Theory and research in social education 17/01

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# THEORY AND RESEARCH in Social Education

Vol. XVII No. 1 Winter 1989

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Reviewers

The Editors would like to thank these reviewers for the thoughtful attention they gave to manuscripts they have considered.

William R. Fielder, Oregon State University
James Finkelstein, New York University
Barry Franklin, Kennesaw College
Michael Hartooinian, Supervisor, Social Studies Education, State of Wisconsin
Wilma Longstreet, University of New Orleans
Paul Mattingly, New York University
Jack L. Nelson, Rutgers University
Anna Ochoa, Indiana University
Paul Robinson, The University of Arizona
Charles S. White, George Mason University
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November, 1988

A Note from the Editor:

We now have received forty-five manuscripts for review and considera-
tion in TRSE. As I read the manuscripts that come in I am reminded of my
graduate studies. I learned some statistics; I studied experimental designs of
research. Psychology was then the preeminent discipline of education. Ex-
perimental research was the "hard science" of education. The fashions of
educational research are changing but the old ways persist. The focus of at-
tention was on changing behavior. Criticism of research directed attention
to methods of analysis, data interpretation, or perhaps generalizability.
Students learned the fashions of thought required for graduation and pro-
fessional advancement. It has not been our tradition to seek to pose and in-
vestigate fundamental questions in education. Our fashion has been to
assume or presuppose that the research that we have been taught how to do
is what we should be doing. We may investigate "wait time," or the relative
effect of one or another method of instruction. In general, attention was
directed towards the management of behavior for one or another educa-
tional objective. Statistical significance was the accomplishment for which
we were taught to strive. Critical theory and ethnography provide new
perspectives on social education, but mainstream thought continues in the
fashions of the past.

There is some discussion today about the Vietnam War. It was a con-
troversial war. It was a very significant event in the life of this nation. What
should social studies teachers do to bring that war, its conduct, its conse-
quences in Vietnam and the United States to the attention of students? If we
accept this question as an issue of some importance, then it becomes im-
mediately clear that many of the research fashions we have been taught will
not help us address this question. True experiments or quasi-experiments,
or correlational studies or questionnaires, or survey research do not appear
to be helpful. What ideas about the war deserve attention? How should they
be addressed?

Consider, for example, as a source of information about the war in Viet-
nam, the following poems by W. D. Ehrhart:

Souvenirs

"Bring me back a souvenir," the captain called.
"Sure thing," I shouted back above the amtrac's roar.

Later that day,
the column halted,
we found a Buddhist temple by the trail.
Combing through a nearby wood,
we found a heavy log as well.
It must have taken more than half an hour, but at last we battered in the concrete walls so badly that the roof collapsed.

Before it did, I took two painted vases Buddhists use for burning incense.

One vase I kept, and one I offered proudly to the captain.

Farmer Nguyen

When we swept through farmer Nguyen's hamlet, some people said that farmer Nguyen had given rice to the Vietcong.

You picked the wrong side, farmer Nguyen. We took you in, and beat you, and put you in a barbed wire cage.

When the Vietcong returned to farmer Nguyen's hamlet, some people said that farmer Nguyen had given information to the Round Eyes.

Wrong again, farmer Nguyen. They took more rice, and beat you, and made you carry supplies.

Time on Target

We used to get intelligence reports from the Vietnamese district offices. Every night, I'd make a list of targets for artillery to hit.

It used to give me quite a kick to know that I, a corporal, could command an entire battery to fire anywhere I said.

One day, while on patrol, we passed the ruins of a house; beside it sat a woman with her left hand torn away; beside her lay a child, dead.
When I got back to base,
I told the fellows in the COC;
it gave us all a lift to know
all those shells we fired every night
were hitting something.

A Relative Thing

We are the ones you sent to fight a war
you didn’t know a thing about.

It didn’t take us long to realize
the only land that we controlled
was covered by the bottoms of our boots.

When the newsmen said that naval ships
had shelled a VC staging point,
we saw a breastless woman
and her stillborn child.

We laughed at old men stumbling
in the dust in frenzied terror
to avoid our three-ton trucks.

We fought outnumbered in Hue City
while the ARVN soldiers looted bodies
in the safety of the rear.
The cookies from the wives of Local 104
did not soften our awareness.

We have seen the pacified supporters
of the Saigon government
sitting in their jampacked cardboard towns,
their wasted hands placed limply in their laps,
their empty bellies waiting for the rice
some district chief has sold
to profit to the Vietcong.

We have been Deomcracy on Zippo raids,
burning houses to the ground,
driving eager amtracs through new-sown fields.
We are the ones who have to live
with the memory that we were the instruments
of your pigeon-breasted fantasies.
We are inextricable accomplices
in this travesty of dreams:
but we are not alone.

We are the ones you sent to fight a war
you did not know a thing about—
those of us that lived
have tried to tell you what went wrong.
Now you think you do not have to listen.

Just because we will not fit
into the uniforms of photographs
of you at twenty-one
does not mean you can disown us.

We are your sons, America,
and you cannot change that.
When you awake,
we will still be here.

These are documents of that war. They poignantly suggest fundamental
issues of social studies education that cannot be addressed through our
traditional research customs. What ideas about Vietnam, about the world
economy, about the United Nations, about the North/South economic rela-
tionships deserve attention in schools? What fundamental questions should
we be addressing in our research today? What do students need to know
about the life of our species as it is to be found in the rich nations and in
poor nations of this planet? To what extent does our traditional scholarship
direct our attention away from the critical issues that are central to our pro-
fession?

Millard Clements
Editor, TRSE

W. D. Ehrhart is a Vietnam veteran; he lives in Doylestown, Pennsyl-
vania. These poems are from his book To Those Who Have Gone Home
Tired, New and Selected Poems, published by Thunder's Mouth Press, 54
Letters

900 Shows a Year

Jean Grambs' all-out attack on Stuart Palonsky's 900 Shows a Year cannot go unanswered. As a friend and frequent collaborator of Palonsky's, and as someone who reviewed his book in its manuscript stage, I feel a natural urge to respond. Even so, a defense of Palonsky's book would ordinarily have been forgone as too subject itself to attack on the basis of my association with the author. The only reason a defense of the book is being offered regardless is that Grambs has nothing good to say. She is unrelentingly hostile to the book, and some semblance of balance should be provided to your unsuspecting readers.

The very beginning of Grambs' attack reveals her determination to savage Palonsky's book. "The research site was selected because it would hire the author as a full-time teacher when he needed a job; the school is atypical in many respects, serving an affluent, white, suburban, district, with most students college-bound." Instead of praising Palonsky for seizing upon an opportunity to do ethnographic research in the trying role of participant-observer, Grambs makes a snide and irrelevant remark about the reason he was there in the first place. She goes on to imply that there is such a thing as a typical school and Palonsky failed to find it. She would do us all a favor by telling us where that typical school is, and if she can't she should explain why Palonsky's atypical school is worse than those of other ethnographers. Palonsky's detailed description of the school in which he worked allows the reader to judge its typicality for the reader's purposes. What more does Grambs want?

Rather than proceed paragraph by paragraph of Grambs' review, a temptation difficult to resist, I will try to deal with what I perceive to be Grambs' major objection to the book. That is the author's point of view. Not the particular point of view which Palonsky held, but the fact that he had one at all and dared to let it permeate the book. In reading Grambs' review, I kept thinking that she must have felt the same way about Death at an Early Age and 36 Children and How to Survive in Your Native Land, etc., etc. All those are books in which the authors' anger and frustration and iconoclasm are manifest.

Those are not polite books, and neither is Palonsky's. But they are all honest, even if brutally so. The juiceless scholarship that Grambs gives every indication of preferring cannot stir the reader because it displays so little passion on the part of the author. Grambs appears to believe that an impassioned presentation means the research on which it is based simply could not have been conducted dispassionately.

A test of whether Palonsky's book is provocative or not is to use it in class. I've tried it in an undergraduate course at Pace University and in both an undergraduate and a graduate course at Rutgers. It is the course book
that provokes the most discussion, during and after class, and the one which students think has told them the most important truths. Even the students who are offended by the book's occasional vulgarity (as Grambs is) at least have that reaction to it. To get the ho-hum reaction one should, of course, supplement Palonsky's book with dry scholarship, and I do because it is so abundant.

Ken Carlson
The State University of
New Jersey
Graduate School of Education
New Brunswick, New Jersey
08903

Reviewer's reply:

I am afraid Ken Carlson missed the point of my review. I too found the earlier works of Kozol, Holt, Dennison, et al, moving and impressive, since they so clearly showed they cared about the educational ills they so excruciatingly documented. As I recall, none of these authors claimed to be doing a scholarly study, and they wrote with grace and passion hoping to change the educational world. Palonsky claimed to be doing a scholarly ethnography, characterized by descriptive clarity, inclusiveness, and non-judgmental reporting and analysis, Had he taken the Kozol, Holt approach he would have told us at the outset that he was an advocate, critic and a partisan, and we could have judged what he told us on that basis. But he did not do this. He claimed to be presenting a scholarly report and analysis, and it is this on which I fault him. Scholarship is cool and advocacy is not, and if you try to have it both ways the scholars are going to call you to account—though undergraduates may not.

Jean D. Grambs
The University of Maryland
College of Education
Institute for Child Study
College Park, Maryland
20742

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Critical Reasoning on Civic Issues

Walter C. Parker, Michele Mueller and Laura Wendling
University of Washington

Abstract

In order to examine the elicitation and production of critical reasoning, twenty-four eleventh grade students were directed to write a dialectical essay on a selected civic issue. Twenty-Two of the 24 students produced such essays. Difficulties included simplistic arguments pro and con, and non sequitur counterarguments. The investigators suggest that high school students are ready to employ advanced forms of critical reasoning on public controversies, and await lessons that invite it.

This paper reports an exploratory study of adolescents’ reasoning on civic issues. The first section introduces the central concepts. The second details the study’s method—an analysis of essays written by high school students on selected civic issues. The third presents and interprets the findings, and the conclusion proposes several hypotheses about students, social studies, and dialectical reasoning on civic issues. To begin with conclusions, dialectical reasoning is central to critical reasoning on public controversies; many, perhaps most, high school students are able to reason dialectically without the benefit of prior instruction; and metacognitive guidance supports student production of such reasoning.

Problem

Perkins, Allen, and Hafner (1983) closed their study of everyday reasoning with hypotheses that anticipate several of the issues in the present study:

A final point about a critical epistemology: if we are right in characterizing it as a matter of knowledge and know-how, it should be teachable. Teaching it would mean teaching quite different from conventional logic or statistical inference, and also quite different from debate. To inculcate a critical epistemology would be to train people to build
understandings of situations by interrogating their own knowledge, and playing off different sorts of knowledge and intuitions against one another in order to evolve sounder models. (p. 189)

An understanding of critical reasoning begins with three distinctions: one between problems of logic and civic issues, one between the kinds of reasoning brought to bear on these, and another between cleverness and genuine questioning. As for the first, problems of logic are by definition well structured and monological. Sufficient information needed to solve the problem is given in its presentation and a single line of reasoning will render a solution. Consider these two, the first a version of the classic liars-and-truth-tellers problem and the second a typical word problem.

In a certain mythical community, politicians always lie, and nonpoliticians always tell the truth. A stranger meets three natives, and asks the first of them if he is a politician. The first native answers the question. The second native then reports that the first native denied being a politician. Then the third native asserts that the first native is really a politician. How many of these three natives are politicians? (Perkins, Allen & Hafner, 1983, p. 177)

Martha Lynn had 10 cookies. She ate four and then divided equally the ones she had left between her brother and her friend, Alan. How many cookies did she give away?

Although more information might be helpful, both problems can be solved without it. Moreover, a single solution is guaranteed when the reasoner executes properly a train of deductive reasoning.

Civic issues require a different kind of reasoning if they are to be understood at all. As public controversies (Newmann & Oliver, 1970), they are community issues, matters of the common weal, of Arendt’s (1958) in-between. Their landscape is ill-structured (Paul, 1987; Simon, 1973; Voss, Greene, Post, and Penner, 1983) and multilogical. Much information that would be helpful in reasoning one’s way to a solution is not given in the problem presentation, and conflicting logics, which may be unto themselves whole and reasonable, can be brought to bear. In other words, “premises are not fixed and inferences are not perfectly reliable” (Perkins, 1986, p. 3); consequently, various solutions are possible and, given more than one reasoner, controversy is likely. Consider these:

1. Was the United States justified in using the atom bomb on Japan?
2. Is it right that schools sanction the home language of some students but not of others?
3. Is it right to lie in order to protect a friendship?
4. Should the local parish be permitted to provide sanctuary for illegal immigrants from Central America?
5. Will tax breaks for investors trickle down to the poor?
6. Should 7-eleven stores sell Playboy and Penthouse magazines?
On any of these civic issues, a reasoner may introduce new information at any point in the reasoning and, more sweeping than this, have a change of mind—that is, a reasoner can shift from one logic to another and see the problem in an altogether new light. American history teachers witness both occurrences frequently enough when students are discussing the first of the issues above. New information is typically introduced as the discussion progresses (e.g., projections of the number of casualties both sides would have sustained had conventional arms been used in an invasion of the island). And, students are often divided roughly into three logics: Unconditional opposition to nuclear weapons use, “We shouldn’t have dropped those bombs even if doing so actually saved lives in the long run. Their effect is just too indiscriminant.” Conditional opposition, “If more lives were saved by using the bomb, then I guess it was right.” Or, “If the other side introduces them into a conflict, then we have to respond in kind.” And those who generally advocate using the most powerful weapon available, whatever the circumstances.

Civic issues, then, are by nature controversial and fuzzy. They crisscross multiple categories, points of view, and values; are entangled in ancillary problems; and are tied to diverse bodies of knowledge and value commitments with which the reasoner may have only limited familiarity and to which no connection may be perceived. Reasoning on such issues is not so much problem-solving (at least not as the term is usually used in formal reasoning to imply a linear and orderly procession from hypothesis to conclusion), as it is model building. Because premises are not given, they must be constructed as the reasoner goes along. And, they may be revised or abandoned outright as the reasoner acquires new information, or devises or is exposed to different and somehow compelling logics. Moreover, alternative ways of construing the issue must be identified. There are often no formal, or technical, rules by which this construction and revision can be managed nor by which general principles can be applied to the particulars of the issue at hand. The difficulties in this sort of reasoning, then, are not only the tasks of building up an adequate information base and avoiding logical fallacies but, more demanding still, the task of constructing adequate models of the situation being reasoned about (Perkins, Allen, & Hafner, 1983; and see Bernstein on Aristotle, 1983).

Central to this model-building, and what is considered here a critical attribute, is the exploration of competing logics (frames of reference; points of view). This is dialectical reasoning. It may occur in many forms—in discussions and debates, in writing, and “inside our own heads,” so to speak, as we set differing points of view against one another dialectically. This sort of reasoning confronts the reasonableness of one logic with the reasonableness of others with reference to criteria that are not indigenous to any one of them. Consider, for example, discussants who are wrestling with multiple logics on the fifth problem above. A reasoner espousing a free market point
of view might advocate letting consumer demand decide whether such products should be supplied. Contrast that with a feminist logic, which might oppose the sale of pornography regardless of its market value, asserting that it degrades women; or a civil libertarian logic, which might argue that consenting adults have the right to pursue their happiness even if in ways that others find offensive. Surely, there are other logics as well. Since reasoners on this issue are likely to be reasoning, perhaps unreflectively, from within one of the several logics available or imaginable, dialectical reasoning begins with the recognition that one does have a point of view. And, it amounts to interrogating one's own position and the logic that frames it.

Now, dialectical reasoning must be distinguished from cleverness, or sophistication, which typically has as its intent the shoring up of one's position rather than the open activity of discovery. Emphasis on this distinction can be found in many traditions, East and West. In Buddhism, it is found in the practice of "mindfulness" or "beginner's mind"—a way of being characterized by radical empiricism or openness to experience and, with it, a rejection of what is regarded as the mind's inherent preoccupation with reference points used in its own defense (Suzuki, 1970). In the Western psychological tradition, this distinction is known in terms of, on the one hand, egocentricity, defensiveness, and confirmation bias; and, on the other, rationality. Either way, it is a distinction based on the recognition that no demanding cogitation nor developed sensibility is required in order to have and defend an opinion. People need no special training to think they are right. Humans are by nature egocentric and ethnocentric, and neither the accumulation of knowledge nor the mere passage of time seem to overcome them (Kohlberg, Levine, & Hewer, 1984; Perkins, 1985a; Piaget, 1965; Ross and Anderson, 1982). To the contrary, even advanced knowledge can attach to what remains a defensive intellectual core, leaving reasoners perhaps more clever, more capable of justifying skillfully their initial positions on issues, but not necessarily more open than a child to genuine inquiry and criticism. Here is Socrates's disdain for the sophists.

Elaborating this point, we might consider three kinds of thinking: vulgar, sophisticated (sophist-icated), and critical (Paul, 1987, after Mills, 1962). Vulgar thinkers artlessly and without reflection assert and defend their opinions on issues, and do so from within the confines of their present frame of reference. Slogans and prejudices prevail. Sophisticated thinkers do roughly the same, only artfully. Though their assertions and refutations may be without logical fallacy, egocentricity governs their thinking, and their intent is still to win. Critical thinkers are different. Their thinking has been freed, relatively speaking, from the need to be right; consequently, they can explore rather than only defend.

They are capable of learning from criticism and are not egocentrically attached to their point of view. They understand it is something to be developed continually (dialectically) and refined by a fuller and richer
consideration of the available evidence and reasoning through exposure to the best thinking in alternative points of view. (Paul, 1987, p. 138)

Though these are idealized types, they assist with the distinction we are trying to make—that skilled thinking is not much of a gain over vulgar thinking if it is still dedicated to defending early-taken positions. Genuine inquiry requires a genuine opening, and this amounts to “an active effort to interrogate one’s knowledge base in order to construct arguments pro and con” (Perkins, Allen, & Hafner, 1983, p. 186; see also Gadamer, 1985).

