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# Theory & Research in Social Education

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In 1989, President Bush called the nation's governors together for the first national education summit. They set goals and tried to develop ways to measure progress, but were stymied by resistance to federal interference in local school decisions. Seven years later, governors and 44 top corporate leaders met at IBM's conference center in Palisades, N.Y. and set up an approach for states to accomplish what had eluded participants in the first summit, namely defining what should be taught in local schools and enforcing curriculum standardization through state mandated tests—what is called the "standards movement."

Standards-based educational reform exemplifies how elites manufacture crises (e.g., the widespread failure of public education) and consent (e.g., the way to save public education is through standardized schools driven by high-stakes tests). The summit and Public Agenda's report to participants are quintessential examples of how neoliberal democracy works to thwart meaningful participation of the many by allowing the few to speak for all.

The objective appearance of standards-based reforms, which aim to reform schools by focusing on test scores, conceals (partially) the fact that these reforms are the result of deepening economic inequality and racial segregation, which are typically coupled with authoritarianism. For example, in Chicago, public schools have been militarized—six schools have been turned in military academies and over 7,000 students in 41 schools are in Junior ROTC—and teachers have been given scripted lessons, keyed to tests, to guide their instruction. In a dramatic shift away from democracy, the Detroit school board was disbanded last year by the Democratic mayor and Republican governor, who then appointed a new board—whose members represent corporate interests and of whom only one is a city resident (Gibson, 1999). The primary justification for the seizure of schools and the imposition of standardized curriculum has been poor test scores and high dropout rates. But, standardized test scores are less a reflection of ability or achievement than measures of parental income. For example, recent data show that someone taking the SAT can expect to score an extra thirty test points for every $10,000 in his parents' yearly income (Sacks, 2000).Dropout rates are directly related to poverty, and none of the powers demanding school seizures or standardization are prepared to address the question of poverty.
When IBM C.E.O. Louis Gerstner convened the third National Education Summit in September 1999, media attention focused on the laudatory monologue provided by an alliance of conservative and liberal politicians, corporate elites, chief school officers, and teacher union leaders about the "gains" made since the last summit, three years earlier. Specifically, forty-five states have adopted standards in social studies, English, math and science, up from 14 in 1996. Forty-eight states have instituted mandated standardized tests, up from 39 in 1996. Over 10,000 employers now use student school records to identify behavior and work habits as part of their hiring process, up from the 3,000 business that previously used transcripts. The media, and the participants themselves, heaped praise on the spectacular achievements of the past three years.

Public Agenda—a public opinion research organization—reported to summit participants that the movement to raise standards in public schools strikes a responsive chord with the public, but also warned that the issue of standards is not immune to the "normal controversies and complications that accompany any large-scale policy change" (Johnson, 1999, p.1).

What is noteworthy about this report, Standards and Accountability: Where the Public Stands, is its straightforward description of the agenda that must be pursued if the economic and political elites are to maintain legitimacy—and respond to opposition—as they define the curriculum and pedagogy of public schools. The number one task according to Public Agenda is effective propaganda or as they put it:

Experts and decision-makers often must concentrate on the labyrinth of details needed to make a policy work in real life. But to sustain change...that touches people's families and daily lives, leaders need to take time periodically to restate the basic rationale, to remind people of the beliefs and values that underlie reform. When the going gets a bit rough, people need to be reminded of why we're here. (Johnson, 1999, p. 2)

It is important to note that the "we" in this case refers to the summiteers and other opinion-makers like Public Agenda and Education Week, the trade weekly that has been an ardent proponent of the standards movement, and which collaborated with Public Agenda on its survey of public opinion regarding the standards movement.

While the authors of Standards and Accountability: Where the Public Stands make much of the "established and remarkably stable" support for standards-based educational reform in the U.S., they are mindful of "pitfalls that could derail or unsettle support." First, the report warns that standards advocates should expect unhappiness when the
rubber hits the road and students are retained in grade or denied diplomas.

Pointing to the dramatic shift in public support for managed health care as people experienced drive-by surgery and denial of treatment options, Public Agenda warns standards advocates that delivering test score increases must be accompanied by the “appearance of fairness” in managing the reform effort. Now that thousands of students are being forced to repeat a grade or denied diploma, it is likely that the mere appearance of fairness will not be enough to stave off opposition to standards and the high-stakes tests that accompany them. Parents and teachers are the two groups most likely to derail the standards train.

The Public Agenda report—in a somewhat quixotic claim—declares that parents are insignificant players in the standards movement. While parents generally support standards-based reform, Public Agenda says, “most are not especially well-informed or vigilant consumers, even concerning their own child’s progress” (Johnson, 1999, p. 5). This claim conflicts with reports that the once-sporadic resistance to standards-based educational reforms is blossoming into a broader rebellion (e.g., Ohanian, 1999; Ross, 1999, Whitmire, 1999). For example, as a result of parent protests Los Angeles school officials recently backed off of a plan to end “social promotions” and in Massachusetts officials were forced to redefine cut scores on state tests that otherwise would have prevented as many as 83% of Latino and 80% of African American students from receiving high school diplomas.

