, a person, a place, event, or another fun fact for each letter of the alphabet. It was in that class that I learned about zebra mussels and how they infested Minnesota waters, something that I never knew until I opened a book on Minnesota water life. Doing my own research was exciting and new; we were given computer lab time and class periods to spend in the library to do our own research! But, I was not given a template for research or any clarification on how to organize the project. Instead, our class was given a paper handout explaining what the assignment was, how

many points it was worth, what we needed to get an A, and when our project was due.

We knew we had to write at least a paragraph about each letter and either draw or print a picture showing or relating to the letter. That was it. No handout on how to organize our thoughts or findings. No examples of how previous students had organized their research and projects.

I know if given a similar project now, I would arrange a table that has letters of the alphabet down the left hand side and have other columns with details or titles of labels. As a 7th grader, I did not know where to start. From what I remember, I completed the assignment (since I got to “Z” and learned about zebra mussels, I assume the rest of the alphabet was done, too). But with little guidance or options on organization for that project and many other assignments that followed in my education experience, my organization and process was often done differently each time and with gaps in my research and learning. This is the type of situation when a log or at least a few different literacy strategies would be helpful in a social studies classroom. In answering, *What literacy strategies can be incorporated into secondary social studies classrooms to increase student learning?*, secondary social studies teachers can impart strategies and skills to their students through assignments like the one I was assigned in middle school.

By high school, I had figured out that I learned really well in my history classes by taking notes in an outline format. Since AP classes were often relatively linear and went chronologically, I learned that when reading and going through lessons, if I took notes with headers and bullets, I could organize topics and events in a way that I could be productive and actually remember what I was writing down. But, I figured this strategy

out because making an outline is what I had learned in English classes, not from any resources in the history classes.

As a high school student, it was great that I learned that this strategy worked so well for me. Without having learned that strategy in another class and applying it myself in History, I know I would not have organized anything as well and would not have been as successful in my own social studies classes. I know that not all students are like me in the way of trying to find new ways to research or organize class notes. Many students can be very successful in social studies classes, but they need a ground work and multiple strategies so they can see what works well for them, not a one-size-fits-all message. In my opinion, secondary social studies students should not be expected to already know how to do everything, which is why a resource is needed. For secondary social studies teachers to have a formal resource with multiple strategies that can cater to different situations and learning goals will prompt visible and attainable answers to my question, *What literacy strategies can be incorporated into secondary social studies classrooms to increase student learning?*

Graduate work. While working on my coursework for my initial teaching license, I had many classes with different foci the one that was most significant in my outlook on teaching social studies revolved around literacy. This class focused on the importance of literacy in the secondary classroom. And even though there were graduate students in almost every content area, the concepts and lessons were applicable across secondary contents. It helped show me ideas on how to incorporate literacy in any class with a focus on student experience and had us try strategies ourselves to see how we learn

best. Before we can help students learn, we need to understand *how* they can learn.

Whether it was drawing out a story that we listened to for better focus on the details or meditating while listening to a text instead of reading it ourselves which helps focus on the main ideas, this class launched my interest in how to incorporate literacy strategies in social studies classes to increase the student experience and learning.

This class gave me a taste of how to still use the content that I love while finding new ways to increase student learning. Unfortunately, that is all it was. A taste. It launched an idea in me that different strategies can help different types of students in different ways. By having a variety of strategies that can reach students at different places in their learning and with different learning styles, teachers in a social studies classroom can provide resources for their students to achieve their best and increase learning.

Teaching experience. In the fall of 2018, I was fortunate enough to have a student teaching placement in a suburb of the Twin Cities at a middle school that focused on student learning and progress. Like many classrooms, there were high flyers, but also students that needed extra assistance and time to get work done in class or extra help while staying after school. As I gave out new assignments and projects, I realized that one common thread that students would struggle with was literacy, specifically reading comprehension, writing, and speaking with and in front of peers. I had one student, Aiden (all names have been changed in this capstone), who was brilliant at answering questions that I posed to the class. I could ask about something that we went over a week ago and he could recite back to me the correct answers and give examples to strengthen what he said. But when he would get certain assignments, he would completely shut down. As I

paid more attention to his negative reactions, I realized that any assignment that had him read over a paragraph on his own and answer questions, he did not even attempt. He would distract other students, doodle on his paper, or try to work on other assignments. Basically, he avoided reading assignments like the plague. What I discovered was that it was not the reading that got him, it was remembering what he had just read.

Another student that I taught, Norah, struggled on all assessments that had a reading component. Anything beyond matching vocabulary words with definitions left her guessing on each answer before she even attempted to read the possible answers. Some questions would ask students to write a very structured and guided paragraph about the geography in ancient Minnesota or give a one-sentence description of food sources by the first Minnesotans and students were asked to match the correct time period. But no matter how much time she spent staring at the sheet of paper in front of her or the textbook that had the answers, she would either make up an answer or raise her hand stating that she did not know the answer. I learned that when I could sit with her one-to-one and have her read the questions and prompts outloud, she would finally see that she knew the answer. But getting her to read on her own seemed like something she did not know how to do. She struggled with reading comprehension as she read almost any text.

A third student that I had the great fortune to teach, Anna, was a straight-A student who thrived on individual work and most assigned work. What she did not thrive on was speaking in front of the class. Whether it was me asking for hands of students that knew an answer, giving a rebuttal or fact in a debate when participation was mandatory

for an A, or even talking about herself in class introductions, she would shut down. Anna aced every written assignment, assessment, and group project that involved reading or writing, but when asked to speak in front of the class or even smaller groups, her nerves reacted so strongly that she would clam up and not attempt to speak while looking down and losing any confidence in the content knowledge she knew in her head. This aversion to speaking and anything related to reading was a constant struggle not just for Anna, Aiden, and Norah, but many other students in the social studies classes I have been a part of as well.

In most secondary social studies classes, there are required components of the grade that include speaking components like debate, discussions, presentations and speeches. There are almost always written assignments that are due for grades as well as the expectation of writing skills to take notes, outline, or even fill out worksheets. There is also a heavy focus on the reading of primary and secondary sources, and therefore a need for strong reading comprehension skills to truly succeed. Reading comprehension is not just about the post-reading understanding. There are pre-reading, during reading, and post-reading stages that are all equally important to have strong student understanding for them to succeed (Alvermann, Phelps, & Ridgeway, 2007). In all classes, especially social studies, this comprehension is vital for students to not just comprehend information, but be able to apply that learning to content and real life.

From these experiences in the classroom using just three students as prime examples demonstrates why using literacy strategies to increase reading comprehension, writing, and speaking and listening should be available to use in a secondary social

studies classroom. By having a diverse set of strategies to use in the context of a social studies classroom, teachers can better differentiate to student needs to ensure that each student has the resources they need to succeed.

Chapter Summary

My own experience as a student in middle and high school and struggling with literacy skills within my social studies education was just the first step. After taking education classes and learning that specific literacy strategies that can increase student learning while differentiating lessons and being a student teacher and seeing first hand the struggles of students in today's schools with reading comprehension, writing, and speaking and listening, I know this capstone can be an asset in a secondary social studies classroom.

Continuing On

As this capstone continues, Chapter Two introduces literature that provides background for why literacy is needed in a social studies classroom as well as how to increase strategies used to give students choice and a differentiated approach to teaching social studies. Chapter Three details the capstone project that I have created: a website resource that categorizes literacy strategies with examples of use in both middle and high school social studies classrooms with descriptions of each strategy and why and how it can increase student learning. The concluding Chapter Four is a wrap-up detailing an overview of the capstone and how I plan to use my website/resource in the future. It is my goal to create a strong resource to answer my capstone question: *What literacy strategies can be incorporated into secondary social studies classrooms to increase*

student learning? By finding the strongest literacy strategies with proven results, they can be adapted to secondary social studies classrooms so that teachers will be able to use the resource created in this capstone and increase student learning. Chapter two will explore the research to inform teachers on the importance of literacy in social studies classrooms in a literature review.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

When teachers look at the Minnesota State Standards for secondary level social studies, the skills in which students should be competent require many abilities including describing, identifying, outlining, explaining, analyzing, evaluating, and to compare and contrast (Minnesota Department of Education, 2013). To ensure that students are able to complete and even exceed these standards, secondary social studies teachers should be armed with the best resources and abilities to assist students in reaching those standards. When asked to have students describe, outline, evaluate, or analyze, (as well as other skills), a certain amount of literacy teaching is required for student learning (Dobbs, Ippolito, & Charner-Laird, 2016). What is not required is for teachers to have a background or knowledge of teaching literacy. While students in 7th grade are required to “outline the major political and military events of the Civil War” (Minnesota Department of Education [MDE], 2013, p. 73), their social studies teachers are not required to take a class on how to instruct writing an outline. While most teachers have gone through a teacher education program where they gain instructional knowledge in subject matter areas and possibly have 1-2 courses on the basics of literacy, there is no requirement for licensed social studies teachers to have learned literacy practices in their content work before earning their license (Minn. Stat. §§ 122A.181-184 (2018)) unless directed by their own preparation program.

What literacy strategies can be incorporated into secondary social studies classrooms to increase student learning? This literature review looks at this question and the uses of literacy in secondary social studies classrooms, through reading comprehension, writing, and speaking with focuses on authentic assessment, challenges of incorporating literacy strategies into social studies classrooms, and specific strategies to increase comprehension. The strategies presented are also catered for different learning needs and types of student learning. Some literacy strategies included are reflective, intuitive, logical, unstructured, visual, individual, or collaborative. Secondary social studies students will all learn slightly different from the next student and teachers. To be prepared as one would like to be, educators should have multiple resources available for units to be able to differentiate learning while still having a focus on the learning objectives and standards (Gunter, Estes, & Mintz, 2007). Therefore, this capstone is not only looking into need and reasons for increasing literacy strategies, but introducing the how and why to use new strategies in addition to educators' already prepared material. These resources and strategies are also an option for differentiating lessons and increasing student learning through an expansion of stronger literacy connections with the content.

