Curriculum Project:

A Multidisciplinary Look at Soccer

Introduction:

This curriculum project aims to use a well known and much-like pastime, soccer, to introduce multidisciplinary lessons in mathematics, reading, writing, and history. The curriculum incorporates Slavin’s cooperative learning and addresses mainstream-centric curriculum, which gives students the opportunity to view other cultures and groups. Our curriculum unit is specific to public schools in Hartford, a city of immigrants where many youths come from soccer-loving countries. Students will have the opportunity to talk about the importance of soccer in their own lives. There was recently an article in the Courant about soccer being cut in Hartford Public Schools because of lack of funds. We thought it would be interesting to discuss the article with students and allow them to make social action by writing letters to the school board advocating for soccer. We wanted to incorporate a variety of academic skills from a variety of subjects into a single thematic focus on soccer.

Context:

This curriculum unit is designed for a fifth grade classroom with twenty students in an urban, majority-minority school such as M.D. Fox Elementary School. Over 95 percent of students are eligible for free/reduced-price meals, which indicate a high level of poverty in the community. The racial breakdown of the student population at M.D. Fox Elementary School is
79.2% Hispanic, 14.4% Black, 5.2% White, 1.0% Asian American, and 0.1% American Indian. According to Kozol’s definition, M.D. Fox Elementary School is classified as an “intensely segregated Latino and black school.” Learning will take place in a regular classroom setting for four of the five days. On the second day, students will work in a computer lab to conduct research and to utilize technology resources. Students will be placed in a detracked class to ensure they receive the same quality instruction and educational experiences and opportunities. Moreover, the curriculum will further principles of detracking to allow students to work in heterogeneous groups that will embrace all skill levels and abilities. The unit will take a consecutive five-day lesson with eighty minutes for each day to explore soccer in multiple subjects. By using a variety of activities, the curriculum seeks to engage the students while teaching them important learning objectives.

Objectives:

1. Students will discuss and respond to texts that represent many multicultural experiences about soccer.

   Students will share and express personal opinions and respond to texts by making text-to-self, text-to-text and text-to-world connections (Standard 1.2E). They will discuss how the articles connect to their own life, another text they have read, or the world around them. When students make authentic connections, they will gain a deeper understanding of the text. Moreover, text connections help to engage students and create understanding of the underlying theme and main ideas in the text. Text-to-self is a strategy that enables students to activate prior

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knowledge. Locke would argue that knowledge is created through experience. Learning depends upon the student having some prior knowledge or experience. Students are able to comprehend better when they activate prior knowledge and experiences and recognize how ideas in the text relate to their experiences, their knowledge of other texts, and events and issues in the world around them.

Students will be able to make and support judgments and opinions about texts read (Standard 1.2D). They will identify reasons why soccer was cut in Hartford Public Schools and the significance of this decision. They will take their own stand on the issue and listen to their peers’ points of view. These objectives above fulfill standards 1.2D and 1.2E of the Connecticut English Language Arts Curriculum Framework Grade 5.

2. Students will gather and interpret information from a variety of primary and secondary sources.

The objective emphasizes the use of primary and secondary materials. Students will not only identify the difference between a primary and secondary source, but also locate and gather information from both sources (Standard 2.1A). They will compare and contrast information provided by primary and secondary sources (Standard 2.2B). Students will work in pairs to research information from multiple sources about a country’s attitude towards soccer and history of soccer in that country. These objectives above satisfy standards 2.1 and 2.2 of the Connecticut Social Studies Curriculum Framework Grade 5.