Perhaps the best example of parental “pushback” is in Virginia where Parents Across Virginia United to Reform Standards of Learning is a rapidly growing group working to dump the state’s curriculum standards and testing program. Virginia’s unrealistically broad “Standards of Learning” (SOL) includes this standard for third-graders:

“Students will explain the term civilization and describe the ancient civilizations of Greece and Rome in terms of geographic features, government, agriculture, music, art, religion, sports and the roles of men, women and children.”

Starting in 2004, Virginia high school students must take a series of 11 exams, based on the SOL to graduate. In 2007, 70% of a school’s students must pass SOL tests for it to remain accredited—last year only 2.2% of Virginia schools met this standard.

Beyond the unrealistic nature of the SOL and deleterious effects of high-stakes testing on teaching and learning, a primary concern of
the Virginia parents group is that the state's reform efforts have not included local input on what students should be learning. They argue that many test items are more like Trivial Pursuit factoids than essentials and claim that Virginia's standards reflect the views of only a few members of the state board of education rather than a consensus of broad-based groups of educators and parents.

The absurdity of many standards and test questions is not limited to Virginia. In Chicago, George Schmidt—a thirty-year veteran of Chicago Public School classrooms and publisher of monthly newspaper written by and for people who work in Chicago's public schools—is being sued for $1 million by the Chicago Board of Education for publishing questions from the Chicago Academic Standards Examinations (after students took the tests). This item is from a social studies CASE:

23. All of the following activities are part of a typical African woman's life in rural areas EXCEPT:
   A. preparing food
   B. taking care of children
   C. helping her husband grow cash crops
   D. selling crops at the market.

While Public Agenda—and perhaps the corporate leadership of the movement—considers parents to be little or no threat to standards-based educational reform, politicians appear more sensitive to the growing anti-standards, anti-testing pressures. Test boycotts and other forms of resistance have moved the governors of Michigan and California to offer students money (“scholarships” of up to $2,500) for taking or scoring well on state-mandated tests (Aratani, 2000). Indiana politicians are bracing for an enormous backlash against the state graduation test, which threatens to keep 50% of the seniors in urban districts and a quarter of seniors state-wide from graduating this year.

Teachers are the most significant potential pitfall to the standards movement, according to the Public Agenda report. While many school administrators and the top leaders of the teacher unions are solidly on the standards bandwagon, rank-and-file teachers' pivotal role is rightly acknowledged:

If teachers believe that standards policies are important and well thought out, they can sustain and nourish parental support. If teachers are convinced that standards policies are unfair or destructive, they can undercut parental support with extraordinary speed...District directives are often ridiculed or resented, and experienced teachers have already been through waves of reform,
which in their minds produced very little of value. Public Agenda’s research strongly suggests that bringing the nation’s teacher corps firmly inside the movement to raise standards could be the most pivotal challenge of all. (Johnson, 1999, p. 4)

Following the lead of Public Agenda, the top agenda item at the summit was teaching, in particular devising ways in which teacher preparation and pay can be tied directly to the standardized curriculum and tests developed by states.

For their part, education leaders promised to align college-admissions requirements with state curriculum standards. The standards, which threaten academic freedom in K-12 classrooms, are now being applied to university teacher preparation programs as advocates work to create a rigid system in which the education of students and teachers is defined by interests accountable only to corporate America. As a result, the standards movement poses a threat to parents, teachers, students, and other members of local communities to define their own interests and desires and use them as platforms for deciding the content and pedagogy used in public schools.

The idea of paying teachers based on their students’ test scores, which was endorsed at the summit, is backed by Bob Chase and Sandra Feldman, the respective presidents of the NEA and the AFT. In the past six months unionized teachers in Denver, St. Paul, Cincinnati, and Seattle, to name a few, have agreed to some sort of pay-for-performance plan. Governor Gray Davis of California recently approved $50 million for one-time bonuses of up to $25,000 for teachers whose students show substantial test score improvement. Davis’ plan, like other teacher pay-for-performance plans, is an attack on the notion that teachers should be engaged in deciding what’s best for their students by shifting the focus from students’ welfare to teachers’ pocketbooks.

Paying teachers for student performance is not a new idea. History shows that most of the gains from such programs are destructive illusions that narrow the curriculum offered to students and encourage teachers and administrators to cheat—as we have recently seen with the high-stakes exams used in New York City public schools. Wilms and Chapleau (1999) describe pay for results schemes implemented in England, Canada, and the U.S. in the last two centuries and conclude:

Few reforms that are forced on the schools (especially destructive ones like pay-for-results) will ever penetrate the classroom and positively change the teaching and learning processes. Teachers are every bit as adept at deflect-
ing or sabotaging reforms of this kind today as they were at deceiving English school inspectors in the 1800s. Politically driven reforms like pay-for-performance are nothing more than reflections of public frustrations. And rather than helping to solve the root causes of failure, they paralysis us and deflect public attention from reforming the educational systems at their core. (p. 34)

Obviously, participants at the summit understand the centripetal position of teachers in education reform. If real reform is to be achieved, however, the root causes of problems faced by public schools must be addressed—social and economic inequalities. Standardized curriculum and high-stakes tests not only divert attention away from these inequalities, but are used to justify and sustain them.