Reading Comprehension in Social Studies Classrooms

In a secondary social studies classroom, reading texts and documents is one of the foremost ways for students to gain insights into the past and learn about political and social issues in the world (Wineburg, 1991). To increase student learning and knowledge through reading comprehension, secondary teachers use a mix of primary and secondary

sources in the classroom. Primary sources are original items from the past or written by individual's direct experience in an event, often in the medium of letters, speeches, diaries, oral histories, and photographs (Kottler & Gallavan, 2008). According to Kottler and Gallavan, (2008), secondary sources are more often used and are documents written by “individuals who have researched information and offer an interpretation or analysis based on primary resources” and are seen in textbooks, magazines, journals, and encyclopedias (p. 107).

By using certain literacy strategies, social studies teachers can continue to focus on content, but also differentiate lessons and types of reading comprehension habits. To gain a better understanding of the texts and materials that are introduced, students need to be able to not just read but also comprehend the meanings to later analyze and apply their learning. To do this, they need not only to understand the content through reading to later apply and analyze learning, but they also need to learn the perspectives of authors. As Wineburg (1991) found, when historians read, they automatically take into account the author's perspective but high school students rarely look at the author's point of view (POV). To make sure that not only comprehension is increased but that all aspects of a text are taken into account, certain literacy strategies introduced in this section takes into account multiple areas of reading comprehension while integrating author POV and motive.

The next subsection focuses on how to create authentic assessment of reading comprehension and authentic learning from literacy strategies. By looking at authentic assessment and what that means in a secondary social studies classroom, the strategies

presented later on cater to the goals of authentic assessment and help answer the question of: *What literacy strategies can be incorporated into secondary social studies classrooms to increase student learning?*

Assessment in reading comprehension. Authentic assessment of reading comprehension can be shown in many ways, but in a social studies classroom, it is usually required that students show their learning through multiple choice tests, essays, or short answers (King, Newman, & Carmichael, 2009). Those can be a way for a student to demonstrate memorization of facts and someone else's analysis from a textbook or secondary sources, but to gain authentic learning through reading comprehension, there are a few ways to gauge student learning that can go beyond showing students can recognize certain key phrases or words. Authentic learning would show that students can place their learning in a historical content with cause-and-effect implications, understand the perspective of a certain political or historical perspective that might be different than their own, or give the *why* of an event without needing to look at a textbook for another author's opinion (Wineburg, 2001). The goal of assessment should not just be for standardized tests and ticking off standards; students need to become "knowledgeable on important issues in their world" and connect that knowledge to current events and critical topics (Bell Soares & Wood, 2010, p. 490).

Authentic assessment does not mean that students cannot have an authentic experience in conventional classes or with conventional coursework, but instead identifying a lesson that is as King et al. (2009) states, "more complex and socially or personally meaningful than others" (p. 44). Meaning, instead of just rote memorization,

students should be able to use higher order thinking skills and connect their content not just with other content, but the real world, and even the students' own lives (King et al., 2009). One way that social studies teachers can help their classrooms focus on this authentic learning goal in reading comprehension is by not focusing on the find and search mentality when using texts. Too often students are asked to find an answer to a specific question that students can search for in a text rather than using what they learned and their prior knowledge to analyze the answer themselves. The "locate information in the text" skill dominates many classrooms and should be reconsidered so that students can truly show their learning instead of showing their search and find skills (Wineburg, 2001, p. 51). Instead, teachers should focus on student analysis and when integrating literacy strategies in a class, it is much easier to see trends, spot struggles for students, and help students find answers for themselves instead of the textbook telling them everything (Hosp & Suchey, 2014).

Multiple choice assessments are commonly given as quizzes and tests in social studies classrooms as it is a practiced way of testing students' abilities to identify the correct answer in a lineup of options (Paris et al., 1992). The questions are normally quick to write and can come straight from texts read in class. But does that really check the students' knowledge of content, or is it a test in memorization? If that is the goal of an assessment, to have students point out an accurate statement amongst other false statements, then yes, it might be a fair assessment. Moreover, if students are given a text such as a letter from a soldier in the civil war and asked to identify what side the student thinks the soldier is fighting for based on the evidence given or the details in the language

that the letter uses would be using more of the higher-order thinking that most teachers aim for.

Another focus that authentic assessment aims for is to shift classroom focus to substantive focus (Schneider, 1994). Meaning, students should not just study content and curriculum as the past or something that does not reach them as people. While studying event dates and facts are very important in the timeline of a cause and effect in the larger picture, the memorization of dates or events is not an authentic learning experience for the student. They should study the why behind historical events and look at perspectives of both sides of conflicts to see the whole picture instead of singular views. Bringing the content to the real world and if possible, to the students' lives is a great way to bring higher order thinking, depth of knowledge, a connectedness to the world outside of the classroom, and a substantive conversation to the table (Schneider, 1994).

This capstone's goal is to look into the question of *What literacy strategies can be incorporated into secondary social studies classrooms to increase student learning?* By increasing certain skills and literacy strategies, authentic learning can be catered to in a classroom and therefore, student learning can increase. Engaged reading in a social studies classroom should not only consist of studying one topic at a time, but instead integrating new ideas and facts with previous knowledge (Paris et al., 1992). When studying the causes of World War II, there should be connections to WWI and the German state in Europe, not just an American focus on the Great Depression or the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Students should relate to the entire worldview to see the connections that span across the curriculum, history, and society (Paris et al., 1992).

In the Minnesota State Standards (2013) for secondary social studies, there are many specific standards that require identifying cause and effect, analyzing an event or phenomena, or assess the influence or state of certain events or ideas. To ensure that students are prepared to do this, guiding students during reading, having planned graphic organizers to outline findings on a page, and even creating story maps or visuals that help students see change over time and cause and effect in action can help provide small steps to authentic learning (Schneider, 1994).. As diving deeper into authentic assessments can show that an increase in reading comprehension can help increase student learning, there are many challenges associated with updating curriculum or even implementing new strategies in a classroom (Schneider, 1994). Continuing on, this capstone will discuss a few specific challenges that new literacy strategies can create in a classroom.

Challenges of introducing new reading strategies. As teachers in a changing world, not only are the standards and individual school goals constantly changing, but so are methods for bringing information into the classroom (Wineburg, 2001). From technology changes and enhancements (or lack of enhancements,) to accessibility of secondary and primary sources online, social studies teachers have billions of sources available at their fingertips. The challenge is choosing *what* to bring into your classroom and how that makes using the immense amount of resources meaningful.

Trying to integrate literacy strategies into a planned curriculum can be very challenging, especially for teachers that have team-developed lessons or certain schedules that need to be kept to get through units in line with other teachers. Wineburg (2001) noted that there is a “growing recognition by educators and policymakers that questions

of historical reasoning carry implications that go well beyond the curricula borders of history” (p. 50). It is because of the influence that social studies has not only on a student’s classroom grade but on their life outside of school that creating an environment that fosters authentic learning is imperative to go above and beyond meeting standards (Kottler & Gallavan, 2008). By incorporating literacy strategies into social studies classrooms, teachers can learn more ways to reach diverse learners as well as increase student learning at levels beyond state standards (Wineburg, 2001).

Documents used in social studies classes, even textbooks in middle level classes, but especially authentic content, can be very rich and conceptually dense (Kottler & Gallavan, 2008). This can make differentiating every lesson (or at least every lesson containing a focus on reading documents) very difficult for teachers to manage for each student. Students with different reading levels and abilities often can benefit from different instructions, differentiated or customized activities, or at least simplified versions of activities or assignments (Shaver & National Council for the Social Studies, 1991). But with one teacher in a classroom, this type of differentiation can be very difficult, especially if trying to introduce more literacy strategies through reading to the class. Introducing literacy strategies can be a daunting task with trying to balance prepared curriculum, but with a resource of possible strategies like this capstone discusses, integrating more reading comprehension activities and graphic organizers is possible (Kottler & Gallavan, 2008).

Evaluation is also a difficult task to take on when trying to introduce concepts with a goal of authentic learning (Schneider, 1994). It is great to have a goal of having

students achieve authentic learning and introduce literacy strategies to reach that goal, but so is ensuring that you have an accurate evaluate whether students have truly reached those achievements. Evaluation of authentic learning can be assessed in class, but the instructor should make sure that there is a focus on higher order thinking and depth of knowledge (Schneider, 1994). This means that an evaluation or assessment of student learning should not just be whether a student completed an assignment or implemented a strategy. Teachers should look to see if the students were able to explain their learning past memorization or copying quotes from sources. There should be a construction of knowledge throughout assignments and by the time a summative assessment comes, teachers should see analysis in students' work, which means making sure that questions asked are not only fact-based, but asked for student analysis and deeper knowledge (King et al., 2009).

There are strategies that can be implemented in social studies classrooms that are not only aimed to authentic learning and student growth, but also catered to ease of use for teachers. In response to this capstone's essential question of *What literacy strategies can be incorporated into secondary social studies classrooms to increase student learning?*, the next section attempts to give tangible resources for teachers to increase the learning of their own social studies students. The next section details strategies for the three stages of reading: Pre-reading, during reading, and post-reading.

Strategies for increasing reading comprehension. To understand the words on a page, there are multiple stages that students need to be competent and practiced in so that they are successful in the classroom. There are different skills used in the

pre-reading, during reading, and post-reading stages (Jetton & Dole, 2004). Pre-reading uses skills like word association and grouping along with recognizing text features and graphics, while during reading includes determining key ideas, and asking mental questions as they read (Ogle, Klemp, & McBride, 2007). Post-reading skills needed for stronger reading comprehension are reflective thinking about the topic and questioning the validity and reliability of arguments and questions posed in the reading (Ogle et al., 2007, p. 9).

