
INFLUENCE OF TEACHERS' USE OF GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KINANGO SUB-COUNTY, KWALE COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Statement of the Problem: Teachers' use of graphic organizers play an important role in implementation of social studies curriculum in schools. However, in Kinango Sub-county, implementation of social studies curriculum in public primary schools has faced numerous challenges. Many teachers do not complete their syllabus in time and pupils register low grades in social studies examinations.

Purpose of the Study: To assess the influence of teachers' use of graphic organizers on implementation of social studies curriculum in public primary schools in Kinango Sub-county, Kwale County, Kenya.

Methodology: The study adopted mixed methodology and descriptive survey research and phenomenological research designs. Target population was 3188 respondents which comprised 154 headteachers, 634 social studies teachers, 2 Curriculum Support Officers (CSOs) and 2398 Class VIII pupils from which a sample of 356 respondents was obtained using Yamane's Formula. Stratified sampling was applied to create two (2) different strata based on number of zones in Kinango Sub-county. From each zone, 19 headteachers and 100 social studies teachers were selected using purposive sampling. All the CSOs were purposively selected. However, from each zone, 58 class VIII pupils were selected using simple random sampling. This procedure realized a sample of 38 headteachers, 200 social studies teachers, 2 CSOs and 116 class VIII pupils. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically based on the objectives and presented in narrative forms. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages and inferentially using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 23) and presented using tables.

Findings: The study found that syllabus coverage in social studies is below average which has occasioned low performance in KCPE. This is attributed to the teaching strategies adopted by social studies teachers such as infrequent use of graphic organizers.

Recommendations: The study recommends that social studies teachers should continue using graphic organizers such as charts and pictures and venture into use of slides and Venn diagrams.

Keywords: *Teachers, Graphic Organizers, implementation, social studies curriculum, public primary schools.*

INTRODUCTION

Teachers play important role in the realization of quality education in primary schools. In India, for example, Baysinger and Butler (2014) posit that teachers are tasked with the responsibilities of coordinating and monitoring social studies activities and provide classroom pedagogy. In the same token, Deborah (2014) notes that teachers are tasked with the responsibilities of providing classroom instruction, syllabus coverage and maintaining pupils' discipline during social studies lessons. McDonnell (2014) posits that teachers have roles in implementation of social studies curriculum in addition to other roles such as child guidance and discipline, respecting cultural diversity, establishing reciprocal relationship with families and creating a caring community of learners, teaching to enhance development and learning in the classroom.

To achieve this, teachers adopt use of graphic organizers. Graphics are visual images or designs on some surface, such as a wall, canvas, screen, paper, or stone to inform, illustrate or entertain. Baxendell (2013) opines that graphic organizers are an effective tool to use in the social studies classroom to organize and communicate information in a visual way. A study carried out in the Netherlands by Bundy (2015) revealed that, when applied to content areas, graphic organizers enhance the learning and comprehension of difficult concepts and ideas. Bundy (2015) found that using graphic organizers in the social studies classroom helps to make content accessible to all levels of learners. These include charts, slides, venn diagrams and document analysis sheet.

The researcher further established that teachers who use the above graphic organizers find it easy to organize, clarify or simplify complex information to learners and enable learners to construct understanding through an exploration of the relationships between concepts in social studies. These findings point to the fact that graphic organizers are a useful scaffold to support pupils' learning. In other words, careful design, creation and use of graphic organizers provide important intellectual guardrails to guide learners toward deeper understanding and learning of

different concepts in social studies. In a study conducted in France, Kilpatrick, Swafford and Findell (2016) noted that graphic organizers such as charts and motion pictures contribute effectively to the implementation of social studies curriculum in primary schools. Kilpatrick et al (2016) note that, to be effective pictures must be understood from pictures learners can develop the ability to see, describe and draw inference. Pictures are also one of the most important techniques in teaching new words (ibid). By use of pictures the researcher means blackboard drawing, wall pictures charts and flash cards, the image of pictures stimulates the learners' imagination which encourage them to express their feelings, attitudes, a number of activities can be generated through using pictures (ibid). This lends credence to the findings of a study carried out in India by Noor (2017) which revealed that a substantial relationship between the use of manipulative graphic organizers and learners' achievement in social studies. Noor (2017) further revealed that effective use of teaching resources in classrooms had witnessed improved test-scores. In other words, learners with good access to graphic organizers have improved intellectual and cognitive abilities to master concepts very fast.