In the end, the National Education Summit is yet another portrait of power relations in neoliberal democracy. It represents our hierarchical society, where citizens are made to be passive spectators, disconnected from one another and alienated from their own desires, learning, and work. The spectacle of standards, test scores, and summits obscures the role of parents, teachers, and students in decision-making about public education. The spectacle expresses what society can do, but in this expression what is permitted with regard to teaching and learning limits what is possible. Ultimately, the achievement of standards-based educational reform is the preservation of the unequal conditions of existence.

Even as summiteers celebrated successes, they face growing resistance to the mechanisms designed to allow a handful of private interests to control as much as possible of public education and social life. In 1932, George S. Counts, in his speech "Dare the School Build a New Social Order?" also made clear the central role teachers have, not only in educational reform, but in social change. Counts explicitly challenged teachers to develop a democratic, socialist society. While the summit is in the lime-light, many teachers are working with parents, students and other committed citizens to build a democratic society, one that challenges the impulses of greed, individualism, and intolerance that are embodied in much of what passes as educational reform today.

The bottom-line is that the more members of local communities are allowed to decide on school curriculum and teaching methods, the more equitable and democratic the society will be. Standardized curriculum and high-stakes tests are attacks on democratic education. Organized parents, educators, students and community people have an honest stake in responding and are doing it.
Notes
1 For an examination of the mythical crisis of U.S. schools see, Berliner and Biddle (1995) and Rothstein (1998).
2 Public Agenda reports that results from their recent Reality Check survey show that overwhelming majorities of parents (83%), teachers (79%), employers (93%) and college professors (90%) say having guidelines for what students are expected to learn and how helps improve academic performance.

References
The Power of the Press: A Content and Discourse Analysis of the United States History Standards as Presented in Selected Newspapers

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Abstract
This study uses ethnographic content and critical discourse analytic methodologies to examine how the voluntary national U.S. history standards contained in National Standards for United States History: Exploring the American Experience were presented in selected U.S. newspapers. Our analysis indicates that most newspapers presented a fragmented picture of the history standards, that criticism of the standards was highlighted, and that the nature and scope of the standards were inflated. Additionally, we found that newspaper articles tended to frame the controversy surrounding the history standards as a political, rather than educational debate. The article concludes with a description of the significance of this study for social studies teachers and suggestions for future research.

A 1991 poll conducted by the Louis Harris Organization revealed that over 80 percent of Americans felt that public school students should be required to meet national performance standards prior to graduation (Louis Harris & Associates, Inc., as cited in Ravitch, 1995). In the early 1990s, the Bush administration approved hundreds of thousands of dollars in federal grants to organizations selected to write voluntary national standards for a number of curricular areas, including history. While campaigning for the Presidency, Bill Clinton demonstrated his support for national standards by calling for the "establishment of world class standards [specifically to include history]..." (National Center for History in the Schools, 1993, p. iii).

By October of 1994, Undersecretary of Education Marshall S. Smith made clear the authors of the history standards were selected during George Bush's Presidency, and that the Clinton administra-

How could bipartisan support for the notion of voluntary national U.S. history standards evolve into equally strong bipartisan opposition just three years later? In this study, we examine a small part of the saga. Specifically, we ask: How was the history standards debate presented to the public in selected U.S. newspapers? Content and discourse analytic methods were used to examine 31 descriptive newspaper articles published in major newspapers between the onset of the debate and the subsequent revision of the standards. This analysis provides insight into what the general public could learn about the U.S. history standards from reading major U.S. newspapers, and how the controversy was "framed" or presented.

**Background and Related Research**

**The Standardization of U.S. History Instruction**

Standardization of student learning in U.S. history courses began long before the 1994 release of the document entitled, *National Standards for United States History: Exploring the American Experience* (National Center for History in the Schools). Numerous national committee reports, college entrance exams and requirements, and uniformity among history textbooks contributed to an informal standardization of U.S. history instruction that was traceable to the 1890s. It was, however, the federal government's involvement in the creation of *National Standards for United States History* that made them unique (Ravitch, 1995).

The road to national standards for U.S. history instruction began with the 1983 release of *A Nation at Risk*. Authors of *A Nation at Risk* identified numerous examples of what they believed to be shortcomings in school curriculums (The National Commission of Excellence in Education, 1983). Included in this report was a call for the establishment of high standards requiring students to push the boundaries of their abilities. According to educational historian and former Assistant Secretary of Education Diane Ravitch, "the response to *A Nation at Risk* was unprecedented" (1995, p. 52), and although a number of efforts to reform what ailed U.S. schools were implemented prior to 1983, the release of this document focused attention on the efforts of businesses, universities and state-level task forces to improve education in the United States. It was within this climate of increased
attention to U.S. schools that some states began developing their own educational standards.

In 1989, two events marked the beginning of a move toward national standards. First, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics developed their own national standards. Second, in an effort to guarantee a quality educational experience for all students, the nation’s governors and President Bush met and discussed ways to improve education in the United States. Following these meetings, National Education Goals was released outlining six major aims U.S. schools were to achieve by the year 2000. Of particular importance to the move toward national standards for U.S. history was the third goal, which stated, “American students will leave grades four, eight, and twelve having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, history and geography...” (“America 2000,” 1991, p. 9).

