

Political Systems of New Mexico: An Authentic Middle School Portrayal

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Rationale

In New Mexico, all seventh grade students are required to take New Mexico history for one semester. This history class is generally taught within a social studies class or as part of a humanities curriculum which would include both social studies and language arts. In several school districts across the state, the history of New Mexico is taught in a 'family' or block setting. Most schools with families include two to five teachers who integrate four or more core subjects such as language arts, social studies, math, and science. Teaching in a family setting with two or more hours of blocked time allows teachers to create units of projects which span all subjects. This integration helps students to realize the interconnectedness across subject matter.

The state provides the following scope and sequence for the curriculum in New Mexico history. The guidelines are:

"Learners exhibit an understanding of the ways human beings view themselves in and over time.

Describe how language arts, literature, the arts, architecture and other artifacts, traditions, beliefs, values, religion...and behaviors contribute to the development of New Mexico.

Identify formal and informal leaders from New Mexico's diverse past and present

Articulate the implications of cultural diversity as well as cohesion within and across groups in New Mexico.

Relate the role of transportation, communication, manufacturing, natural resources, and technology to the economic development of New Mexico." (1)

It is evident that these guidelines are broad and open to interpretation. In a traditional middle school or junior high setting, where social studies is taught as a separate class, the study of New Mexico history might seem somewhat limited and possibly even dry. In a family setting, however, where core subjects are integrated through themes or units, there is a greater potential for New Mexico history to take on genuine meaning for students. Through integrated, in-depth, hands-on units, students can make numerous connections concerning history and their present-day lives. This interdisciplinary approach has been shown to increase students' understanding of a given topic. Though it is very time intensive for the team members implementing the instruction, it helps students to master content at a deeper, more meaningful level. It also allows students to implement synthesis and evaluation, the highest levels of Bloom's taxonomy. For example, students who study political cultures in the state can examine New Mexico's life zones and its arid climate (science); the annual rainfall for the past five years (math); the continual struggle for control of ditches or acequias in small communities (social studies); and the literature which has arisen from this ditch controversy, such as the *Milagro Beanfield War* (language arts).

This semester-long unit is designed for fifty to sixty seventh grade regular education students in a family setting with two teachers where all core subjects except math are integrated. The

region is a large school district within a Southwest metropolitan setting. There are approximately 100,000 students in the district. The school itself has nearly one thousand students. Demographics of the school range from lower, fixed income to middle and upper middle incomes: 55% of the student population is Anglo; 38% is Hispanic; 5% is Native American; 2% is African-American. Thirty –three percent of the student body receives free or reduced breakfast and lunch.

This middle school is also a Coalition School, which means it is a member of Brown University’s Coalition of Essential Schools. This fact is significant because the philosophy of the entire school centers around TheodoreSizer’s Ten Essential Educational Principles. These principles are:

1. Focus – Schools help all students to use their minds well.
2. Simple goals – Less is more. Schools must have in-depth study.
3. Universal goals – School practice should be tailor-made to meet the needs of every group or class of adolescents
4. Personalization – Smaller class size allows teachers to know students.
5. Student-as-Worker – Student is engaged in his/her learning; no sage-on-stage imparting knowledge.
6. Demonstration of Mastery – Students exhibit their mastery and understanding of subject matter.
7. Tone – Tone of a school should be safe; child-centered.
8. Teacher-as-Generalist – Teacher acts as facilitator or counselor.
9. Budget – Budget is the concern of the administration.
10. Cultural diversity – Students and staff recognize and respect diversity. (2)

Because of its involvement with the Coalition of Essential schools, this middle school has become more student-centered. Students are encouraged to master the materials they study rather than simply ‘cover’ chapters and take a test at the end. At the completion of each nine weeks, students involved in projects or units normally present some form of Demonstration of Mastery of their nine weeks study. This demonstration might be a band or chorus concert or students might perform a play based on their area of study. Students studying New Mexico could present an entire New Mexico Day where students present their research, sing songs of New Mexico, perform traditional dances, and serve food of the region.