In many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, Bellanca (2017) asserts that well-designed graphic organizers should guide learners to categorize key concepts, surface the interconnection of ideas, or help students construct knowledge. A study carried out in Ethiopian primary schools by Marew (2018) found that using graphic organizers enable learners to organize, comprehend and internalize new learning in social studies. Marew (2018) further established that, to ensure smooth implementation of social studies curriculum in schools, use of graphic organizers provides a hands-on approach to learning. This implies that the designs of the graphical organizers and the act of organizing content serves to stimulate both the creative and logical parts of the brain.

A study undertaken in a sample of primary schools in KwaZulu Natal Province in South Africa by Walkin (2018) established that teachers of social studies have adopted use of graphic organizers to help learners develop various cognitive skills like brainstorming, generation of ideas, organizing and prioritizing content, critical analysis and reflection. The exposure to the various tools helps improve the student's capacity for active learning. Walkin (2018) revealed that, in such primary schools, use of the visual representations has served as visual cues aiding retention and recall of concepts in social studies and their relations. In a study carried out in Uganda, Sikubwabo (2018) revealed that use of graphic organizers has enabled teachers to extract critical information from the text in an effort to increase learner comprehension of the material. Sikubwabo (2018) found that teachers believe that one possible solution to this is to

make the information more visible to the pupils through the use of graphic organizers, which should help the learners achieve deep comprehension and easier memorization of basic information and concepts in social studies.

In Kenya, learners are naturally visual and can build relationships between concepts and a represented item and that using representation or pictures to clarify a relationship is making the use of graphic organizers (Kiruhi, Githua & Mboroki, 2018). For example, learning the basic concepts can use pictures of apples or favorite fruits to help learners recognize that the ideas represent the items depicted.

Teaching social studies through representation or pictures allows learners to make connections between the real world and the skills that are vital for academic success. In Kinango Sub-county, Kitimo (2014) posits that teachers use organizers to help learners become more motivated, demonstrate faster short-term recall and show greater long-term achievement. Rashid (2016) carried out in Kinango Sub-county which revealed that graphic organizers allow teachers and learners to isolate, summarize, and manipulate social studies information in ways that are learner-centered, developmentally appropriate, active, challenging and productive. However, this has not realized much remarkable progress in improving syllabus coverage and learner performance in national examinations in social studies.

Kitimo (2014) reports that, in Kinango Sub-county, many teachers do not complete their syllabus in time and pupils register low grades in internal and national examinations with regard to social studies. A report by MoE (2020) shows that, in public primary schools in Kwale County, 67.2% of teachers do not complete syllabus in time and have 43.3% of their pupils register low grades in examinations in social studies. However, much still needed to be done since Rashid (2016) as well as other reviewed studies, besides appreciating the role of graphic organizers, has not articulated how different forms of graphic organizers influence implementation of social studies curriculum in primary schools.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Use of graphic organizers plays an important role in implementation of social studies curriculum in public primary schools. However, in Kinango Sub-county, implementation of social studies curriculum in public primary schools has faced numerous challenges. As noted earlier in the background, many teachers do not complete their syllabus in time and pupils register low grades in internal and national examinations with regard to social studies as a subject. Ministry of Education (2020) notes that, in public primary schools, 67.2% of teachers

do not complete syllabus in time and have 43.3% their pupils register low grades in internal and national examinations. Despite these observations, few empirical studies have assessed the extent to which teachers' use of graphic organizers influences implementation of social studies curriculum in public primary schools; thus, the study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- i. To assess the status of implementation of social studies curriculum in public primary schools in Kinango Sub-county.
- ii. To examine the influence of teachers' use of graphic organizers on implementation of social studies curriculum in public primary schools in Kinango Sub-county;