By looking into strategies and skills that should be introduced into secondary social studies classrooms, the capstone question of *What literacy strategies can be incorporated into secondary social studies classrooms to increase student learning?* will be further answered. One main thing to remember when discussing these strategies as well as the others to follow in this capstone, is that “not all strategies can be used effectively by all students” (Jetton & Dole, 2004, p. 47). These strategies should be mixed into curriculum based on standards and objectives of lessons to increase student learning, not just be used as a grading measure. This means what works for one student might not work for another, and that is normal. Giving students options once you have been through multiple strategies as a class is also a great way to let students have choice in their learning while also being able to work with their strengths to learn. Getting students to buy into a strategy and how it can benefit them and help students commit to the strategy, especially if it is different than what they are used to (Mason, Reid, & Hagaman, 2012).

Pre-reading. One of the first stages to gauge and then increase student understanding of texts and assigned readings in a secondary social studies classroom is to make sure that students are set up for success in their pre-reading activities. Pre-reading activities and literacy strategies can focus on prior knowledge of students to gauge what they already know as well as anticipation strategies to prepare students to gain insight into the content they are about to read (Kottler & Gallavan, 2008). As teachers introduce these literacy strategies to increase pre-reading comprehension for students, another thing that teachers should always keep in mind is bias. While not always at the forefront of concern in social studies classrooms, questioning the identity of the author, why they wrote what they did, and how they framed the text is often just as important as the content within the text itself (Alvermann, Phelps, & Ridgeway, 2007). By focusing on prior knowledge and possible bias before students read, using literacy strategies proven to increase reading comprehension can also increase overall student learning and therefore success in social studies classrooms. Types of strategies that focus on prior subject knowledge, distortions or misinterpretations of content that students might have prior to reading, and finding author bias before reading include Rate Your Knowledge and anticipation guides.

‘Rate Your Knowledge’ is a type of pre-reading strategy that can help teachers gauge what their students already know as well as find any misconceptions and biases that students already have about a topic or event (Blachowicz, 1986). One of the first things teachers want to know when introducing a new unit or lesson is “what do my students already know?” ‘Rate Your Knowledge’ is a simply organized chart that has five

columns. The first column should be the vocab word, event, or idea followed by the next two narrow columns are for “Don’t Know” and “Heard of It”. The last two columns should have a bit more width, and are “Have Some Idea” and “Know It” (Vaca & Vaca, 2017). This gives students the opportunity to give explanations for items they might know or have an idea about, but not be stressed if they have never heard of something or are not confident by selecting either column 2 or 3. To use this strategy fully, it is helpful to hand out the same sheet or at least the same copy to students after learning the material as they can fill in what they have learned, letting the teacher and themselves physically see the growth in their understanding of a topic (Vaca & Vaca, 2017). English language learners (ELLs) and struggling readers might have more answers that are blank or in the “not know” category during the pre-reading phase.

Anticipation guides are one way to activate prior knowledge and also give students an introduction to the content they are about to read more about. As Alverman et al. (2007) stated, anticipation guides are “a series of statements that are relevant both to what students already know and to the materials they are going to be studying” (p. 174). When creating an anticipation guide, teachers have a lot of freedom in the organization and focus of the guide (Alverman et al., 2007). The basic layout should have directions at the top followed by 3 main columns. The far left column would be labeled “Before reading”, the far left labeled “After reading”, and the middle column would be a fact, topic, or statement. Students, as directed in the instructions, would use True/False, Agree/Disagree, or even dates as their answers in the “Before Reading” and “After Reading” columns (Kottler & Gallavan, 2008). Anticipation guides are a very useful

resource to use for pre-reading and post-reading texts. They can assist in facilitating a deeper comprehension of text and help students develop metacognition (Vaca & Vaca, 2017). Through the use of anticipation guides, especially on primary sources and more difficult texts, students know what to look for as they read, as they have filled out their perceptions or guesses already about the content. As they read the texts, they will want to be able to see if their predictions were true and fact-find, which could increase their interest in the topic as well (Vaca & Vaca, 2017).

During reading. Strategies to increase reading comprehension should also be focused while students are reading or between chapter or sections of a reading if you are reading texts as a class. As Wineburg (2001) found, reading for the social studies discipline differs from other academic reading because when reading for social studies is an investigation to consider human motives, degrees of bias and trustworthiness, and the author's main points (Spires, Kerkhoff, Graham, Thompson, & Lee, 2018). By using specific literacy strategies in social studies as students read, comprehension can be more focused on motive, bias, and POV while still learning content to connect causal relationships in the texts. Some literacy strategies, if executed and explained to students to maximize learning, can be very beneficial as well as activities such as evolving main idea columns, outlines, semantic webbing, and memory storage (Zwiers, 2010).

THIEVES is a strategy that focuses on reading comprehension of detail-heavy readings, longer readings, or higher level readings, especially in textbooks or secondary texts that have multiple sections and focuses (Manz, 2002). In using THIEVES, students are instructed to take notes in a certain way as they read assigned texts. The THIEVES

acronym stands for **T**itle, **H**eadings, **I**ntro paragraphs, **E**very first sentence in a paragraph, **V**ocab (or Visuals), **E**nd of chapter questions, and **S**ummary (Manz, 2002). While THIEVES is technically used throughout the reading process, it is examined during this part of the process as it is a helpful tool for students to use as they read, capturing information as they find it instead of recalling it later on (Manz, 2002). Also, with many social studies teachers left without options to choose or update often dense textbooks for their classes, THIEVES presents a way to take on intimidating textbooks one piece at a time, giving struggling readers tricks to master the textbook and break down information (Zwiers, 2010). The use of THIEVES is also very easy as you can create print-out bookmarks for students to have individual copies, handouts where students can take notes, or, once students know the acronym, they can take all their notes in blank notebook pages.

A more visually focused strategy for students to use while they read are Sketch Illustrations (Zwiers, 2010). Sketch Illustrations can be used during reading or post-reading, but will be focused on for during reading as it gives students an opportunity to take notes that are not just representational, but offer an alternative accommodation for students that have difficulty producing written notes, students with disabilities, or students whose first language is not English (Gunter et al., 2007). Sketch Illustrations are very much as they sound. Students are instructed to use paper and a writing utensil (or colored utensils if resources are available or wanted) and draw a narration of the text they are reading and should draw more illustrations to show more detail or less to draw a bigger picture or summary of the reading (Zwiers, 2010). Once students have drawn their

own interpretations and connections to the text, having students share their illustrations in small groups can help students learn concepts they might have missed, not focused on, or give them a chance to see the text from a different student's learning perspective. Sketch Illustrations are also very powerful in increasing reading comprehension as drawing helps students' observational skills and creates strong connections with the material (Gunter et al., 2007).

Post-reading. Many literacy strategies that focus on reading comprehension have a factor that relates to the post-reading stage of a student's progression in reading a text (Zwiers, 2010). But ensuring that there is not a drop-off after during reading strategies is critical so that students are able to use the last stage of reading to reflect and connect their learnings is imperative (Zwiers, 2010). This section outlines two main post-reading strategies that help students increase their learning through authentic learning as they use higher order thinking skills, a connectedness to the real world, and a depth of knowledge of content.

A strategy with a focus on post-reading comprehension is the Cause and Effect Timeline. This strategy works best when the documents/readings students are focusing on are narrative and expository texts. Cause and Effect Timeline is a graphic organizer that lets students "not only determine the sequence of events in a story or historical account but also to establish or infer the causes of those events" (Zwiers, 2010, p. 104). Students can create a timeline (if previously used in class), otherwise finding a copy online or creating a handout is best to create the organizer outline. On the timeline, there should be space above and below the horizontal timeline bar. Above the timeline bar, events should

be written (with or without dates as long as events are in chronological order), and then the cause of each event should be written on the bottom half of the timeline bar below the event it is referring to (Zwiers, 2010). And if one cause leads to or is part of the cause for multiple events, lines should be drawn to each event a cause has impact on so that students can start to see the ramifications and causes of a larger scale idea like a time period or war.

While this strategy can be done individually, teachers can mold the activity so that students can work with partners or small groups while filling out their Timeline or hold discussions afterward to confer and share inferences and ideas. Zwiers (2010) suggested that if students are sharing completed timelines with one another, they should use the specific language of “One possible cause might have been...because...” (p. 104). This gives students freedom to share their own ideas about causes and the events they impact as well as giving other students the opportunity to either add on in agreement or share their own inferences and causes of events with the start of the script.

The 4x40 strategy is a literacy strategy that can be used post-reading and also be a good introduction to think-pair-share or small group discussions. The main idea of the 4x40 strategy is that students can focus their learning on more specific details in depth rather than trying to memorize or recite a plethora of topics from a single reading (Vaca & Vaca, 2017). To have students use this strategy, on simple notebook paper, students will draw a column on the left side of their page so there is about 1 inch in the left column and in that left column students will list 4 terms, ideas, or events that come up in the reading. They then must write at least 40 words describing each of the 4 main ideas

(Vaca & Vaca, 2017). By focusing on a limited number of main ideas or words, students can write their understanding of a smaller set of material making the task more manageable for them (Vaca & Vaca, 2017). Based on how the 4x40 is used in the class, students will be able to have think, pair, share time to talk with others to discuss understanding and learn main points of readings that they thought of. For EL learners or students at lower reading levels, teachers can also assign four specific words so that students would only need to focus on learning those terms or ideas instead of trying to choose what four terms to write about on their own (Vaca & Vaca, 2017).

A focus on reading comprehension, while crucial to achieving student learning, there is also a strong need for social studies classroom to have authentic learning in writing and speaking skills to truly display a student's sense of voice in their learning. The next section of this capstone continues to answer the question of *What literacy strategies can be incorporated into secondary social studies classrooms to increase student learning?* The section has a concentration on writing, authentic assessment using the form of writing, challenges to writing strategies in the classroom, and specific writing strategies.

