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## **Incorporating Authentic Assessment into Social Studies**

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# Incorporating Authentic Assessment into Social Studies

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## Definitions

“**Traditional assessment** often measures whether the student can recall or recognize information or complete paper and pencil activities to show that material is learned” (Engel, 2003).

**Authentic assessments** “involve higher-order thinking skills and the coordination of a broad range of knowledge. They communicate to students what it means to do their work well by making it explicit the standards by which work will be judged” (Hart, 1994).

## Literature Review

- Authentic assessment has support from many teachers, parents, and students.
- In many cases there is support for a combination of traditional assessments and authentic assessments.
- Literature suggests that students are often able to demonstrate what they have learned on authentic assessments.

## Methodology

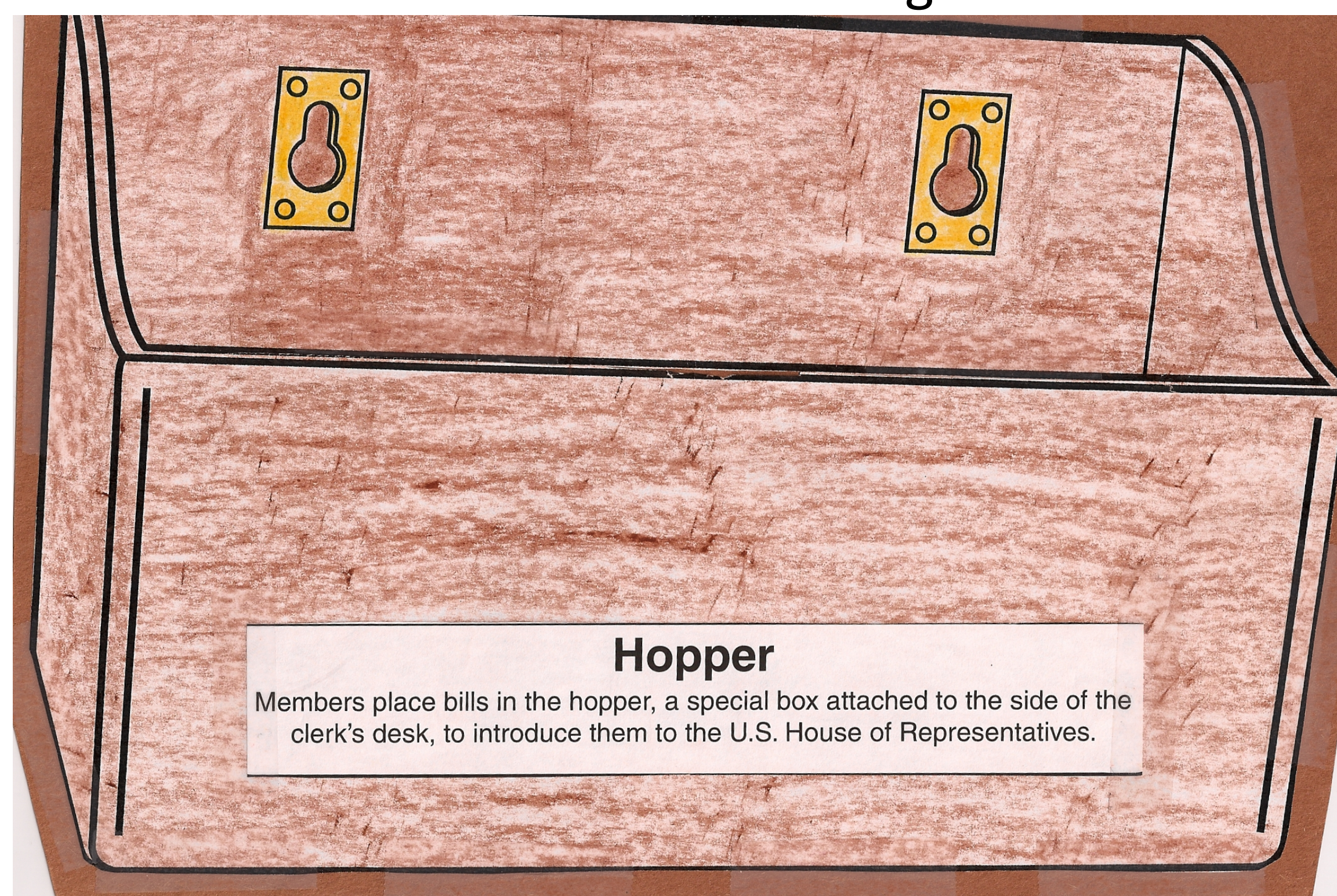
This study was conducted in a second grade classroom. I implemented authentic assessments during a social studies unit that focused on the American government. I collected lesson plans, student work, and my own observations throughout the unit.

## Guiding Questions

- Are students engaged while completing authentic assessments?
- Are students able to successfully demonstrate what they have learned on authentic assessments?

## Findings

The following is a quote from our simulation where I used observations to assess student knowledge of how a bill becomes a law: “‘I am not going to sign this bill. I think it is silly for an ostrich to ride in a car.’ The students laughed and then I asked, ‘does anyone know what it was called when I did not sign that bill?’ and most of the class raised their hands. The first student said ‘veto!’ very excitedly. Right: The hopper from our simulation.



Right: Work from an activity where students classified rules as constitutional or unconstitutional to demonstrate what they learned about the Supreme Court. The following observation is from the discussion of the activity: “If the student spills something they should just leave it on the floor” is unconstitutional “because it’s not respectful, it’s not safe, and it’s not responsible”.

### Unconstitutional

If a student spills something they should just leave it on the floor.

Students should talk whenever they want to.

Students should leave the classroom whenever they want to.

If you need something, just take it from wherever you find it.

Students should say mean things to their classmates.

## Conclusions

- Students are engaged while completing authentic assessments.
- My students were able to work together to complete these assessments.
- Authentic assessments reveal students’ understanding of social studies concepts.

## Acknowledgements

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