This unit in Political Cultures of New Mexico will include materials and lessons for language arts, literature, social studies, and science. In the unit, students will have the opportunity for genuine, hands-on learning, self-paced research, and immersion into the study of New Mexico history and the process of the state government in New Mexico through the simulation of legislative session within the classroom.

Curriculum Objectives

Through hands-on activities and self-paced research into New Mexico, students will gain a deeper understanding of their subject matter. Students will not learn all there is to know about

New Mexico, but they will be able to present and defend opinions through their judgments about the information and the validity of the ideas they have studied.

This semester-long unit will be divided into two sections. Each section will last approximately nine weeks. The first section will involve student-conducted research into New Mexico history. In social studies and in language arts classes, students will conduct group research into significant periods of New Mexico's history. These periods will include: the Pueblo people and their ancestors; Spanish/Mexican Settlement; Territorial period; early statehood to the end of the Depression; and the Manhattan project. The research will culminate in New Mexico Day; this will be the students' Demonstration of Mastery. The second section of the unit will be a legislative session simulation. Class members will be divided into sections which represent five regions in New Mexico. Elected representatives will then create and chair committees designed to examine school and student-based issues in the school community.

For those teachers implementing this unit, an abridged history of New Mexico is included in these plans. Also included is a very brief explanation of the structure of the state government. It is hoped this information will assist teachers in their understanding and ultimately, the teaching of this unit.

History of New Mexico

New Mexico is a state of unsurpassed diversity, both geographically and culturally. Geographically, New Mexico measures 121,666 square miles; it is the fifth largest state with one of the smallest overall populations at 1.58 million people.⁽³⁾ New Mexico is also a remarkable natural wonder: It contains six of the seven life zones which exist in North America. These zones include the lower Sonoran, upper Sonoran, Transitional, Canadian, Hudsonian, and Arctic/Alpine. Culturally, the state boasts many distinctive groups, but predominant among these are Hispanics, Native Americans, and Anglos. The vastness of the land combined with the wide range of cultures sets the stage for rather interesting politics throughout the state.

Examining New Mexico's history from its earliest inhabitants helps lay the foundations for many of the political intrigues of today. Scientists speculate that New Mexico's first inhabitants were nomadic tribes who crossed the Bering Strait land bridge some thirty thousand years ago. These prehistoric people moved into the southwestern and northwestern part of what is now the state. These nomadic tribes were the early ancestors of New Mexico's first cultures: Basketweavers I and II, the Hohokam, and the Anasazi cultures. These residents lived thousands of years after their Bering Strait relatives came into the Southwest. These indigenous peoples developed ingenious methods of irrigation and agriculture. Corn and squash were staples in their diet. They traded with other tribes. They created beautiful works of rock art. Descendants of these early cultures now inhabit the nineteen pueblos of twentieth century New Mexico.

Hundreds of years later, nomadic Athabascan tribes from the North migrated into the region of the Southwest. Their descendants are the Navajo and Apache tribes. Navajos living in the Four Corners area of the state comprise the largest Indian nation in the country.

New Mexico's indigenous people continued to thrive for hundreds of years. Drought or disease

might have caused a shift of location within the region, but the native cultures individually continued to survive. All this began to change, however, after 1539. During the late fifteenth and sixteenth century, Spain was a world power intent on expanding its land holdings in the New World. From its viceregal government in Mexico City, Spain sent out Franciscan friar, Marco de Niza and his guide, Estevan. These two men conducted some of the first recorded explorations of the Southwest. For the next forty years, explorers and friars, including Francisco Vasquez Coronado and Brother Agustin Rodriguez, traveled east and west along the Rio Grande valley hoping to increase Spain's buffer territories. In 1598, Don Juan de Onate led a small group of soldiers and several families into the Rio Grande valley. Onate's mission: Create *la Provincia de la Nueva Mexico* for the Spanish crown. Onate established the first mixed cultural capital in San Juan de Los Caballeros, near present-day Espanola. With Onate's settlement came New Mexico's first system of provincial government, which included a governor, a vice-governor, a military leader, and a religious leader. (4)

The arrival of the Spanish was most difficult upon the indigenous people.

