

Area/Skill - Social Studies	Cognitive Skill Level - Evaluation	Correlation to Framework - 02.01	Lesson Number - 25
<p>Activity Title - Year Round Schools?</p> <p>Goal/Objective</p> <p>To interpret an article and evaluate the information through comparing and contrasting the pros and cons.</p> <p>Lesson Outline Introduction</p> <p>Begin the lesson by discussing why schools are generally operated for only nine months out of the year. This concept goes back to the days when America was an agrarian economy and children were needed to work on the farms during the summer months.</p> <p>Activity</p> <p>Divide the class into small groups of four to five students. Have each group read the article and identify the pros and the cons of year-round school. Have them divide a piece of chart paper in half, writing the pros on one side and the cons on the other.</p> <p>Next have the students identify additional positives or negatives that the article did not discuss. Have the students write these pros and cons on the bottom half of the chart paper in the appropriate column.</p> <p>Have the students compare and contrast the pros and cons that they listed from the article. Discuss further implications of year-round schools that were identified by the students.</p> <p>Debriefing/Evaluation Activity</p> <p>Debrief the activity by having each student write a paragraph stating his/her views on year-round school.</p>			<p>Materials/Texts/Realia/Handouts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handout - Year Round Schools? • Paper and pencil
			<p>Extension Activity</p> <p>Have students research year-round schools and look for articles and editorials in the local newspaper on the topic. Make a bulletin board of the pros and cons of this topic.</p>
<p>Real-Life Connection</p> <p>Discuss how year-round school would affect the student's family, community, and workplace. Include in the discussion the changes that would need to be made in schedules, as well as any personal or economic advantages or disadvantages.</p>			<p>ESE/ESOL Accommodations</p> <p>Have students highlight the different facts found in the article before transferring the information.</p> <p>Allow students to orally report their findings.</p> <p>Create a graphic organizer that identifies pros and cons. Start the student off with one positive comment and one negative regarding the topic.</p>

GED 2002 Teachers' Handbook of Lesson Plans - Script

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Activity Title - Year Round Schools?

Introduction

Ask: Why do students attend school for nine months and then get a summer vacation of three months? If students are unaware of the rationale for the traditional school year, briefly review the aspect that America was once an agrarian economy. Children were needed to work on the farms during the summer, so school was traditionally conducted only during the late fall and winter months. This schedule has continued even though most children in today's world do not live on farms.

Main Activity

Ask: What would happen if the school calendar changed and children would now attend year-round with no additional days of attendance required? Write down some of the comments from the students on the board.

Say: Today, we are going to discuss the issue of year-round school. Get into small groups of four to five people. Each group will read a short article on year-round schools. As you read the article, underline or highlight the pros and the cons. When you have finished reading, use the chart paper on your tables to write down the pros and the cons of year-round school as stated in the article. You may wish to divide the paper into two halves so that all of the pros for year-round school are on the right side of the paper and all of the cons are on the left side.

Say: You will notice that the article is not long enough to list all of the implications of year round school. See if you can come up with additional positives and negatives regarding this practice. Write your personal pros and cons under those listed by the article.

Have the students report their answers to the rest of the class.

Closure/Conclusion

Ask: Based on the information that you have just gained and your own personal views, would you be in favor of year-round school? Write a paragraph about your personal viewpoint. Be sure to back up your opinions with facts whenever possible.

Debrief the activity by discussing the various opinions.

Follow-Up Lessons/Activities

Take a survey of students for year-round school and those against. Have the students graph the results. A survey can also be taken of the reasons that students either like or dislike the concept of year-round school. These results should be displayed in graphic form. Discuss why a specific type of graph was used to display the data.

GED 2002 Teachers' Handbook of Lesson Plans
Social Studies Lesson 25 Handout

Year Round School?

To some, the idea of giving up the three-month summer vacation that's a tradition in public schools seems preposterous. But in some Texas and California school districts, students attend classes part of the summer in exchange for more frequent breaks during the rest of the school year. They call the approach year-round school and they like it.

Year-round schools that have been used to deal with overcrowding have children attend classes throughout most of the year, taking two- to three-week breaks staggered throughout the calendar rather than three months of vacation in the summer.

Students are split into separate groups and put on alternative tracks. That means some students would be leaving on vacation when others are starting back to school.

In this way, school building capacity can be increased by up to 50 percent. This technique is called multi-track year-round school. The tracking schedules are designed to make sure as many students are off at a time as possible.

California, Minnesota, Texas, North Carolina, and Colorado have tried the method at some of the schools. The most popular calendars seem to be those in which students attend 45 days and have 15 days off or attend 60 days and have 20 days off.

There are many educational benefits to the staggered schedule. Of the studies that have looked at student achievement, 36 percent indicated students attending year-round schools perform better than students on traditional calendars, 8 percent found students on traditional calendars did better while 50 percent showed no difference. The studies were cited in a report made to the Minnesota Legislature in 1999 when that state wanted to consider alternative school programs.

There are some challenges to the year-round calendar. Teachers aren't always available for district-wide staff training and parents may have scheduling conflicts if they also have children on traditional calendars. Parents who work also find it hard to deal with year-round schedules. Childcare can be an issue because children are on more frequent breaks, and parents must find something for them to do.

Other problems include statewide testing schedules, high school athletics, fine arts competitions, and just the difficulty in scheduling.

However, year-round school is a feasible answer to overcrowded schools – an important consideration in rapidly growing parts of certain states.