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study was guided by the Instructional theory which was postulated by Robert Gagne (1999). The theory offers explicit guidance on how to help people learn and develop. It focuses focus on how to structure material for promoting the education of human beings, particularly pupils and learners. This theory outlines strategies that the teacher may adopt to achieve the learning objectives. The instructional theory identifies what instruction or teaching should be like and outlines strategies that teachers may adopt to achieve the learning objectives. Therefore, the rationale of using the instructional theory for this study is that the theory offers general guide on how children develop and learn. It also addresses the role of the teachers in formulating instructional strategies for implementation of social studies curriculum through effective instruction. It recognizes instructional strategies that teachers may adopt which including use of graphic organizers in realizing the objectives of social studies curriculum in schools.

This study was also based on the curriculum theory by Franklin (1956). According to this theory, human life, however varied, consists in the performance of specific activities. Education that prepares for life is one that prepares definitely and adequately for these specific activities. However numerous and diverse they may be for any social class they can be discovered. This requires only that one go out into the world of affairs and discover the particulars of which their affairs consist. The curriculum will then be that series of experiences which children and youth must have by way of obtaining those objectives. This theory thus rationalizes the fact that teaching strategies adopted by teachers play critical role in successful implementation of social studies curriculum in schools.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted mixed methodology and descriptive survey research and phenomenological research designs. Target population was 3188 respondents which comprised 154 headteachers, 634 social studies teachers, 2 Curriculum Support Officers (CSOs) and 2398 Class VIII pupils from which a sample of 356 respondents was obtained using Yamane’s Formula. Stratified sampling was applied to create two (2) different strata based on number of zones in Kinango Sub-county. From each zone, 19 headteachers and 100 social studies teachers were selected using purposive sampling.

All the CSOs were purposively selected. However, from each zone, 58 class VIII pupils were selected using simple random sampling. This procedure realized a sample of 38 headteachers, 200 social studies teachers, 2 CSOs and 116 class VIII pupils. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically based on the objectives and presented in narrative forms. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages and inferentially using Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Analysis with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 23) and presented using tables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the findings of the study based on the objective. It also outlines the methods of presentation of the study findings and discussions.

RESPONSE RATES

In this study, 200 questionnaires were administered to social studies teachers out of which 196 questionnaires were filled and returned. Similarly, 31 headteachers, 2 CSOs and 93 Class VIII pupils were interviewed. Response rates shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Response Rates

Respondents	Sampled Respondents	Those Who Participated	Achieved Return Rate (%)
Headteachers	38	31	81.6
Social Studies Teachers	200	196	98.0
Curriculum Support Officers	2	2	100.0
Class VIII Pupils	116	93	80.2
Total	356	322	90.4

Table 1 shows that headteachers registered a response rate of 81.6%, social studies teachers registered 98.0%, CSOs registered 100.0% response rate whereas class VIII pupils registered a response rate of 80.2%. On average, this yielded a response rate of 90.4%, which affirmed

the assertions of Creswell (2014) that a response rate above 75.0% is adequate and of suitable levels to allow for the generalization of the outcomes to the target population.

Status of Implementation of Social Studies Curriculum in Primary Schools

The study sought to assess the status of implementation of social studies curriculum in public primary schools in Kinango Sub-county. This was measured by rating the levels of syllabus coverage and KCPE performance in social studies curriculum in public primary schools. Results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Levels of Syllabus Coverage in Social Studies Curriculum

Levels of Syllabus Coverage	Number of Teachers	
	f	%
Excellent	35	17.9
Very Good	49	25.0
Good	20	10.2
Fair	80	40.8
Below Average	12	6.1

Source: Field Data (2023)

Table 2 shows that only 35(17.9%) of the teachers stated that their syllabus is excellent, a quarter, 49(25.0%) stated very good, 20(10.2%) stated good whereas majority, 80(40.8%) indicated their syllabus coverage is fair with a paltry 12(6.1%) stating below average. During the interviews, the headteachers, however, responded on the contrary by stating that timely syllabus coverage has been a challenge in many public primary schools. They indicated that social studies teachers rarely complete their syllabus in time. When probed further, headteacher, H1, noted;

In my primary school, the levels of syllabus coverage in social studies are below average. Teachers do not cover their syllabus in time to allow learners time to revise.