The National Education Goals Panel, established to monitor progress toward these goals, quickly realized that assessing achievement of these goals would not be possible without a clear understanding of what was meant by “challenging subject matter” and “competency” (Ravitch, 1995). National standards and testing seemed to offer a solution to this problem. In 1991 and 1992, the Department of Education awarded grants to selected groups to develop voluntary national standards in science, history, the arts, civics, geography, foreign languages and English (Ravitch, 1995).

The National Center for History in the Schools at the University of California, Los Angeles was selected to develop standards outlining the historical content and processes with which students should be familiar. The two-year development process was financed by a $525,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and an $865,000 grant from the U.S. Education Department (“Battle Over History,” 1994). In 1994, National Standards for United States History: Exploring the American Experience was officially released.

The Press and Educational Issues

John F. Jennings, director of the Center on National Education Policy, spent part of 1995 traveling across the United States talking about education with thousands of people. During his travels, he discovered widespread skepticism regarding public education, which he attributed partially to the news media’s coverage of educational issues. Jennings writes, “everywhere I went I found the major news media to be extremely negative about public schools...The bad news was immediately broadcast, and good news about the schools rarely made it into print or onto television” (1996, p. 12).

In their book The Manufactured Crisis, Berliner and Biddle report that the media tend to emphasize, and in some cases distort, the prob-
lems of the public school system, while ignoring its accomplishments (1995). For example, a 1993 Department of Education press conference, at which high levels of illiteracy among the adult population of the United States was announced, spurred hundreds of newspaper articles. When the articles appeared in papers, however, reporters failed to include several important facts, including that of those “individuals classified as among the most illiterate: 26 percent had debilitating physical or mental conditions, 19 percent had difficulties reading print because they were visually impaired, and 25 percent were immigrants whose native language was not English — the language of the test” (Berliner & Biddle, 1995, p. 10). According to Berliner and Biddle, this example “is all too typical of recent ignorant, highly critical media portrayals of American education and its effects. Hardly a week passes without one or more inflammatory press accounts detailing the ‘rotten’ state of America’s schools” (1995, p. 11).

Only one other study of the media’s presentation of the U.S. history standards debate was located. Chapin’s (1995) analysis indicated that liberal magazines and newspapers were more likely to support the history standards, while conservative publications tended to assume a critical stance in response to the standards. Regardless of ideological orientation, however, the media framed the controversy as a political debate, while generally neglecting questions regarding the need for national standards. Finally, Chapin notes that the opinions of historians, their associations, and teachers were rarely included in newspaper and magazine articles (1995).

Although Chapin’s study provides a starting point for further analysis of media representation of the history standards, it is limited in both scope and focus. Her analysis was limited to articles from only five publications: The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Los Angeles Times, Time, and U.S. News and World Report. Additionally, the study was designed exclusively to identify the presence of three specific themes in the articles: whether we should have national standards, whether revision is an essential part of history, and whether standards can be realistic.

Method

The present study uses a combination of content and discourse analytic methodologies. The principles of ethnographic content analysis (ECA), a model of document analysis described by David Altheide in Qualitative Media Analysis (1996), guided much of the design of this study, while critical discourse analytic methodology was used exclusively to analyze article headlines.
**Ethnographic Content Analysis**

Ethnographic content analysis (ECA) combines objective content analytic methodology with participant observation. Ethnographic content analysis reflects its participant observation roots by requiring the researcher to immerse her/himself in the context and process of document production.

Altheide states that “context, or the social situations surrounding the document in question, must be understood to grasp the significance of the document itself...” (1996, p. 9). In other words, the researcher must consider the occurrence of other trends, issues, or events that may shape interpretation of the document. For example, in this study, our understanding of the presentation of the history standards controversy in newspapers was enhanced by an understanding of comparable political debates raging in the United States, such as the debate over the Smithsonian Institute’s portrayal of the Enola Gay’s bombing of Hiroshima, or how to celebrate the quincentennary of Christopher Columbus’s voyages.

Document analysis must also reflect an understanding of the document production process (Altheide, 1996). For example, newspaper editors must continuously make decisions about what stories to print. Newspapers present a minute fragment of the world; many events go uncovered everyday (Fowler, 1991). Because nothing is inherently newsworthy, choices must be made based on some type of criteria. Alger identified six criteria that newspapers may use to assess the newsworthiness of an event. He said that news typically focuses on that which is new and different; characterized by conflict, violence, disaster, and scandal; local; will have a high impact on readers; focuses on individuals; and/or involves celebrities or well-known individuals (Alger, 1989). Fowler suggests that such criteria may be used by newspaper editors in two ways. First, they may serve a gatekeeping function in that they support the publishing of some stories over others. Second, they may be used as guidelines for presenting stories. In other words, events may be transformed to highlight the criteria identified above.

An understanding of context and process also helps investigators understand that the meanings of a document rarely appear all at one time. Instead, Altheide says that meanings “emerge or become more clear through constant comparison and investigation of documents over a period of time” (1996, p. 10). Studying documents becomes important because they reflect the gradual shaping of meaning, which in turn will impact how individuals define social situations and issues.