The Spanish policy of subjugation, indoctrination, and assimilation proved devastating and deadly. Prior to the arrival of the Spanish, the pueblos in New Mexico numbered over thirty. Within several hundred years, this number would be reduced by almost half. Many Indians were slaughtered outright; others succumbed to European diseases to which they had no immunity. New Mexico remained under continuous Spanish rule until 1680, when the Pueblo Indians, led by a San Juan Indian, Pope, revolted. Many Spanish were killed or banished down river to El Paso. The governor of the area was murdered. Pueblo Indians spent twelve years free of Spanish rule. In 1692, however, with the leadership of Don Diego de Vargas, the Spanish again took control of New Mexico. Historians refer to this as the *Bloodless Reconquest* of New Mexico. Under de Vargas came a more judicial form of government. Based on the model found in California and Texas, New Mexico's structure was designed as a colony of Spain. Unfortunately, isolation and a hostile environment made survival in the territory a struggle. When Mexico won its independence from Spain in 1821, very little changed in the region. In 1824, the Mexican Constitution was adopted and New Mexico became a territory of Mexico ruled by a governor, legislature, local mayors, and a town council.

Anglo-Americans had begun to filter into the New Mexico territory as early as 1821. Several events, however, increased their numbers to the area. The first was war. War broke out between Mexico and the United States in 1846. This brought Anglo troops into the region. Additionally, trade along the Santa Fe Trail drew many enterprising Anglos. The United States began to recognize the potential of the territory and sent out troops to protect its interests. General Stephen Kearny rode into Santa Fe in August of 1846 and took it over with little resistance. New Mexico became a part of the United States with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. The Gadsden Purchase of 1853 added southwestern New Mexico and parts of Arizona to the United States' own buffer zone.

For the Native Americans in the Southwest region, the years between 1840 and 1880's were marked by displacement, starvation, violence, and suffering. As more Anglo-Americans moved into the territory, tribes of Comanche, Apache, Navajo, Chiricahua and others were one by one subdued and silenced. In 1868, the Navajos were force marched to Fort Sumner on what has

come to be known as the 'Long Walk.' During the trip to Fort Sumner, men, women, and children walked hundreds of miles with no food or water and little more than the clothes on their backs. Many died on the way. Others perished upon arrival at the wretched camps created to house them.(5)

With the Indians now safely placed upon government controlled reservations, New Mexico's lands seemed wide open and available. Unfortunately for all involved, this was not the case. Many Hispanic ranchers had lived and worked and owned property throughout the state. These ranchers were quickly displaced by land-grabbing Anglos. Additionally, both the Mexican and the Spanish governments donated lands to families or to military leaders such as *conquistadores* who had been particularly loyal to the government or the crown. Land grants were given both to individuals to manage and to large groups of multiple families to manage communally. Substantial land grants were also given to Native Americans. Boundary specifications of many land grants, however, were vague by Anglo-American standards. Numerous land grant recipients found themselves in a legal conundrum. Taxes were levied in these properties, often without the inhabitants even realizing a tax had been imposed. When taxes were not paid, the property would come up for sale. Clever, unscrupulous Anglo-American attorneys, territorial officials, land speculators, and other investors purchased the land at rock bottom prices. "The fact that great plots of land were taken over by Anglo-Americans, often through illegal means, only exacerbated the conflict between the Spanish-American and the Anglo-American in northern New Mexico."(6) Racial tensions felt in various regions of New Mexico today have roots in a tumultuous history that spans over one hundred years.