3 Phillips and Soltis, Perspectives on Learning, Chapter 2
3. Students will demonstrate knowledge of perimeter and area.

Students will represent and describe mathematical relationships using variables in equations (Standard 1.2A). For example: Formula of an area of a rectangle is the length multiply by the width \((A = L \times W)\). They will employ formulas for finding the perimeter and area of rectangles (shape of soccer field) and use them to solve problems. Students will replace variables in algebraic expressions with given values that they obtained in their research of soccer field size in their country (Standard 1.3A). Students will evaluate the expressions and solve for areas and perimeters of the soccer field. These objectives above meet standards 1.2 and 1.3 of the Connecticut Mathematics Curriculum Standards Grade 5.\(^6\)

4. Students will create final products in myriad ways, including written, oral and visual texts using primary and secondary sources.

Students will prepare oral presentations for the entire class. They will listen to the ideas of others and communicate ideas clearly. Students will gather and organize information from multiple sources to address why soccer is important. They will apply the conventions of Standard English in oral, written and visual communication. Students will use the appropriate feature of persuasive writing in their letters to advocate for soccer in Hartford Public Schools (Standard 3.1). This will foster active students who care about their community and want to take action to affect change. They will use appropriate language as related to audience (Standard 3.2). These

objectives above concentrate on 3.1 and 3.2 of the Connecticut English Language Arts Framework Grade 5.\(^7\)

**Activities:**

**Day One: Introducing the Unit to the Students**

As a fun and engaging introduction to the topic of soccer, the class will watch a short video showing highlights from the 2010 World Cup. Then the students will read two articles: one about the history of soccer and another about the Hartford Public Schools cutting varsity soccer (See Appendix). The video and readings will be the basis for a class discussion on personal experiences, thoughts, opinions, and feelings about soccer. Students will then transition to the math element of the curriculum with a mini-lesson on perimeter and area. Students will learn formulas for discovering perimeter and area of a rectangle. They will use these formulas to determine the perimeter and area of a soccer field. Students will ascertain that changes in perimeter affect changes in area, and vice versa. To learn this pattern they will experiment with soccer fields of different sizes such as high school regulation, college regulation, and professional regulation fields. They will later employ these techniques to find the perimeter and area of a soccer field in their country of research.

**Day Two: Learning about Primary and Secondary Sources**

The day will begin with a lesson on research methods and on primary and secondary sources. Students will learn about scholarly sources and helpful tools for research. They will learn the advantages and disadvantages of online and print research. They will find out the difference between primary and secondary sources and the importance of each type of sources.

information. In small groups they will receive a worksheet with a list of different sources and they will categorize the sources into primary or secondary and explain their decisions. The worksheet will include terms such as letters, textbooks, diary entries, maps, encyclopedias, artifacts, and newspaper articles. The teacher will then review the terms and establish that the children understand the difference. Then the class will separate into research pairs. The teacher will decide the pairs based on her understanding of classroom dynamics. As a pair they will choose to research a country in which soccer is important. The class will go to the computer lab, which will also have print sources available, and research their country’s attitude towards soccer, the history of soccer in that nation, the existence, or lack, of a professional team, the popularity of soccer, and any other information the team feels is relevant. They will also find out the regulation size for a soccer field in that country (if this information is not available they will find the size of a particular field in that country). For homework students will be asked to go home and talk to family members or community members about soccer in their lives and write one paragraph describing what they learned. This homework exercise is intended to bring community knowledge into the curriculum and also establish a parent-school connection.

Day Three: Preparing for Presentations

On day three the students will complete their research and begin putting together presentations. The pair will be given a tri-fold project board but will be encouraged to use images, writing, props, and oral elements in their presentation. They will use their knowledge of primary and secondary sources to create a well-researched presentation. Students will hear a lesson on how to present a presentation. This lesson will include information of how to speak clearly, how to choose relevant information in the project, the importance of speaking slowly and facing the audience, and how to react to questions during and after a presentation. First the
teacher will hand out copies of the presentation grading rubric (See Appendix). The teacher will give a sample presentation on a country that no student pair chose. Then she will encourage the students to ask questions. This activity will visually and orally show students how to present their projects. The activity also encourages creative thought and critical thinking, while fostering a desire for learning. After the teacher’s presentation the students will grade the teacher according to the rubric, which will cement their understanding of the expectations for the project and reinforce the importance of following the guidelines.