Writing in Social Studies Classrooms

Literacy, while often focused in text and reading, also needs to involve types of writing as they are just as important to improving student understanding of material in a secondary social studies classroom. Students are more actively engaged in learning when they are able to write and process information (Kottler & Gallavan, 2008). Authentic assessment in writing can be difficult but should be focused on not only vocab or

identification, but also on fluency, comprehension, and reflection (Miller & Veatch, 2010). This way students are able to still grow as writers, but with a focus on the content and analysis, there is a focus on the social studies content and not just literacy skills. There are also challenges like timing to create, implement, and grade writing focused activities and projects, meeting standards with informal writing, and making sure that students are aware of plagiarism and how to avoid it. By having strategies and activities that explore writing in a social studies classroom, student learning can be targeted and increase in content knowledge, transfer and showing of vocabulary, and constructing meaning and critical analysis from their curriculum. This section will focus on answering the question of *What literacy strategies can be incorporated into secondary social studies classrooms to increase student learning?* by focusing on literacy through implementing writing strategies.

Assessment in writing. Writing is often the logical next step after reading content in a social studies classroom and historically, assessment of writing looks at a final product that students produce (Shaver & National Council for the Social Studies, 1991). Assessment is critical in writing, but writing should also be used as a tool for learning (Young, 2016). There are strategies that should be used for formative and summative assessment, but there are also skills and strategies that use writing that can be catered with a focus strictly on student learning (Young, 2016). Note-taking is typically most important to the notetaker and therefore the importance of different criteria or details written down should be more up to the judgment of the writer (the student) than the assessor (teacher) (Young, 2016). This does not mean that writing and even note-taking

should never be assessed. It does mean that teachers should take a step back before trying to use everything that students write on, whether it be notes, graphic organizers, or even a worksheet, and consider what the goal of that strategy is, then decide whether it should be used for assessment of student learning.

When assessment of writing is being considered, there is a strong agreement that carefully set rubrics or checklists can be especially helpful in gauging student learning and ensuring that students are meeting criteria or the goal of the lesson, as well as helping start a dialogue between the teacher and student with feedback (Alger, 2009; Berry, 2014; Knipper & Duggan, 2006). Rubrics and checklists make it easier for teachers to show students where they were meeting or not meeting learning objectives and gives teachers starting points to providing written feedback as well (Knipper & Duggan, 2006). Checklists are especially a good idea as they can help students self-monitor if they are meeting expectations. Teachers know that grading papers, worksheets, and even simple paragraph assessments for every student they see during the day can be a time-consuming task (Knipper & Duggan, 2006). If students are able to self-monitor, use partners to have formative check-ins on writing assessments, or act as a starting point, teachers can focus on struggling students; for instance, students who are close but might not be grabbing concepts that are needed, or see what students might need more challenges in class (Knipper & Duggan, 2006).

There is a need for proper writing strategy and structure, but the first step for secondary social studies teachers is to base their assessment on student learning (Paris et al., 1992). Writing skills can be developed through practice, self-monitoring, and

assistance from peer and teacher help, but the standards and objectives that most students must get to and reach are based on content (Paris et al., 1992). So if teachers can focus students on letting writing ability come from continued practice and content-focused assignments, students can reach standards and develop skills through practice (Paris et al., 1992).

Social studies teachers should also remember that there is a difference in writing to learn and learning to write (Berry, 2014). This means that when students are writing to learn, it is content focused and the deeper level thinking and analysis are the main reasons for writing (Berry, 2014) If students are learning to write, then the focus is on grammar, spelling, fluency and flow. Most social studies assignments are content-based as they look for students to give a narrative, summarize, analyze, or describe something that they are learning about on certain topics (Minnesota Standards, 2013). Yet there are often parts of grading or focuses coming from secondary teachers in all subjects that mark students down for incorrectly spelled words, when the focus should be on content learning, not the mechanics of the writing.

A plan for how to assess writing of secondary social studies students is a first step to using more literacy strategies to increase student learning, especially through writing. Having a focus on writing to learn or learning to write can help take steps to answering the research question of this capstone: *What literacy strategies can be incorporated into secondary social studies classrooms to increase student learning?* Another step that needs to be considered are challenges that come with introducing writing strategies into the classroom. The next section addresses some of those challenges and how teachers can

overcome or modify those challenges so they can integrate more writing strategies to increase the learning of all of their students.

Challenges of introducing new writing strategies. It can be easy to say what teachers should focus on when giving students writing assignments and how to assess them, but what is not always easy is going beyond the surface and facing the many challenges that can come from assigning students writing-based projects or assignments. Some challenges that can be implemented in a secondary social studies classroom when trying to implement more writing based strategies include time management, avoiding plagiarism in formal papers, and deciding what should be graded (Knipper & Duggan, 2006). This section looks at challenges faced, but also provides ways to fix or overcome those challenges to show that increasing literacy strategies based on writing skills can be beneficial to all students and increase their learning.

As discussed in the Assessment in Writing section, checklists and rubrics are a great way not only to grade writing assignments or assessments, but are also a great resource to ensure that teachers have enough time to truly assess each student's work (Knipper & Duggan, 2006). If a secondary social studies teacher has 5 periods of 30 students each, that is 150 students. Meaning, if the teacher ever assigns a worksheet, short writing assignment, or even a writing section on an assessment, that is 150 papers to read. Knowing that workload could be coming can be very overwhelming and can make writing assignments or assessment with writing components less desirable to assign to students (Berry, 2014). The first thing to remember is that not everything needs to be put in the gradebook. From quick-writes to student notes, to longer writing projects,

sometimes the best assessment is informal check-ins or over the shoulder checks to ensure students are attempting the assignments, but the teacher doesn't need to read every word. Being afraid to assign students to write can be a disservice to the students as writing can help maximize student learning of content as they apply their own analysis (Berry, 2014). So knowing or choosing what to fully read versus checking in partway through a reading, having students peer-edit (with checklists or rubrics), self-check, or actually reading all student work, social studies teachers can ensure writing is implemented strongly in their classroom without the overwhelming feeling of hours of grading hundreds of papers.

Another challenge of integrating certain writing strategies in a secondary social studies classroom is the issue of plagiarism. In most informal strategies and even many assessments that take place in class, students will not be required to cite sources, but for papers and assignments that students specifically use outside sources for, they need to understand how, why, and what to cite (McCullen, 2003). While most schools and districts have plagiarism policies, it is always a good idea for social studies teachers to go over what is considered plagiarism at the beginning of the year and throughout so that students have a solid understanding of what is required of them as writers (McCullen, 2003). Having a poster on the wall of a classroom should not be the only step social studies teachers take to prevent plagiarism. They should also be careful not to assume that students will learn and remember citation rules from their English class. If a social studies teacher assigns writing pieces or papers, there should be an explanation of what citations to use (APA, MLA, Chicago, etc), when to use them (not just direct quotes but

also paraphrasing or using any ideas that are not the students' own), and how to cite (McCullen, 2003). By taking just a few steps at the beginning of class and retouching when introducing new assignments, students can learn best practices that will help them for the rest of their academic careers. It will also promote acknowledging others' ideas and pushing students to do their own critical thinking and analysis (McCullen, 2003).

While there are many challenges to bringing in any number of strategies or activities to a secondary social studies classroom, there are often ways to overcome those obstacles, as seen in this section. After looking at the obstacles that teachers have to think about, the next step is diving into the strategies. As this capstone attempts to answer *What literacy strategies can be incorporated into secondary social studies classrooms to increase student learning?*, the next section focuses on specific writing based strategies to increase student learning in the secondary social studies classroom.

Strategies for writing. Writing in a social studies classroom is a gateway, taking the students from reading to being able to project and articulate their learning and understanding of required content (Miller & Veatch, 2010). The writing strategies in this section are helpful for showing critical thinking and a deeper level of understanding as well as ways to take diligent notes that are not simply copying another person's words, but applying understanding and then creating their own version of summaries. Written summaries can help students focus on details, and informal note-taking can help students improve their writing abilities as there is a focus on the critical thinking and content instead of worrying about spelling, grammar, or specific writing skills (Miller & Veatch, 2010). By giving students multiple strategies to test out and try in a social studies

classroom, students will be less likely to shy away from assignments because they can see what works best for them, especially within note-taking and graphic organizers of learned content (Alger, 2009). By diving deeper into writing strategies, *What literacy strategies can be incorporated into secondary social studies classrooms to increase student learning?* can be answered further.

Informal. Cornell Notes are a type of literacy strategy focused on strong student note taking. The focus of students using Cornell Notes is to “stimulate thinking through questions and a summary” (Young, 2016, p. 148). Cornell Notes are easily created by students on a blank sheet of paper or in a notebook, or can be printed and handed out by the teacher. There is a two-inch column on the left side where keywords, concepts, facts, or questions are written by the student. The right side is for the definitions, detail, and answers to the left column. There is also often a few lines reserved at the bottom of the page to summarize the page of notes as well (Young, 2016). This practice can be completely student-initiated as they read texts, but it can also be catered to assist struggling readers, EL learners, or when texts are particularly challenging or dense. The right column can be filled in or offered by the teacher so that students are able to focus on specifics of a text (The Learning Strategies Center, n.d.). Or teachers can also have students only fill in the left side as they read with preliminary questions or facts that stand out, and then group or pair with other students to fill in the right-sided column and summary. Cornell Notes can be helpful as a note-taking strategy that helps students record their learning, question the text, recite and reflect their learning, and then review

within the summary; something that can be difficult to do if there is not a structured note-taking within the class (Vaca & Vaca, 2017).

Everybody Write is a writing strategy that leads very easily to creating authentic classroom discussions and dialogue that are student-driven and based on their understanding of the material. It is a very simple idea as long as a teacher can carve at least one extra minute into wait time after students are done reading a text either individually or out loud as a class. The teacher has students finish their reading, and then taking anywhere between half a minute to three minutes, students will silently write their thoughts about what they read. It can be opinions, questions they have, a quote they found meaningful or thought-provoking, relating the reading to something in their life, in the world, or something from a previous lesson (Lemov, 2010). The point is to get them writing using the text as a guide or focal point. Once students have had time to at least get a few thoughts or question on their paper, an unstructured discussion can develop. This ensures that students have enough time to generate ideas for the discussion, feel confident enough to share as they have something written down, and allows cold calling of students as they are all prepared with at least something before you even call on them (Lemov, 2011).