The mixture of Hispanic, Anglo-American, and Native American has provided New Mexico with intriguing political cultures. In areas of original Mexican or Spanish settlement, such as northern or central New Mexico, the control of local political institutions has remained unchanged for over three hundred years. The people tend to vote liberally on social and economic issues; yet cautiously on others. Another political culture exists on the east side of the state. This region of New Mexico is tied to Texas and Oklahoma; or, in other words: it is an area of conservative Democrats and Republicans. The northwest portion of the state has the majority of New Mexico's Native American population. Because of their own tribal governments and council, participation by Native Americans in the state's political affairs is limited. Native American legislative representation has increased, though, over the past thirty years.

The largest populated county, Bernalillo, is fairly representative of the entire state as a political culture. There is a mixture of Hispanic, Native American, African-American, and Anglo cultures along with ranchers, miners, industrial-scientific workers, and educators. There is a balance of liberal and conservative in the county.

New Mexico was Republican-based until FDR and the New Deal back in 1930's. From that point on, New Mexico followed national trends. Locally, New Mexico remains Democratic. At the state and congressional level, however, there is a growing trend toward more Republican representation.(7)

The Structure of New Mexico State Government

In 1912, when New Mexico became a state, it implemented a fragmented executive system along with its state constitution. Through this executive system, the governor's office has supreme executive powers. Despite many political power plays and attempts at reform, this system remains in place. New Mexico also has numerous other elected offices, including the treasurer and the attorney general. Other significant elected political offices are described in the constitution and each is designated with its own organizational administration as well as a sizable budget.

New Mexico's legislature is a powerful force with the ability to impact the environment, raise taxes, and forever affect the lives of its citizens. Similar to the federal government, it is a bicameral legislature, which means it has two houses as a legislative body. New Mexico has a House of Representatives, comprised of seventy members, and a Senate, made up of forty-two senators. Representatives are elected to two-year terms; senators are elected to four-year terms.

The legislature convenes in Santa Fe at noon each year on the third day of January. In even numbered years, the legislature meets in its short session for thirty days. In odd numbered years, the legislature meets in its long session for sixty days. The governor has the power to call special sessions. The primary function of the legislature is to enact laws. However, as most Americans probably realize, the path from bill to law is fraught with near insurmountable obstacles.

Each year, more than two thousand bills are brought before the legislature. Because of this, the majority of work in the legislature is performed within committees. There are twenty-four standing committees between the House and the Senate. The House has fifteen committees: twelve committees consider legislation and report bills to the floor for a vote. These are called substantive committees. Three other committees are procedural. The Senate has nine standing committees. All of the Senate's committees are substantive committees.

Appointments to all legislative committees are based upon the long-standing seniority rule in Santa Fe. Only senior, more experienced House and Senate members may serve on committees and only the most senior members may serve as committee chairs. Though this appears a sound procedure in terms of providing experienced House and Senate members for committees, the results are often negative. For example, the appointment of senior members does not necessarily mean these same members are supportive or even familiar with their particular committee issues. The Committees Committee appoints senate committee members. This committee consists of the president pro tem, or the President of the Senate; the majority and minority floor leaders; the majority and minority whips; five members of the majority party; and one member of the minority party.

In order for a bill to become law, it must first be supported by a legislator and presented in committee. A league of writers who are available for the committee's use actually pen the documents and prepare them for presentation on the floor of the House. The sponsoring representative then presents the bill to the floor of the House or Senate. Both House and Senate must vote upon and pass the bill in exactly the same form. The bill then goes to the governor to be signed into law or vetoed. If vetoed by the governor, a bill might return to the committee where it originated for additional work or revision. Generally, though, most bills simply die. Because of legislative time restraints and busy dockets, hundreds of bills never even make it out

of committee and on to the floor for consideration by either the House or the Senate.

Strategies and Classroom Lessons

Literature

In literature, students will first be asked to read orally the Dine creation story. This story tells of the four worlds the Dine passed through to reach the fourth world or present-day world. At the end of the story, the protagonist, Begochiddy, explains to the people how they must now live peacefully with each other. Students will be asked to write the words which Begochiddy might have spoken to his people, then they will present it orally. This is a quick one to two-day assignment.