Similar views were expressed by the class VIII pupils who noted that levels of syllabus coverage in social studies is below average. They stated that their teachers rarely cover syllabus in time. Class VIII pupil, CLP1, observed;

In my primary school, we usually lag behind in covering syllabus and sometimes proceed to the next class without clearing social studies content for the previous class.

Similar views were expressed by the Curriculum Support Officers who also stated that syllabus coverage in many public primary schools has been a challenge to many social studies teachers.

The CSOs indicated that most of the teachers do not cover their syllabus in time. On further probing, Curriculum Support Officer, CSO1, observed;

In many public primary schools, teachers teaching social studies rarely cover their syllabus in time. In fact, rates at which they cover social studies syllabus is below average, which has made it difficult for pupils to perform better in their examinations.

These findings point to the fact that syllabus coverage by social studies teachers has been a problem in many public primary schools. This is consistent with the assertions of Kitimo (2014) reports that, in Kinango Sub-county, many teachers do not complete their syllabus in time.

This also lends credence to the findings of a report by the Ministry of Education (2020) which showed that, in public primary schools in Kwale County, 67.2% of teachers do not complete syllabus in time. These findings point to the fact that timely coverage of social studies syllabus has not been realized in many public primary schools. Having collected data on syllabus coverage, data were further collected on KCPE performance in social studies for the last five years (2018-2022). Results are shown in Table 3;

Table 3: KCPE Performance in Social Studies Curriculum

Year of Examination	KCPE Results in Social Studies (%)
2018	37.87
2019	33.90
2020	31.64
2021	29.57
2022	30.61

Source: Field Data (2023)

Table 3 shows that KCPE performance in social studies has been low fluctuating between 29% and 38% for the last five years, which is below average. These findings were supported by headteachers, social studies teachers, class VIII pupils and Curriculum Support Officers who stated that academic performance of pupils in social studies has been low despite the concerted efforts being put. These findings corroborate the assertions of Kitimo (2014) that, in Kinango Sub-county, pupils register low grades in internal and national examinations with regard to social studies. In the same token, the Ministry of Education (2020) also reported that shows that, in public primary schools in Kwale County, 43.3% of their pupils register low grades in internal and national examinations in social studies. These findings affirm the fact that performance of pupils in social studies has been low in many public primary schools.

Teachers’ Use of Graphic Organizers and Implementation of Social Studies Curriculum in Public Primary Schools

The study sought to examine how teachers’ use of graphic organizers influence implementation of social studies curriculum in public primary schools. Descriptive data were collected from teachers and results are shown in Table 4;

Table 4: Teachers’ Views on the Influence of Use of Graphic Organizers

Test Items	Ratings				
	SA %	A %	U %	D %	SD %
Teachers use charts and pictures to teach social studies to improve syllabus coverage and learners’ performance	60.2	9.5	3.9	7.8	18.6
Use of slides to teach social studies has rarely been adopted to improve syllabus coverage and learners’ performance	53.7	9.1	3.0	12.1	22.1
Teachers rarely use Venn diagrams to teach social studies to improve syllabus coverage and learners’ performance	77.1	5.2	3.9	10.0	3.8
In social studies class, use of document analysis sheet has ensured that teachers cover syllabus in time and improve learners’ performance	46.3	8.2	4.8	35.1	5.6
Use of graphic organizers has enabled teachers to enhance implementation of social studies curriculum	51.1	8.7	4.3	26.4	9.5

Source: Field Data (2023)

Table 4 shows that 118(60.2%) of teachers strongly agreed with the view that teachers use charts and pictures to teach social studies to improve syllabus coverage and learners’ performance as did 17(9.5%) who agreed, 8(3.9%) were undecided, 15(7.8%) disagreed whereas 34(18.6%) strongly disagreed. These findings corroborate the findings of a study conducted in France in which Kilpatrick et al (2016) revealed that graphic organizers such as charts and motion pictures contribute effectively to the implementation of social studies curriculum in primary schools. Kilpatrick et al (2016) note that, to be effective pictures must be understood from pictures learners can develop the ability to see, describe and draw inference. This indicates that learning the basic concepts in social studies can use pictures of apples or favorite fruits to help learners recognize that the ideas represent the items depicted. In other words, teaching social studies through representation or pictures allows learners to make connections between the real world and the skills that are vital for academic success.