**Day Four: Delivering Presentations**

On the fourth day students will have the opportunity to present their findings to the entire class. They may begin by explaining where their country is located and the history of soccer there. The presenters can explain the nation’s attitudes towards soccer. For instance, they can tell the class how popular soccer is, who plays soccer, who watches soccer, etc. Pairs will describe any professional teams in the country, possibly describing a particular player or an important game. They may also describe the nation’s participation in the 2010 World Cup. They will be encouraged to include other trivia or facts that they found particularly interesting. They will also show the class what they discovered about the perimeter and area of a soccer field in their country. After each presentation students will ask thoughtful questions regarding the project. Following all of the presentations the students will compare and contrast multiple countries to deepen their knowledge of the multicultural experience of soccer.

**Day Five: Writing Letters to Advocate for Soccer in Hartford Public Schools**

On the final day of the curriculum students will engage in social change. They will re-read the article from the Hartford Courant, which describes varsity soccer being cut from Hartford Public Schools due to lack of funding. They will discuss how their understanding of the
article has changed over the week. The students will answer thought-provoking questions such as: should the school district cut soccer? Why is soccer an important aspect of schooling? Why might the school district value, or not value, soccer? The students will listen to a lesson on how to write a letter. They will learn the parts of the letter, including the address, date, greeting, introduction, body paragraphs, and the closing. Students will spend the rest of the period writing a letter to the school board describing why schools need soccer and/or the importance of soccer to their community. They will employ the knowledge they have accumulated over the week to create a compelling and clear argument. The letters will be sent to the school board. Hopefully the board will respond to the students’ writing. The weeklong lesson will conclude with a final discussion on soccer. Students can describe what they learned and how it relates to personal experience. They will connect academic knowledge to personal knowledge to produce a deep and lasting understanding of the objectives.

Evaluation:

The teacher will use a multi-faceted evaluation process for assessing the students. This evaluation process allows every student to show his/her strengths because it does not rely on testing for the grade. Students will be evaluated on homework completion, class participation, the oral and visual aspects of the presentation, and their letters to the school board. Homework completion is based on whether or not the student turns in the assigned paragraph. To receive high marks in class participation a student must listen to the teacher’s lessons, contribute during class discussions, and pay attention to peer presentations. The presentation is graded in three areas in scores ranging from 1 to 4 (for a possible total of 12). The letters are graded by the writing rubric in seven areas of letter writing each with a score from 1 to 4 (for a possible total of
28). The evaluation method will assess the students in a number of areas without depending fully on any one aspect of learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Element</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
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<th>Points Earned</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Awareness of Audience</strong></td>
<td>Significantly increases audience understanding &amp; knowledge</td>
<td>Raises audience understanding &amp; awareness of most points</td>
<td>Raises audience understanding &amp; knowledge of some points</td>
<td>Fails to increase audience understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Effectively convinces audience of the validity of their point of view</strong></td>
<td>Clear point of view, incomplete development and/or support</td>
<td>Point of view may be clear, but lacks development &amp; support</td>
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<td>Fails to effectively convince the audience</td>
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<td><strong>Strength of Material &amp; Organization</strong></td>
<td>Clear purpose &amp; subject</td>
<td>Has some success defining purpose &amp; subject</td>
<td>Attempts to define purpose &amp; subject</td>
<td>Subject &amp; purpose not clearly defined</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pertinent examples, facts, and/or statistics</td>
<td>Some examples, facts, or statistics</td>
<td>Ideas supported by thin or incomplete evidence</td>
<td>Very weak or lack of examples, facts, or statistics</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ideas supported by evidence</td>
<td>Ideas supported by some evidence</td>
<td>Ideas supported by thin or incomplete evidence</td>
<td>Insufficient support for ideas</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Delivery</strong></td>
<td>Relaxed, self-confident and prepared to speak</td>
<td>Quick recovery from minor mistakes</td>
<td>Some tension or indifference apparent</td>
<td>Nervous tension or indifference obvious</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Holds attention using direct eye contact with the audience</td>
<td>Fairly consistent use of direct eye contact with audience</td>
<td>Occasional but inconsistent eye contact with audience</td>
<td>No effort to make eye contact with audience</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fluctuation in volume &amp; inflection maintain audience interest and emphasize key points</td>
<td>Satisfactory variation of volume and inflection</td>
<td>Uneven volume with little or no inflection</td>
<td>Low volume and/or monotonous tone</td>
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Adapted from http://www.louisianavoices.org/pdfs/Unit3/Lesson1/RubricForOralPresentation.pdf
## Fifth Grade Writing Rubric