Everybody Writes lets the teacher monitor students as they write to ensure that all students are participating and ready for questions and discussions to follow; it also gives every student a chance to share. For the students that have answers right away and their hand shoots up, Everybody Writes makes them pause and solidify and strengthen their thoughts before sharing (Lemov, 2011). And for other students that can be more shy or

averse to sharing off the top of their head, this allows students to have a sense of confidence, feeling of preparedness, and also helps refine thoughts as writing can “challenge students intellectually, engage them, and improves the quality of their ideas and their writing” (Lemov, 2011, p. 139). Having students focus on the writing lets them clear their thoughts and any questions they have before sharing out with the class which is a great focus on informal writing as well as informal and large class discussions (Lemov, 2011).

Formal. One writing strategy that teachers could look to use as assessment (most likely formative to see what aspects of a lesson or unit students are understanding) is Unsent Letters. For this writing strategy, students will be given a perspective or a person to “write a letter to” (Vaca & Vaca, 2017). If students are at a point where they can choose a POV or person of interest to write to, that is also a great way to individualize the assignment. Students should focus on the text, resources, and any materials that have been used in class so far so they can show their understanding of the content (Vaca & Vaca, 2017). The length of the assignment or number of “letters” is dependent on the teacher and what time is allocated. After students have written their letters, they can either share their letters out loud or they can be passed around anonymously so that other students can “respond” to the letters as well (Vaca & Vaca, 2017). Unsent Letters is a great way for students to use their creativity combined with their understanding of content. By letting students have the freedom to write the letter either from the POV of someone else or to someone of a different period or event, it lets the students write a

narrative of their understanding. This is also a way for teachers to conduct formative assessment with a fun spin for the students and the teacher as well.

Another formal writing strategy that can be used for formative assessment is BioPoems. BioPoems have a focus on writing across the curriculum with a creative spin on deeper understandings of specific people or groups of people in society and history. BioPoems require “students to think carefully about the content of the text and make inferences about what a [historical figure’s] actions and statements imply” (Fordham, Wellman, & Sandman, 2002, p. 157) and then create a structured poem based on the students understanding and inferences about the subject. The structure is 11 lines long and goes:

1. First name
2. Four traits that describe character
3. Relative (e.g., brother, sister, mother) of
4. Lover of...(three things or people)
5. Who feels...(three items)
6. Who needs...(three items)
7. Who fears...(three items)
8. Who gives...(three items)
9. Who would like to see...(three items)
10. Resident of...
11. Last name (Knipper & Duggan, 2006, p. 468).

As the poems are describing a person, there is not just one right answer since there are multiple lines that all come with a varied possibility of descriptions. While this strategy is focused around creative biographies, it can still be adjusted to include economics (consumer vs business or different types of economists), sociology and psychology (theorists or scientists), and politics (either specific people or political groups). All the teacher needs to do is edit the layout of certain lines like line 3, line 4, or line 10, and then the BioPoem can be more fitting for groups as well as individuals (Knipper & Duggan, 2006).

Writing is a critical skill for a social studies classroom and can be paired well with reading comprehension and speaking activities to increase student learning in a social studies classroom (Knipper & Duggan, 2006). As this section focused on the need for increasing writing activities, skills, and strategies in secondary social studies classroom, it detailed methods of assessment with a focus on student writing, challenges that come with increasing literacy strategies focused on writing, as well as specific strategies that can be implemented into social studies classrooms with little prep time but still increase student learning. This capstone's goal is to help answer the question of *What literacy strategies can be incorporated into secondary social studies classrooms to increase student learning?* The next section highlights speaking and listening within literacy of a social studies classroom, assessment within speaking and writing tasks, challenges of introducing and using speaking and listening activities in the classroom, and strategies that are specifically related to speaking and listening to stretch students' skills in this area.

Speaking and Listening in Social Studies Classrooms

Speaking is one of the most common ways we communicate and is vital in being able to express knowledge not only in a secondary social studies classroom, but also in the real world. Using speaking and conversation skills can help “increase inferring skills and recognizing bias,” two skills that increase student learning to content and real-world connections (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011, p. 143). By also integrating literacy strategies that have a focus on speaking, students can grow their own reading comprehension with increased skills of comparing, cause and effect, interpreting, and communicating (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). As this capstone continues to aim to help answer *What literacy strategies can be incorporated into secondary social studies classrooms to increase student learning?*, taking reading comprehension and writing and then adding a speaking and listening component to the literacy aim, can only strengthen and deepen student learning. Speaking and listening skills come in a variety of ways, and this section will focus on speaking in the form of discussion, both small-group and large-group, as well as introductions to debate.

Successful class discussions in a social studies classroom rely not only on strong guidance and knowledge from the teacher, but planning and layout of the discussion by the students. “Social studies is the study of groups and the expression of many different ideas and beliefs” (Kottler & Gallavan, 2008, p. 93). To have students share their learning and merge the content with their own ideas and beliefs, discussions need to foster safety and an openness of all involved. Some discussions are spontaneous and others are planned pieces of curriculum, and the difference often depends on the level of experience

with discussions of the students in the classroom. As social studies teachers look to have planned discussions and progress to more fluid and organic discussions, the following sections details strategies that help organize and take steps to keep them strong and focused.

Assessment in speaking. In Minnesota State Standards for middle school and high school students in social studies classrooms, students need to be able to describe, compare and contrast, and pose topics about various topics and events in the main subject areas (Minnesota Department of Education, 2013). To reach those standards, teachers can use a multitude of strategies and lessons to ensure that students are in fact learning not only those skills, but the content behind the standards too. One way to reach those standards is through speaking, but to use speaking skills as a measure of assessment, teachers need to design authentic speaking assessments to avoid creating a disservice to students that are not truly reaching the state standards in their learning.

The focus of authentic assessment should not just be on answers out loud correctly. That is not demonstrating that the student has a higher order of understanding or connectedness with the content. Instead, when assessing students through discussion and debate and other speaking and listening exercises, teachers should look at the cooperation of the students with one another, how they interact with the community of learners in the class, and if they are exhibiting analysis in their thoughts, not just repeating what a reading might have said (Paris et al., 1992). This can be difficult to measure, but if discussions and debates are practiced successfully and all students feel

supported and safe in that environment, the ease of showing authentic assessment should be indicated clearly (Paris et al., 1992).

The purposes of speaking activities should not always be assessment alone, but instead, they can be used to grow students' awareness, tolerance, and emotional connectedness with a topic (Brookefield, 2006). When studying immigration, if a teacher can have students discuss the difficulties families might have faced in the 1800s and then have students discuss how difficult it might be for them to leave their home and move to a new country, the students will be able to use their knowledge of immigration to frame the conversation; but the emotional realization and connectedness with the reality of immigration will impact the students in a way that does not need to be assessed. Instead, the goal of a discussion like that should be to have students truly connect with the material. This helps them understand perspectives, think about immigration on micro and macro levels, and build their respect for experiences of others as well, instead of worrying about an assessment grade linked to the lesson (Brookefield, 2006).

When teachers do use speaking activities or assignments for assessment to measure student learning, there should be a focus on elements such as staying focused, supporting ideas or opinions with examples of life, text, or previous lessons, being able to paraphrase and deepen other's ideas, and using positive communication techniques (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). Ensuring and assessing if students can stay focused on the topic at hand helps show the ability to build off of others' ideas and connect ideas to the main topic instead of distracting each other or going off on tangents. Including the ability to support their ideas with text, previous lesson examples, or life experiences, the student

can show a clearer understanding because they can connect content with their own life and the real world (Vaca & Vaca, 2017). Paraphrasing other students is similar to the ability to stay focused, as students are not only showing their ability to stay focused on what other students are saying, but to listen carefully to their ideas as well.

Conversing is a critical skill that is used not only in a social studies classroom, but something that students use every day, in all subject areas, and at home in their personal lives. But there should be a heavy focus on speaking in a secondary social studies classroom so that students can develop substantive conversations as well as connect their conversations of the subject area with their own lives and with the world (King et al., 2009). Speaking and listening are critical skills to develop in a social studies classroom as those skills help students develop their own judgment and encourage students to grow in participatory democracy (Brookefield, 2006). By having students discuss or debate issues, either historical, political, social, or economic, they can grow as global citizens as they will have the confidence and practice of contributing their own knowledge in higher level discourse. So to ensure this growth, teachers need to make sure that during their assessment, part of the grading scale is on the participatory skills students attempt.

As students grow in confidence and knowledge, their skills and analysis will grow, but as integration of meaningful discussions joins the classroom, teachers should be open to seeing assessment as not just perfect analysis, but as using speaking skills, respect for others' perspectives, and growing in communication skills (King et al., 2009). On top of using authentic assessment for speaking strategies and ensuring student growth, there are more challenges that come with introducing new speaking strategies into a

secondary social studies classroom. The following section addresses some of those challenges.

Challenges of introducing new speaking strategies. While using speaking strategies in a secondary social studies classroom can help students find a deeper understanding of knowledge and help communication skills so they can have substantive conversations, there are also challenges that come with introducing speaking strategies to the classroom. Secondary students can struggle with a fear of public speaking, making it difficult for teachers to moderate larger group discussions and debates and to ensure that all students have an equitable amount of learning (Brookefield, 2006). There can also be difficulties with balancing how structured to make a discussion so that it stays on topic but is not dominated by teacher moderation.

Small group discussion might not reach all aspects of a topic as it is limited to the students in the small group, but by having a focused number of students, individual voices are heard more clearly and can create a feeling of community within the small group. This builds trust within the group and confidence in the content being discussed. Many students can have a fear of speaking in front of the class. These students that might have great ideas but are stifled by their own fear can build confidence in speaking of their observations in small groups (Brookefield, 2006).