Students will be assigned the following books to read during the first nine weeks.

Rio Grande Stories, by Carolyn Meyer

Miracles and Mysteries of New Mexico, by Jack Kutz

Turtle Dreams, by Gerald Hausman

Sing Down the Moon, by Scott O'Dell

The assignment for one of these stories is included:

Rio Grande Stories

By Carolyn Meyer

This fiction book is a collection of stories and folktales from around New Mexico. The topic of each story in the book differs. One story tells the tale of an African-American in New Mexico; another story discusses the little-known history of Jews in the state; yet another story focuses upon a young Navaho boy's life on the reservation.

For your assignment, you are to interview your grandmother or grandfather, or great aunt or uncle. The interviewee must be two generations removed from you. If you do not have any relatives two generations removed from you, you may interview a family friend or perhaps even a neighbor. Your interview may be conducted in person; it might be conducted over the phone, or you could even use e-mail to interview your subject.

In this interview, you will ask questions concerning folk legends or tales that which your subject can remember from childhood. For example, perhaps your interviewee can remember from childhood the story of Llorona. Or perhaps your subject has tales of escaping from Nazi Germany during the start of WWII. Whatever their story is, you must listen carefully to discover all the important details.

Next, your job is to write down this story. Take notes first about the story, then turn those notes into a narrative or retelling of the story.

Your narrative must be at least two pages long, typed, double spaced in 14-point (or smaller; nothing bigger!) serif font. At the beginning of the paper, write a brief paragraph which introduces your subject and answers the following questions:

1. What is the name of this person and what is their relationship to you?
2. Where and when did the interview take place?
3. Where and when was this person born?
4. What places has this person lived? Where have they lived the longest?
5. As this person was growing up, what were the lessons their parents taught them about life or dealing with other people? What sort of advice did they receive from their parents?
6. After asking this preliminary information, ask your interviewee to tell you a folk story they can remember. While you are listening to this story, you should take notes. Or, you may want to tape record your interview. A tape recording would be a great way to make certain you have all the details of their story.

After the interview, you must spend some time writing this story. Be certain to make your writing as interesting as possible: Use lots of adjectives!

The criteria for grading is as follows:

To earn an 'A', a student must interview **THREE** people and write down the stories of **THREE** different people.

To earn a 'B', a student must interview **TWO** people and write down the stories of **TWO** different people.

To earn a 'C', a student must interview **ONE** person and write down the story of **ONE** person.

This assignment is worth 200 points in language arts and in social studies so **DO YOUR BEST!**

Science

In science, students will first study the flora and fauna of New Mexico. This lesson will be introduced through a field trip to Shady Lakes. Students will be asked to collect water samples in a small jar. Students will also attempt to identify and illustrate five life forms they see at Shady Lakes. Back in the classroom, students will examine the pond water under a microscope and identify the microorganisms.

This first nine weeks, students will also study the six life zones found in New Mexico. These life zones, again, are lower Sonoran, upper Sonoran, transitional, Canadian, Hudsonian, Arctic/alpine. For this assignment, students will work in groups to create a learning poster on butcher paper. Their poster must include the locations of their life zones, the flora and the fauna within their life zone. They will be asked to collect or create samples of the flora. Students must also conduct research into any environmental problems or issues which might affect their particular zone. Resources available to students include the Roberts *New Mexico History* text, as well as numerous field guides located in the classroom.

The final project in science, which will take approximately seven to nine weeks, will be a New Mexico Field Guide. Requirements for the field guide are:

New Mexico Field Guide



As a Demonstration of Mastery for seventh grade science, all students will be required to create an annotated, illustrated field guide of native New Mexican flora and fauna.