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<th>4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clearly addresses all parts of the writing task.</td>
<td>Addresses all parts of the writing task.</td>
<td>Addresses only parts of the writing task.</td>
<td>Addresses only one part of the writing task.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates a clear understanding of purpose and audience.</td>
<td>Demonstrates a general understanding of purpose and audience.</td>
<td>Demonstrates little understanding of purpose and audience.</td>
<td>Demonstrates no understanding of purpose and audience.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintains a consistent point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including the effective use of transitions.</td>
<td>Maintains a mostly consistent point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including the effective use of transitions.</td>
<td>Maintains an inconsistent point of view, focus, and organizational structure, which may include ineffective or awkward transitions that do not unify important ideas.</td>
<td>Lacks a point of view, focus, organizational structure, and transitions that unify important ideas.</td>
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<td>Includes a clearly presented central idea with relevant facts, details, and/or explanations.</td>
<td>Presents a central idea with mostly relevant facts, details, and/or explanations.</td>
<td>Suggests a central idea with limited facts, details, and/or explanations.</td>
<td>Lacks a central idea but may contain marginally related facts, details, and/or explanations.</td>
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<td>Authoritatively defends a position with precise and relevant evidence and convincingly addresses the reader’s concerns, biases, and expectations.</td>
<td>Generally defends a position with relevant evidence and addresses the reader’s concerns, biases, and expectations.</td>
<td>Defends a position with little, if any, evidence and may address the reader’s concerns, biases and expectations.</td>
<td>Fails to defend a position with any evidence and fails to address the reader’s concerns, biases and expectations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Includes a variety of sentence types.</td>
<td>Includes a variety of sentence types.</td>
<td>Includes little variety in sentence types.</td>
<td>Includes no sentence variety.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contains few, if any, errors in the conventions of English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors do not interfere with the reader’s understanding of the writing.</td>
<td>Contains some errors in the conventions of English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors do not interfere with the reader’s understanding of the writing.</td>
<td>Contains several errors in the conventions of English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors may interfere with the reader’s understanding of the writing.</td>
<td>Contains serious errors in the conventions of English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors interfere with the reader’s understanding of the writing.</td>
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Appendix:

With End of Soccer, Hartford High Students Denied Yet another Goal

August 24, 2010|By Rick Green

Where I live in West Hartford, the town is overflowing with soccer. A few miles away, the sport is dying.

At the nation's second-oldest public high school, in a city teeming with immigrants and refugees well versed in the world's No. 1 sport, there will be no varsity boys soccer in Hartford this fall.

I'm told there are sound reasons why Hartford Public High School won't have a team shortly after the World Cup captivated people around the globe: It costs too much, and not enough students want to play.

If it's between a reading teacher or a soccer coach in a city with some of the lowest performing schools in the state, I understand tough choices have to be made in a district trying to save itself.

Certainly, when poverty is the biggest enemy, there are more important things than sports. But I can't help but think we are losing something vital here as the gap between the haves and the have-nots yawns wider and we struggle to figure out how to eliminate the achievement gap that divides rich and poor and black and white.