While there are many dilemmas that can come with discussion and debates being introduced into classrooms, two key dilemmas are a balance of structure and unstructured discussions and deciding if whole-group versus small-group serves as the best option for format. For teachers, having a more structured discussion or even a structured debate,

there can be much more control over timing, the topic, and expectations of the activity (Piro, 2016). When there are clear essential questions being asked, assigned common readings, and if the teacher is guiding questions, the outcome is much more predictable, which can sometimes be the goal of a discussion (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). If a teacher has a goal of a lesson or set curriculum in mind, a structured and set way of discussion might help students all reach similar conclusions which, if that is the goal of the lesson, is considered a positive outcome. But if the teacher is looking to lead to more Socratic style discussions and giving students questions but letting them lead the way to the focus of discussion, then the outcome is less predictable. It becomes more challenging for the teacher to maintain control over the timing, and there could be less focused debate as there is an ambiguity in the discussion (Piro, 2016). One way to overcome these obstacles is having a mix of both structured and unstructured speaking activities in the classroom. The strategies listed later in this capstone give an introduction to the possibilities of aiming for more structured discussions that can grow to larger more student-led activities.

There is also a challenge for teachers to ensure that their students are prepared and ready for the type of debate or discussions that are practiced in a social studies classroom. To have successful discussion in a classroom, students should have ground rules that are understood by the entire class before any activities start (Brookefield, 2006). Planning time for creating the ground rules of classroom debates and discussions can easily be a part of the class introduction with other rules, but should also have an aspect of student involvement. Yes, there are specific strategies that will require tweaking of any rules set forth, but a line of respect, openness to perspectives, and fairness should be part of the

groundwork (Brookefield, 2006). While this is a challenge that has to be thought of earlier on in a class, it is worth it for bringing in discussion and debate into the classroom so that there isn't a panic or afterthought of going over such things right before a discussion. The following section outlines various strategies for discussions and debates integrated into the social studies classroom under the assumption that the teacher and students have gone through general rules for student discussions and debates.

Strategies for speaking and listening. Social studies is often focused on the text-heavy nature of many lessons that rely on primary and secondary documents, with reading comprehension being a main focus. While reading comprehension is a necessary skill to succeed in a social studies classroom, the need for speaking helps not only build stronger oral language skills (especially with academic language), but it helps practice and build skills of “questioning, summarizing, clarifying, connecting, and interpreting” (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011, p. 12-13). As students are able to compare their ideas and perspectives with other students through speaking in discussions and debates, they are also building their critical thinking skills as well as promoting valuing and understanding of different perspectives. Speaking skills are also crucial in student learning, especially in reading comprehension. Speaking and conversation with others can help organize thoughts, analyze evidence, and create connections while strengthening vocab and syntax which can show authentic learning in a classroom (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011, p. 13). In discussions, students are able to interpret ideas and compare thoughts and understanding of texts while also testing each other's ideas with questions and challenges. Social studies is an accumulation of multiple perspectives from history, society, politics, and more. As

students learn to understand the importance of respect and openness to others' ideas, they are able to take full steps forward as global citizens. The strategies in this section relate directly to small-and large-group discussions as well as introductions to debate skills and practices.

Discussions. Discussion Starters is a great way to immediately use discussions in class and can be used throughout the entire school year, applying different starters for different topics and units (Zwiers, 2010). This strategy takes some work up front in creating a poster that can be posted in the classroom and used during multiple lessons by students, but ultimately requires less planning time later on once students know how to use the strategy. An example will be shown in the website created for the capstone project. The poster would have three main sections of different areas of focus that have prompts and questions on the left, and then sentence starters for responses on the right. Discussion Starters' three main groupings are Predictions/Inferences/Questions, Reactions/Opinions/Feelings, and Evidence/Connections. The grouping of Prediction, Interferences, and Questions has statements including "Why do you think...", "Why did the author...", and "what can you infer from... why?" (Zwiers, 2010). Then each question or prompt would have a response starter across from it on the image such as "I think it means that...", "I predict that...", or I wonder why..." (Zwiers, 2010). Each grouping has a list of discussion-starting questions or statements that students should be prompted to consult to create questions and statements with each other to acquire habits of complex thinking and include more academically focused language in their discussions (Zwiers, 2010). In small groups, this strategy works well because students can focus on

the different groupings depending on how comfortable they are with the reading or topic (Zwiers, 2010). This strategy also can increase reading comprehension as there can be a focus to use this after reading texts and students can self-guide small groups about the reading and discuss perspectives and understandings with one another in an informal way.

One discussion strategy that links post-reading, writing, and small and large group discussions are Discussion Webs. Discussion Webs help students dive deeper into certain topics and can be used as introductions to debates or to look into author POV or multiple perspectives of an event or idea. Discussion Webs do not need to be a handout, but instead can easily be created by students on notebook paper as the layout is simple in nature. Students should be given the essential question (EQ) or central question to the reading and write that at the top of their paper (Alvermann, 1991). Then the paper should be divided to 2 sides: Yes and No (or whatever variation or positive or negative that comes from the EQ) (Alvermann, 1991). Ask students to pair up and write 3-4 points for each side of the question based on the text or assigned readings while keeping both list sizes relatively the same length. If there is a focus on writing, teachers can ask for full sentences; otherwise, bullet lists work well, especially once transitioning to sharing ideas out loud (Vaca & Vaca, 2017). Teachers can also challenge higher level readers to make their points without looking back at assigned readings or doing most recall from memory.

Once the lists are made by pairs, group each pair with another partner set and in those groups, ask students to come to a consensus based on the lists that the group members have. If students disagree on what a “final” answer is and consensus is difficult

to reach, be sure to remind students that it is okay to disagree with their group, but to be respectful of opinions. Direct students to try to keep an open mind as they hear all points for both sides, as recognizing and respecting multiple perspectives is a central goal of studying social studies. As groups have their final conclusion, each group member shares the group's consensus with one reason why they chose it and how they got to their consensus (Alvermann et al., 2007). Once all groups have shared, students can ask other groups follow-up questions and continue on to large-group discussion with the whole class. After a large class discussion, students should then use the bottom of their paper to write their own answer to the essential question (Alvermann, 1991). This gives students a way to conclude their learning by taking what they have read, discussing with others and hearing other points of view and facts they might have missed on their own, and applying it to their answers.

Debate. One strategy that helps introduce debate-style academic speaking skills is Problematic Perspectives. When using Problematic Perspectives, teachers need to choose texts that have at least two sides of a problem or possible perspectives on an issue to make the strategy worthwhile and work. Have students read the text or excerpts individually or in small groups, then have students get into groups of 3-4 students if not already in groupings of that size (Vaca & Vaca, 2017). Then, in either a handout or student-made chart, there should be two columns on a sheet where students think of problems they can find in the reading and put in them in bulleted lists in the left column. Then have students work together in their small groups to come up with solutions to those problems in the right-hand column on their sheets (Vaca & Vaca, 2017).

Students should then share small group ideas across the entire class. This can lead to a whole-group discussion with comments or other solutions to problems shared. A full class list can be made by the teacher or a volunteer student on the front board so that students can see the issues being discussed and what solutions are being created. This type of “debate” is a great intro to a classroom that has yet to experience a full debate because this helps students think critically about topics and find solutions while communicating with small groups and then defend their solutions in front of the whole class (Vaca & Vaca, 2017).

Speaking and listening in a secondary social studies classroom is vital to maintaining open communication between the teacher and the students, but also between the students themselves. Conversation skills build literacy in students in a way that only reading or writing cannot achieve (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). Not only does practicing speaking and listening in a social studies classroom help grow oral language skills, construct meaning from texts, and compare and contrast answers and ideas with those of their peers, it also brings forward skills that they will use in their adult lives as global citizens (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). This section brought forth ideas and reasons why speaking and listening skills and strategies should be present in a secondary social studies classroom as well as assessment foci for speaking and listening, challenges of introducing and using these skills in a classroom, and strategies that can increase student learning through oral communication. The next section summarizes the entire Chapter Two Literature Review and provides an introduction of what to expect when reading Chapter Three.

Chapter Two Summary

As secondary social studies teachers face changes in state standards, district and school curriculum changes, and the everyday, unplanned interruptions that occur throughout the day, they are still held to teaching standards that include students being able to understand, analyze, outline, compare, and evaluate (as well as many more objectives) (Minnesota Department of Education, 2013). To reach these standards and have students gain authentic learning, having a toolkit of certain literacy strategies can improve student learning and differentiate instruction to increase reading comprehension. Having multiple strategies to help with the pre-reading, during reading, and post-reading stages of text-based lessons paired with writing and speaking strategies can help give students choice in their learning as well as differentiate instruction so that the teacher can continue to focus on content and still facilitate learning through increased literacy (Gunter et al., 2007). Ensuring that teachers understand the importance of when to grade, when not to grade, and how a focus on writing in a social studies class can also help them set priorities when looking at assessment strategies for literacy within writing. If secondary social studies teachers can look to speaking as a way to have students show their authentic learning through discussions and debate, students can build oral skills along with deeper content understanding and continue to grow as global citizens. By integrating literacy strategies and looking to introduce strategies in reading comprehension, writing, and speaking, secondary social studies teachers should be able to help differentiate to their students while seeing their students grow and increase their learning.

Continuing On

Following this Literature Review, this capstone moves on to Chapter Three where an overview of my capstone project is reviewed. From specific strategies for secondary social studies teachers to how the project integrates ease-of-use and availability to many users, Chapter Three explains what the project will be used for, how it will be used, why it will be used, and why it is presented in the medium of a website. Each strategy will have an explanation of who the strategy is recommended for, what types of learning goals are being set, what literary type is being used, and at least two examples of the strategy in use in secondary social studies settings. As the project is a website, Chapter Three includes research showing the importance of a public website, the pros and cons of having contributors, and a go-live date and plan for intermediate updates for the site. All of these strategies, examples, and project description and reasoning serve to answer my research question: *What literacy strategies can be incorporated into secondary social studies classrooms to increase student learning?*

CHAPTER THREE

Project Description

The project for this capstone gives concrete resources and answers to the research question: *What literacy strategies can be incorporated into secondary social studies classrooms to increase student learning?* Earlier in this capstone, different assessments, challenges, and specific strategies were offered to help answer the research question above. This chapter encapsulates the description of my website project and how it answers the research question. To start this chapter, I have a project overview to give background and a short summary of my goals for my project. Then I have a “Why a Website” section including research and theories, discussing the lack of current resources for secondary social studies teachers, and comparing certain types of educational websites. Next, I dive into why I am using Google Sites instead of another interface available online. I also talk about the intended users/audience starting with secondary social studies teachers and expanding to other secondary content areas. Then, I give a full description of the website, what is on the website, how to use it, and how to add/contribute to the website. I conclude with a timeline for completion for go-live, plans for updates and the possibility of having contributors and how I will act as a site manager as the website grows in strategies and users.