A field guide is a book which provides pertinent, yet brief information on the plants and animals of a particular region. It is called a 'field guide' because it is often carried out in the field by hikers or nature enthusiasts to help identify plants and animals. The guide has photos or illustrations of plants or animals. It provides the Latin names of the plants and animals, as well as the common name. The book will provide information concerning the zone where this species lives. It might also provide information concerning the life cycle of the plant or animal.

YOUR field guide must have a total minimum of **THIRTY ITEMS** with at least three items from each of the Life Zones found in New Mexico:

- Ten trees
- Ten plants (wild flowers/weeds/grasses)
- Ten birds or animals
- Scientific or Latin name and common name of each item
- A minimum FIVE-sentence paragraph about EACH item in your book.
- Color illustration, photo, or computer graphic of each item.

You may, of course, choose to include **MORE** items in your book. This would improve your grade tremendously!

The text of your field guide must be typed. Illustrations may be imported graphics, imported photos, actual photos, or hand drawn.

Use the books provided in class for this assignment or use the school or local library.

This assignment is worth **FOUR** grades in science and language arts so **DO YOUR VERY BEST WORK!**

Social Studies/Language Arts

New Mexico History Assignment

Students will study New Mexico history for approximately six weeks. Students will be randomly assigned to their research groups. The historical periods to be studied are, again: Pueblo People and their Ancestors; Spanish/Mexican Settlement; Territorial Period; Early Statehood to the end of the Depression; and the Manhattan Project. Of course, teachers may choose any period from New Mexico history with which they are familiar or think students should know. Resources available for student consumption include the school library; the public library; the computer lab with numerous encyclopaedia CD's as well as Internet access; classroom set of the Robert's *New Mexico History* text; numerous historical atlases; multiple

copies of *New Mexico Magazine*. There are also dozens of other texts available such as *New Mexico Government* by Garcia and Hain and Ellis' book, *New Mexico History Past and Present*. The rubric for the assignment is as follows:

New Mexico History

Group Number: four to five people Time Period _____

Group members _____

_____ Research Paper – 100 points

Five-page research paper discussing at least five key features, people, and events of your chosen time period. ALL group members must submit at least ONE page of typed history. Paper must be typed; 14 point serif font.

_____ Bibliography – 50 points

Minimum three-item bibliography in proper form. Typed. 14 point serif font

_____ Power Point – 60 points

Six screen Power Point presentation highlighting key features, events, people and/or places of your time period. Each screen must have graphic and text and color.

_____ Arts Appreciation – 50 points

What arts or artists were known during this period? Each member of the group must recreate art from your era. If you are studying Pueblo people you might make a pot; if you are studying the Manhattan project, you might sing music of the forties!

_____ Culinary Appreciation – 50 points

Bring a selection of three to five foods from your era to share with the class.

_____ Oral Presentation – 50 points

When called upon, all members of your group will present some portion of your report on your time period.

_____ Total points earned _____ Grade earned

As evidenced by the rubric, several skills will be taught to prepare students for this assignment. Some of these skills include:

1. Research techniques: how to use both the public and school library; how to use Internet; how to look info up on microfiche; how to look up info on a CD ROM; how to scan materials for main idea.

2. Writing skills: how to take notes; how to brainstorm and organize thoughts; how to create sentences and paragraphs from notes; how to paraphrase; review five-paragraph essay
3. Review use of word processor
4. Proper bibliography form
5. New computer skill to be taught: PowerPoint

Proposed field trips for this first nine weeks include:

Santa Fe - New Mexico Legislature

Los Golondrinas – a Spanish colonial village in La Cienega, near Santa Fe

Tijeras Land Grant association

Acoma or Isleta Pueblos

Walking field trip to Erna Ferguson Library

In the course of this project, as students work and research, there will be benchmarks for each area of the rubric to help all class members stay on task. The first benchmark will be due the first week of the assignment. By the end of the first week, students must bring in two books they are using for research. By the end of the second week, students will be responsible for a two-page, double-spaced, handwritten rough draft of the history portion of their paper. Students need to show that at least they have begun some preliminary research on their topic. This is required of each student, not each group.