"Kids need an opportunity beyond the classroom," said Neil Sullivan, principal at Simsbury High School and outgoing president of the Central Connecticut Conference, which includes Hartford. "It's part of the overall program, just as things like performing arts and student council. Anytime schools start dropping sports, we as a conference have a concern."

Eliminate sports for city kids, and the message is pretty clear: This isn't for you.

"It doesn't make me feel good," said Adam Johnson, a principal at Hartford Public, which also has eliminated wrestling and tennis programs in recent years. "Probably more so than in any community, our kids really see the school as home. When you dip into these type of things, you are taking away something that might be a support system for kids."

"We probably have the raw talent to have incredibly successful teams, with the large numbers of refugee and immigrant students," Johnson said. "The burden to recruit and have a structured coaching program is greater on us. Our kids have so many demands."

Add to this the fact that the school district is reorganizing, moving away from large high schools to create smaller academies. More sports are likely to face elimination.

Hartford Public actually pulled the plug on its boys soccer team in the middle of last season, when there weren't enough players to field a team.
I've seen the struggles that coaches and teams face with other sports, such as baseball, which takes years of practice. Soccer, however, only requires a ball, a field and a lot of running. Have we really reached the point in Hartford where you can't convince a couple of dozen boys in a high school of 1,600 students to go out for the team?

It's no mystery why the elite private schools around Hartford require students to play a sport. It creates better students.

Years of research shows that students involved in sports or other extracurricular activities are more likely to succeed. They are more likely to show up for class and less likely to be substance abusers. They understand rules, listening and working with others. They watch less TV. They are better adjusted, and their grades are better. Sports and after-school programs make kids feel like they are a part of something greater.

Sports "are immensely important to all students but particularly important to city students," said Joe Canzanella, athletics director for the New Haven schools, who told me about the value of just traveling to other communities to play games when your whole world has been a city neighborhood. "It gives them an extra incentive and an extra opportunity to develop."

To Mike Savage, director of the Connecticut Association of Schools and the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference, it's a question of equality.

"You take Glastonbury and they have everything. And then you go to Hartford.," Savage said. "These kids aren't being treated in the same way."

Urban educators face immense challenges every day and city schools must evolve. But as Hartford moves to reorganize its schools, sports shouldn't be tossed aside.

Retrieved from
History of Soccer

Posted: Oct 04, 2007

The history of soccer can be traced back to almost every country of origin. The game was so accessible that men of every status could afford to play. It’s easy to imagine that games of kicking a ball or something that resembles a ball have been around for thousands of years. The ancient Romans and Chinese are credited with the very first signs of soccer. China used to play games similar to football as far back as three thousand years ago and the Romans used to keep their warriors fit with football. A number of other countries laid claim to the sport as well including Japan, England, Italy and South and Central America.

Credit with the formal development of soccer history is rightfully given to England. They were the first to start incorporating rules and form associations or leagues. Around 1863 they began to separate soccer from rugby and formed the first Football Association. Teams from around the London area came together and began to formulate the basic rules that were agreeable by everyone. These included the size of the field, number of players and rules regarding contact. Ironically it wasn’t until six years later that the hand ball or no carrying of the ball was included.

The sport blossomed throughout England and held its first championship after just eight years. As expected the sport traveled throughout Europe and international competitions between England and Scotland formed. The sport brought in spectators and produced athletic stars which pushed the organizations to formalize their practices. New associations began to pop up throughout Scotland, Ireland and Germany.

The largest of all international associations was formed in 1912, Federation Internationale de Football Association, FIFA. Fifa held the now famous World Cup in 1930 and has grown to over 200 members throughout the entire world. Now there are tons of amateur, semi professional and professional leagues all over the world. Whether it’s young kids, professional athletes or weekend warriors soccer can be found anywhere in the world.

Soccer history has evolved to today’s standard where it is played at the amateur and professional level all over the world. It is recognized as the most played and watched sport in the world. The basic rules and limited amount of equipment make soccer an easy sport to participate in for all.

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