Of course, there has been in social studies education a vigorous tradition of inquiry [if not instruction (Goodlad, 1984; Morrissett, 1982)] on the development of student reasoning on civic issues (Anderson, 1942; Beyer, 1985; Cherryholmes, 1982; Cornbleth, 1985; Engle, 1960; Fair & Shaftel, 1967; Giroux, 1978; Giroux & Penna, 1979; Hunt & Metcalf, 1968; Kohlberg, 1973; Newmann & Oliver, 1970; Oliver & Shaver, 1966). So, the present study introduces no new concern; like the others, it regards the chief mission of social studies education to be an intellectual one with practical, ethical intent: civic betterment. Rather, the contribution of the present study is a narrowing from this broad concern to a central and largely ignored aspect of critical thinking on civic issues: the development of dialectical reasoning. By narrowing to this, we are focusing on a category that brings to the foreground the distinction between vulgar and sophisticated thinking on the one hand, and a critical epistemology on the other.

Method

Our purpose was to explore dialectical reasoning as an aspect of critical reasoning or model-building on civic issues. Accordingly, we defined it operationally, assessed student production of it, and generated hypotheses related to that production.

Subjects were 24 adolescents drawn randomly from 98 participants at a month-long, resident, civic-leadership institute conducted in the summer of 1986 in a city in the Pacific Northwest. All 98 were between the eleventh and twelfth grades; the age range was 16 to 18 years; 55% were female; 24% were minority (10% Asian, 6% Black, 6% Native American, 2% Hispanic). Application forms were distributed to schools and businesses throughout the state and, from written applications, a panel of eight community leaders selected 98 students according to stated criteria: caring about civic life, initiative, and ability to communicate clearly in writing. The selection panel also sought to obtain minority representation at a level greater than state proportions and a statewide demographic distribution.

Data

Examined were 24 four-paragraph essays written on one of two civic issues on the first day of the institute. Students selected one of the issues knowing they would then write an essay on that issue.
Should publishers of school books use language that includes both sexes, like person and people, and avoid man or men when appropriate?

Should citizens be allowed to voice their opinions even if they disagree with the government?

Written directions were given as follows:

INSTRUCTIONS: Put a check beside the issue you will write about. You will write a four-paragraph essay about the issue you have checked. Each paragraph should be approximately one-fourth to two-thirds of a page long. Each paragraph has a particular purpose:

In paragraph one, you are to summarize what you know about the issue.

In paragraph two, you are to state your position on the issue and give the reasons for your position. In other words, state your position and then support it.

In paragraph three, you are to give as best you can the counterargument. In other words, give the other side's reasoning on this issue.

In paragraph four, write a conclusion.

Begin writing on the next page. Use a separate sheet of paper (blank sheets provided) for each paragraph. You do not have to fill up the whole page.

In order to analyze student production of dialectical reasoning, it first had to be elicited. Our assumption, drawn from other studies (Newmann & Oliver, 1970; Perkins, Allen, & Hafner, 1983) and our own experience as instructors, was that these students were ready to reason dialectically without prior instruction if they were given some help at the time of assessment (Valencia & Pearson, 1988). This was accomplished with a variation of scaffolding, or metacognitive guidance (Greenfield, 1984; Palinscar & Brown, 1984; Perkins, 1986; Vygotsky, 1978). This guidance encouraged reasoners to perform in ways they otherwise might not; consequently, it expected better performance than would occur were the same students to attempt the same task without guidance. Rather than simplifying the task, scaffolding holds the task constant while intervening to help the student accomplish it. Typically, scaffolding is an oral interaction, with novice and guide both present, in which the novice is nudged along just enough to maintain adequate performance and progress. In the present study, only the novice was present, so the scaffolding, such as it was, was accomplished through written instructions.

Two levels of scaffolding were present. At the essay level, students were guided explicitly to compose paragraphs such that the second and third were related dialectically, while the first and fourth were a knowledge summary
and conclusion respectively. At the paragraph level, less scaffolding was present. Put another way, scaffolding within paragraphs was less explicit than scaffolding for the whole essay. In the instructions above, note that students are not helped with either the summary or the conclusion. And in the second and third paragraphs, they are not guided beyond the basic purpose of the paragraph, not guided, for example, to use multiple lines of reasoning in each paragraph. By varying the degree of scaffolding in this way, we then had the opportunity to analyze student reasoning both in the presence and absence of explicit scaffolding.

The form of scaffolding used here has the attraction of situational validity in conventional classroom settings: Writing essays according to a teacher-given format is not an uncommon school task—both for students learning to write essays and for those using essay formats to express their thinking on given or chosen topics. Since a burgeoning literature on intelligence in general (e.g., Gardner, 1976; Lerner, Hultsch, & Dixon, 1983; Sternberg, 1985), and thinking skills in particular (Newmann, in press; Nickerson, in press; Parker, in press) is pointing to the task- and domain-dependent character of cognitive performance, it seems not only reasonable but desirable to study that performance in context. Put differently, as long as the thought specimens examined in this study were understood to be task-dependent, it was desirable that they should be dependent on tasks that made sense in actual teaching/learning settings.

It might be tempting to consider this assistance as instruction. That would not be helpful, as a number of distinctions are present. First, we assumed that the ability did not need to be taught—that it was already present in students but would not be expressed without explicit direction to express it. Second, the scaffolding provided lacked the components of instruction, whether the data-gathering and discovery processes of inductive approaches (e.g., Taba, 1963); the teacher explanations, modeling, and student practice with feedback of direct approaches (e.g., Rosenshine, 1983); or the turn-taking of reciprocal instruction (Palinscar & Brown, 1984). Third, its occurrence coincided with assessment, whereas, instruction necessarily precedes and follows it.

Analysis

Several questions guided the analysis of essays. First, was the scaffolding successful? That is, did these writers construct a four-paragraph, dialectical essay? Second, was the first paragraph the summary requested, or was it more of an introduction to the second paragraph—a preliminary myside argument? Third, did the second paragraph contain a reasonably complex argument for the writer's position (instructions requested "the reasons for your position"), or was it merely a statement of the writer's position, or a position and a simple support? Fourth, was the third paragraph (the "otherside" argument) reasonably cogent? Three sub-questions regarding cogency were: (a) Did the content of the third paragraph connect mean-
ing fully to the second, such that it provided a counterargument(s), or was it a non sequitur? (b) Was this counterargument at least somewhat empathic? That is, did the writer endeavor to represent coherently and fairly the counterargument, perhaps capturing its logic? (c) Was it at least as complex as the myside argument given in the prior paragraph? Fifth, did the fourth paragraph contain dialectical reasoning? That is, did the writer compose a conclusion that merely argued again the logic of the myside argument in paragraph two, or did the conclusion contain a broader logic—something of a synthesis of the opposing logics, or one that at least mentioned the counterargument(s)?

A content analysis (Holsti, 1969) was conducted using six categories deduced from the conception of dialectical thinking outlined above. Per these categories, better dialectical essays are distinguished from worse in six ways: (1) The first paragraph is a background summary of the issue and contains, relatively speaking, none of the author’s opinions on the matter; (2) the second paragraph expresses the author’s position and more than one line of supporting reasoning; (3) the third paragraph argues against the position expressed in the previous paragraph, using more than one line of counter reasoning; (4) the counterarguments in the third paragraph are related to the reasons given in the second and (5) are presented empathically, that is, without apparent intent to garner support for the author’s position. Finally, the concluding paragraph is dialectical within itself—it does not merely give the author’s position and reasons, but at least acknowledges the existence of counter reasoning.

CATEGORY A: VALUE CLAIM. A value claim is a statement in paragraph one expressing the author’s belief about what is important, good, right, or worthwhile—about an end state worth or not worth attaining. In contrast to knowledge claims, which state what the author considers to be true and which can be more-or-less verified empirically, a value claim expresses a judgment that cannot, as a judgment, be verified. An example of a statement not classified as a value claim is, “Citizens in communist countries do not have the opportunity to voice their thoughts and ideas.” The author is stating this as a matter of fact. An example of a statement classified as a value claim is, “The people of the United States are fortunate that they can demonstrate and voice their individual opinions.”

CATEGORY B: LINES OF SUPPORT. A line of support is a reason given in paragraph two to justify the author’s position on the issue. For example, a subject argued for free speech using two lines of support. The first drew upon the concept, popular sovereignty: “Government is made up of citizens.” The second asserted that dissent is valuable because, “Disagreement can bring new, innovative ideas into society and can cause a society to do soul searching.”

CATEGORY C: RELEVANT COUNTERARGUMENT. This category is concerned with the presence or absence of a semantic connection between
the otherside argument in paragraph three and the myside argument in paragraph two. What first had to be established was whether the third paragraph argument was counter to the position taken in paragraph two. If it was, the next determination was whether this counterargumentation was relevant to the particular line(s) of support given in paragraph two. For example, a line of support in paragraph two referred to "... the benefits of freedom of speech in generating new ideas for improving our system of government." The third-paragraph counterargument pointed to "... the problems that new ideas, which arise out of free speech, cause for our government." This counterargument was classified as relevant.

**CATEGORY D: EMPATHIC COUNTERARGUMENT.** The concern in this category is with the author's attempt to step into the shoes of those who might argue otherwise and to understand those counterarguments from within. The otherside reasoning in paragraph three was judged empathic if it was presented convincingly and without apparent myside bias. A good test for empathy was to read paragraph three before reading the author's first two paragraphs. An empathic third paragraph did not give the author's position and reasons and, if read alone, could be mistaken for the author's myside argument. In contrast, a non-empathic third paragraph was used as another forum in which to continue the myside argument; and, even though a counterargument might be mentioned, its treatment served the myside argument.

**CATEGORY E: LINES OF COUNTERARGUMENT.** A line of counterargument has the properties of a line of support, except that it counters rather than supports the author's position. The concern here was to determine how many different reasons the author generated that served to argue against his or her myside argument. Examples are given in the analysis below.

**CATEGORY F: DIALECTICAL CONCLUSION.** A fourth paragraph was judged dialectical if the writer acknowledged the existence of a counterargument(s) or, beyond this, pointed to some aspect of the counterargument(s) that was worth considering or, going still further, pitted against one another the myside and otherside arguments. Examples are given in the analysis below.

The reliability for mean ratings from the two raters on categories A, B, and E was .70, .83, and .52 respectively, using Ebel's formula for intraclass correlation (1951). On the dichotomous categories C, D, and F, the agreement between the two raters was 61%, 95%, and 61% respectively. For all six variables, discussion among the raters brought the agreement to 100%.

**Findings and Discussion**

As to the first question guiding the analysis, all subjects constructed a four-paragraph essay as directed and, though not without difficulties, all but two argued for and against their position on the selected issue (see Table
Appendices A-D are sample essays). This may be the most important finding of the study. A form of dialectical reasoning, albeit incipient, was elicited from 92% of the sample without benefit of prior instruction and by nothing more clever than a set of clear instructions. An examination of the other questions will elaborate this general finding.

### Table 1

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* A = number of value claims in first paragraph; B = number of reasons in myside paragraph; C = relevant counterargument; D = empathic counterargument; E = number of reasons in counterargument; F = dialectical conclusion.
QUESTION 2. Was the first paragraph a summary as requested, or was it more of a preliminary myside argument? In 11 of the 24 essays, the first paragraph contained one or more value claims in support of the writer’s position on the issue (Category A, Table 1). A comparison of Karen’s and Bill’s first paragraph will illustrate (Appendixes A and B). Karen asserts over two sentences a knowledge claim about freedom of speech. Bill opens his paragraph with a knowledge claim and then moves to his myside argument. This leaves him without much more to say in paragraph two—indeed, he begins that paragraph with the phrase, “Like I stated before . . .” The key difference of interest here is that the first writer opened the essay without launching into her myside argument while the second did not.

This early opining can be interpreted in a number of ways: Perhaps these eleven reasoners were unable to separate their position on the issue from what they knew about it; that is, they were unable to distinguish their point of view on the issue from “the facts of the issue.” Perhaps they had the ability to make this distinction but not the desire. Or, perhaps they had the ability but did not interpret the instructions as a request for a summary of knowledge claims rather than value claims. The first and third of these comprise what seems to us the best explanation. The general inclination toward egocentricity, or confirmation bias (constructing a one-sided—myside—model of an issue), would incline reasoners to use the first paragraph as yet another opportunity to opine. Indeed, this is to be expected in reasoning that is not yet critical. While we are sensitive to the false fact/value dichotomy (Cf. Habermas, 1971), we believe that an aspect of dialectical reasoning is the ability and concern to distinguish justification from description—to know (relatively speaking) when one is and is not arguing one’s position. Not knowing this was, in turn, probably a metacognitive shortfall in the writer that might be remediated through more explicit scaffolding: The instructions for paragraph one might be rewritten to read:

In paragraph one, you are to summarize what you believe are the facts about this issue. Be careful to avoid in this paragraph revealing your position and reasons for your position. That is what paragraph two is for.

QUESTION 3. Did the second paragraph contain a reasonably complex argument for the writer’s position? The notion of complexity in the myside argument was defined operationally as the number of lines of support given for the position taken. This was an admittedly modest, but not unusual, conception (Cf. Toulmin, 1958). While most (15) writers offered just one line of support, six gave two, two gave three, and one gave four (Category B, Table 1). Of the four essays attached, three give one line of support, and Carol’s (Appendix D) gives four. (Carol’s essay is also distinguished by being one of only two essays written on the first issue.) A brief look at the four essays reveals that Karen, like the other 21 students writing on this issue,
favors the right of dissent. Her justification, such as it is, argues that the
government’s function is to serve the people’s “wants.” Bill’s justification
for the right of dissent takes a somewhat different turn—that citizens’
public disagreements with government functions to reduce government
power, thereby undermining government’s capacity to serve itself rather
than the people. Diane’s reason is similar to Karen’s—government is
created and operated by the people, and so the people “have all the right in
the world to do what they want with it . . .” Carol’s position on the other
issue is that publishers should continue using the words man and men even
though men and women are equal and should be treated as such. She offers
four reasons. First, important information (gender) would be lost were the
neutral pronouns used; second, women get plenty of recognition already;
third, costs of the changeover to neutral pronouns would be prohibitive;
and, fourth, future leaders, using logic, will not be swayed by such things.

It should be noted that multiple reasons in the myside argument were not
considered necessarily better than a single reason, particularly when a
reasoner only mentioned superficially several lines of reasoning rather than
developing one into a cogent position and justification. In model building
on civic issues, however, grappling with a multiplicity of perspectives is of
central interest, and we were concerned to examine alternatives within the
myside argument itself as well as between it and the counterargument. That
we found multiple arguments in 9 of the 24 myside arguments suggests,
first, that this is not as rare a phenomenon as might be expected, even when
not encouraged explicitly. (The scaffolding for the second paragraph was
subtle, the only cue for multiplicity being the use of the plural reasons.) Sec-
don, more explicit scaffolding for complexity probably would be fruitful.
For example:

In paragraph two, you are to state your position on the issue and give a
few reasons for your position. In other words, state your position and
then support it with two or three different, good reasons.

**QUESTION 4a.** Did the counterargument connect meaningfully to the
myside argument? The raters judged there to be four cases of connection
between paragraphs two and three and 18 non sequiturs (Category C, Table
1). The two marked NA (non applicable) were not counterarguments at all
but further myside reasoning. The samples attached will illustrate. Both
Karen and Bill generated otherside reasoning, but neither argued against the
particular myside reasons they had given earlier. By contrast, Diane’s and
Carol’s third paragraphs were not merely arguments for the other side, but
countered to some degree the particular reason(s) given in paragraph two.
Diane had earlier argued that the government is “made and run by” the
people. She now counters that reasoning by arguing that since the govern-
ment is made and run by the people, who are they to complain? “Why
should they disagree,” she asks, “on what they have built for themselves?”
Carol had earlier argued four reasons against neutral pronouns in texts, and the raters judged that she countered two of them: the second and fourth. She opposed the second by arguing that even though the first thing immigrants see is the Statue of Liberty (a woman) and even though ships are christened as females, women "are still being discriminated against." She opposes the fourth more directly. Whereas she had earlier argued that "someone who is supposedly a leader of tomorrow" would not be unduly influenced by masculine pronouns, she now counters that these leaders need instruction on this matter.

Of interest here is that Diane and Carol managed to frame an opposition not to just any myside argument for their positions but to their own myside arguments. This approaches the self-interrogation that is essential to a critical epistemology.

**QUESTION 4b.** Was the otherside argument empathic? 21 of the 24 essays were judged empathic (Category D). Our concern was to distinguish otherside arguments that were presented unconvincingly (i.e., with myside bias) from those that had the feel, or conviction, of an argument that the writer might support.

A comparison of Bill's third paragraph to those by Kim, Diane, and Carol will illustrate the difference. Bill's myside argument runs through all four paragraphs of his essay. He never gets around to arguing against his position, not even in the otherside paragraph. Recall that Bill's introductory summary was actually a myside argument, and that it was further elaborated in paragraph two. In paragraph three he further shores up his myside argument (and avoids interrogating it) by dismissing the opposition as something bad, rather than trying to understand its logic and test it against his own. The third paragraphs in the other three essays could be read alone and, if the reader had not seen the surrounding paragraphs, mistaken for the authors' myside paragraph.

**QUESTION 4c.** Did the third paragraph contain a reasonably complex argument against the position the writer expressed in paragraph two? As in the myside argument, complexity was defined in terms of the number of lines of reasoning given, now counterarguments (Category E, Table 1). As a group, the writers generated fewer reasons against (32) than for (37) their position (though the difference was not significant in a correlated t-test). And, as in the myside argument, most (14 of the 22 with counterarguments) produced just one line of reasoning.

As in the myside argument, the generation of more than one line of reasoning was considered an advance in the otherside argument. This is because as lines are added the model under construction becomes more appropriate to the requirements of reasoning on multilogical problems. However, this more-is-better definition needs to be tempered by an appreciation for developing a line of reasoning in the direction of wholeness, empathy, and cogency rather than simply skimming across the surface of several.
One essay exemplified the latter (subject #7, Table 1). This writer argued in paragraph two that people’s “natural curiosity” turns to dismay, then bitterness, and finally unrest when it is denied expression as free speech. Paragraph three then states,

Some could say that a society where every citizen has the power to oppose the government in public will threaten a country’s loyalty, pride, nationalism, etc. Others might say that this system would end up in anarchy and would be like stepping back into cave man days. Still others might say that without government control of what may be spoken on that national security would be in constant danger.

The lack of development in these three counterarguments results in a less effective otherside argument that the better developed counterarguments in the essays of, for example, Karen, Diane, and Carol (Appendixes A, C, and D).