The culmination of the history research will be New Mexico Day presented in the school's Great Room. Students will create areas in the room which represent their time period. They will prepare brief speeches which summarize each portion of their research. There will be music, dancing, and food! Other classes will be invited to visit. This will be the students' Demonstration of Mastery for the nine weeks.

Legislative Simulation

Following the study of New Mexico history, students will proceed to examine the structure of the state government. This portion of the lesson will take approximately two to three weeks. Introduction of this lesson will begin with a trip to Santa Fe to visit the capital building and the legislature.

Next, a guest speaker will discuss how the legislature functions. The guest speaker will be a judge or a county commissioner or an attorney from Albuquerque. Students will learn about the bicameral nature of the New Mexico legislature. They will learn about the House and the Senate and how those members are chosen. They will learn about the Speaker of the House and President Pro Tem. Other information concerning the legislature will be presented through lecture, discussion, and role playing in class. Students will also visit district court during this period.

Students will read about political parties in *Scholastic Scope*, (1990) and will be asked to discuss the platforms and agendas of the nation's two largest political parties: Democrat and Republican. They will be asked to consider the need for political parties. Students will also be asked to consider if political parties are adequate. Do they represent the ideologies of all citizens in the country and if not, why not. Students will then create their political parties. Their

political party creation will require the following information:

1. Name, logo, motto for political party
2. Party song/Party handshake
3. Five issues with which they are concerned (Should be student and school oriented).
4. They must write an ad for a magazine which will discuss one of their issues and advertises for the party. The ad must have eye-catching titles, exciting words, and creative, colorful art.
5. Students will film a commercial based on their written ad. To save time, students will be asked to join other political parties and participate in other students' commercials.

After filming is complete, students will begin the legislative simulation. This portion of the lesson will take six to seven weeks. Students will randomly divide up the class according to regions in the state. These regions will be Central, Northwest, Northeast, Southwest, and Southeast. Based on information students have gleaned from the history reports and creating their field guides, vital information about each region will be written down and posted on large butcher paper around the room. This vital information will include: 1. Three to five large cities in the region and approximate populations, 2. Significant natural resources; 3. Reservations or pueblos in the regions; 4. Tourist attractions in the region (Carlsbad Caverns, Elephant Butte, etc.); 5. Possible significant issues for their region; and 6. Political points of view in the region.

After students have divided up into regions and completed their mini-research into each region, they will be asked to consider representatives to represent their region in the legislature. All students will be asked to write a campaign speech in which they discuss the following information: 1. Name and length of time candidate has been a New Mexico resident; 2. Employment history (Babysitting? Yard work for dad?); 3. Their political party (the one they created); 4. Significant political or social issues (school issues) in which the candidate has been involved (Did they help get the school's skateboard rule passed? Are they their class president?); 6. Rationale (Why?) for seeking political office. How will they be a good representative? Speech must be at least two pages long. It may be handwritten neatly in ink.

All students will be asked to present their campaign speeches before the class. Class will choose the top ten speakers, two for each region. Their choice will be based upon their candidate's ability to speak well in public and their candidate's ability to discuss the required issues previously listed.

Following the presentations of the campaign speeches, the ten chosen candidates will use the students assigned to their region to act as volunteers for their campaigns. There will be approximately five students per candidate to work on campaigns. Within these groups of volunteers, the students will decide on three to five work groups which will be needed for a successful campaign. One work group might be in charge of creating posters, flyers, and mailings. Another group might be in charge of television spots for their candidate. Still another group might be responsible for radio ads.

Candidates will have one week to campaign throughout school. They may make announcements over the intercom in the morning; they can also show their campaign ads on the local in-school TV newsmagazine. Computers will be used to create campaign posters and flyers. Early the next week, students will vote for the candidate of their choice. Even though students may have worked with one particular candidate, they are free to vote for whomever they choose.