Website Project

My project is a website of resources that houses literacy strategies that incorporate reading comprehension, writing, and speaking/listening that can be used in secondary social studies classrooms. The strategies are organized by literacy strategy category and have insights into strengths of each strategy, ways to differentiate for different types of learners, examples of the strategies used in both middle and high school settings, and blank templates (PDF and Google Doc) for applicable graphic organizers or handouts for ease of use to teachers using the website either through downloading or printing right from the website. There are 26 strategy pages on the site as each literacy strategy has a page dedicated to why it can help increase student learning, a middle school level example and a high school example (both in social studies settings) of how to use the strategy. The introduction page shares research from my literature review on the importance of literacy within social studies to provide context for the reason behind the website. These strategies, if incorporated into secondary social studies classrooms, can increase learning and target specific areas of growth including reading comprehension (pre-, during, and post-reading stages), writing and note-taking skills, and speaking and listening skills. The website is open to the public and has an organizational table that categorizes the various strategies so that teachers can filter searches based on objectives in their own classrooms or areas of literacy that they would like to focus on in their classroom.

Students with different reading levels and abilities often can benefit from different instructions, differentiated or customized activities, or at least simplified versions of

activities or assignments (Shaver & National Council for the Social Studies, 1991). By giving multiple options for different stages in student learning within a social studies classroom and offering ideas to further differentiation within strategies, these resources will help serve students as well as teachers by giving them an easy-to-access website to find new ideas and layouts for activities and strategies to use. By creating an online resource that houses a plethora of strategies for teachers to easily access and modify for their own use, this website helps answer my capstone question of *What literacy strategies can be incorporated into secondary social studies classrooms to increase student learning?* by giving examples of research-based strategies that can increase student learning. Not only do the strategies help to increase student learning, but they provide options for teachers and more ways to differentiate strategies for the classroom as well. While there are many ways to have such resources and strategies available for teachers, the next section details why I have chosen a website to be the medium of my resource.

Why a website? Websites and the use of the Internet are sources that teachers use to gather resources and strategy ideas that have grown exponentially in the last two decades (Barack, 2010). By choosing a website as my capstone project medium, I believe I am able to reach more secondary teachers to use these resources than might be possible with a hard copy of the strategies. While I could use a Google Doc or something that can still be easily shared, I believe that having an interactive website where you can click and follow strategies or categories to find what you want is more suited for teachers (Bagiati, Yoon, Evangelou, Magana, Kaloustian, & Zhu, 2015; Nichols, Maynard, & Brown, 2012). Using a website takes less time than flipping through multiple pages and it also

creates an environment that can be shared, in which collaborators can be added, and that is more accessible within the realm of the Internet (Bagiati et al., 2012).

I also chose to use a resource website instead of writing curriculum because among the current resources for secondary social studies teachers that are easily found online, most are curriculum or lesson plans instead of plain resources or blank templates (Prince, 2012). Even in a simple Google search for secondary social studies literacy activities (or strategies), most of the common results are full lesson plans, links to websites like the Library of Congress, or even links to sites that cost money or require memberships to see the majority of the content. By creating a resource-focused website, I have the interactive ability that websites have, while keeping the focus on accessibility and ease of use for the teachers that will be using these strategies in their classroom.

Why use Google? There are online website platforms to build a website in today's world, like Squarespace, weebly, GoDaddy, and Wix, but the platform tool that is used by school districts and teachers more and more is Google (Barack, 2010). By using Google, I am able to cater to a platform that many teachers already use. Google not only offers apps like Google Site and Google Forms, which this project will use, but they also host Google Classroom, Google Keep, Slide decks, Google Drive, and Gmail (Robinson, 2017). With the various apps that Google offers-many for free-it seems like a smart choice to host my website. As Google Sites does not charge any money to create a site, I am able to create a valuable resource using only time and my own research. Not only is Google cost efficient, but it also is easy to share and add collaborators on this platform. Anyone with a Gmail account can easily be a collaborator or editor and Google Forms

and submissions of those forms do not require the submitter to have a Gmail account. Google Sites are also a user-friendly way to build a website with point-and-click style features compared to a HTML-dependent platform that other websites might offer (Barack, 2010).

Description of the website. The main page (home page) of the website hosts a brief background of why the website exists and the main table of literacy strategies laid out below. The table consists of strategy titles in rows going down and columns that can be selected on the backend to show what literacy areas the strategies focus on. For example, the Cornell Notes have during reading, post-reading, and informal writing selected. This expedites the searching for any teacher trying to find a strategy by title or by what literacy area can be utilized. There is also a designation next to the title of the strategy if there are important notes or strategies that are easily differentiable or can be used for EL learners more easily than others. The titles of the strategies have hyperlinks so that when clicked on, it pulls up the specific strategy page for the user to look at and possibly download templates for their own use.

Each strategy page has a banner at the top of the page categorizing the areas of literacy that the strategy focuses on as well as methods for differentiation or support ideas for English language learners. There is also a brief description of how to use the strategy as well as any specific research found on that literacy strategy. Below the description is a screenshot of the strategy on a blank template. This allows site visitors to see the layout of the strategy. Then, within each strategy page, there will be two to four links. One is a link to a Google Doc version of the blank template. The next is a Word version of the

blank template. Having the two different types of templates allows teachers that are using whichever platform to have easy access to their own version of the template without the extra clicks of sharing or renaming or just to get a blank template. The possible third and fourth links will have examples of the strategy in use with a middle school level example and a high school level example for most strategies. Some will have one main example if it is a simpler strategy that calls for less explanation. This allows teachers to see how the strategy can cater to different grade levels. And a few examples are all done without templates and given as directions to students, so there are templates to follow but not specific examples.

There is a form on the main page as well as a link to the form on the bottom of each strategy page. This form is used for comments from public users. If site visitors have tips, tricks, or questions about strategies, they are encouraged to submit them via the comment form. It is my goal to answer submitted comments within two weeks of submission. By doing this, my website will stay responsive and act as a strong tool for other teachers as well as building my own knowledge of the initial strategies along with learning about other teachers' teaching strategies and different ideas on how to use or differentiate specific strategies.

There will be an additional Google Form added to the website within two months of the go-live. This form will specifically be for strategies that site users would like to see added to the site. Since teaching is a very collaborative profession, my goal is that once I set up the site with the original sources and strategies, it can be expanded and used for more than only secondary social studies teachers. Once enough strategies or focused

ideas are compiled, I will be able to use that feedback and assistance from others to create more pages that can focus on specific content areas or even grade levels. To ensure the go-live of the website, this second Google form for additional strategy ideas will not be added during the initial launch of the website.

Intended Users/Audience

This website has the potential and goal to grow to serve a larger general population of all secondary content area teachers, but the initial intended audience will cater to one main group. The main audience of my website is secondary social studies teachers. Since there are strategies that can be used in both middle school and high school classrooms, there is not a preferred grade level that would be served best with the strategies. The website will not be exclusive of certain email users or limit access to people that are not invited. While there are many books that teachers can find that host literacy strategies, there are not many that are specifically catered for social studies teachers. This site will be for those teachers that need new ideas to incorporate into their classrooms without having to do extensive research on their own about how to use a certain strategy in a social studies classroom setting.

Google creates a privacy setting that limits outside users from editing live content. Anyone that can edit on the Google site has to be a collaborator. Since nothing can be edited unless a collaborator is added, the website will be open to the public so that any teachers that find it or are given the address will be able to access the site and all of the downloadable resources it holds without possibly changing the content on the site. As the main intended audience and users are teachers, the final end user will be students. While

not interacting with the website itself, the goal of this project is to increase the learning of the students that are able to use these strategies in their classrooms.

Assessing Success of the Website

To assess the success of my website, I will look to how my research question of *What literacy strategies can be incorporated into secondary social studies classrooms to increase student learning?* is being answered. As I cannot measure the success of each student that has a teacher incorporating the strategy resources on my website, I will have a Google Tracker on the site to monitor website visits as well as an optional feedback form for users. The Google Tracker will help me see if the site is being accessed and by what geographic areas. The Google feedback form will be set up so that teachers that implement strategies found on my resource website are able to give feedback based on their students' responses and learning using the strategy. I think that this measurement and feedback will be more beneficial than tracking as the direct feedback can give me tips and updates for strategy descriptions or help in deciding if I should highlight great strategies or remove any that do not actually help with increasing student learning.

Timeline for Completion

For this website project, it is my goal to have two timelines that relate to the implementation and completion of the website itself as well as an updating timeline. The essential go-live date is a set date so that I can have an end goal in mind of when the resources would be live and available to others to use. Once the website is live, it is still my goal to have a constant goal to update, add, and let collaborators contribute to resources as well. To do this, it will take a planned out schedule with a strategy for

updates, changes, additions, and possibly removing strategies based on feedback, usability of strategies, and ability to maintain the website itself.