The application of ECA methodology requires a reflexive approach to data gathering, analysis and interpretation (Altheide, 1996). Once the researcher is familiar with the context in which the docu-
ment was produced, s/he will read a sample of the documents to be coded. Using information gathered through the study of both the document production process and a number of the specific documents, the researcher will “list several categories (variables) to guide data collection and draft a protocol” (Altheide, 1996, p. 25). Altheide says a “protocol is a list of questions, items, categories, or variables that guide data collection from documents” (1996, p. 26). Protocol design is guided by the specific research question. In other words, protocols are designed to provide the researcher with the information needed to address the research question. This protocol would then be applied to a number of the documents. During the application of the protocol, when new ideas emerge, the researcher drafts a new version of the protocol. The new protocol is then applied to all of the documents.

Once the protocol has been applied to all of the documents, the researcher is ready to begin analyzing the data. Although numerical data may be gathered as a part of ECA, of at least equal importance is narrative description and comments. Brief summaries are then written that compare and contrast extremes and the main differences within each category. Each specific topic of investigation identified on the protocol represents one category. For example, in the present study, two primary categories are the arguments for and against the U.S. history standards.

**Critical Discourse Analysis**

Discourse analysis is the study of the process of communication (Tesch, 1990). Brookes says, “The aim of critical discourse analysis is to uncover how language works to construct meanings that signify people, objects and events in the world in specific ways” (1995, p. 462). Numerous critical discourse analytic techniques may be applied to newspaper articles, or parts thereof. In this study, the headlines of 31 descriptive articles were analyzed for the use of overlexicalization and naturalized reformulation. The decision to critically analyze only headlines was based on the function they serve in newspapers. Headlines provide “initial summaries of news texts and foreground what the producer regards as most relevant and of maximum interest or appeal to readers” (Brookes, 1995, p. 467). Thus, headlines help readers to construct an ideological approach to the content of the article. Brookes also found that most people do not read beyond the headline and the first few sentences of an article (1995). Thus, headlines provide the dominant image of a given event and the way the event is apt to be stored in the mind of readers.

*Overlexicalization.* Overlexicalization is defined as “the availability of many words for one concept” (Fowler, 1985, p. 69). Overlexicalization divides reality into categories that “result in certain meanings rather than others being repeatedly and routinely
foregrounded" (Brookes, 1995, p. 471). In her analysis of the representation of Africa in two British newspapers, for example, Brookes found newspapers drew on lexical groupings around three pairs of concepts: violence and peace, repression and democracy, and helplessness and help (1995). According to Brookes, overlexicalization led to the foregrounding of Africa as violent, repressive and helpless.

Naturalized reformulation. Naturalized reformulation is the routine substitution of one word for another (Brookes, 1995). Naturalized reformulation shapes ideology because it allows some aspects of an event to be foregrounded, while rendering certain other aspects of the same event virtually invisible. For example, Brookes found "the naturalized reformation of ‘loans’ to African states as ‘aid’ which obscures the exploitative nature of this phenomenon by couching usury in terms of help..." (1995, p. 473).

Sample
Availability sampling was used in this study to identify 84 newspaper articles that reported on the United States history standards. These items were located via a key-word search of Newspaper Abstracts, an on-line searchable database containing the citations and abstracts for newspaper articles printed in more than 25 national and regional newspapers from 1989 to date. The search phrase "history standards" was used to identify relevant articles.

The determination of relevance was based on whether or not the U.S. history standards were addressed in the article. Some articles were excluded from this study because it was not possible to conclude with certainty that the author was writing about the U.S. history standards. For example, some articles emphasizing the world history standards were omitted because they did not specifically mention the U.S. history standards.

Only news items published between October 1994 and May 1996 were examined in this study. October 1994 was selected as the starting point, because this was the month the U.S. history standards were released. May 1996 was chosen as the final month for article inclusion, because the most recent check of Newspaper Abstracts in August of 1996 revealed the publication of no new relevant articles after that date.

The 84 newspaper articles located included 31 descriptive and 53 opinion pieces. For this study, content and discourse analytic methods were applied exclusively to the descriptive pieces (see Appendix). In contrast to editorials, op-ed pieces, commentaries and news analyses, the main purpose of descriptive articles is not to share a perspective, but to relate the "basic facts" surrounding an event or situation. Of course, the way in which a descriptive article is written—the facts selected, the adjectives used, the quotations included, etc.—does
convey a perspective. But because the descriptive article does not overtly express an opinion, the general public is more likely to see it as a source of "the straight story." It is precisely for this reason that we thought it more interesting to analyze descriptive articles as opposed to opinion pieces. The 31 descriptive articles appeared in nine different newspapers (see Table 1 for a listing of the newspapers).

Reliability and Validity

The unique nature of ethnographic content analysis made working for inter-rater agreement very difficult. In the book, *Qualitative Media Analysis*, Altheide states that investigator agreement is "more problematic and will take considerably more interaction than is the case with conventional quantitative content analysis between the investigators and the protocol, the investigators themselves, and the investigators and the problem under study" (1996, p. 37). While Altheide feels investigator agreement is desirable, he speaks of this primarily in terms of situations in which two different researchers would be gathering data. If inter-rater agreement is to be achieved, it is his contention that the two investigators need to discuss interpretations of the text and work together to code the articles. He believes such an approach is more beneficial to protocol refinement than to the achievement of a high measure of inter-rater agreement. Altheide feels that a single, consistent investigator is more important than inter-rater agreement. Thus, much of the data for this study was gathered by one investigator applying a consistent interpretation of the protocol to the newspaper articles.