Summarizing these three analyses of the third paragraph, it was first found that 22 of the 24 writers in our sample produced some sort of counterargument to the position they had voiced earlier. Second, counterarguments generally were not directly relevant to the supporting arguments; counterarguments generally countered the position taken in paragraph two but not the supporting reasons given for the position. Third, most writers were able to present this otherside reasoning without apparent myside bias, and, fourth, a single counterargument comprised most of the otherside arguments.

Would explicit scaffolding on paragraph three have elicited better otherside reasoning? This is difficult to say, particularly given cognitive theory that emphasizes the prerequisite capacity for reciprocity, or reversibility (Kohlberg, 1979; Piaget, 1965; Selman, 1971). Yet, the sample’s responsiveness to what little scaffolding was present suggests to us that explicit scaffolding in this paragraph would be fruitful:

In paragraph three, you are to argue against each of the reasons you gave for your position in paragraph two. Be sure to think carefully about these counterarguments and present them convincingly, as one who believed them might.

**QUESTION 5.** Was dialectical reasoning present in the concluding paragraph? An incipient form was found in the fourth paragraph of 12 of the 24 essays. Admittedly, we were satisfied here with the simplest variants of dialectical reasoning. The conclusions in the essays attached are representative of the sample. Bill and Diane reproduce the essence of their myside argument; Karen and Carol do the same, but dialectically—they acknowledge the existence of counterarguments.
Bill’s conclusion continues the myside argument he introduced in paragraph one and elaborated in paragraphs two and three. His conclusion states his position (free speech is needed) and a supporting reason—that without free speech “The U.S. would be another USSR or Denmark.” Diane’s conclusion is more sophisticated but still lacks a dialectical character. While avoiding the vulgarity of Bill’s characterization of Denmark and offering instead a rendition of Jefferson’s Declaration as a support for her position, still she does not display a modeling of the issue that includes at this point consideration of opposing points of view.

By contrast Karen’s conclusion includes consideration of at least one of the two counterarguments she raised in paragraph three (the risk of chaos). Carol refers specifically to neither of her two counterarguments, but generally to both: “Although there are many strong arguments for the use of people and person in school books, I still believe that . . .”

That roughly half of the sample evidenced dialectical reasoning in the concluding paragraph without any scaffolding (recall that the instructions for the fourth paragraph were vague: “In paragraph four, write a conclusion.”) suggests that the phenomenon is not terribly rare and that explicit scaffolding would have elicited it from a greater proportion of the sample:

In paragraph four, write a tentative conclusion. Be sure that your conclusion shows that you have considered the arguments against your position as well as arguments that support your position.

**Conclusion**

The study has a number of limitations, chiefly its artifactual and ungeneralizable results. As for artifactuality, the findings likely were confounded by students’ writing and verbal ability. This is a limitation, however, only if one is interested in measuring dialectical reasoning independent of writing tasks, an interest we did not share. The approach taken here, rather, was to assume the domain- and task-dependence of dialectical reasoning, a position in line with the emerging contextualism in cognitive psychology (e.g., Lerner, Hultsch, & Dixon, 1983), and to examine its character in a context relevant to social studies curriculum and instruction. Consequently, this was a study of dialectical reasoning in the particular setting of a scaffolded, four-paragraph essay written on one of two given civic issues. Future studies will need to explore its character in other contexts that are also relevant to school practice, for example, in other writing tasks, in community participation activities, and in discussions of current events and text material.

Second, the findings of this study should not be generalized to other adolescents. Our sample was not randomly selected and is likely biased toward greater ability to write clearly and greater interest in grappling with
public controversy. For this reason, the study will conclude with hypotheses rather than generalizations. Our intent is that they express in general terms what has been learned here and suggest future work.

Civic issues involve political-ethical controversy. Their landscape is ill-structured and multilogical. As such, they pose a unique set of epistemic demands on reasoners. Formal logic, argument analysis, and problem-solving skills, while not irrelevant, are not as central to the task as is the more messy business of building a model of the issue that includes the multiple logics that might be brought to bear. Examined in this study was a critical attribute of this construction project—dialectical reasoning.

Twenty-four high school students attending a leadership institute each wrote a scaffolded, four-paragraph essay on one of two civic issues. An analysis found that (a) most (92%) students argued both for and against their position; (b) most (54%) summarized what they knew about the issue without apparent interference from their myside argument. The others displayed some degree of confirmation bias; (c) most (63%) argued for their position with just one line of reasoning; (d) of the 22 students who generated otherside reasoning, most (82%) produced a counterargument(s) that was a non sequitur to the myside argument; (e) most (88%) wrote an empathic otherside paragraph; (f) 58% argued against their position using just one line of reasoning, and 33% used more than one; (g) most (54%) did not evidence even incipient dialectical reasoning in the concluding, unscaffolded paragraph.

Three hypotheses are warranted. First, high school students generally can construct dialectical models of public controversies. They await curriculum and instruction that invite it. Second, minimal metacognitive guidance can help students be successful at this task. Third, provided over the long term, supportive conditions should help students acquire the habit of dialectical reasoning. These are discussed below.

Experience tells us that dialectical reasoning is a rare phenomenon. One never sees it in public news conferences and addresses where apparently intelligent leaders expound sophisticated myside arguments without restraint, nor does one see it in high school and college classrooms where debate, when it is invited, often is little more than alternating monologues. Yet, dialectical reasoning was elicited from 92% of our sample, and without the benefit of prior instruction. What this suggests is that students are ready to move beyond monological habits to the construction of dialectical models of civic issues. Needed are (a) tasks that require it and (b) assistance—mainly directions to build thorough and reasonably empathic understandings of all sides of the issue at hand, and to regard one's initial position as just that, a point of departure.

Put simply, we are suggesting that high school students are capable of taking and interrogating a position on a civic issue, whether current or historical, and have only to be asked and helped. Admittedly, this is too
simple, but it captures the essence of our main hypothesis. Let us elaborate. One comes away from literature with the notion that the overriding problem confronting social studies educators of every stripe (from, say, Beyer [1985] to Ravitch [1985]), even beyond the problem of student disengagement (Newmann, 1986) is the mindlessness of many, perhaps most, social studies lessons. The complaint is not new (Anderson, 1942; Committee of Seven, 1990). Our hypothesis emphasizes that the reason for this longstanding tradition of mediocrity is not a deficit in student reasoning ability, but in lessons—lessons that do not challenge students to grapple with social knowledge, and to reach in their grappling from sophisticated to critical reasoning. The reason is not that students in the main are unable to grapple in this way, but that the curriculum and instruction often are not designed to promote it.

The intention here certainly is not to lay the responsibility for this at the feet of the nation's teachers. Far more than teaching is behind the lessons doled out in social studies. Institutional barriers are overwhelming. Consider, for example, the pressure from state and school district curriculum guidelines to cover more content than possibly can be treated thoughtfully (much less grappled with dialectically), or texts that settle for mentioning everything so as to offend no interest group, or the common mode of school organization that undermines students' and teachers' attempts to thoroughly explore any issue (Cuban, 1984; Newmann, 1988; Schrag, 1988).

Yet, institutional obstacles aside, teachers are not helpless. Minimal metacognitive guidance can be provided, and it appears to be effective. Metacognitive problems occur at the executive level of cognitive functioning where plans for problem-solving are made and tactics marshalled (Flavell, 1979; Sternberg, 1985). The difficulties our writers had in the four paragraphs appear to us as problems of this sort since they occur precisely where explicit metacognitive guidance was lacking: in the first paragraph where half the sample included myside arguments; in the second where most students argued for their position using just one line of reasoning; in the third where most counterarguments were non sequiturs and used only one line of reasoning; and in the fourth where half the sample reverted to simple myside reasoning.

Over the long term, metacognitive guidance should help reasoners acquire the habits of dialectical reasoning as one critical aspect of model building on civic issues. This statement is not made in ignorance of the necessity of cognitive readiness for the demanding task of framing a dialog "inside one's head" between arguments for and against one's position. Indeed, we subscribe to the assumption that egocentricity is the primary human condition and is overcome only with much constructive activity. Yet, we suggest that maturity and cognitive readiness are not all that are necessary for dialectical reasoning—that guidance helps one perform closer to the ceiling of one's abilities. This is Vygotsky's (1978) point. Intra-
individual tactics originate in inter-individual activity between guide and novice, and the guide's challenge in the tasks and domains of dialectical reasoning on civic issues is to gear guidance to the present gap in a learner's skill, to aim the scaffolding at what Vygotsky has called the "zone of proximal development." This is "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers." (1978, p.86) Put another way, this zone is the gap between comprehension and production.

For example, scaffolding for dialectical reasoning might occur regularly as part of writing assignments and discussions in a United States history class. It would be helpful if the course featured in-depth examination of select civic issues drawn from precolonial to present time. Issues would be selected for the importance and richness of the historical material that would be included in model building on them, and for their similarities to civic issues confronting us today. Helpful curriculum materials are available (Lockwood & Harris, 1985; Newmann & Oliver, 1970). In the discussions that accompany the writing and re-writing, students can be directed to name beforehand the kind of comment that they are about to make (e.g., a myside argument, an otherside argument, a new position). This should aid the building of metacognitive awareness of dialectical reasoning. And, they can be directed to articulate the sides of a case with which they disagree.

But we are getting ahead of ourselves. A number of difficulties accompany these hypotheses, and they lie on both the psychological and sociological sides of the coin. On the psychological side, key questions remain unanswered: What is the relationship between the use of dialectical reasoning in attempts to understand civic issues and one's disposition (Ennis, 1962) and intelligence (Sternberg, 1985)? What is the role of imagination in dialectical reasoning, particularly when a reasoner cannot recall and does not have at hand the resources to investigate counterarguments (Perkins, 1985b)? What factors increase the likelihood of transfer of dialectical tactics, once acquired, to novel civic issues? Considering the role of empathy in constructing a dialectical model of an issue, what is the relationship of role-taking (Selman, 1971) and reversibility (Kohlberg, Levine, & Hewer, 1984; Piaget, 1965) to the ability to reason critically? With younger students, we might suppose that prior instruction on dialectical reasoning is needed in addition to scaffolding. But how much, and what kind?

Questions persist on the sociological side as well. Scaffolding for critical reasoning in general and dialectical reasoning in particular requires a supportive environment. It assumes a setting in which teachers, administrators, and the school culture of which they are a part are concerned to foster in students a thoughtfulness beyond what is required for the acquisition of isolated bits of content (Parker, 1987, 1988; Schrag, 1988), and that they
have explored student intellectual functioning sufficiently to identify with some accuracy students' zones of proximal development. Similarly, such a project assumes that the school and community are interested in the genuine exploration of civic life. Neither of these assumptions is without problems. Moreover, such a project assumes teachers and school leaders are capable of transcending their own penchant for vulgar or sophisticated myside reasoning, and that they have developed a reasoned approach to leading discussions of controversial issues (Kelly, 1986). Making matters on the sociological side yet more difficult, critical reasoning rests on a parallax view of knowledge and truth that has little currency. It is a view that considers knowledge a social construction and truth the tentative outcome of ongoing argumentation to which no parties are denied access. In brief, a project of this sort requires conducive conditions, and those conditions are not currently in place in sufficient measure to ease the difficulty of the project.

**References**


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APPENDIX A: KAREN’S ESSAY
(subject #9)

#1 The freedom of speech is the U.S.’s first statement in the constitution. Any citizen of the U.S. may speak out his or her complaint, agreement, or ideas for the laws of their government.

#2 I am one hundred percent for the people’s voice in government. Government is something that affects everyone with its laws for economics and military. So it is vital that everyone should be able to choose what they want and how to carry out those rules. It’s true that there is a need for a ruler in every society, but not to use his or her power in a way that benefits only certain groups. There should be a ruler (government) to carry out what the majority of the people want. The people are and should be the ones to want a certain law and the government is the system to regulate that law.

#3 Very few people really know what’s going on with the world and are not very well-educated enough to have a say in the government. The few who do know about what’s needed and the solution should be the ones to make the laws of government. People often do not agree on the answer to an issue one hundred percent. If people had a voice in how the government should do something, people would be always arguing and there would be chaos.

#4 The government does affect everyone, so even though the chaos of debate among the people, at least we the people can speak out on what we feel about an issue and make our government do what we, the people, want. When people have a say in government, the people feel in control, therefore you get a group of people that are satisfied and happy. If something affects someone, that someone should receive knowledge about it and be able to decide what he or she wants to do.

APPENDIX B: BILL’S ESSAY
(subject #10)

#1 To clear up some confusion in my mind, the United States of America allows citizens to protest against the government over an issue. I think that’s excellent because I fear the day when American government will have too much power over the citizens, and that it will not be able to do anything except acquiesce to their needs. Thank God for America. The ability of a citizen to disagree with the government publicly does a lot of good to his community. It also reduces the power of the government and it also can bend the power of the government to benefit the protester and his/her community.
Like I stated before, I am for the right of a citizen to disagree publicly with an issue or issues against the government. This will greatly reduce the power of a government and it will be great for the protester and its community. Throughout the history of America, a person(s) was/were able to protest publicly against an act or acts of Congress (taxes, tariffs, etc.). This greatly reduced the power of the government. These protests constantly pressure our government and, in a way, makes them do what we (citizens) want, not what they (government) think we want.

I believe a person who would oppose the rights of a citizen(s) to voice their opinions in disagreement with the government would be someone like Gorbachev. He is a Communist leader. In his government if someone opposes the idea of a government that someone's head would be gone. The idea of Socialism also opposes the right of a citizen. The idea of Socialism is to make everybody equal. If a farmer makes 100 units and his two other competitors make 25 units to each farmer, that would make 50 units for all three farmers. In a country like Denmark where there is Socialism, they can't protest or say anything. Their government believes that government's authority (total authority) over citizens is necessary and that they are doing their best to please the community.

Finally, I would like to say that the idea of openly expressing your own opinion against the government is needed. If this idea did not exist, U.S. would be another USSR or another Denmark.

APPENDIX C: DIANE'S ESSAY
(subject #13)

The tenth amendment of the United States Constitution clearly states that citizens of the United States are endowed to certain rights, in which one of them is the right of free speech or the freedom of speech. Throughout history since the Bill of Rights were passed, citizens of the United States have taken advantage of this right in which sometimes disagreement on an issue would result in violence, prejudice, or battling debates. Some examples are the Women's Movement for the right of all women to vote, the Vietnam War that ultimately raised attacks from college campuses, and the Segregation issue where blacks fought for justice and equal rights. Thus, social and political changes were made. Women got the right to vote. Blacks were allowed in "White" schools and other areas in which they were previously not permitted in the so-called "White" society. The following pages will state some facts and opinions that will support or disagree with the above.

To me, I personally agree in allowing the citizens of the United States the right to disagree with the government. It is the people who make and run the government. And so they have all the right in the world to do what they
want with it as long as it will not harm, destroy, or cause havoc to other citizens or other nations of the world.

#3 The following are counterarguments in which I would make if I were the other side’s reasoning on this issue.

I totally disagree with allowing the citizens of the United States to voice their opinions even if they disagree with the government. They made and run the government, so why should they disagree on what they have built for themselves. Such actions would result in violence and unending debates which would cause all kinds of havoc. Such as: 1) causing confusion to the rest of the citizens in the U.S. who may have no affect or part on their opinions; 2) create violence and war between each other resulting in no solution or affect on what their supporting for; and 3) the government cannot favor one side’s argument and ignore the other side’s. The two parties will have to work it out together. “United we stand, divided we fall.”

#4 In conclusion, I believe in the right of free speech and the right for the citizens of the U.S. to disagree and voice out their opinions in the government. Thomas Jefferson stated that if the government was doing something wrong or not to the liking or rules of the people and the Constitution. Then it is the right of the citizens to change it or make another.

APPENDIX D: CAROL’S ESSAY
(subject #24)

#1 In this age and time, women have come to the idea that they should have more rights, and be as equal to men as possible. In most school books today, terms such as man or men have put the ERA on the bandwagon for more neutral terms such as person or people. They feel that this is promoting a “better” sex among males, them being the “dominant” species. They feel everyone should be equal, and treated as such in our school books to promote equality among the sexes.

#2 Publishers of school books should avoid using words such as people and person, and continue using words such as man or men. I feel that both sexes are equal but with different characteristics, and should be treated as such. Also, if the words people and person were used there would be confusion as to who the person was. Did a person (male or female) make the first American flag? No! Betsy Ross, a woman did. Was our first President of the United States a person? No! He was George Washington. I also can’t understand what the big gripe is that the ERA has. I mean, the Statue of Liberty is a woman, that is the first thing immigrants see when they enter this country. Ships are christened as shes. So what do they have to complain about?

Also, to change all the books would be expensive, and education already is
having financial problems. If someone is supposedly a leader of tomorrow, then they would not be swayed by the use of the male gender in school books. They would (or should) know the issues and be able to form a logical opinion for or against this idea.

#3 Being a female, I can also see the other side of this controversial subject. Women have gotten very touchy and sensitive about their rights, and feel that they are still being discriminated against. So, in hopes of making the “young people” believe that women are equal to men in every way, they want to have neutral terms such as people and person substituted for man and men. And in this way they could secure that discrimination against women in all forms would cease. Look at the comparable worth issue. Women are still being paid lower wages doing the same job a man does, and he gets paid more. Is this fair? So seeing that we are the leaders of tomorrow, we should be taught equality now, in a feminist’s view.

#4 Although there are many strong arguments for the use of people and person in school books, I still believe that the use of man and men should still be used in books. Women are being treated pretty fair these days, compared to days past, and I don’t think that the Women’s Libbers have anything to complain about. Also, the high cost factor of changing these books would be detrimental in trying to save education financially. It is better to have more and better trained teachers who can help us see both sides of issues without books rather than have poorly trained, small groups of teachers with books that promote neutrality and bland equality.
The Expanding Environments and Elementary Education: A Critical Perspective

James E. Akenson
Tennessee Technological University

Abstract

Contemporary elementary social studies retains the marks of influence of the expanding environments organizational framework. Developmental theories influenced, and continue to influence, elementary social studies and the expanding environments. Historical evidence and research into children's knowledge of the social world points to flaws in the expanding environments. Suzanne Langer's symbolic theory of art and C. Wright Mills's model of biography and history provide additional metaphors for thinking about elementary social studies. Development of a fourth grade Tennessee history textbook receives analysis in light of the continued resiliency of the expanding environments and the texts which convey it.