All students will fill out the Bernalillo county form for voter registration. Student volunteers will compile a class list of eligible voters. The county clerk's office will deliver a voting machine to any classroom or school free of charge. Students running for office will have their names placed in the voting machine. On a Tuesday, students will go to their voting district set up in the classroom (Central, Southwest, Northwest, Southeast, and Northeast) and give their name to the student clerk, and go vote. Clerk will cross off the name. Students will then vote in the voting booth!

After a winner from each district has been elected, the next order of business is to meet in the first legislative session and elect the president of legislature. In the interest of time and the desperate need for the teacher to remain sane, the classroom legislature will not be divided into House and Senate. There will be only the 'legislature'. This will be discussed and explained to the students.

Next, regional students will meet with their respective representatives to suggest an issue for a committee to evaluate and study. Their representative will appoint the members of the region part of the committee. The chairperson of the committee will be chosen by seniority based on birth dates. When students canvass their fellow classmates, they will be assigned classes based upon school 'regions' : Southeast corner classes; Southwest corner classes, etc. Committee chairs, along with the Committee members, will then canvass the school and determine what their constituency feels are significant issues for the school. This will take place through surveys in the first period homeroom class and by questions asked during lunch. Several days will be devoted to gathering information. Students will then discuss their findings in class. With teacher guidance, each committee (region) will come up with an issue and turn it into a bill. The bill will ultimately be discussed on the floor of the classroom legislature.

The committee will then research their issue. One significant issue at school is crossing guards on the main street. Currently, there are no crossing guards. Teachers have acted as crossing guards and risked their lives getting students safely across the street. This issue is of tremendous concern because seven students have been hit by cars in the crosswalk over the past five years. Students, teachers, and parents are aware of the problem and danger. If the issue is a crossing guard, students will generate a list of people they might speak to concerning this situation. They could question students about the degree of danger they feel crossing the road; they could speak to the principal about past attempts to get a crossing guard; they could question the on-campus police officer about his/her opinion and APD's (Albuquerque Police Department) rationale for not providing crossing guards to middle schools. Finally, students could ask teachers about past incidents and accidents in the crosswalk.

Once committee members have compiled their research on their school topic, they will regroup in their committees to discuss their findings. They will discuss what they need in terms of a bill or law; what would they like to see happen? During this process, students will have a

mini-lesson from a legislator on bill writing and the elements needed to create an excellent bill. Students will have several days to draft their bill.

The regular session of the in-class legislature will meet. Committee chairs will be called upon to present their issue and their bill. Chairs will provide history of their issue, present the results of their research, and then present their bill. All members of the legislature will vote yea or nay on the bill. Those bills that are approved will next be presented by committee chairs to the school's SRC, or School Restructuring Committee. This committee is responsible for all major changes which occur throughout the school. The bills will also be presented to the Parent-Teacher-Student group known as the PTSO.

The success of this lesson is based upon the teacher's ability to lead their students toward self-guided work. Students must always be encouraged to be self-directed learners, collaborative workers, quality producers, and complex thinkers. These are the qualities necessary to become life-long learners.

Notes

1 Albuquerque Public Schools District Core Curriculum: Scope and Sequence, Grades 6-8, 1997

2 Sizer, Theodore, *Horace's Compromise*, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1992, pgs225-222

3 NMmgov.homepage.fastfacts, June 1999

4 F. Chris Garcia, Paul L. Hain and Gilbert K. St. Clair, *New Mexico Government*, Albuquerque: UNM Press, 1994, pg.15

5 Dee Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, New York: Holt, Reinhart, and Winston, Inc., 1970

6 F. Chris Garcia, Paul L. Hain and Gilbert K. St. Clair, *New Mexico Government*, Albuquerque: UNM Press, 1994, pg.24

7 Richard Ellis, *New Mexico Past and Present: A Historical Reader*, Albuquerque: UNM Press, 1971, pg56