The jury method of validation was used in this study. This validation method asks experts to judge the appropriateness of relevant parts of the methodology used in the study (Budd, Thorpe & Donohew, 1967). A jury of three education professors with backgrounds in the social sciences and the humanities reviewed the protocol designed for this study. They agreed that the protocol was a valid instrument.

Results and Discussion

Learning (or not) about the Standards through Newspaper Articles

A review of the 31 articles using ECA revealed that six primary events related to the U.S. history standards were covered in newspapers. First, a number of newspaper articles mentioned the October 1994 release of the standards document, *National Standards For United States History: Exploring the American Experience*. During that same month, an opinion piece, written by the former chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities Lynne Cheney, appeared in *The Wall Street Journal*. In that article, Cheney attacked the standards for what she believed to be an inaccurate and biased representation of U.S. his-
tory ("The End of History," 1994). Cheney's editorial marked the beginning of a prolonged debate over the merit of the U.S. history standards. This debate, carried out and covered by newspapers, marked the second event. The third event occurred on January 12, 1995, when the National Center for History in the Schools agreed to review, and where necessary, revise the U.S. history standards. Six days later, the fourth primary event in the history of these standards occurred. On January 18, 1995, the U.S. Senate voted 99 - 1 in support of a resolution denouncing the history standards. The October 1995 decision of two independent panels, convened to review the history standards, was the fifth major event reported by newspapers. The independent panels concluded that, though the standards were seriously flawed by bias, they should be revised and retained. The final event reported in newspapers occurred in April 1996, when a revised version of the standards was released.

Reading each of the descriptive articles for information on the six main events revealed that most of the newspapers included information on only some of the events (see Table 1). Of the nine newspapers that published descriptive articles containing information on the U.S. history standards, only one, The Los Angeles Times, mentioned all six primary events. The New York Times published information on five of the major events, but failed to mention the authors' January 12, 1995 decision to review and revise the standards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper Coverage of the History Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Release</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta Journal/Constitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston Globe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Science Monitor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago Tribune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles Times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York Times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Times-Picayune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA Today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wall Street Journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington Post</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Journal was much less complete. The Atlanta Journal and Atlanta Constitution published one article that reported on the debate surrounding the U.S. history standards (“Critics Object,” 1994) and a second on the national science standards, in which some criticisms directed at the U.S. history standards were mentioned (“Standards Issues,” 1995). The Christian Science Monitor published one descriptive article that reported the Senate’s decision to condemn the history standards (“Senate Turns Up Heat,” 1995). In The Wall Street Journal, only one descriptive piece mentioned the history standards. This reference to the standards was in the newspaper’s “What’s New — World Wide” column, which appears daily on the front page of The Wall Street Journal. On September 5, 1995, the standards were mentioned as part of a campaign speech delivered by Bob Dole in which he said they “denigrate America’s story” (“What’s News — World Wide,” 1995, p. A1).

Thus, unless numerous newspapers were read on a regular basis, very little information could be obtained about the standards via descriptive articles contained in U.S. newspapers. That newspapers offered readers incomplete coverage of the history standards is significant, given the national debate that ensued regarding the merit of the standards. Decisions about major educational reform efforts, such as the U.S. history standards, should involve a well-educated public. The newspaper articles included in this study did not provide readers with the information necessary for making a well-informed assessment of the standards. By not providing a more complete picture of the history standards in descriptive articles, the general public needed to either buy and read the standards or view them through the eyes of others, whose interpretation of the standards were presented in opinion pieces, on television and radio talk shows, and in descriptive article citations.

“Framing” the Story: Controversial and Political

Altheide described frames as “the focus, a parameter or boundary for discussing a particular event” (1996, p. 31). In addition, Altheide states that “frames focus on what will be discussed, how it will be discussed, and above all, how it will not be discussed” (1996, p. 31). By foregrounding some ideas and concealing others, frames provide readers with a specific way to understand the U.S. history standards.

We examine two sets of frames here. The overarching frame is one that depicts the standards as either controversial or noncontroversial. The secondary frame is one which describes how the controversy was framed.

Of the 31 descriptive articles that mentioned the U.S. history standards, 29 portrayed the standards as controversial. The two articles that did not refer to the standards as controversial appeared in the October 26, 1994 edition of U.S.A. Today. These articles, published the
day the U.S. history standards were released, described the standards and what they said students should know about U.S. history ("History by Rote," 1994; "U.S. History that Kids Should Know," 1994).

Articles that reported on the U.S. history standards varied considerably in their primary focus. Many of the articles were written specifically to relate major incidents involving the U.S. history standards. Others, however, focused primarily on national standards released in world history, civics or science. Although the focus of the articles changed, the framing of the initial version of the U.S. history standards as controversial remained very consistent.

The framing of the controversy in individual newspaper articles was assessed primarily through an examination of vocabulary utilized and the arguments presented in support of and opposition to the U.S. history standards. For example, the use of words such as "conservatives", "political correctness", and "bipartisan" suggested that the controversy was predominately a political issue. If an argument in opposition to the standards stated that the federal government should not set educational standards, however, the controversy was framed as a debate over who should control education.