Introduction

Since its evolution in the early 1900s, the scope and sequence of the expanding environments became the dominant organizational framework in the elementary social studies curriculum throughout the United States. The May, 1980 cover of Social Education listed the most common theme at each grade level K-12 and raised the question: "Is This The Dominant Social Studies Curriculum Pattern in the U.S. Today?" The elementary grades progression sequence listed on the cover Social Education followed a sequence from self, family, home, and neighborhood, and community in primary grades to regions, United States history, the western hemisphere and world history in the intermediate grades. With but slight deviation the elementary sequence reflected a strong emphasis based upon the expanding environments organizational framework. The expanding environments progression from self to world reflects the past and present influence of theories derived from developmental psychology. From the discredited recapitulation theory of the Herbartians to sophisticated Piagetian theory,
developmental stages of childhood have influenced the scope and sequence of the elementary social studies curriculum.

Relatively few analyses deal with basic assumptions of the expanding environments framework and set forth alternative paths by which elementary social studies might profitably travel. Critiques such as those by Smith and Cardinell (1964) and Kaltsounis (1964) pointed out flaws related to prior knowledge and experiences of young children. More recently, Bennett (1988), Ravitch (1987), Eagan (1980, 82) and LeRiche (1987) argued against the expanding environments and assumptions derived from developmental psychology. Ravitch, Bennett, and Egan attacked the expanding environments with an expressed purpose of championing the infusion of history as the dominant, unifying discipline. Additional discussions (Larkins, Hawkins, & Gilmore, 1987; White, 1988) dealt with the insubstantial nature of content in elementary social studies texts or the role of texts in legitimating official knowledge (Anyon, 1979). Such discussions did not link the expanding environments to the weaknesses and functions of the texts themselves.

This analysis seeks to extend insights by linking assumptions based upon developmental psychology, the expanding environments, and the nature of content in elementary social studies texts. An analysis of a fourth grade textbook on Tennessee history provides specific evidence of the resiliency of the expanding environments. Perspectives generated from the sociological theory of C. Wright Mills and Suzanne Langer's philosophy of art provide additional evidence concerning flaws in the expanding environments. Mills' integration of biography and history combined with Langer's notion of virtual image and space help dissect the expanding environments framework with greater precision. The metaphors provided by Mills and Langer lay the groundwork for alternative visions of elementary social studies curriculum. The work of Mills and Langer leads to a metaphorical, theoretical, and practical balance to obtain the most appropriate impact from developmental psychology. A balance among psychological considerations, the constructs used to interpret the social world, and methods of social inquiry leads to a specific form of analysis: the attributes of abstract and concrete conceptualization within the context of the elementary social studies curriculum.

Developmental Psychology

Ensconced as conventional wisdom, the expanding environments organizational framework merits close examination. One significant force in reinforcing the expanding environments can be traced to its symbiotic relationship with developmental psychology. As such, developmental psychology represents an empirical attempt to document various stages of intellectual and social maturation from birth to adulthood. Developmental constructs do not represent a recent scientific phenomenon. The Bible makes develop-
mental observations—"When I was a child I thought as a child . . ." (The Living Bible Paraphrased, 1971, p. 1303). The twentieth century finds sophisticated theories designed to help educators match the placement of curriculum content to the developmental level of the student. Implicitly, there exists a golden mean of matching the curriculum to the child. Rest (1974) points out that developmental psychology includes the assumptions of structural organization and interactionism. Children pass through developmental stages characterized by specific cognitive and affective organizational frameworks. Movement from level-to-level takes place by a combination of maturation and experiences which make possible adjustments—assimilation, accommodation—to higher cognitive and affective levels.

In principle, research into developmental levels in each curriculum subject could identify the thought patterns common to each grade level. Research in economic education thus might determine that "economic understanding develops in a manner supportive of aspects of cognitive development theory . . ." (Shug and Birkey, 1985, p. 32). Children's reasoning would become increasingly complex and abstract as they progressed from grade-to-grade. Creating the appropriate teaching materials and learning experiences at each developmental level would make concepts and skills clear to the child. Equally significant, appropriate curriculum would prepare for, and facilitate, movement to the next developmental stage.

Developmental psychology proved crucial in the evolution of elementary social studies in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Akenson, 1987; LeRiche, 1987). Recapitulation theory of the Herbartian's viewed childhood in terms of development through a series of cultural epochs. Accordingly, children passed through stages in a manner analogous to the evolution of the human species. "Ontogenesis recapitulates phylogenesis" became the catch slogan articulated a developmental pattern from simple to complex, from primitive cultures through Western civilization. Children thus studied apparently simple cultures such as those of American Indians and African tribes before studying complex American and European cultures in later grades. The simplicity or complexity of the culture thus matched the simplicity or complexity of the child's developmental level. With the development of additional psychological and philosophical conceptions, the expanding environments emerged. In place of cultural epochs came the progression from family, neighborhood, and community in primary grades to regions, western hemisphere, and eastern hemisphere during intermediate grades. The obvious enthnocentricity of cultural epochs found a successor in which flaws proved less obvious and more resistant to attacks. Indeed, the expanding environments appears logical, reasonable, and easily understood to the casual observer and to many professionals.
Typical of the contemporary manner in which developmental psychology meshes with the expanding environments is the *Guidelines for Geographic Education* (1984). The section titled “Geography in the Elementary School” states:

Geographic instruction at the elementary level should be based not only on key geographic understandings, but also on our knowledge of stages of children’s cognitive, psychological, and social development. Thus, the rich and varied life experiences of children should be used as much as possible to illustrate and develop the geographic understandings and skills selected for study (Joint Committee on Geographic Education and the Association of American Geographers, 1984, pp. 10-11).

The logical outcome for elementary school geography exhibits a commitment to the expanding environments. The kindergarten through second grade sequence utilizes central foci including self in space, homes and schools in different places, and neighborhoods—small places in larger communities. The central foci for grades three and four include community—sharing space with others, and the state, nation, and world. The central foci for grades five and six feature The United States, Canada, Mexico and Latin America, Europe, USSR, Middle East, Asia, and Africa (JCGE, pp. 11-17).

Interestingly, the JCGE geographic sequence, the developmental stages of children, and the apparent cultural needs of children mesh with the expanding environments. Children seemingly possess a cultural and cognitive need to focus upon dubious concepts such as neighborhood because neighborhood somehow matches a developmental norm. Evidence for the match of neighborhood to the developmental norm does not receive articulation in the JCGE guidelines. Apparently, the developmental match received close scrutiny in the process of creating the guideline. Libbee and Stoltman (1988), however, point to research by Piaget and by Stoltman which demonstrates “the extent to which the development sequence of spatial stages generally followed by children compliments the expanding horizons curriculum model” (p. 27).

Developmental perspectives drawn from the work of Jean Piaget exerts an impact upon the entire elementary social studies curriculum. Piagetian theory exerts a strong hold on the thoughts of educators backed by research and a developmental hierarchy of stages and sub-stages. Indeed, creating Piagetian based curricula appears to be a worthy task in the eyes of many social studies educators (Akenson, 1976). The SEARCH social studies curriculum represents one such effort which is a “Functional Social Studies Curriculum Emphasizing Piagetian Operations” (Presseisen and D’Amico, 1975). The SEARCH program aims at:
1. The what of content specifically social, but not necessarily only through discrete disciplines such as anthropology, history, or economics.

2. The how of processes appropriate to the individual student's intellectual development and the cognitive operations readily available to the student.

3. The why of social situations relevant to the learner's real life experiences and yet meaningful to the larger reality of society as well (Presseisen and D'Amico, p. 171).

Such points appear eminently reasonable. Through a synthesis of the three components, the SEARCH social studies curriculum takes its form. The attractiveness of the SEARCH curriculum rests in the translation of Piagetian cognitive operations into specific social studies content dictated by the developmental level of students.

The SEARCH materials proceed on the assumption that the developmental stages carry with them particular social orientations. That is, each cognitive level orients the child to a particular segment of the social world which determines the appropriate content of social studies curriculum for children. Pre-operational thought, which is characterized by egocentric thinking, has a social orientation of interpersonal relations. The level of formal operations has a social orientation of ideational relations, values, ideas on the human condition. Accordingly, content for the pre-operational child would have to deal with interpersonal relations. Such an assumption sounds remarkably congruent with the focus of the expanding environments focus upon the family, school, neighborhood, and community. Piagetian psychology determines that a child engaged in social studies must encounter realities which fall within the immediate personal environment.

The SEARCH materials take the governing category and provide a unit on *I Care For My Dog*. In the first phase, children identify ways to take care of a dog through feeding it, keeping it safe, and giving it a place to live. In the second phase, children specify the best way to feed (regularity, appropriate food), protect (license, medical care, safety), and shelter of a dog. Three stages of SEARCH provide five-to-seven year olds the following progression under the governing category:

**Stage 1**
- I care for myself.
- I care for my home.

**Stage 2**
- I care for my classroom.
- I care for my dog.

**Stage 3**
- I follow rules
- I follow laws and customs. (Presseisen and D'Amico, p. 170.)
Similarly, self-realizing units which emphasize personal characteristics begin with "I have a body" through "I have a family." The achievement of a Piagetian frame of reference stands primary to the curriculum. Consideration of the nature of social studies itself looms secondary to the developmental perspective which subtly meshes with the expanding environments.

Further insight into the limitations of Piagetian developmental psychology and elementary social studies may be found in relationship to the teaching of history. Problems related to formal operational thought might preclude the use of historical topics in the elementary grades. David Elkin (1981) points out the manner in which history might be taught. Elkin frames the problem in terms of Piagetian anticipations, intuitive ideas and interests, which will be fully elaborated at a later stage of development. Elkin concludes that work in the early grades must begin with children's personal histories since history requires formal operational thought. The intuitive anticipations of children thus restrict historically oriented instruction.

I am not saying that we should limit historical instruction in the elementary grades to the personal—only that we might begin there. In addition, whatever history we attempt to teach should be tied to the personal and immediate surroundings of the children. Unfortunately, the history of a city, town, a neighborhood or a household cannot be packaged for national consumption. A major hindrance to teaching history in the elementary grades resides in the fact that while local history is the most interesting, and the most intuitively accessible to children, it cannot be incorporated into materials packaged for children all over the country (Elkin, 1981, p. 436).

Such thinking ascribes substantial limitations to the conduct of social inquiry. It also assumes a limited capability for inquiry to be related to personal experiences and the frame of reference of young children. Apparently, only that which is immediate can be made real. The implied corollary states that the immediate and familiar lacks complexity—a dubious assumption. Drawing comparisons to one's own experiences appears impossible if the topic itself does not occur in the immediate environment. References to city, town, and neighborhood suggest that primary grades history best fits the expanding environments. With logic based upon developmental limitations of children, the expanding environments finds Piagetian reinforcement.

Traditionally, the expanding environments progression found visual representation in a series of concentric circles, beginning with the family, in first grade. The emergence of kindergarten results in the ultimate starting point for the expanding environments—a unit on the self. Units on the self often incorporate activities such as tracing the outline of each child on butcher paper, coloring it appropriately, labelling body parts, cutting it out,
and displaying the self in the classroom or hallway. Precisely why items related to body imagery (Shontz, 1969) represent a fundamental starting point within social studies most likely rests in the conceptual haze of the expanding environments: "How can you study your family if you don't know who you are?" Concern for the development of a positive self-concept also undergirds decisions to emphasize the self as an initial social studies instructional unit. Identification of friends, family members, and favorite activities—all social in nature—may indeed be useful in developing a positive self-concept. As an approach to dealing with the complexities of oneself and of the external social world, such units fall woefully short. As the retrofit starting point for the expanding environments, the self offers the logical fit for the entire scope and sequence.

Clearly, children do differ from adults in the depth and abstraction of concepts which they hold. Certainly, being made aware that concrete experiences should be integral to elementary social studies proves to be a valuable lesson for any educator. However, the developmental norms take on a almost genetic quality indigenous to the human species as it passes through childhood. By identifying the specific developmental levels, the assumption emerges that children can or cannot deal with particular concepts at a given grade level: "... some instruction in basic economic concepts can begin at this level if tied to children's personal economic experiences. Yet, the majority of children in these young age groups are still reasoning about economic problems in a literal and superficial fashion" (Shug and Berkey, p. 41). Empirical data may well reflect such developmental conclusions. Nevertheless, such data does not place the developmental norms in a cultural context. Simply put, common child-rearing or educational practices may result in particular norms, yet not be indicative of the actual abilities of children to have deeper conceptual understandings given different cultural practices. A gradual increase, by grade level, of understanding the concept of monetary value might be a simply function of instructional experiences rather than an innate set of capabilities at the varied grade levels. One is reminded of Kieran Egan's observation regarding developmental stages.

If we find ... that most Australian aborigine adults fail Piagetian tests of the conservation of continuous quantity, are we to believe that aborigine adults will store water in tall thin cans in order to have more water; do they think they lose water when they pour it from a bucket into a barrel? (Egan, 1982, p. 458).

As an insight into common patterns, developmental psychology provides one useful tool in analyzing curriculum. The apparent ease with which such developmental norms reinforce the expanding environments framework suggests that such theories must be used with caution. Research by Levstick
and Pappas (1987) also suggests that developmental psychology need not necessarily reinforce the expanding environments.

**Alternative Conceptual Tools**

Limitations of the expanding environments point to the need for alternative conceptual modes of thinking about elementary social studies. Worthwhile topics outside the domain of the expanding environments and the reality of social learning require conceptual frameworks adequate to integrating a wide variety of elements. The discussions of atypical topics and social learning lead to an examination of C. Wright Mills and Suzanne Langer. Mills' sociological analysis helps deal with content via the linkage of biography (personal experience) and institutional arrangements which provide societies with their basic structure. Suzanne Langer's philosophy of art helps deal with the manner in which the social world presents itself to the individual.

C. Wright Mills addressed himself to the task of setting forth the purpose of studying human behavior. In *The Sociological Imagination* Mills identified the purpose of social inquiry in terms immediately applicable to the lives of everyday persons. Social inquiry, Mills argued, ought to help individuals understand the connection between biography and history, between personal experience and the institutional arrangements which give societies their structure. Without a clear understanding of the interplay, the connection between one's individual life and institutional arrangements which gives society its structure remains obscured. Persons can only remain confused and unable to evaluate or act upon the situations in which they live.

Nowadays men often feel that their private lives are a series of traps. They sense that within their everyday worlds they cannot overcome their troubles and in this feeling, they are often quite correct. What ordinary men are directly aware of, and what they try to do are bounded by their private orbits in which they live: their visions and their powers are limited to the close-up scenes of job, family, neighborhood . . . (Mills, 1961, p. 3).

Seeing beyond the immediately visible aspects of personal experience to social structure, to the institutional arrangements, suggests that certain questions become particularly significant: What is the structure of this particular society as a whole? What are the essential components in this society and how are they related? What varieties of men and women now prevail in this society and in this period? And what varieties are coming to prevail? In what ways are they selected and formed, liberated and repressed, made sensitive and blunted? (Mills, pp. 6–7).

Translated into simple terms, a Mills based orientation makes clear the rationality of studying topics outside the expanding environments frame of reference. A fast-food chain, such as McDonald's, provides one simple example of potential social studies content which fails to fit the expanding en-
environments. Yet, the fast food industry offers content in which personal experience and institutional arrangements can be examined with ease. Every person becomes caught up in the complex web of institutional arrangements when patronizing a fast food restaurant. Hunger takes on greater meaning than one ordinarily imagines. The personal experience of eating at a fast food restaurant cannot be understood in terms of personal food preferences and biological activity between the digestive system and the brain.

"Hunger" involves a relation between the tremblings of the stomach wall and the feelings of its pangs, but such hunger processes are relevant . . . primarily in specific variety of social contexts (Gerth and Mills, 1964, p. 16).

The study of fast foods clearly links the personal experiences of elementary school children with the most fundamental of institutional arrangements. Each of Mills' basic questions comes under scrutiny as children examine the web of relationships and behaviors which take place in the fast food world. McDonald's and its competitors operate in the domain of multinational corporations, mass production, standardization, division of labor, profit motive, and mass media (to name but a few significant concepts).

Attempting to fit fast foods to the expanding environments would prove to be a nonsensical exercise. A first grade unit which incorporated fast foods in a family oriented unit could not explain the meaning of the family activity without ignoring sustained focus upon moment-by-moment family behavior. Likewise, a fast-food examination in a second grade neighborhood or a third grade community focus would by definition have to exceed the bounds of neighborhood or community. Virtually any topic, concept, or generalization would, at numerous points, transcend the boundaries imposed by the expanding environments. The complexities of the linkages between biography and history, between personal experience and institutional arrangements, mandate against the expanding environments (Akenson, 1977). Likewise, many seemingly irrelevant topics merit consideration for inclusion in elementary social studies. Jimmie Rodgers, "The Father of Country Music," transcends the boundaries of the expanding environments and engages children with substantial knowledge. Rodgers' life allows students to deal with concepts related to the development of technology, childhood, regional culture, mass markets, dominant values, and the Great Depression (Akenson, 1982). The expanding environments restricts, rather than enhances, the vision of what constitutes valid social studies.

Analogical clarification of weaknesses in the expanding environments may be found in the work of Suzanne Langer. The seamless web of culture and the multiple linkages between personal experience and institutional arrangements may be comprehended better through Langer's (1953, 1962, 1957, 1968) symbolic theory of art and mentation.
A work of art is a single, indivisible symbol, although a highly articulated one; it is not, like a discourse ... composite, analyzable into more elementary symbols—sentences, clauses, phrases, words ... a work of art is always a prime symbol. It may, indeed, be analyzed, in that its articulation may be traced and various elements in it distinguished, but it can never be constructed by a process of synthesis of elements, because no such elements exist outside of it. They only occur in a total form (Langer, *Feeling and Form*, 1953, p. 369).

Art presents itself with an immediacy, a total impact, which precedes systematic conceptual analysis. In addition, artistic forms of thought represent significant forms of dealing with reality and making visible one's understanding of the social world.

