Social Studies
In Action
A Methodology Workshop, K-5

1: Teaching Social Studies
Powerful Teaching and Learning

This activity takes a closer look at examples of powerful teaching and learning in the classroom video segments. Read the description of each segment, then identify up to three elements of powerful teaching and learning best represented in the segment. Once you've identified the elements, explain your answers in the boxes provided. Then, compare your answers to other teachers' sample answers.

Elements of Powerful Teaching and Learning	
Meaningful	engaging, connects students with real-world situations
Integrative	draws on more than one discipline, subject, or skill set
Value-Based	strengthens students' sense of democratic values and social responsibility
Challenging	incorporates different perspectives and draws on students' critical-thinking skills
Active	participatory, makes use of manipulatives or the physical environment

Segment 1

Description:
Ms. Jones-Inge's class has been talking about types of community. Students researched stories in the news to identify problems that exist in the world, and how their class can make a difference. Students identified, discussed, and talked about the hole in the ozone layer above Chile, and its effects on the children and adults who live there.

Select three or more elements displayed in the example above and write in your explanation of why you chose these elements.

Meaningful	☐	
Integrative	☐	
Value-Based	☐	
Challenging	☐	
Active	☐	

Description:
Ms. Jones-Inge's class has been studying the different types of community: the world, country, local community, and school. Each type of community is defined on an index card that students read aloud. Students suggest gifts that would make a difference in the world, and decide which gift ideas are most realistic.

Select three or more elements displayed in the example above and write in your explanation of why you chose these elements.

Meaningful	☐	
Integrative	☐	
Value-Based	☐	
Challenging	☐	
Active	☐	

Segment 3

Description:
Cynthia Vaughn's students have been studying community, citizens, and leaders using a graphic organizer to define different roles and locations. They explore life in a fictional community they've constructed with cardboard boxes, mapping their community on the classroom floor and role-playing as local businesspeople.

Select three or more elements displayed in the example above and write in your explanation of why you chose these elements.

Meaningful	☐	
Integrative	☐	
Value-Based	☐	
Challenging	☐	
Active	☐	

Sample Answers

Segment 1

Meaningful	☑	Identifying a problem in the world gives students an opportunity to relate to their peers in Chile.
Integrative	☑	The lesson draw on literacy skills in the reading activity, and knowledge about the biosphere as they discuss the ozone layer.
Value-Based	☑	Students are asked to consider what they can do to help people in other parts of the world.
Challenging	☐	
Active	☐	

Segment 2

Meaningful	☐	
Integrative	☑	The teacher's questions draw on literacy skills as students read aloud from vocabulary cards.
Value-Based	☑	Students are asked to consider what they can do to help people in other parts of the world.
Challenging	☑	Students are asked to identify and distinguish between communities of different geographical size, and to think critically about what kind of gift to the world is most realistic.
Active	☐	

Segment 3

Meaningful	☑	Identifying state officials provides a real-world context for the lesson; role-playing as businesspeople gives students a personal connection to their fictional community.
Integrative	☑	The lesson draws on students' art, spatial-ordering, and mapping skills.
Value-Based	☐	
Challenging	☐	
Active	☑	Constructing a model town and organizer makes use of the manipulatives and the physical environment; working in groups is participatory.