In 28 of the 29 articles, the controversy surrounding the first draft of the U.S. history standards was framed primarily as a political debate over how and what history should be taught in secondary-level U.S. history courses. Within these 28 articles, the standards' critics were frequently referred to as conservatives.

In the majority of articles that framed the controversy surrounding the U.S. history standards in political terms, very little context for this debate was presented. In seven of the articles, the debate was presented as part of the cultural and ideological wars taking place across the United States. Proponents of this theory maintained that supporters and opponents of the standards each argued for teaching a version of history consistent with their own political beliefs. Dellios said, "The result was less a debate over how effective the new standards would be in inspiring schoolchildren and more an exchange of angry accusations about hidden political agendas. Both sides charged the other was trying to create a past to correspond with their disparate world views" ("Battle Over History," 1994, p. 4:4).

In four of the articles, the history standards debate was presented as part of an ongoing dispute over what to include in history curriculums ("History Project Debated," 1995; "Battle Over History," 1994; "History on the March," 1995; "Revised History Standards," 1995). Two independent panels of historians, teachers and school administrators who reviewed the history standards for the Council for Basic Education argued that, "There will always be conflicting interpretations about the meaning of history. In history, no historian, no book — not even proposed national standards — ever has the final word,"
In one article, Hugh Dellios pointed out that "In the U.S. there never will be a consensus on how to look at the past" ("Battle Over History," 1994, p. 4:4).

While in 28 articles the U.S. history standards controversy was framed primarily as a political debate regarding the content taught in U.S. history courses, in 11 of those articles reporters mentioned that for some the issue focused on where educational decisions should be made—at the national, state and/or local level. The tradition of local and state control over educational decision-making is traceable to the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution, which says that any power not expressly given to the federal government belongs to the states and the people. For example, Doug Cumming mentions that there was 'suspicion that the "voluntary" standards subvert local control' ("Standards Issue Raises Questions," 1995). In this reference, Cumming refers to all voluntary national standards, not just the U.S. history standards. In some articles, the debate over the U.S. history standards was presented as the reason for concern over whether the national government should be involved in standard-setting. For example, Jeanne Allen, president of the Center for Education Reform in Washington, said, "There is still so much skepticism out there...Many people are wondering whether there is any role for a national commission in devising standards, and whether that should be totally a state role, or even more, a district role" ("History Standards Flawed," 1995, p. A23). Standard supporters responded by saying that the history standards, as part of a national standard-setting campaign, were designed to invigorate reform, support consistency in what students learn, promote the development of challenging curriculums, and help the nation compete in a global economy.

The controversy surrounding the U.S. history standards could also be framed as a debate over whether or not the standards supported student learning and achievement. At times, standard supporters responded to political criticisms with arguments that identified how the standards supported improved teaching and learning in history. Supporters believed the standards, by de-emphasizing facts and memorization, would prepare students to become active learners and thinkers, realize they could contribute to history, bring historical perspective to contemporary issues, deal with historical problems, develop effective citizenship skills and view events from multiple perspectives.

In general, however, the debate presented in selected newspaper articles did not focus on the educational nature of the issue. One article stood out for the unusual way it presented the U.S. history standards. Although the reporter stated that the debate over the standards was primarily political, she actually went into classrooms and observed the effectiveness of the standards when implemented ("History on
the March," 1995). Through observation and discussions with teachers and students, she was able to identify strengths and weaknesses of the standards in relation to educational goals. She found that although some activities required students to possess greater background knowledge and may have been too challenging, "for the most part,...the new approaches to American history seem to have a profound impact" ("History on the March," 1995, p. B9).

Thus, of the 29 articles that presented the standards as controversial, 28 framed the controversy as predominately political. That virtually all of the articles framed the controversy surrounding the U.S. history standards as a political battle over what should be taught in precollegiate history courses may not be surprising. Because national identity is shaped by a nation's history, the teaching of this subject will always be controversial. Although conflicting ideas about what constitutes appropriate content for U.S. history courses have existed for a long time, few newspaper articles presented this broader context. Twenty-five of the 29 articles that presented the U.S. history standards as controversial failed to mention the long-term nature of this controversy, thus creating the impression that the debate over the history standards was unusual. Presenting this controversy as if it were an aberration may have led some to overreact to the debate over the voluntary U.S. history standards' soundness.

The framing of this controversy is also significant for what it shielded from the reader. One would have expected the history standards, as part of a larger national standards movement designed to reform education, to have been debated for their ability to impact learning and teaching. By framing the controversy as a political debate, the issue of whether or not the standards actually supported student learning and achievement went virtually unnoticed.