A painting, a dance, a sculpture, or a musical composition makes a total impression in which individual parts function as a total. Yet, the viewer or listener encounters a structure which may gradually reveal itself to scrutiny. A dance, for example, possesses a logical flow from beginning to end. Each dancer, each separate body part, the relationship of the dancer to other dancers, the relationship of the dancer to the total performing space, and the sequence of each dancer's movement contributes to the image observed by the audience. The impression made by Martha Graham's "Appalachian Spring" occurs as a totality to the audience as the movement flows from beginning to end. Yet the dance can be subsequently analyzed for its structure. The dance, however, presents its import, its meaning, prior to any systematic analysis. Analysis may introduce new insights, elaborate existing meanings, and enhance the appreciation of the viewer for the dance. However, the systematic analysis occurs after the initial perception and impact by the performance in its total complexity. Attitudes and values concerning the dance may or may not be altered despite an increased understanding of the movement.

The complexity of artistic forms such as dance suggests that a variety of logical conceptual schemes could be devised and applied to the process of understanding, appreciating, and developing skills. Pedagogical expertise seeking an optimum progression to understand dance would logically build from simple to complex. Assuming that the viewers of the dance possess adequate prior knowledge to engage in analysis at the desired level of abstraction, the dance lends itself to a multiple of logically valid curricular progressions consistent with the conceptual and technical tools of the dance discipline. No valid progression, however, would preclude the reality of a dance's total impression upon the viewer, would examine a single component in isolation from the dance as a whole, or would completely develop all insights, meanings, and complexities.

The social world, like art, presents itself to the viewer simultaneously. Conceptual tools prove helpful, though somewhat arbitrary, and limiting in their impact. Bateson (1967) found that a variety of conceptual analyses fit
the data which he had collected. Culture revealed itself to Bateson in a variety of conceptual analyses, yet in reality remained a seamless web. Similarly, Hess and Torney (1967) pointed out that children possess perceptions of the political world long before they have specific conceptual tools with which to analyze it. Perceptions and attitudes remain basically the same while increasing experience and formal education provide specific knowledge. The political world, however, makes its impact as a total entity. The specifics may gradually reveal themselves in common educational and cultural practices. Like developmental stages, such specifics reflect cultural practices and not genetic dictates. One need not advocate Zen-like, direct, conceptionless mentation to accept the arbitrary conceptual tools which bring about cognitive understanding. As a conceptual framework brought to bear upon the social world, the expanding environments fails a major test. It assumes that the social world reveals itself to children in a conceptually neat progression, hermetically sealing off the components for which children are not developmentally prepared to study.

Coming to grips with a vision of elementary social studies curriculum divorced from the constraints of the expanding environments suggests a series of logical questions from which could be constructed a large number of curricular sequences. Analysis of a desired curricular sequence becomes a task which accepts input from developmental psychology, yet recognizes the limitations of developmental norms. Awareness of the relative abstractness and concreteness of individual concepts, generalizations, topics, and facts allows for student limitations and required antecedent understanding to be given their due consideration. Numerous questions may be asked: In what ways do children encounter the concept (generalization, fact, topic, theme, etc.) in their daily lives? What information or understanding must a child possess prior to study? Do adults tend to explain the concept as part of the culture? Do children encounter the concept directly or indirectly in other subjects of the school curriculum? Does the concept require technical skills such as mathematics in order to grasp its essential elements? When within the structure of conventional curriculum do children achieve the technical skills necessary to comprehend the concept? What technical aspects of the concept prove essential to understanding? What non-technical aspects of the concept prove adequate to establishing the concept? What attitudinal goals and specific skills do we seek to develop within the context of the content? Concepts such as gross national product and revolution would exhibit different constraints than socialization, power, delta, or goods and services. A unit on the history of the Reformation would present different challenges from one on the history of Coca-Cola and its competitors.

Ultimately, the creation of curricular organizational frameworks freed from the constraints of the expanding environments require varied analyses. Questions may be analogous to that of investment capital rather than arbitrarily fitting content to the expanding environments. The major capital
investment question underlying all the specific previously stated questions is: Given sufficient instructional time to achieve comprehension of the content—facts, concepts, generalizations, topics, themes, etc.—does the investment merit choice over its competitors? Culturally and educationally induced developmental norms may be recognized as non-genetic in nature and dealt with as such in the deliberation process. Price elasticity may only prove to be a difficult abstraction when considered as a concept which requires technical manipulation of mathematical skills and acquisition through a conceptually dense literature. From such analyses a variety of valid organizational frameworks could be crafted for elementary social studies.

Alternatives, Realities and Texts

Intellectual analyses do not a dragon slay. Even the History and Social Science Framework (1988) for California displays the influence of the expanding environments "...primary studies...begin each year by centering first on the child's immediate present...then move spatially outward (State of California, 1988, p. 32). Elements of the K-3 California progression dealing with "Learning to Work Together," (K), "Developing Social Skills and Responsibilities," (1), "Our Parents, Grandparents, and Ancestors," (2), and "Our Local History: Discovering Our Past and Our Traditions" (3) could be perceived as somewhat familiar. Two of the cited topics sound as if socialization is being smuggled into the content. Studying parents and grandparents implies a developmental need which can be left behind as students enter the intermediate grades with its California, United States, and World History and Geography progression. Total exorcism of the expanding environments demon appears to be more difficult than those who despise it might imagine.

The expanding environments possesses features which make its continued survival likely. Stated simply, the expanding environments is intuitively attractive (young children know less than older children), easily explained to the lay public, and viewed as the normal curriculum by virtue of its historical incumbency. The expanding environments even provides textbook publishers with a comfortable format which teachers feel they know and understand.

Events in Tennessee prove insightful for examining the specific mechanics through which elementary social studies texts and the expanding environments operate in consort to reinforce each other. The creation of a Social Studies Curriculum Framework (Tennessee State Department of Education, 1983) and accompanying teaching units resulted in progression influenced by the expanding environments. The insertion of Tennessee studies into the fourth grade points to a developmental assumption concerning the appropriateness of fourth grade for dealing with the state. The structure of the expanding environments did not provide a stumbling block to a
majority of those involved in the enterprise. Tennessee studies appeared to be a legitimate form of content appropriate to the fourth grade which followed from study of self, neighborhoods, and communities.

The insertion of fourth grade Tennessee studies content into the Social Studies Curriculum Framework resulted in activity by at least one publisher. One major publisher wanted to produce a fourth grade supplementary textbook. The selection of an author for one fourth grade Tennessee history text provides insight regarding the predisposition of publishing companies. The publishing company will remain unidentified. Potential authors submitted samples which the publisher evaluated. The publishing company functionary directing the Tennessee text development informed potential authors that the company sought a lively writing style. The functionary indicated awareness of, and sensitivity to, charges that social studies textbooks were dull and lifeless. As a result, one potential author submitted a sample which attempted to address the most obvious faults of social studies texts.

The author selected Lewis Crook as a subject for study of 20th century Tennessee as a form of alternative content. The content posed no apparent risk to the publisher as the life of Lewis Crook was not filled with controversy. The life of Lewis Crook relates to a large number concepts about 20th century Tennessee and its role in national and international events. Concepts and major social events and processes evident in Crook's life include: 1) Family Structure, 2) Power, 3) Sex Roles, 4) Childhood, 5) Technology, 6) Education, 7) Leisure, 8) Sharecropping, 9) Migration, 10) Urban Growth, 11) Country Music, 12) Cultural Interaction, 13) Diffusion, 14) Massification, 15) Depression, 16) Blue Collar, 17) White Collar, 18) World War II.

Lewis Crook allows one to take seriously the effort to construct social studies curriculum which links personal experience to the institutional arrangements of the social world. However, nothing in the life of Lewis Crook suggests that his life fits a preconceived developmental norm appropriate for a specific grade level. Crook's life reflects rural, southern culture in the early 20th century. The difficulties of sharecropping, role of music in the culture, migration to Nashville, involvement on the Grand Ole Opry, a combination of blue collar and low level white collar jobs, combat in World War II, and eventual retirement back in rural Trousdale County, Tennessee, all connect Lewis Crook to significant concepts and events worthy of study (Akenson, 1984).

Selection of Lewis Crook for a textbook sample took place in consort with an effort to maximize the involvement of students. Goodlad (1984) identified the passivity of students, emphasis upon correct answers, and emphasis upon coverage of material. Larkins and Hawkins (1988) suggest that elementary social studies textbooks are trivial and vacuous. White (1988) advocated the inclusion of substantial knowledge in texts. Research on sub-
Project matter preferences consistently places social studies instruction in a low ranking: this at the same time when students indicate their desire to know more about social studies topics (Shoughnessy & Haladyna, 1985). The textbook sample based upon Lewis Crook sought to deal with significant substance and to involve a variety of thinking skills. Specifically, the sample focused upon the difficulties of the southern sharecropper as it manifest itself in family structure, entertainment, education, and the monotony of daily life.

The proposed chapter on Lewis Crook began with a required Reading Preview segment which used an analogy, a conceptual map, and a thought question to require students to make use of the presented information. Analogical reasoning requires students to understand factual information, yet see relationships based upon selected attributes. The conceptual map provided a visual hierarchy which also requires students to make predictions based upon evidence.

Analogy: Lewis Crook: 20th Century: 4th Graders Today: (The Civil War, The Revolutionary War, 2000 and Beyond, 1950s)
1. Think About: What will Lewis Crook have to do with farming and banjos?
2. Read to Learn: How does Lewis Crook’s early life fit the concept map below? What kind of things would you expect to find in the boxes with a question mark?

The body of the Tennessee history sample attempted to paint a realistic picture of early 20th century Tennessee. The Reading Preview and Check Your Reading structured involvement around substantial content which provided the basis to engage in thinking in a variety of styles. The sample thus revealed that day-to-day existence provided Lewis Crook and family with numerous difficulties ranging from financial to emotional.

Lewis Crook was reliable, dependable, cheap labor for his father. George Crook forced Lewis to quit school after eighth grade because he didn’t want anything to interfere with Lewis’s working. George Crook,
however, was not the best father and sometimes left the farm for long periods of time. In the words of Lewis Crook: "I caught all the hardships" as there was "nobody else to do it." His brothers and sisters didn't help much. Lewis Crook had to be the "real" man of the family and do most of the work (Akenson, 1988, p. 4).

Additional material dealt with the relationship of mother Lela Crook to father George Crook. The monotonous round of food cooked by Lela Crook reflected a life of hard work. In the evenings, George Crook played the same two or three tunes on the banjo to the point that Mrs. Crook "almost climbed the walls . . ." In addition, students would have learned that Lela Crook "didn't have much to say about nothing" in family decisions. The sample also dealt with the relationship of the Crooks to friends and relatives. Family friend Dr. Humphrey Bate visited the Crooks each Monday and enjoyed a special custard made by Aunt Sally Crook. The Crooks took part in outings along the Cumberland River which included music, games, and food.

The concluding Check Your Reading section used thought questions, potential additions to the conceptual map, rank ordering, and a semantic differential. The semantic differential requires students to make an evaluation based upon their interpretation of the textual information. Rank ordering requires relational thinking. Both the semantic differential and the rank ordering go beyond mere opinion. Students must evaluate, but must go beyond mere personal opinion. Evidence must be cited from the text which justifies the evaluation. Content regarding father George Crook's behavior and Lela Crook's long suffering makes possible discussion on the sixth question dealing with family cohesion. The cohesion question points to consideration of exceptions to, or inaccuracies of, generalizations about the past.

The Lewis Crook sample resulted in the publisher functionary indicating that the sample was very interesting. The functionary then asked if the author would be interested in writing the teacher's guide for the textbook. Such a response points to the following interpretation of the reaction by the publishing company: "This material strays too far from the standard content to be an acceptable risk for inclusion in a Tennessee history textbook. If a sample of this nature deviates from the standard format, then we may find ourselves with additional content initiatives from this author which would further put us at risk. The use of analogies and other techniques may be very effective, but are idiosyncratic, unexpected, and consume space. Whatever gain in thinking skills or interest level might occur cannot be risked in a venture of this nature. Since the thinking skills materials would be perceived as interesting, they could be used without risk in a teacher's manual which must be produced." Such a response proves particularly interesting given the small market and low risk associated with a supplementary text for a single state.
Check Your Reading

1. Look at the concept map again. What do you think would fit in the boxes with the question marks? What would you put in new boxes if you could make additions to the concept map?

![Concept Map]

2. On page X the word *rural* is introduced. List three or more words in the same paragraph which give you clues about the meaning of *rural*.

3. Examine the map showing a part of Trousdale County. List at least three things which fits the description of Trousdale County.

4. Below are five pairs of words. Point to the place between each pair of words which shows your thinking. Be ready to discuss and give reasons for your thinking.

   Lewis Crook’s Childhood

   Happy .............................................................. Sad
   Rich .............................................................. Poor
   Lonely ............................................................. Together
   Working .......................................................... Playing
   Easy ............................................................... Hard


   a. Banjo____
   b. Food____
   c. Mr. Crook____
   d. Cooking____
   e. Plowing____
   f. School____
   g. Sorghum____

6. Some people think that families used to be stronger and happier than they are today.

   Is this completely true? Use the Crook family as your example.

   Figure 2. Check your reading: Thinking skills.
The preceding interpretation cannot be verified. However, the writer selected for the Tennessee textbook begins Chapter 1 with a poem:

I Thrill at Thought of Mountain Grand;  
Rolling Green Hills and Fertile Farm Land;  
Earth Rich With Stone, Mineral, and Ore:  
Forests Dense and Wilde Flowers Galore (Keith, 1988, p. 1).

The poem will be accompanied on the page with a photograph of a creek with a waterfall. The first lesson focuses upon three hypothetical children from Tennessee's three grand divisions, East, Middle and West, who each describe Tennessee differently. Students will eventually learn that each description of Tennessee is correct because "Tennessee has all the different kinds of land they talk about, and more." The Check Your Reading questions at the end of the lesson ask: 1. Where would you find mountains in Tennessee? 2. How would you describe Tennessee's shape? and 3. What is unusual about the geography of Tennessee? The Thinking Skill directs students to look at a map and list three states that are longer from east to west than Tennessee.

The Tennessee textbook, despite the stated wishes of the textbook functionary, exhibits the serious flaws which textbook critics claim mar the genre. Visions of fourth graders patiently plowing their way through the text and dutifully generating correct answers spring to mind. The time taken to cover the bland passages and generate correct answers leaves little likelihood that enterprising teachers will engage fourth graders in significant inquiry. The teacher's guide or individual teacher creativity will provide but occasional variance from the time consuming coverage and quest for correct answers. Certainly Goodlad's (1984) observations suggest that such a dour prediction rests in fairly solid evidence.

The Tennessee text sample suggests that elementary social studies textbooks will continue to demonstrate a progression influenced to some extent by the expanding environments—from self to the world. The expanding environments may be slain intellectually, but reports of its death may be greatly exaggerated. Likewise, the textbooks themselves will continue to demonstrate the features which critics bemoan. A myriad of factors generated the expanding environments in the early 1900s and contribute to its remarkably long life (Akenson, 1987). In a similar manner, textbooks imply a set of expectations for teacher, publisher, parents, and students. The expectations become a two-edged sword which guides and restricts the imagination and creativity of even those within the textbook industry (Pepper, Personal communication, 1988). The expanding environments itself may work in symbiotic relationship with other forces to insure that future texts will maintain social studies in its low esteem in the hearts and minds of students. The characteristics of elementary social studies texts may be analyzed separately from the organizational framework which they convey.
Likewise, the expanding environments may be analyzed separately from the texts which convey it to students. However, the flaws of each might work in consort to magnify the weaknesses of the other. The total flaws may well be greater than the sum of its respective parts.

Conclusion

Elementary social studies curriculum exists within an historical tradition dominated by the expanding environments organizational framework. Shaped by a variety of mutually operative forces the expanding environments became ensconced in educational theory and practice. Seemingly immune from rigorous analysis, the expanding environments nonetheless possesses numerous epistemic shortcomings. Analysis based upon C. Wright Mills and Suzanne Langer point to conceptually valid orientations for elementary social studies without stumbling upon artificial configurations for which supporting evidence appears scant. Mills and Langer also provide a starting point for subsequent discussions concerning the role of thinking skills and the relationship of the arts to social studies.

Freed from the control of the expanding environments, elementary social studies curriculum, textbooks, and ancillary materials could well exhibit a variety of organizational patterns. Each valid scope and sequence could make clear the linkages between personal experience and the institutional arrangements which shape societies. Cultural, bureaucratic, and economic realities, however, will probably allow the continued survival of textbooks and curriculum in the basic forms we know them. Economies of scale and the conditioning of educators and the lay public will defeat the slings and arrows of those who would destroy the expanding environments and the texts which convey it.

References


Social Studies Coordinators and a K–12 Program in Economic Education

Michael Watts
Purdue University

Abstract

A questionnaire dealing with K–12 scope and sequence issues in economics education was mailed to all members of the Social Studies Supervisors Association and the Council of State Social Studies Specialists. Respondents provided information on when they judged students to be intellectually capable of receiving instruction on 22 different economics concept areas, and when instruction on such material should be incorporated into the current curriculum given limited classroom time for such activities, relatively low levels of teacher training in this subject area and other practical considerations. Responses from these groups were also compared to those from classroom teachers and college-level economics and education faculty members active in the national network of economics education centers and state councils. The social studies supervisors felt that economics instruction should be presented significantly later in the students' school experience than the elementary teacher and economic educator groups. Secondary teachers, however, called for somewhat later instruction on these concepts than the coordinators. Overall, the differences in recommended grade placements were small enough to suggest that a national K–12 plan in economics could be identified and implemented, allowing some latitude for different backgrounds and interests among students, educators, and local and state administrative and curriculum practices.

Introduction

Scope and sequence planning has become a lively topic/issue in both social studies and economic education over the past few years, as well as in related areas such as geography education. Both the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) and the Joint Council on Economic Education (JCEE) have now published initial versions of K–12 guidelines, even though
it has been shown that many such efforts in the social studies have had little effect on classroom practice in the past (Peet, 1984).