Slightly more than half, 105(53.7%) of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that use of slides to teach social studies has rarely been adopted to improve syllabus coverage and learners’

performance while 18(9.1%) agreed. However, 6(3.0%) were undecided, 24(12.1%) disagreed whereas 43(22.1%) strongly disagreed. The study also revealed that 151(77.1%) of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that teachers rarely use Venn diagrams to teach social studies to improve syllabus coverage and learners' performance. On the same breath, 10(5.2%) agreed, 8(3.9%) were undecided, 20(10.0%) disagreed whereas 7(3.8%) strongly disagreed.

These findings are inconsistent with the findings of a study carried out in Kinango Sub-county in which Rashid (2016) revealed that graphic organizers allow teachers and learners to isolate, summarize, and manipulate social studies information in ways that are learner-centered, developmentally appropriate, active, challenging and productive. Rashid (2016) revealed that graphic organizers have made learning social studies concepts manageable and memorable. These findings are indicative of the fact that, though their use in teaching is crucial in improving mastery of concepts, their use has not been fully embraced by social studies teachers. The study further revealed that 91(46.3%) of the teachers strongly agreed that, in social studies class, use of document analysis sheet has ensured that teachers cover syllabus in time and improve learners' performance whereas 16(8.2%) agreed, 9(4.8%) were undecided, 69(35.1%) disagreed whereas 11(5.6%) strongly disagreed. Majority, 100(51.1%), of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that use of graphic organizers has enabled teachers to enhance implementation of social studies curriculum whereas a paltry 17(8.7%) agreed, 9(4.3%) were undecided, 52(26.4%) disagreed whereas 19(9.5%) strongly disagreed.

These findings support the findings of a study carried out in primary schools in Ethiopia in which Marew (2018) found that using graphic organizers enable learners to organize, comprehend and internalize new learning in social studies. According to Marew (2018), to ensure smooth implementation of social studies curriculum in schools, use of graphic organizers provides a hands-on approach to learning. These findings also support the findings of a study undertaken in KwaZulu Natal Province in South Africa in which Walkin (2018) established that teachers of social studies have adopted use of graphic organizers to help learners develop various cognitive skills like brainstorming, generation of ideas, organizing and prioritizing content, critical analysis and reflection. Walkin (2018) further revealed that, in such primary schools, use of the visual representations has served as visual cues aiding retention and recall of concepts in social studies and their relations.

These findings affirm the fact that, though not always an undertaking in many schools, these tools, when incorporated in the lesson, provide learners with the opportunity to actively participate and contribute to their learning process. This implies that the designs of the

graphical organizers and the act of organizing content serves to stimulate both the creative and logical parts of the brain. This indicates that, though many public primary schools have not fully adopted use of graphic organizers for teaching, they are important in ensuring that learners master concepts and perform well in their examination.

Inferential Analysis

To verify the influence of teachers’ use of graphic organizers on implementation of social studies curriculum in public primary schools, data were collected on how often (Very Often = 5, Often = 4, Sometimes = 3, Rarely = 2 and Never = 1) teachers use graphic organizers to teach social studies and average KCPE performance in social studies for the last five years (2018-2022) in the 31 sampled public primary schools. Results are shown in Table 5:

Table 5: Teachers Use Graphic Organizers and KCPE Performance in Social Studies

How Often Teachers Use Graphic Organizers	KCPE Performance in Social Studies
2	37.6
1	34.5
1	29.9
1	28.4
3	40.5
2	39.3
4	50.9
5	49.6
4	45.6
2	47.9
4	58.4
5	56.7
4	34.7
2	44.5
2	49.2
1	53.4
1	40.5
2	56.1
2	55.3
3	47.7
1	37.7
4	48.3
2	41.3
3	43.2
4	34.7
2	34.7
4	44.1
5	51.3
3	47.2
1	28.4
1	24.7

