**“Simulations - A Very Powerful Teaching Tool”**

**Presented by Norma Collson**

****

[www.teachinteract.com](http://www.teachinteract.com)

1-800-421-4246

Grades K-12

SIMULATIONS



Classroom simulations can be a very, powerful tool in the learning process. As an educator, you will find your students engaged in the learning process, while at the same time having fun. Simulations are unique, in that, they allow gifted, as well as challenged students to learn together. When using this style of teaching it creates an environment of active learning rather than passive learning.

**Brain-based Research**

1. The brain is a social and emotional organ that is best developed using understanding and remembering with collaborative, challenging activities
2. Peer support found in collaborative activities is invaluable for struggling students, whether they are just below grade level, have learning disabilities or are learning English. (These groups can also be gifted.)
3. Interact activities require students to reach to the top of the new Bloom’s taxonomy. Students must analyze the task, **evaluate** how to **apply** their knowledge to create the assigned product.

**Challenges**

1. Not enough time for social studies and science – Interact is multidisciplinary so teachers can develop language arts skills, along with other skills such as math using the content
2. Emphasis on testing – Interact reinforces learning so students actually remember topics from fall to spring
3. Not enough funding for supplemental materials – documented student achievement make this an investment toward your school’s goals
4. Wide range of student abilities and learning styles – Interact activities address a wide variety of both and collaborative peer support takes some of the burden off of the teacher
5. Classroom isolation of teachers – Interact has a help desk, a website forum for Interact users and authors

**Simulations in the classroom**

1. Makes learning come to life
2. Develops team work skills
3. Meets challenges in diverse classrooms
4. Provides for a variety of learning styles
5. Easy-to-use lesson plans
6. Provides for a wide range of academic proficiency

**Interact Subjects**

1. Science
2. Math
3. Language Arts
4. Character Education
5. U.S. History
6. Government/Law
7. Economics
8. Geography Studies
9. Integrated Units

**Simulation Overview**

* Each simulation begins with the standards that will be taught for the unit. Example - Standard 1: United States History Standards – Expansion and Reform – Civil War and Reconstruction
* A page overview of the unit is given
* A page with the purpose of the simulation lists the knowledge, skills, feelings and attitudes that will be covered in the material
* Setup Directions – this includes: how to group students, roles to be assigned, duplication, materials needed, enhancement options, assessment, classroom arrangement if needed, and schedule
* Daily Lessons Plans include materials needed for that day and step-by-step instructions
* In the back of the book you will find assessments, activities, duplication sheets and student guides if needed

If you have any questions about simulations in general or a specific one, you may contact me.

**Norma Collson**

Cell – 828-817-6025

Work – 828-859-6889

Email – ncollson@gmail.com

**Presenter Recommendations**  (based on my personal experience and is no reflection on the authors of these units)

\*\*Nutrition

**CHOW** – Covers MyPlate guidelines, important nutrition facts and good health practices – *Excellent* – Grades 4-8

\*\*Science

**Roberto’s Rainforest** – learn about the ecosystem in a rainforest and its people, great when studying plant life – *Excellent* – Grades K-2 (hint- I adapted the concept and used this idea in Grades 6-8)

**My Backyard** – small creatures like ladybugs, hummingbirds, fireflies, etc. are the topic of study here – *heard from another teacher it was a good unit* – Grades K-2

**Code Blue** – The study of the six major body systems and public health issues – *Excellent* – Grades 5-8

**Classroom Campground** – Compass skills, how to enjoy nature and preserve it, weather and wildlife observation, camping safety – *Excellent* – Grades – 2-5

**Zoo** – Care of mammals in a modern day zoo – good to use when studying about mammals, very interesting and engaging – *Excellent* – Grades 2-5

**Peterson’s Pond** – A simulation that uses Pond Life for study – Learn all about the ecosystem of a Pond – Microscope needed – *Excellent* – Grades 4-8

\*\*Language Arts

**Grammar Zone** – A cooperative group adventure through the four basic parts of speech – *Excellent* – Grades 3-6

\*\*History

**Discovery** – a simulation of early American colonization *– Average -* this simulation was hard to teach and difficult to follow – Grades 5-8

**Pilgrims** – A simulation of the first year at Plymouth Colony – *Excellent* – Grades 2-5

**Patriots** – a simulation and resource notebook on the American Revolution – this simulation is excellent but very in-depth, you will probably not be able to cover all the material and could use it differently more than once – *Excellent* – Grades 5-11

**Independence** – a shorter simulation on the American Revolution – *Average* – Grades 5-9

**Civil War** – a simulation of civilian and soldier life during the Civil War, I did adapt this one to make it a little more interesting– *Excellent* – Grades 5-11

**Underground Railroad** – students experience the Underground Railroad as “passengers” – this simulation was lots of fun and the students enjoyed it – *Excellent* – Grades 4-8

**Pioneers** – a simulation of decision making on a wagon train – great when studying westward expansion – *Excellent* – Grades 5-8

**China** – a simulation of ancient China – *Average* – Grades 6-12

\*\*Government and Law

**Kid Town** – a thematic simulation about community life – fun to teach but requires a lot of prep work – *Excellent* – Grades K-3

\*\*Geography

**See the U.S.A**. – a simulation of travel teams who explore the United States – map skills, interesting state facts – *Excellent* – Grades 4-6

**Caravans** – An adventure simulation focusing on World geography – You can add a lot to this one to make it more fun - *Excellent* – Grades 4-8

**Internet Cruises** – A Global travel simulation using the world wide web – very time consuming – *Average* – Grades 4-8

**Flight** – A simulation of a Cross-Continent Air Race that develops map-reading and decision making skills – *Excellent* – Grades 5-8

**Geography Bee** – An integrated Primary unit teaching map skills – probably my all time favorite – *Excellent* – Grades K-3

*\*\*\*There are many other simulations I have not tried yet. I am sure you will find them to be just as useful and engaging in your classroom. \*\*\**