In any area, the difficulties in building up enough support to make scope and sequence programs successful are easy to see. Agreement must exist, or be developed, on such questions as what cognitive and affective material is to be taught, when it will be taught, how it will interface with related material, how much time and space in the curriculum is available for the material, and how differences across students, teachers, schools, districts, states and regions will be accommodated without vitiating what has been identified as "core" material. That is clearly hard enough to do in subjects like English, mathematics or science, which have substantial blocks of instructional time to work with and one central discipline and/or method to cover. In social studies, where curriculum time is sharply limited and several academic disciplines/perspectives are involved, or in one of the specific fields associated with social studies education, like economics, the problems are even more numerous and complex.

But economic educators do enjoy several advantages in taking up this challenge. Most important, perhaps, at least when compared to other social sciences and social studies, is a professional consensus on a core body of theory, models and basic cognitive concepts. Even at the pre-college level, that material mirrors the content of undergraduate and graduate-level coursework in economics, in terms of agreeing what questions are important, what basic concepts to use in trying to answer such questions, and how to evaluate alternative (and often contradictory) answers that are developed from different theoretical models and/or empirical evidence. As prominent economists like Fritz Machlup have long stated, in economics the vital questions don't change much in moving from basic to advanced courses, but the level of sophistication in analysis and answers to the questions do.

There are those who find this "consensual lens" limiting (Helburn, 1986) or biased (Romanish, 1983), and see also (Walstad and Watts, 1984), but few U.S. economists deny its existence. For a general review of this literature, see Watts, 1987a. At the pre-college level, the consensus is reflected in the JCEE's Master Curriculum Guide (Saunders, et al., 1984; see Suman-sky, 1986, for a summary of the development of that document, and the Spring 1987 issue of the Journal of Economic Education for a collection of articles expressing various criticisms of the MCG from both mainstream and more divergent perspectives).

A large part of this consensus rests on the view of economics as a positive science rather than a normative field of study and essay, which means in theory that economic models and evidence could be used to pursue any given set of ends—from methodological individualism to those established by a dictatorship of saints or tyrants. That approach is indirectly supported by a group of economic education studies at the pre-college level which shows that changes in levels of cognitive understanding affect student
responses in the affective domain, but not *vice versa* (see Walstad, 1987, for a summary and discussion of these studies). It is, however, one way in which mainstream economic educators may find themselves at odds with social studies educators who adopt a more activist goal related to citizenship education for a participatory, democratic society (like my colleagues at Purdue, James Barth and Sam Shermis), unless those educators are themselves willing to accept better economic understanding as one of the tools that is necessary to accomplish that end, which they often do.

All of this suggests that the degree to which social studies educators are likely to be willing to endorse economic education efforts at various grade levels is an open question. Thus, economic educators must try to gauge how supportive social studies educators will be in building up a K–12 plan of study.² The coordinators, on the other hand, have reasons to be interested in determining how unified their own answers to such questions are, and in comparing their responses to those of the classroom teachers who work with them in delivering social studies education. The coordinators are clearly likely to support some level of economics instruction at certain points in the K–12 curriculum, but also likely to object if they feel economics is “crowding out” instruction on other social sciences, or students’ more general appreciation of the social studies.

The coordinators are, in effect, the “gatekeepers” to the social studies curriculum in state departments of education and the local school districts which are able to fund such positions. They have long been organized in groups which exist to strengthen current curriculum and instructional practices in the social studies, and actively working with other groups that promote the individual social sciences. In 1986, there were 890 combined members of the Social Studies Supervisors Association (SSSA) and the Council of State Social Studies Specialists (CS4). Both of these groups held annual meetings and participated in other ways in the work of their larger, umbrella organization, the NCSS. But in spite of the strategic importance of these coordinators, we have little empirical data on their training, interest, commitment or ideas in the area of economics education.³ This paper is a report on a mail survey sent to the SSSA and CS4 groups in 1986, with usable responses provided by 276 members (a response rate of 31%).⁴ The information collected addresses the following questions:

1. How much training in economics have the social studies supervisors had, and how recent was their last coursework in the subject?

2. At what grade levels do the supervisors believe students are intellectually ready to discuss the 22 basic economic concepts/concept clusters listed in the JCEE’s *Master Curriculum Guide* (MCG)?

3. Considering student ability and such pragmatic issues as limited class time for instruction on economics, at what grade levels would the supervisors recommend beginning instruction on the concepts at the different cognitive levels suggested by the categories in Bloom’s (1956)
4. How do the responses of the coordinators compare to those provided on identical questions by classroom teachers, some of whom had recently completed in-service training in economics, and by a group of university economists and education professionals on the staffs of state Councils and college or university Centers for Economic Education which are affiliated with the JCEE? See Watts (1987b) for a detailed report of the responses of the non-coordinator groups.

Survey Instruments, Procedures and Responses

A copy of key sections of the survey form sent to the coordinators in the spring of 1986 is provided in the Appendix. Mean responses by the coordinators are also shown there, along with the standard deviation and precise number of responses for each item in the survey. In addition to the questionnaire, the coordinators received a one-page glossary of terms from the MCG and a sheet on the Bloom taxonomy categories (taken from Soper, 1979, and used subsequently in Soper and Walstad, 1987) in order to reduce differences in responses resulting from interpersonal variations in the use of these terms.

The one area completed by all of those returning the questionnaires was on professional background, where it was found that almost 70% of the coordinators had earned at least a master's degree, and over a fourth held the doctorate. Sixty percent held their highest degree in education, and over three-quarters of the coordinators reported a primary academic concentration in the social studies. Slightly more than a third of the respondents had, at some time, taught a course in economics. On average, the coordinators had taken three undergraduate courses in economics, two "regular graduate" courses in economics, and two in-service courses in economics education—in all cases treating a three-credit hour, semester-basis offering as one course. Almost 10% of the respondents had not taken any coursework in economics, and among those who had taken courses most had completed their last course in or before 1975. About two-thirds of the coordinators were male, and their average age was 46.

Like the other groups of respondents who completed this general questionnaire, almost all of the responding coordinators indicated agreement with the idea that most "average ability" students (defined for the survey as students scoring at about the 50th percentile on standardized achievement tests) were intellectually capable of understanding each of the 22 concepts/concept clusters listed in the MCG at some level in the K-12 curriculum. In fact, literally none of the coordinators' responses suggested that it would be desirable to hold all instruction in economics for one or two formal courses on the subject. As a matter of preference or necessity, infusion in other courses is their accepted instructional plan of action for many basic economic concepts, at least in theory if not always practice.

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The great majority of the coordinators also agreed that, even considering practical constraints such as limited time for classroom work on this material, instruction at each of the Bloom levels specified should be included at some point in the K–12 curriculum. As with the non-coordinator groups reported in my 1987b paper, however, this is not a unanimous judgment. Some coordinators left some of the response cells in the survey blank, as noted by the variations in the size of the “n’s” reported in the Appendix. This sometimes reflected, and at times explicitly indicated, uncertainty on the part of the respondents as to where a certain set of material should be taught. In other cases, and particularly for the more advanced concepts at the higher Bloom levels, blanks or dashes were sometimes used to indicate the opinion that a certain concept should not be taught at that cognitive level in the K–12 curriculum.

**Comparisons and Conclusions**

Within the limitations of a mail survey format, which are many and well known, and the additional constraints imposed by adopting the MCG concept categories and the Bloom framework used by Soper and Walstad in developing nationally normed tests on economics at the secondary level, which are also open to some controversy, the data presented here and on the teacher and economic educator groups in my earlier paper indicate that these groups all endorse a fairly extensive program of pre-college economics education featuring developmental instruction, i.e., instruction on some concepts is seen as logically and/or pragmatically prior to instruction on other concepts, and the ways in which students can use the concepts are expected to become more complex and more challenging as they advance to higher grade levels.

Why some groups believe a certain set of material should be taught at a certain grade level is, of course, not perfectly understood. Comparing the responses of different groups of interested parties to such questions suggests some answers, but also raises further questions. In my 1987 article, it was noted that classroom teachers with recent and more extensive training in economics often felt economics instruction on many concept areas should begin significantly earlier than did a control group of teachers. The trained group of teachers also claimed to teach more of the concepts than the control group. The economics educator group generally agreed with the placement suggested by the trained teachers who were most likely to offer the first instruction on a given concept area. They generally did not exhibit internal disagreement about the grade placement of concepts based on whether a respondent’s academic training was in the area of economics or education. How do the coordinators’ responses fit into this broad landscape of survey results? The answer is, basically, as a clearly distinct group, but most like the trained group of secondary teachers.
The table below summarizes the comparative data on suggested grade placements offered by the coordinators, and by the classroom teachers and professional economics educators included in my earlier survey. On average, the coordinators call for introducing concepts at a later point in the curriculum than either the trained or control group of elementary teachers, and the JCEE-network personnel, but earlier than the secondary teachers. More concretely, though at the risk of oversimplifying the range of responses actually provided, the coordinators favor introducing the concepts one to two grades later than the elementary trained teachers (mean difference = 1.4 grade levels; standard deviation = .3); about half to one-and-a-half grade levels later than the elementary control group of teachers (mean difference = 1.0 grade level; standard deviation = .6); at about the same to one-half grade earlier than the trained secondary teacher group (mean difference = −.2 grade level; standard deviation = .4); and about the same to one full grade level earlier than the control group of secondary teachers (mean difference = −.5 grade level; standard deviation = .5). The coordinators favor introducing concepts about half a grade later than the JCEE-network personnel (mean difference = .6 grade level; standard deviation = .8), but that average masks that fact that the JCEE network would introduce many concepts in the elementary grades one to two years earlier than the coordinators, while holding back some concepts to be introduced in secondary grades as much as half a grade level, compared to the coordinators’ recommendations.

The comparison with the teacher groups is not especially surprising since the coordinators have (on average) enough background in economics to fit with the trained rather than control teacher groups, and are more likely to be former secondary, rather than elementary, teachers. In other words, their responses are closest to the teacher group that most closely matches their own training and background in economics, social studies and general education. But at the same time, they are closer to the responses of the elementary teachers and the economic educator group than the secondary teachers, perhaps reflecting a greater familiarity with the instructional activities and materials available in those grade levels, and the people who work in those grades.

The “political” issue raised by these response patterns is, of course, whether the coordinators are, on net, catalysts or curbs to expanded programs in economics education. The academic issue is whether their judgments on the curriculum and students’ capacities are more correct, or at least better informed, than those of the teacher and economics educator groups. While it might be possible and profitable to address these questions by attempting to determine which groups are in a better position to assess student ability, curriculum structure, and practical constraints facing instructional programs, discretion suggests leaving it as an open and ultimately empirical question to determine what specific scope and sequence
## Table 1
Comparisons of Mean Grade Placements by the Social Studies Coordinators and Other Groups*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Trained Teacher Group</th>
<th>Control Teacher Group</th>
<th>JCEE Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Grade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placements Suggested</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By Social Studies Coordinators</td>
<td>(108)</td>
<td>( 1)</td>
<td>(84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identical Grade</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placements Suggested</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By Social Studies Coordinators</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Grade</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placements Suggested</td>
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<td>76</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By Social Studies Coordinators</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>(27)</td>
<td>( 2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The first number shown in each cell is the raw count taken from a total of 110 responses. The numbers in parentheses report the cases which were significantly different from responses on the same items provided by the respective comparison groups, using a 2-tail test at the .05 confidence level.
plan or plans are most effective. Furthermore, it is important to note the broad areas of agreement among these groups and not over-emphasize the importance of disagreements that are couched in terms of suggesting instruction on a particular set of material one or two grade levels earlier or later than another group of respondents.

All of the groups discussed in this paper are practitioners of economics education at one level or another. They seem to share enough common ground to develop at least the general parameters for a standard program in economics education—in terms of what conceptual material is to be taught, at what cognitive levels, and even when it is to be taught—allowing some range for the differences discussed above. Other groups of educators, as the NCSS discovered, can disrupt attempts to build a consensus for such standardized programs, even if they represent only a "small . . . but highly articulate group" (Bragaw, p. 484) claiming to have a higher wisdom on such issues. And, of course, in subjects like economics which frequently attract attention and criticism from non-educational organizations and members of the general public, it can be more than usually difficult to implement such programs.

Perhaps this explains why only now, after 30 years of operation, the JCEE is releasing its first scope and sequence plan. If this document accomplishes nothing more than to stimulate empirical studies on what parts of the plan, if any, are feasible and effective, that should represent a major step forward in making the field of economics education a more mature social science by offering propositions from the discipline which are open to refutation or support based on empirical analysis.

Endnotes

1. For a brief review of this distinction see Armento (1986).
2. This is not to say that social studies is the only area where such instruction can occur—only that it is a very important, and quite possibly the single most important, area.
3. In fact, almost all of the empirical evidence we do have is very general in nature. I am not aware of any studies on this group dealing with the specific topic of economics education. Social studies coordinators and teachers are reported to have endorsed a report on a scope and sequence plan for "the social studies" in Bragaw (1986, his emphasis). More detailed information is available on responses from classroom teachers at the college and pre-college level. For example, Jantz et al. (1985) present data on faculty perceptions concerning inquiry and curriculum change which are related to the issues discussed here.
4. This suggests a general margin of error of plus or minus 5.9% at a 95% confidence interval. As reported below, however, the number of responses on individual items in the survey did vary somewhat.
5. Following the procedures first adopted in Soper, only five categories from Bloom’s taxonomy were used in this survey.

6. It is unlikely that this training is in core theory courses required in graduate economics programs, but rather in courses taken as electives or for an outside minor while completing a graduate degree in education, or in courses tailored for education professionals.

7. In my earlier survey of teachers and JCEE personnel, among the 447 “trained” pre-college educators, 74 were in administration (mainly principals, media specialists, or content consultants); the rest were classroom teachers. Approximately 64% (285) of the responses were from persons working in elementary grades (K–6) and 36% (162) were from persons working in secondary grades (7–12). Years of full-time job experience in education averaged 15.8. Those responding to the questions on training reported an average of 17.9 semester credit hours in economics (7.8 undergraduate hours, 4.9 “regular graduate” hours and 5.2 hours awarded in teacher training workshops). An average of 7.0 years had passed since respondents in this group had completed an intensive course (3 or more semester credit hours) in economics, and 5.8 years since the last intensive course in education. Half (50%) of the 431 respondents who provided optional information on sex were male. Responses on age and sex were also optional; 413 individuals indicated an average age of 41.9 years and median family income in the $24,000–$36,000 range.

With respect to the control group of pre-college educators, 17 of the 157 respondents were in administrative positions; the rest were classroom teachers. Among these responses, 41% (64) were from elementary teachers and administrators, and 59% (93) were secondary personnel. Average years of full-time experience in education were 14.5. Those responding to the questions on training averaged 12.5 semester credit hours in economics coursework (8.2 undergraduate, 2.8 “regular graduate,” and only 1.5 in teacher training workshops), and 90.2 hours, on average, in education courses (54.7 undergraduate, 27.1 regular graduate, and 8.5 in workshops). Years from last intensive coursework in economics and education averaged, respectively, 12.2 and 6.4. About 49% of the 149 optional responses on gender provided by this group were from males; the average age for 143 respondents was 38.9. Median family income for 150 respondents in this subgroup was in the $24,000–$36,000 range.

The “control” group did differ significantly (at the .05 level or higher) from the “treatment” group of educators in some important respects. First, as designed, the control group had less training, and less recent training, in economics. Teachers in this group were especially less likely to have completed an intensive economic education workshop in recent years. Second, the control group included a larger proportion of secondary educators. In reporting responses below, I have separated the elementary and secondary groups to eliminate any distortions that might result from this difference.
Third, the control group was about three years younger, on average, than the group of trained teachers. Related to this, average teaching experience was higher for the trained group of teachers by about 1.4 years; this difference, however, was not significant at the .05 level. The age difference per se was not expected to affect survey responses in any systematic manner. Therefore, no adjustments have been made in this respect in reporting the survey data below.

When reviewing the survey results comparing the “trained” and “control” educator groups, one needs to remember that in this sample those are relative, not absolute, labels. The control group does have some training, formal coursework, and presumably even classwork experience in teaching economics to their students. The observed differences would almost certainly have been greater if the comparisons had been made with a group that literally had no training, coursework, or experience in the area. On the other hand, that sort of control group would clearly not be representative of any major group of teachers in Indiana or, perhaps, in any other state.

The background information on the JCEE-network personnel can be summarized as follows: 41.3% of the 126 respondents indicated that they held a doctorate in economics; 21.4% a doctorate in education; 7.1% a doctorate in economic education; and the remainder held a master’s or bachelor’s degree. Average years of full-time professional experience were 17.2; average age was 43.5 years; and 76.8 percent were male.

One problem is particularly relevant here, namely the issue of selection bias. It is possible that coordinators who were better trained and thus more comfortable in dealing with economic concepts were more likely to complete and return the survey. If so, this weakens the conclusion that the overall population of coordinators accepts the reasonableness of the MCG concept areas as a guide for pre-college economics education programs. It strengthens, however, the conclusion (presented below) that the population of coordinators believes economics instruction should begin later in the curriculum than some teacher groups and the economic educator group.

References


A QUESTIONNAIRE ON A K-12 SCOPE AND SEQUENCE IN ECONOMICS EDUCATION

Results from Social Studies Supervisors Association and Council of State Social Studies Specialists

N = 276; 890 Questionnaires Mailed; 31% Response Rate

Section 1: Intellectual Feasibility of Teaching Concepts at Different Grade Levels

Next to each of the concepts listed below, please indicate the particular grade level (do not use ranges, such as 1-3 or 4-6) in which you believe a class of average ability (i.e., 50th percentile) students can feasibly be introduced to the concept. Here, feasibility refers only to the students' intellectual ability to develop a meaningful understanding of the concept. Other constraints, such as the availability of classroom time, are considered in a later section.

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Section 2: An "Optimal" Scope and Sequence for Economic Concepts, all Things Considered

Please consider all aspects of what you know about students' intellectual ability and such other factors as competing demands for classroom time at different grade levels, existing curriculum structures, etc. Then, indicate in each box at what specific grade level you believe a class of average ability students should receive instruction on the concepts listed on the left side of the table to achieve a mastery at the cognitive level shown on the top of the chart. For example, put a 1 in box A1 if you believe first grade students should receive instruction on the concept of scarcity at the "Knowledge" cognitive level. Again, show a specific grade level in each box, not a range of grades.