Source: Field Data (2023)

Table 5 shows that, in public primary schools where social studies teachers frequently use graphic organizers during teaching, implementation of social studies is effective characterized with improved academic performance in KCPE. In other words, though not a full guarantee, frequent use of graphic organizers by social studies teachers has helped them to effectively implement social studies curriculum in schools. Results in Table 5 were subjected to Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Analysis. Results are shown in Table 6:

Table 6: Relationship between Teachers’ Use of Graphic Organizers and Implementation of Social Studies Curriculum in Public Primary Schools

		Teachers’ Use of Graphic Organizers	Implementation of Social Studies Curriculum
Teachers’ Use of Graphic Organizers	Pearson Correlation	1	.509*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003
	N	31	31
Implementation of Social Studies Curriculum	Pearson Correlation	.509*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	
	N	31	31

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 6 shows a Pearson Product Moment Correlation Test Analysis which generated correlation coefficients of $r = 0.509$ with corresponding significant level (p-value) of 0.003 which was less than the predetermined level of significance, 0.05, that is, $p\text{-value} = 0.003 < 0.05$. Thus, the data shows there is significant influence of teachers’ use of graphic organizers on implementation of social studies curriculum in public primary schools.

Thematic Analysis

During the interviews, the headteachers, Curriculum Support Officers and class VIII pupils also responded in favour of the view that teachers use charts and pictures to teach social studies to improve syllabus coverage and learners’ performance. Headteacher, H2, noted;

In my primary school, I provided teachers with all the curriculum support materials. These include pictures and charts which are relevant to the concepts being taught in social studies.

On their part, the Curriculum Support Officers indicated that all public primary schools are supplied with curriculum support materials such as charts and pictures to aid the process of classroom pedagogy. Curriculum Support Officer, CSO2, stated;

In my zone, all public primary schools are provided with teaching and learning materials such as charts and pictures to help teachers in curriculum implementation by helping learners master concepts in social studies.

These views were echoed by class VIII pupils who stated that their teachers use charts and pictures during social studies lessons. Class VIII pupil, CLP2, observed;

In my class, there charts and pictured embedded on the walls and desks to help us understand different concepts being taught. My teacher ensures that every learner understand the value of each chart pinned on the class wall. This has enabled us improved performance in the subject.

On the use of slides, Venn diagrams and document analysis, the interviewees also indicated that these are rarely used by teachers during teaching and learning of social studies. Headteacher, H3, stated;

In my primary school, use of slides, Venn diagrams and document analysis is minimally undertaken by social studies teachers during instruction.

Similar views were expressed by the CSOs and class VIII pupils who stated that these forms of graphic organizers are rarely used in many public primary schools for teaching social studies. Class VIII pupil, CLP3, observed;

I have not seen my social studies teacher use slides or Venn diagrams during social studies lessons.

Despite these findings, the respondents indicated that slides and Venn diagrams are useful in teaching social studies if all the resources are provided. These findings further point to the fact that, when graphic organizers are incorporated in social studies lesson, they provide learners with the opportunity to actively participate and contribute to their learning process.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

From the study findings, it is evident that levels of syllabus coverage in social studies are below average. Teachers do not cover their syllabus in time to allow learners time to revise. This has occasioned low academic performance of learners in social studies evidenced by low KCPE grades. Teachers' use of graphic organizers influences the extent to which social studies curriculum is implemented. Teachers frequently use charts and pictures to teach social studies to improve syllabus coverage and learners' performance. However, slides, Venn diagrams and document analysis sheets are rarely used by social studies teachers, despite the fact that they are considered useful in teaching social studies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that social studies teachers should continue graphic organizers such as charts and pictures and venture into new areas such use of slides, Venn diagrams and document analysis. School management should provide resources required to enable teachers adopt use of slides and Venn diagrams while teaching social studies.

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