

Curriculum Unit in Action

Third Graders Apply Complex Concepts: States and Nations

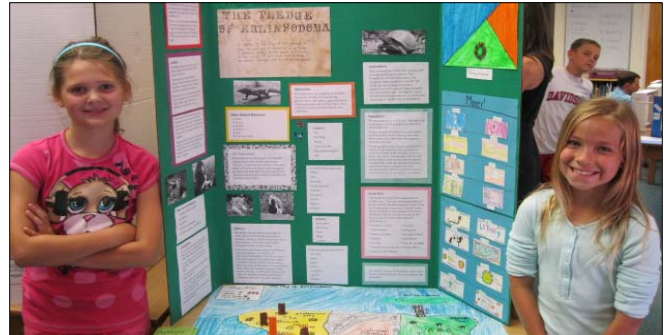
"I think America is a nation-state because we have a strong government and laws, borders around our land, and the same belief that you can succeed if you work hard."

"We are a nation-state because our economy has exports and imports. It's capitalism. We also believe that America is the place for freedom and equality."

Two students in my third grade classroom made these comments at the end of the school year after participating in my "The Making of America" curriculum unit that I created in CTI's States and Nations seminar.

During our first seminar meeting I realized most of the participants were middle or high school history teachers and was concerned about whether I would be able to take the seminar's complex concept of nationalism and apply it to 3rd grade. However, I decided to take the idea and wrap it around and through the third grade standard course of study by having students explore important historical events, people and time periods in America.

I exposed my students to a variety of media and literature for nine months. I was amazed at the questions they asked, the discussions we had, and the connections and conclusions they made throughout the unit. It made me realize that believing in my students, and giving them consistent and continuous exposure to examples of nationalism enabled them to understand and apply it to their learning and to their own lives as American citizens. My students would not have been as engaged or have learned the content at the high and meaningful level that they did had I not created the unit.



Abby Yingst and Chloe Mechling proudly showcase their work from CTI Fellow Maggie Hershey-Mason's unit on States & Nations.

I have to thank Shelly Rigger from Davidson College, our Seminar Leader, for guiding me in the right direction throughout the process of creating my unit. I also would like to thank the Fellows in the seminar who shared their resources and ideas which I tailored to meet the needs of my grade level.

What my students gained surpassed my expectations. They now think of themselves as a critical part of the world, specifically America, and have a deeper sense about what it means to be the citizen of a country that took hundreds of years to evolve, a country that will continue to change based on their involvement and actions today and in the future.

*Maggie Hershey-Mason, Davidson Elementary School
States and Nations CTI Seminar 2011
(See Maggie's unit at charlotteteachers.org)*



See you at the Racetrack! CTI Seminar Leader Peter Tkacik (The Science of NASCAR) invites all CTI Fellows for a ride around the track in a Sprint Cup car on Thursday, June 21, from 9 am to 5 pm at Concord Speedway (7940 US Hwy 601 S). Part of UNC Charlotte's Motorsports Engineering Summer Camp, the event provides free rides, lunch and an opportunity to learn about how race cars work. For more information contact Marion Cantor at 704-687-8347.

To learn more about CTI visit: www.charlotteteachers.org

CTI Highlights

- CTI Teacher Leader Jeff Joyce is coordinating a pilot CTI summer camp seminar (*Media, Digital and Artistic Literacy*) June 18-22 at Dilworth Elementary School, in conjunction with the Arts & Science Council.
- Many thanks to our Fellows and Seminar Leaders who made CTI presentations at the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations Board of Trustees Annual Meeting at Davidson College in May: Kristiana Luce, Connie Wood, Tim Chartier and Shelly Rigger. Kristiana, Tim and Michael Pillsbury also presented at a recent meeting of the Belk Foundation Board. Their eloquent efforts help ensure continued funding of CTI seminars for all!
- The Spring meeting of CTI's University Advisory Council (UAC) was held at the Gantt Center for African American Arts+Culture. Davidson College and UNC Charlotte faculty members received updates on CTI's program evaluation plan and indicated support for implementing a Strategic Thinking Task Force for CTI.