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   - Comprehension: 4.07, 6.48, 250
   - Application: 4.99, 3.00, 251
   - Analysis: 6.99, 3.06, 249
   - Evaluation: 7.73, 3.23, 248

2. Opportunity Cost and Trade-offs
   - Knowledge: 4.84, 3.17, 245
   - Comprehension: 5.62, 3.11, 244
   - Application: 6.46, 3.13, 248
   - Analysis: 7.99, 2.99, 244
   - Evaluation: 8.48, 3.02, 243

3. Productivity
   - Knowledge: 4.71, 2.63, 250
   - Comprehension: 5.60, 2.67, 252
   - Application: 6.54, 2.80, 250
   - Analysis: 8.02, 2.73, 248
   - Evaluation: 8.56, 2.84, 246

4. Economic Systems
   - Knowledge: 6.54, 2.27, 251
   - Comprehension: 7.31, 2.25, 251
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Book Reviews


Reviewed by Jane J. White, Education Department, University of Maryland Baltimore County, Catonsville, MD. 21228.

*Ways with Words* by Shirley Brice Heath is a disturbing book for teachers to read. I have used it in graduate research and social studies methods courses for five years now. It never fails to upset students. But at the end of each semester, students leave proclaiming that this is one of the most important books in education that they have ever read. To illustrate the types of shifts that take place in the students' thinking, I will describe what happened on a week by week basis as I used *Ways with Words* with a graduate research class in the fall of 1987.

The first week of the course I assigned the Prologue and Chapter 1, “The Piedmont: Textile mills and times of change” in “Part I: Ethnographer learning.” When we met to discuss the readings, the students liked all of the other articles: they saw them as relevant and useful assignments that gave them an idea of how this course was going to inform their work as teachers or administrators. However, although polite (after all, it was only the second week of the semester), the students let me know that they were not exactly sure why I was having them read *Ways with Words*. The geography and social history of a dusty little mill town in the Piedmont seemed remote and irrelevant to educators who saw themselves as living in fast-moving and sophisticated times. The discussion of how, around the turn of the century, a close-knit community developed divisions between the local townspeople and the millworkers, “a mixture of farmers, Appalachian migrants, and what the townspeople regarded as ‘white trash’” (p. 22) was not immediately compelling. The story of what happened after the desegregation laws mixed the children of the black and white millworkers with the children of the townspeople elicited only mild historical interest. Primarily middle class teachers patiently explained to me that the schools in which they work have been integrated far longer than those in the South, and that we as a society have moved beyond the racism rampant in those days.

The second chapter, “‘Gettin’ on in two communities” and our second discussion about the readings evoked reactions ranging from annoyed impatience to out-and-out seething rage. The discussion started with mild complaints. Given their busy lives and schedules, why was I asking them to read about the nine look-alike houses in a hollow on Dura Street in the white community of Roadville?
A double outline of flowers edges the porches. . . In unevenly shaped
backyards are gardens, grape arbors, chicken pens, rabbit hutch
es and an occasional camper, van, or boat. An American flag flutters from a
high flagpole in the yard of the house nearest the top of the hill.
The screen door in the front porch of this first house on the street
opens into a living room filled with showroom-like matching furniture:
a suite of sofa and chairs, two end tables, and a coffee table fill the
small room as they once did the display window of the furniture store.
There have been a few additions: starched stand-up doilies encircle the
bases of end table lamps, ashtrays and vases. Flat crocheted doilies
cover the arms of chairs and sofa and the headrest position of the
chairs. (pp. 30-31)

Students found the thick description hard to read. A student described
how she sat down in a comfortable chair to read this chapter. Half an hour
later her husband came upon her, fast asleep, the book still in her hands.
The students were uncomfortable reading about a "country" way of life in
such detail. The doilies, the flag. Was Heath was holding their way of life
up to ridicule?

When we discussed Trackton, an all black neighborhood on a short,
dead-end, dirt alley, around which eighty wooden houses cluster (p. 48), the
black students in the class began to protest. Excellent students themselves,
and currently holding key administrative positions in state and county
school systems, they argued that the section on Trackton portrayed blacks
in a poor light. They were tired of reading about blacks as either street
hustlers or sharecroppers. A student read from her log to make the point
that "the reasons that these blacks did not live exactly like their white
counterparts nor use materials like them is due to the historical lack of con-
trol minority individuals have had over their socio-economic position."

Becoming bolder, a black student told me that she found the first passage
of actual speech by the Trackton "mayor" reacting to several preschool
boys fighting over a tricycle most offensive.

You know what you oughta do? Ain’t no good fightin’ over sump’n
you both want, jus’ tear it up dat way. Lemme tell you sump’n ’bout
dat. One time dere was a real smart man, knew everything, you know,
and a woman, uh, two women, brought a child to ’im, each one sayin’
it was hers. Dat ol’ wise man, he rub his chin jus’ so /putting his hand
to his chin/ (long pause) and you know what he did? /looking from boy
to boy netiher of whom has looked at the mayor during his talk/ (long
pause) He say he gonna chop dat baby in two (pause) //both boys look
up briefly, then turn back to the tricycle//
’n give half to each one of dem mamas. Right quick like, one dem
mamma say, now you give dat baby to dat woman, don’t hurt dat baby.
/looking intently at boys/ (pause) Now who you think got that baby?
Dat wise man give dat baby to dat mamma what didn’t want de baby hurt. Now go 'bout yo' play and don’t fight no more, you hear? (p.50)

Both black and white students chimed in with even angrier overtones when they looked at Trackton Text IV Chapter 3, “Learning how to talk in Trackton.” (Heath has just let Lem’s mother out of her car to go into a furniture store to make a payment and Lem, Benjy, and Nellie are still in the car.)

A. 1. Benjy: Miz Hea’, where you goin?
2. Heath: I’m goin’ ’round de block, waitin’ for yo’ mamma.
3. Nellie: Why you leave Lillie Mae?
4. Heath: Ima pick up Lillie Mae, you see, Lillie Mae come out de sto’, when we go ’round de corner again.
5. Benjy: Right down here?
6. Heath: Right down there.

After heated discussion, the general consensus was that Heath was trying to make blacks look bad because she was writing their speech in dialect. The students agreed that there are many well-educated blacks who speak properly and that the book did not need to present blacks as uneducated and ignorant. The students said that when Heath spoke in dialect she was patronizing the blacks. She obviously is well-educated and did not have to mimic their speech.

At this point, the students were thoroughly engaged with the text. It was an excellent moment to begin discussing why Heath as an ethnographer and sociolinguist would write a book like this. What was she trying to do? I talked about how ethnographers carefully observe and empirically describe cultural patterns. They record uses of material possessions, uses of space and time, definitions of work and play, and patterns of how people talk to each other. I discussed how ethnographers try to “maintain an open acceptance of the behaviors of all members of the group being studied” (Heath p. 35, 1982). Although empirical observers, ethnographers also interpret what they see. However, the reason for being a participant as well as an observer is to be able to describe “what things mean to those involved rather than to pronounce judgment in terms of some external set of values or preferences (e.g. the anthropologist’s)” (Wolcott, 1982 p. 82).

I suggested that just as ethnographies are written with a “tradition of deferred judgment,” (Wolcott, 1982 p. 82) so as students they need to read ethnographies with deferred judgment. We discussed how difficult it is for anyone to temporarily set aside his or her standards of how things should and should not be done.

I then talked about the problems a sociolinguist (and, in fact, any observer of interaction) has recording and transforming into print the exact
language spoken by people. We looked again at Heath's "Note on transcriptions" (p. 15) and I mentioned that all speakers, not just rural Southern blacks, do not pronounce words in the way that they are written. (When I asked the students how they would accurately record the word *was* when they say it, they agree that we say "waz." No one says, "wass" the way it is written.)

The students began to accept that oral speech, when written down, looks very different from the written language. While they were still bothered by the unfinished sentences, the redundancy and sloppiness of oral speech, they learned to expect that dialogue will not look like the more highly valued formal written speech. Students noted how Heath's accuracy in recording allowed them to see different varieties of speech within the same community. They discovered that the same people vary their patterns of speech based on the activities in which they are engaged. The students were then given an assignment based on Chapters 2, 3, and 4 ("Teaching how to talk in Roadville") to build a retrieval chart comparing and contrasting the ways of life in Roadville and Trackton.

Learning how to think about cultural data without being judgmental was not easy to do. At the next session it was evident that the students had put much work into their comparisons of the ways of life in Roadville and Trackton. Unfortunately, however, the majority of their comparisons described Trackton as a deficit model of Roadville. For example:

- **Temporality:**
  - *Roadville:* Children are on a schedule for eating and sleeping.
  - *Trackton:* Children are not constrained by time limits.

- **Adult/child interaction:**
  - *Roadville:* Children learn to become conversational partners with adults. Are expected to answer questions and be information givers.
  - *Trackton:* Young children are either ignored or not allowed to participate in adult conversations.

- **Learning:**
  - *Trackton:* Learning is incidental and unorganized. Children's questions are not answered. No feedback is given in language learning.

I then pointed out that Heath described ways of life in Trackton and Roadville based on how the participants understood what was happening. It is unlikely that people in Trackton perceived themselves as negative models of Roadville. Rather, they lived life by their own set of beliefs and standards about what was important to do and not do. The students then worked in
small groups, rereading the text and looking at each other’s retrieval charts, trying to figure out how to describe Trackton and Roadville in terms of their participants’ values and perceptions. This reconceptualization resulted in quite different responses. For example:

Adult/child interactions:

**Trackton**: The first six months of life are spent in continuous family interaction. Infants are constantly held by a family member. Within this atmosphere the infants ‘literally feel the body signals of shifts in emotions of those who hold them; they are never excluded from verbal interactions’ (p. 75).

**Roadville**: Babies are left to themselves some to explore, to move about, to make noise. Babbling and cooing of babies often interpreted as words: da-da-da = daddy. Children’s sounds repeated as words.

Learning:

**Trackton**: Young males are put on center stage at an early age and learn to evaluate the intent and meaning of other people’s moods. In “what you gonna do” situations they are subjected to teasing, challenging and confrontations. Males are expected to develop the problem solving skills necessary to outwit their elders in pseudo or actual conflict situations. For example, Lem learned to snatch candy from the mayor and hide it in a hole that the mayor could not reach. Young girls are expected to learn to fuss because if they do not, they will not be good mammas, able to protect their rights in the neighborhood.

**Roadville**: Roadville parents fill the child’s room with educational toys from busy boxes to erector sets and set great store in the value of educational play. Roadville parents provide toys that teach and support. They buy brand names that are associated with learning rather than with fun. Young children use toys and games to learn texture, color, shape and function.

Different practices based on different values stood out much more clearly in these responses. For example, teasing seemed sensible in a culture that valued problem solving and taking care of yourself in an unpredictable, often unfriendly world. Educational toys made sense in a culture that valued verbal information and where, as one student said, “Adults believe they must teach children to talk. They model the language for the children.”

By Chapter 5, “Oral traditions” and Chapter 6, “Literate traditions,” Heath had won over even the most recalcitrant students to her way of seeing cultures. The students were comfortable with the co-existence of different cultures in which “children learn to pay attention to each other as people,” and “children are accustomed to adult direction and questioning, structured tasks and learning to ‘do the job properly.’”
When asked how their lives were like those in Trackton or Roadville, students who previously had not talked much in class began to contribute. Students from different socio-economic backgrounds were legitimated by *Ways with Words*. When they told anecdotes about their upbringing, they found that their classmates were fascinated with them as sources of information. The class was utterly delighted when a sophisticated, urban, black principal revealed that when he lived in the country as a boy, his nickname had been “Scooter.” Excited by this confession because it confirmed that Heath “got it right” (p. 78), students plied him with questions about child rearing behaviors for black males in a rural setting. Since no single way of life was being judged as the right or wrong way to live, students began to “own” and share rural, suburban, and urban experiences and speech activities.

In Chapters 3–7, Heath gave the education students a wonderful introduction to the sociolinguistic analysis of speech acts. Her descriptions of questioning, complaining, “fussin”, “talking junk,” story telling, raising hymns and bedtime stories, for example, could stand alone as powerful scholarly analyses in linguistic journals. Heath wrote so clearly that the students readily understood this new form of knowledge. After reading these chapters, the students now used the Trackton Text I (p. 50), that was initially so distressing to them, as an outstanding example of cultural transmission. They described how Trackton community leaders often responded to inappropriate behavior in children with relevant parables from the Bible.

The students completed another retrieval chart comparing ways of speaking in Trackton, Roadville, and their own community. The students were able to pick key features and functions that defined the different speech events in each community. For example, one student compared story telling in Trackton and Roadville by noting that:

In Roadville only certain community members are designated as good story-tellers. In Roadville a story is invited or announced by someone other than the story-teller. Roadville story-tellers use formulaic openings. The stories are factual with little exaggeration. The stories end with a summary statement, moral, proverb, or Biblical quote. Stories often point out a weakness of all, needing to be overcome. A story is seen in Roadville as an assertion of community membership and an agreement on norms of behavior.

In Trackton story-tellers, from a young age, must be aggressive in inserting their stories into an on-going stream of discourse. Story-telling is highly competitive. The focus is on the strengths of the individual who is the story’s main character. The story is not likely to unify listeners in any sort of agreement, but to provoke challenges and counter-challenges to the character’s ways of overcoming an adversary. Track-
ton children base the plot of their stories on a real event but quickly exaggerate so as to be entertaining and hold their audience's attention. There is much creativity, language play, embellishment, extensive gesturing and interaction with the audience.

In their logs that week, the majority of the students quoted Heath: "For Roadville, Trackton's stories would be lies; for Trackton, Roadville's stories would not even count as stories" (p. 189). They were fascinated by how the meanings of speech events varied in different ways of life.

*Ways with Words* just kept getting better. Part II "Ethnographer doing", Chapter 8, "Teachers as learners" allowed the education students to talk about things that are not usually talked about in research courses: how good teachers had trouble teaching students whose backgrounds differed from theirs. Heath writes openly about the troublesome differences in uses of language that the children brought to school. "Such differences were initially noticeable in the naming practices, types and uses of politeness formulae and habits of questioning. Everything from uses of space to uses of time caused trouble":

"Is this where the scissors belong?"
"It's time to put our paints away now."

Both Roadville and Trackton children had difficulty interpreting indirect requests for adherence to an unstated set of rules . . . . Roadville children in preschool showed 'proper' respect when a teacher was talking, but in small-group activities, when no adult was around, they negotiated among themselves in loud and boisterous ways, fighting out what they believed to be their right to a toy or to a position on the floor, and sulking when the teacher intervened before the 'score' was settled between two children . . .

At storytime or in the times when the teacher gathered the students on the rug about her to talk about the group as a whole, Trackton children interrupted, tried to 'take the floor', and chattered freely to their neighbors. (p. 280)

The education students noted that the problems that the Carolina teachers were having, supposedly due to desegregation, were problems that they encountered daily.

Many read ahead to find out what happened. They saw how the Carolina teachers became researchers first, studying their own language patterns at home and in the workplace, and then reassessing the past patterns of successes and failures in their classes. After the Carolina teachers recognized differences in speech patterns between themselves and their pupils, they figured out (with many false starts) how to use strengths from the different ways of talking in classroom settings.
Chapter 8 resulted in the articulation of many new ideas. Questions were asked: Can school failures be seen as discontinuities between communication patterns at home and communication patterns in the classroom? The single most important concept in this book was felt to be the realization that “language is power” (p. 265). Education students argued that teachers and their pupils gain power over their own lives if they analyze which forms of speech and writing are appropriate to which situations. Teachers should find ways that children talk and read and write in their home communities that can be used as bridges to learning school language. Perhaps then school would make more sense. Children may perceive that, rather than being asked to replace their old ways of knowing and talking, they are being asked to add additional strategies to their repertoire to enhance their options in life.

The education students’ favorite chapter was Chapter 9, “Learners as ethnographers.” Directly applicable as an outstanding example of social studies inquiry into the community, Heath described how a fifth grade science class of black boys reading at second grade level or below, became ethnographers. The fifth graders interviewed and studied how two different farmers, one “scientific” and one guided by folk concepts, planted and grew their crops. In the process of organizing and writing up what they found out, the boys learned to translate the oral, personalized, contextualized verbal knowledge from the community into knowledge appropriate for the school domain: written, depersonalized, decontextualized knowledge.

Then, after reading about Mrs. Pat, a creative teacher who helped a roomful of second graders labeled as failures study the reading and writing that went on in their community, the education students began to talk about change. They talked about the type of change—small, subtle, and the result of work—that is within their power to make and that can make a difference for some of their students. The education students heatedly debated why these wonderful changes were wiped out after a number of years (see “Epilogue” pp. 356–369), and whether it behooved them to try to be researchers in their own classrooms without system-wide support. Students who were in administrative positions within school systems debated the pros and cons of courses and workshops using Ways with Words to help teachers become researchers.

“Compelling”, “insightful”, “powerful”, “significant”, “concrete and useful” were how the students described Ways with Words in the last entries in their semester logs.

Students wrote:

After reading this book, I now have a different conceptualization of what it means to meet the needs of the students.

I now want to be an ethnographer of my own life as well as the lives of the students around me so that I can bring people and ideas from the everyday life of the community into school.
I learned that by modifying materials and methods, teachers allowed students in both communities to make choices among uses of language and to link these choices to life chances.

Heath offered the teachers in her course the opportunity to examine and re-examine their teaching roles and pedagogy. In finding ways to make schooling, reading and writing make sense to students these teachers had to alter their methods of teaching but not necessarily change their standards. They learned to believe that their students could learn and that they could learn from their students.

Heath's description of the fifth grade science ethnographers is a gentle commercial for the craft of teaching. It is not so much using cultural data to create changes in kids as immersing kids in the process of creating cultural data and somehow along the way, changing themselves.

All agreed that reading this book would have a powerful influence on how they will think about their teaching as they try to link their students' experiences with the academic knowledge available in schools. Heath did not keep the status, power and knowledge of how to be a researcher for herself. By giving her knowledge away, first to the Carolina teachers and their pupils, and then via Ways with Words to my students, Heath has empowered us all.

References


I Get Deja Vu When I Read You, Mr. Hirsch


Reviewed by Mary A. Hepburn, Vinson Institute of Government, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia 30602


Although Hirsch is an English professor with a specific interest in teaching literature and grammar, he applies his critical review of education to the social studies as well. According to Hirsch, American youths are not gaining "the basic information needed to thrive in the modern world." American schools have failed to provide for the continuous transmission of significant background information specific to our culture, information that would make American youth literate. Instead, young people are now gaining most of their cultural information from television, and therefore they know more about rock stars than about the Spanish Armada or Shakespeare.