Initial go-live. The project timeline for the initial go-live date is on August 16, 2019. This is the goal for multiple reasons. First, I hope to complete the project by August 16, 2019 to have the ability to integrate and look at strategies to use in my own first year of teaching. As many Minnesota schools start with professional development in the middle to later half of August, having a go-live date of August 16 gives me a stop date goal for this website so that I can dedicate my time to teaching instead of building the website. Second, this date is so that it could be introduced in a Professional Learning Community (PLC), all-school, or department meetings before the beginning of the school year. Many social studies PLC and department level content groups work during the weeks leading up to school to plan and finalize at least the first unit or two for the year. By having a resource that can provide templates and strategies to increase learning through literacy strategies, I hope that I can bring in the website as a strong contribution to whatever school and team that I join. By having the website done in mid-August, the go-live would provide enough time to use strategies as well as give me great ideas to continue updates to the website

Updates and monitoring. After the website is live and open to outside users, the website will be updated once each month so that any comments or ideas from outside users can be implemented as well as adding any additions of new strategies and resources. As the goal of this website is not only to provide resources but also to be a collaborative space for all teachers, I am hopeful that after being used by more and more

teachers, there will be additional contributions and ideas. That way, there can also be other content area main pages that link to the strategies but also have other content-focused examples so that teachers can best see how to use the strategies in their classrooms. This will obviously take time, but with a commitment to updating the site once per month, setting aside a few hours each month for updating and adding strategies to the website will be worth the time and effort if it means more students can benefit from more learning strategies in the classroom. The additional strategies will be sent in via a Google Form so that contributors can add documents, links, and explanations of strategies they would like added. By using Google Forms, I can continue to use the Google platform which will be easy to implement and integrate with the website.

Chapter Three Summary

Chapter Three has given a project overview of the website project as well as given the reader insight as to why a website medium was chosen to display the resources for other teachers. This was followed by an explanation of why the use of a Google-centered website will benefit the users and the project as a whole. Next, the main audience of the initial go-live of the project was given. A description of the website design and layout was provided as well as how each individual strategy page will be shown on the website. The final aspect of Chapter Three was an intended timeline that includes an initial go-live date as well as plans for updates and additions to the site after the website is live.

Continuing On

From the main introduction of why this capstone has focused on literacy strategies within secondary social studies classes, a literature review on the research behind such

strategies, as well as the description of a website project, Chapter Four is a complete summary of this capstone paper and how it has looked into answering the research question *What literacy strategies can be incorporated into secondary social studies classrooms to increase student learning?* This next chapter will give an overview of each section to conclude the capstone with final summaries to ensure the main points are understood by the audience.

CHAPTER FOUR

Reflection

Introduction

When I initially set out to answer the question *What literacy strategies can be incorporated into secondary social studies classrooms to increase student learning?*, I didn't realize just how deep that answer could reach. I still haven't truly learned the full depth that literacy can help increase student learning, but I have been able to dive into expert researchers findings as well as developing my own project to house strong strategies that aim to increase student learning in a secondary social studies classroom. This chapter begins with exploring the Literature Review from earlier in the capstone and how that learning impacted my project as well as my own understanding of literacy. It then reflects on the project and how the project assists in answering the research question above. Next, I describe the highlights and lowlights of the project build and final product. Finally, this chapter concludes the capstone paper and project learnings as a whole.

Project Reflection

The completion of my website project is a culmination of technology, time, research of literacy strategies, and most importantly applying what I learned in my Literature Review. Through my research, I had found many literacy strategies and aspects of those strategies that could lead to student learning in a social studies classroom, and

some that didn't seem to relate. Finding strategies that would fit with my goal of focusing on secondary social studies classrooms wasn't too difficult. But most strategies came from different sources, so as I compiled my research, it all kept leading me to believe that my project is a strong idea that will help educators with a central location for easy access for new strategies to try. As I am not in a teaching position yet, it is difficult to rate the success of the website. So to combat this and ensure that the website can continually be assessed by educators and if the strategies do increase student learning, I added an additional form to measure success of students and to receive feedback for the website from end-users. I also found a few limitations to balance my success in the build of the website itself.

Applying the literature review. Throughout my research shown in Chapter Two, I was able to not only look at what types of reading, writing, and speaking strategies can benefit students, but also what types of assessment can be used to gauge student success. I made sure that the strategies that I chose to include in my website would have outcomes that can be collected and seen by the teacher or rated so that growth in learning can be measured. As seen in each subsection in Chapter Two, I also researched certain challenges that can come with each type of literacy. In my website, I focused on using strategies that would combat some of those challenges such as strategies that take less than 20 minutes to prep (most are 2-5 minutes), rationale sections behind the strategy, and ensuring the the strategies made students use their own words. Less prep time helps eliminate worry about using a new strategy because it lets teachers focus on learning outcomes and content and using the templates provided (Schneider, 1994). The rationale

sections on the website help teachers see what the outcomes of the strategy should be in order to see if it fits in with their learning objectives. And most strategies will have students use texts but not copy specific wording which helps eliminate student plagiarism by having them think about how to apply concepts, not just copy and paste others' words as their own.

Assessing the project success for student learning. As I am not currently in a teaching position, truly assessing what strategies work well in the classroom is difficult. To combat this obstacle until I am in my own classroom, I am relying on others to fill out the added Google Form on the site where educators can provide feedback through answering 4 multiple choice questions and two short answer questions. These responses will help gauge if students benefited from the literacy strategy used from the website. I can then take this feedback and make any updates suggested by those end-user teachers and edit directors, templates, or possibly remove strategies if they proved to not provide a positive learning increase for students. In the future, it will still be my goal to regularly update and add to the website with strategies that I am able to test in the classroom so I know they will be useful for student learning.

Limitations. There were two main limitations that I found when building my project and ensuring that it aligned with and answered my research question of *What literacy strategies can be incorporated into secondary social studies classrooms to increase student learning?* The first limitation was the actual building and layout of Google Sites. When I initially planned how I wanted each strategy page to look, I wanted there to be a more interactive drop down menu ability off of each page to search the site.

After hours upon hours of working and researching about how to best build a Google Site out, I realized that my very introductory knowledge of websites would limit my ability to make it exactly as I wanted. After hours of trying to format a page to my liking that was still visually pleasing to look at while also being user friendly and logical to click through, I was able to develop a page template to use for each of the strategies on the website. Even though it is not what I had originally pictured in my head, after using Google Sites, I have found that this best fits my project needs and wants.

The second limitation that I found while creating my website is that not all of the strategies that I chose are able to have examples typed out on a webpage. Some examples, especially reading and writing strategies can have blank templates for teachers to use as well as strong examples of what student work might look like when using the templates. But for speaking and listening strategies that focus mainly on speaking and not writing, there isn't a way to show an example unless I had audio or visual examples of the strategy being used in a classroom. So for those few strategies where an examples is possible or where it didn't make sense, I had to omit those examples on the pages. Although I think it works better that way, it wasn't something I had gone in planning, so I would categorize it as a limitation of the process that I used while developing each strategy page.

Successes. Along with the limitations that I found in building my website, I also found many successes. One main success was that the utilization of hyperlinks, Google's "copy" feature within Google docs, and being able to have PDF URL links for Word attachments let my ideas come to life. Because each strategy has its own webpage, I was

able to ensure that each strategy had a blank template that is reachable, downloadable, or can be copied. This is very helpful so that end-users don't have to re-type a worksheet to use it in the classroom. It also means that since they would own that copy in a Google Doc format or a Word Doc format, they can also make edits and adjustments as needed which can be difficult when only working from PDFs online or from examples in textbooks or workbooks.

Along with the ease of use I was able to create, another main success of my website is that I gave written statements for each strategy or how it could specifically be used in a social studies classroom. I think this is a very important aspect of the site as it can provide teachers with a short paragraph on if the strategy might be a good fit in their own classroom based on their learning objectives, student interest, and areas of growth needed in their students. The description shows how it can be assessed or utilized for grading or not grading which lets teachers see learning objectives and goals could be aligned while using the strategy. It also gives an overview of the focus of how to use the strategy meaning that teachers can see how it works with their students' interests and needs.

While I could go on at length about small limitations or even more successes, I think that as a whole, my website met my goals and also helps lead to answering my research question which is what mattered the most at the beginning. And now, knowing that it could actually be used by secondary social studies teachers in practice, that is even more important, as resources like this are necessary for opening up new ideas and

practices with teachers that might not otherwise have the resources or time to find them on their own.

Project in Action

As stated previously, I am currently not teaching in my own social studies classroom. But as I want to ensure that my project is able to make an impact and help secondary social studies teachers, I will be able to offer the website to the school that I student taught in as well as schools where I interview for teaching positions. Not only will this help me when networking and finding my own teaching position, but it will mean that the website is being used by teachers as soon as this next school year. As the website gets more and more feedback from the Google Forms, I will be able to update strategies and start to grow and add more as well. It would be my goal that if the website is continually being viewed and used that it continues to be updated so that it can reach more teachers and therefore impact more students.

In this chapter, I reflected on the process of building the website and the challenges, successes, and outcomes of my project. I discussed in detail how I utilized Chapter Two research and learnings as well as how I will continue to improve the process of assessing the website to make sure that it reaches my goal of helping teachers increase their students' learning by using the literacy strategies. Lastly, I discussed the limitations of my project as well as successes that were presented upon its completion and how the projected fit well into my research question.

Conclusion

This capstone and the project had the goal of answering and being a resource to the question of *What literacy strategies can be incorporated into secondary social studies classrooms to increase student learning?* In the last four chapters, I have given an overview as to why this topic is of interest to me as well as highlighting the importance of incorporating literacy strategies within secondary social studies classrooms. This capstone highlights a large variety of research on how to increase learning, how to measure and use authentic assessment within literacy strategies, and specific examples with explanations of how the strategies work and can increase student learning. Next, it provides insight as to why I chose to build a website for the project to show my application of knowledge to something strategic and tangible. The capstone concludes with my post-build reflections on the limits, success, and future goals for the project itself. I introduced Anna, Aiden, and Nora in Chapter One as examples of students that struggled in a social studies classroom, but could have benefited from focused activities and strategies with a literacy focus within the content. It is my ongoing goal that students like those three, as well as many other students, can benefit from my capstone through their teachers use of my website. To help increase students' learning is of the utmost importance, not just in secondary social studies classrooms, but across the curriculum. I hope that I can help in making a small difference as the website is spread from teacher to teacher.

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