Why have the schools failed? He attributes the miscarriage of education to "faulty" educational theories that have dominated curriculum and instruction in the U.S. and points his accusing finger at John Dewey and his followers, who Hirsch says have focused education on the learning of "hollow" thinking skills to the detriment of learning specific content. This emphasis on skills and processes, he says, has interfered with the transmission of "shared historical information" about western culture and led us down the road of cultural illiteracy.

In regard to the social studies curriculum, he views the second decade of this century (the era of the 1916 National Education Association curriculum recommendations and the Seven Cardinal Principles) as the beginning of the demise of our cultural purpose. Subjects that were intended to inculcate "traditions and duties," i.e., history and civics, declined into "social studies," a subject aimed at developing skills for living based on the needs of the child and the needs of society. From that period forth, Hirsch paints a picture of a curriculum hampered by skill-building, "learning-by-doing," and "fragmentation"—all quite devoid of content. Thus, in the 1980s we have a generation of young people who do not understand the shared information of the history, literature, and mythology of our culture—the knowledge that separates literate people from the rest.
Of course, Hirsch’s comments about student deficiencies in factual knowledge are not inaccurate. There is evidence that in twelve years of schooling disconcertingly high percentages of students are failing to learn the fundamentals of history, civics, and geography. But what is to be done?

Hirsch’s solution is one approach to “back to basics,” a curriculum based on a list of information—the names, places, phrases, and dates commonly understood by “all literate Americans.” Specifically, his solution is presented in the form of approximately 5,000 facts that any literate American should know. Learning this body of factual information, according to Hirsch, will provide “the only sure avenue of opportunity for disadvantaged children” to rise out of poverty and illiteracy.

The inspired list was drawn up by Hirsch with the assistance of two colleagues at the University of Virginia—a physics professor and a history professor. Beyond the list, Hirsch offers no real program of curriculum reform. Thus far, the only uses I have seen for the list is by critics to point up its WASPish narrowness (it excludes such greats as Jose Marti and Harriet Tubman), or by the erudite as a kind of snobbish trivia test (“How many of these do you know?).

Hirsch’s proposal for refocusing the curriculum has received much media attention and praise from back-to-basics proponents as an educational innovation for our times. Of course, the idea of a fact-based curriculum is not new; but neither is the idea of basing curriculum on a determination of the most culturally significant names, events, and places. Let me take you back to the 1920s, to an earlier, perhaps better thought out, curriculum proposal based on a similar notion of cultural literacy.

A Sixty-Year-Old Idea

When I first read Hirsch, I certainly had a feeling of deja vu, because in the process of researching and teaching about the history of the social studies, I have become interested in the writings of Carleton Washburne, Superintendent of Schools of Winnetka, Illinois in the 1920s. Washburne was an exceptional administrator armed with a doctorate from the University of California, an interest in educational research, and a commitment to “the new education.” In the social studies he sought to combine the strengths of progressive educational reforms with what he considered to be fundamental knowledge or cultural literacy.

Washburne perceived that progressive educators, reacting against rigid fact-memorization, had turned their backs on the need for a common body of knowledge to facilitate the exchange of ideas. He argued that this factual knowledge was a necessary accompaniment to thinking skills if students were to effectively solve personal and public problems and society was to advance.

He proposed that “scientific” or objective means be used to determine just what content was fundamental to our culture. He would not set himself
or his colleagues as a measure of the formula for cultural literacy, nor
would he rely on historians ("interested in history for its own sake"). In-
stead, he turned to the literature of the times to enable students "to under-
stand what other people are talking and writing about". The content of the
social studies curriculum would be based on the results of tabulations of the
most frequently mentioned persons, places, and events in newspapers, news
magazines, popular and literary periodicals, and major literary works.
Committees of teachers and supervisors in his school district arduously ex-
amined the literature in 1905–1922 publications and tabulated 81,434 allu-
sions. Requiring that the final list include only facts alluded to for at least
six periodical years, the list was reduced to 61,616 facts—more than 13
times the size of Hirsch’s list.

**Comparison: Similar But Different**

Was my feeling of *deja vu* warranted? Is the Hirsch proposition the same
as Washburne’s 1920s facts-oriented program? Washburne, like Hirsch, ar-
ticulated in his time an understandable concern that basic information of
the culture was being neglected. Also like Hirsch, he indicated that the list
of facts would have to be revised periodically to reflect changes in cultural
knowledge.

Unlike Hirsch, Washburne worked out a *systematic basis* for determining
which facts should be selected as guideposts to cultural literacy. The way his
teachers drew up the list estimated the probability that students would need
that knowledge. Also, unlike Hirsch, Washburne prepared a rationale for
and developed a means of *organizing* the factual information into social
studies curriculum materials. As he stated, "We cannot merely throw
names and incidents together and call the results curriculum" (Washburne,
1923). Rather, he worked with teacher groups to develop student materials
"that would be both interesting and accurate" (Washburne and Stearns,
1928). To give unity and coherence to the information list, he had his com-
mittees of educators develop units of study based on such organizing themes
as life in ancient times, the interdependence of man, and questions of cause
and effect.

Perhaps most important to Washburne, the learning of the list of essen-
tial factual information was not to be an end in itself but a part of a well-
balanced education diet that included reflective thinking and application. A
well-organized presentation of the factual information would build the
groundwork for "more advanced social science courses in which problem
solving and the recognition of human integrality would be guiding prin-
ciples" (Washburne, 1928). Hirsch, on the other hand perceives "the piling
up of information" as the direct means to improve education (Hirsch,
1987).

Hirsch, I think, is inclined to throw out the baby with the bath water in
his arguments with Dewey and progressive education. Hirsch complains
that Dewey opposed the "mere accumulation of facts" and "placed too much faith in children's ability to learn general skills" from "a few experiences" (Hirsch, 1987). Washburne, on the other hand, attempts to reconcile Deweyan ideas with more traditional concerns by taking into account context along with content in educational planning. Moreover, he reveals a better understanding of Dewey and the criteria of continuity and interaction for educative experiences. In developing social studies curriculum, Washburne made organization and internal continuity of learning prime considerations along with interaction with external factors such as environment, community, and society.

Conclusion

The call for "cultural literacy" seems to be a recurring prod to reform in social studies education. Like apple pie, it is always tasteful and acceptable. But it is an amorphous concept. Various proposals for changing the social studies curriculum in this century have been based on various conceptualizations of cultural literacy. During certain periods of the history of the social studies, cultural literacy has been defined with an emphasis on facts, information, western heritage and subject matter content. In other periods, however, cultural literacy has been viewed with a concern for social assimilation, citizen participation, assistance of the disadvantaged, equalizing of opportunities, and solving social problems. Hirsch himself (1983) is aware of the vulnerability of the concept: "Literacy is not just a formal skill; it is also a political decision. The decision to want a literate society is a value-laden one . . . ."

In each era of curriculum reform, prevailing perceptions of what the school curriculum must accomplish define the standard of "cultural literacy" for our society. The ephemeral concept of what is fundamental and necessary in education shifts and changes as do conditions in the society. In one period there is a demand for greater knowledge of the past: in another, a demand for more practical skills. Consequently, it is not surprising that a "new idea" for improving curriculum in the eighties should make us feel that we have seen it before. It is similar, but quite different. The present and future are always constructed on the past. But newer is not always better.

Although I doubt that list-making assures a sound and appropriate curriculum, clearly social studies in any period must have a knowledge base. But I think Hirsch has missed the boat by presenting alphabetical bits and pieces of information that confound organization or instruction. His facts list for the eighties is biased toward western academic culture, and, based on the judgment of a few professors, it is thus static and limited and unlikely to provide for education for the future. In contrast, Washburne's 1920s list and the methods for obtaining and updating it reveal greater sensitivity to technological change, changing cultural composition, the needs of know-
ledge for the workplace as well as the reading room, and a concern for cross-national communication in a shrinking world. If we must have facts lists or lists of knowledge objectives, it seems to me that sixty years ago Washburne had a better proposal.

References


Reviewed by Nancy R. King, Lida Lee Tall Learning Resources Center, Towson State University, Towson, Maryland 21204.

*Lucy Sprague Mitchell: The making of a modern woman* is a richly detailed, interesting, informative and thoroughly readable biography of a fascinating woman. Mitchell is an excellent choice as a biographical subject for several reasons. First, she lived a long and active life, and she played a prominent role in several public spheres. The flow of events in her life reveals and illuminates both her personal challenges and the historical context in which she lived.

Second, Mitchell is an excellent choice because she lived such a carefully considered life. She seems to have been an unusually introspective woman who habitually committed her thoughts to paper. She reacted to several crises in her life by writing about her reactions, her thoughts, and her feelings. Similarly, the letters she wrote during her five-year courtship are numerous and revealing. Mitchell’s husband, Wesley, also wrote extensively about himself and his life. Together the couple documented the activities of family and friends, their personal interactions and thoughts, books they read, topics they discussed, and other details of their lives. Wesley’s diary was of such importance that when he went on a camping trip, he left the diary with Lucy so that she could record the family’s activities during his absence. Antler, then, has many varied resources upon which to draw as she recounts and interprets the life of Lucy Sprague Mitchell.

Lucy was born on July 2, 1878, into a wealthy and prominent family in Chicago. The financial security the family enjoyed was not accompanied, however, by emotional security, and Lucy’s childhood was difficult and unhappy. Her stern and demanding father ruled the family; her mother was submissive and often ill.

Lucy did not attend school as a young child, and she was largely self-taught until she enrolled for the last two years of high school at the Marlborough School for Girls in Southern California. After graduation, she managed to convince her parents to permit her to attend Radcliffe College. Though neither the faculty nor the Harvard students were welcoming, Lucy flourished at Radcliffe. She delighted in both the intellectual challenge and the freedom from familial constraints.

In 1900 Lucy Sprague graduated *magna cum laude* with Honors in philosophy from Radcliffe and was immediately required to return home to care for her ailing parents. After the death of her mother, she traveled to Europe with close family friends, George and Alice Palmer. During the trip, Alice Palmer died suddenly and Lucy lost a second important source of love and support.
Lucy returned for a short time to Radcliffe where she worked in the dean’s office. In spite of her father’s assumption that she would return home, and George Palmer’s desire that she marry him, Lucy moved to California to work in the dean’s office an the University of California-Berkeley and in 1906 she was officially appointed Dean of Women. In assuming the deanship, Lucy became one of a small number of women holding positions on college and university campuses.

As her career developed, Lucy moved from California to New York and from an interest in college-age women to a focus on young children. In New York City, she helped establish the Bureau of Educational Experiments, worked with Caroline Pratt at the Play School, wrote several books for children and adults and created the Bank Street School. In most of these professional ventures, Lucy served as a facilitator; she provided much of the energy and coordination that brought projects and ideas to fruition. In addition, her personal wealth supported and sustained many of the institutions with which she was involved.

Antler provides considerable detail about professional activities, colleagues, disappointments and accomplishments as Lucy forged a career which combined her intellectuality, her need to be professionally productive, and her aspiration to be involved in social reform. Unfortunately, Antler’s understanding of the field of early childhood education is superficial, and she does not see clearly Lucy’s role in this developing field. Nonetheless, Antler gives us a tremendous amount of information about Lucy’s professional ventures and the impact these had in the public sphere and on her personal life.

Another major theme Antler stresses in Lucy’s adult life concerns marriage and motherhood. While it was not common for women to attend colleges and to pursue professional careers early in this century, it was even less common for professional women to marry and raise families. Lucy, herself, had serious doubts about the wisdom of marrying, and Wesley Clair Mitchell spent five years of persistent courtship to convince Lucy to marry him. Their marriage was a long and happy one and Wesley was an important source of support and encouragement to her throughout their lives together.

The Mitchell’s raised four children and motherhood was also important in Lucy’s life. In this case, however, her role as a professional educator intruded on her relationship with her own children. In later life, the children complained that they often felt more a part of her experiments than a part of her family.

In 1948 Wesley Mitchell died and Lucy entered a new phase in her life; she lived for nineteen years as a widow. Determined to live life to the fullest, Lucy wrote an account of her marriage, continued several writing projects with colleagues at Bank Street, and served on the Bank Street School’s Board of Trustees.

Lucy moved to California in 1955 and lived there until her death in 1967.
She spent her old age reflecting on the events in her life and writing for pleasure.

This life that Antler has so carefully studied is clearly intended to be more than a look at a particular woman. Mitchell was one of the first women of her class and upbringing to combine career and family, and Antler analyzes this theme throughout the book. Several of the numerous contradictions and difficulties with which Mitchell dealt are familiar to professional women today. For example, Lucy contended with the guilt and uncertainty provoked when the demands of her parents conflicted with her own drive for a college education and professional career. She was also torn between her need to be a professional and the attentions of a suitor. Though she insisted on an egalitarian marriage, her correspondence with Wesley Clair Mitchell indicated her desire for a man with a strong personality to guide and master her (173). Lucy herself, considered these issues at length, and Antler focuses on them as well.

There are several other contradictions that Lucy did not recognize or consider. For example, she did not acknowledge a tension between the demands of motherhood and the demands of her career. This may be because she believed that her own children were integrated into her professional life and because she never lacked for household help.

Her children do not remember her as a nurturing, accessible mother. Throughout their lives, they were greatly attached to Mollie, the family’s housekeeper, and they ordinarily turned to Mollie for daily help with their personal needs and for comfort in times of trouble. Lucy, however, did not indicate that her professional interests detracted from her relationship with her children.

Similarly, Lucy valued spontaneity but often reacted to events in her own life with studied intellectuality. The lives of the Mitchell’s had an intensity and purposefulness in every detail, and the family lived in an achievement-oriented, competitive atmosphere. On one family outing, for example, Wesley noted the time it took various family members to climb a hill.

Lucy also overlooks the importance of her personal wealth in shaping her opportunities in life. From an early age, she traveled extensively, lived in lovely homes, and was welcomed by wealthy and prestigious families around the world. Throughout her career, Lucy supported many of the institutions with which she worked, though her interest was never simply philanthropic, and she contributed professionally in every case. Nonetheless, she was able to create these opportunities for herself, in part, because of her personal wealth.

Lucy’s wealth also helped solve problems in her personal life. She hired as many as five live-in helpers during her children’s early years, and, although she did acknowledge that it was an advantage to have money, she claimed it offered no substantial benefit to mothers.

At the time of her death. Lucy was writing a book she titled, “Every
Stage of Life Has Its Song: My Song Has Been a Woman's Song." The legacy she left us is very much a woman's legacy. Throughout her life, she actively sought the help of professional women; as a young girl she met Jane Addams and visited Hull House. Alice Palmer was her ally against her family's reluctance to permit her to attend college, and she lived with the Palmers in Cambridge during her years at Radcliffe. When she sought advice about the direction of her career, Lucy toured the East and spent time with several professional women involved in social reform. She collaborated with women throughout her career, often serving to facilitate their efforts and help accomplish their goals.

Though the costs to herself and to her family were often high, Lucy Sprague Mitchell's accomplishments were numerous and substantial. She played a major role in bringing the progressive ideas of her time to the attention of the educational community. Much of what she pioneered has become the common wisdom of today. In both the triumph of her professional achievements and her loving marriage and in the limitations of her attempt to combine mothering and career, we learn much about Lucy and her times. Antler's analysis helps us bring these new insights to bear on the present time and on our own lives.
Information for Authors

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An Invitation

I would like to invite all readers of this journal to contribute to TRSE and to encourage friends or colleagues who are engaged in important research to do so as well.

It is my hope that during my editorship TRSE will publish many different kinds of scholarship concerned with social studies education. Publishing recent doctoral research is quite appropriate for the journal. Scholarship dealing with women’s issues, racial issues, environmental issues, economic issues, peace issues, political issues, historical issues and or philosophical issues of social studies education are all appropriate for this journal. Scholarship concerned with curricular materials and instructional activities have an important place in this journal. My intention is to include rather than exclude different perspectives on research and scholarship.

We all share a common faith that something we think of as research is at least one way we should seek to improve social education. We, as social studies teachers, want our students to come to some understanding of society and history, to be effective citizens, to avoid the abberations of racial, religious and sexual prejudice. Through social studies education we hope to contribute to the development of saner, more just, less polluted, less violent world.

Whatever this hope and aspiration, the actual world we live in presents a darker aspect: savage conflicts in Central America, Africa, the Middle East, Sri Lanka, The Philippines, and East Timur. Torture, assassination, arms races, world wide environmental degradation and homelessness, poverty and despair in many United States cities are everyday realities. Often torture and assassination are claimed to be progress, or the defense of democracy or a struggle for social justice. The truths of our planet are infinite and many of them are painful. On our troubled planet what is wisdom in social studies education?

What research is vital to our professional concerns? What should we seek to know that we do not know? About social studies education? About human society? About being human? About the conduct of social inquiry? What research is relevant to our highest aspirations and yet grounded in an awareness of our human condition? What issues should be explored in TRSE?

I would like to invite all readers of this journal to join in the exploration and clarification of ways we may seek to make social studies more honest in its treatment of issues, more significant in its intellectual challenge, more important in the lives of students.

Millard Clements

Editor, TRSE
Theory and Research in Social Education

Editorial Board

David Berman
University of Pittsburgh
School of Education
4C12 Forbes Quadrangle
Pittsburgh, PA 15260

Jane Bernard-Powers
San Francisco State University
Elementary Education
1600 Holloway Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94132

Charles Chamberlin
University of Alberta
Department of Elementary Education
Edmonton, Alberta
Canada, T6G 2GS

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Towson MD 21204

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942-1 Shimokume
Yashiro-Cho
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Chambers Building
University Park, PA 16802

Lynette K. Oshima
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Multicultural Teacher Education
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Curriculum and Instruction  
225 North Mills Street  
Madison, WI 53706

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University of Wisconsin  
Curriculum and Instruction  
225 North Mills Street  
Madison, WI 53706

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1-1 1 Tennodai Sakura-Mura  
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305 Japan

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College of Education  
Newark, DE 19716
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1600 Holloway
San Francisco, CA 94132
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(H): 216/678-1053


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320 Education Building
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Stuard Palonsky
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