**Debating Content**

As part of this political debate, opponents focused primarily on content, maintaining that the history standards—an overtly "politically correct" document—emphasized the negative aspects of American history and the glory of minority groups, while excluding traditional white male heroes. For example, Jean Merl in a *Los Angeles Times* article opened with the following statement: "The first national standards proposed for teaching history in America's public schools will be unveiled today amid complaints from conservatives that political correctness prompted the slighting of familiar historical figures such as Ulysses S. Grant and the Wright brothers" ("Debate Greets Standards," 1994, p. A1). In his opening paragraph, Guy Gugliotta compared the reactions of "some prominent conservatives" to the standards with "open rebellion" ("Up in Arms," 1994, p. A3). Though most of the criticism was directed at the teaching examples contained in
Table 2
Critics' Concerns Regarding the Standards' Content and the Number of Newspaper Articles Presenting Each Concern

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements of the Standards Cited by Critics</th>
<th>Number of Articles in which Concern is Cited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Excessive coverage of selected historical figures:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph McCarthy</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ku Klux Klan</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harriet Tubman</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Federation of Labor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Excessive coverage of particular themes, documents, events:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McCarthyism</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slavery</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Insufficient coverage of selected historical figures/groups:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wright Brothers</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Revere</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Edison</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Washington</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albert Einstein</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert E. Lee</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Grant</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Jefferson</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander Graham Bell</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonas Salk</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.P. Morgan</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Founding Fathers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin Franklin</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Insufficient coverage of particular themes, documents, events:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Constitution</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill of Rights</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-World War II advances in science &amp; technology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-World War II rise of the middle class</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of democratic ideals</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities offered to immigrants</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American opportunities</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instructional activities deemed inappropriate:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct trial of J.D. Rockefeller</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study the impact of the fur trade on animal destruction and how it contributed to pitting American Indian groups against one another</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compare encounters between “intrusive” European migrants and “indigenous” people</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements of the Standards</th>
<th>Number of Articles in which Concern is Cited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructional activities deemed inappropriate (con’t):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate Emancipation Proclamation given that it did not free all enslaved people</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examine the impact of religious fundamentalism on politics by studying speeches of Patrick Buchanan</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omissions:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asked students to discuss religion of American Indians and African Americans in early America, but did not ask students to study the religion of European Americans</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presented the advances of the Aztecs without discussing their reliance on human sacrifice</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presented the wealth of a West African King without question</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfair representations/characterizations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Included Tip O’Neil’s characterization of Reagan as “Herbert Hoover with a smile” and “a cheerleader for selfishness”</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presented U.S. as aggressor in World War II</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associated Kennedy and Johnson with terms such as “legacy” and “accomplishments” and Coolidge and Hoover with terms such as “trickle down economics”</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the standards document, some of the 33 standards were also criticized for the inclusion of biased language and the exclusion of the U.S. Constitution. Table 2 contains specific features of the standards that were criticized in the articles, as well as the number of articles in which each of these criticisms appeared. These examples, according to critics, confirmed the unbalanced portrait of history represented in the U.S. history standards.

The standards’ supporters responded to these criticisms with arguments that reflected both a political and educational orientation. These individuals believed that the standards offered a balanced view of U.S. history that illuminated the country’s strengths and weaknesses, while also presenting the contributions of groups traditionally ignored in U.S. history courses. Advocates argued that a desire to be politically correct did not result in the omission of important aspects of U.S. history, but rather that the time had come to change the teaching of history in the United States. Critics’ attacks, supporters argued, were politically motivated and simplified the study of history.

Additionally, those in favor of the standards felt critics misunderstood the nature of the standards, which were designed as a voluntary and flexible guide emphasizing themes, not a curriculum comprised of facts and figures. On occasion, supporters also attempted to respond to politically-motivated criticisms with educational justifications for the standards. For example, Gary Nash, one of the standards’ authors said, “the proposed standards represented a ‘broad consensus’ among educators and historians on de-emphasizing memorization of names, dates, and places, and getting students to think about the significance of events and be able to apply the lessons of history to their lives” (“Debate Greets Standards,” 1994, p. A29).

The presentation of specific aspects of the U.S. history standards document cited by supporters and opponents of the standards is also revealing. Specific complaints about what was included and excluded by opponents to the history standards were cited 121 times, while content from the U.S. history standards document presented by supporters was presented only 11 times (See Tables 2 and 3 for specific examples). This uneven presentation created an image of the standards as a document characterized by numerous weaknesses. Such a presentation may have eroded newspaper readers’ support for the U.S. history standards.

**The History Standards: Threatening? Powerful? Conflicted?**

As the introduction to newspaper articles, headlines serve an important function. In this study, discourse analytic methods were applied to the headlines, so inferences could be made about the way they shaped readers’ understanding of the U.S. history standards.
Discourse analytic methodology was applied to only 26 of the 31 descriptive article headlines. Descriptive article headlines that were not written about the U.S. history standards were excluded. For example, headlines that described the civics or world history standards were not included. The headlines analyzed for the presence of naturalized reformulation and overlexicalization are listed in the Appendix.

**Naturalized reformulation.** Naturalized reformulation is the consistent substitution of one word for another in text. Examples of reformulation were identified in nine headlines (see Table 4). Noticeably absent from any of the headlines is the word "voluntary." This omission is particularly noticeable given the number of headlines that implied that the standards were mandatory. Referring to the standards as "guidelines" suggested that the standards outlined an exemplary plan from which teachers should develop lessons. In addition, calling the standards a "curriculum" hinted that the standards provided a step-by-step agenda for teaching history in schools. Not emphasizing the voluntary nature of the standards played into traditional American fears of national control of the school curriculum. For over 200 years, most Americans have believed that educational decisions should be made by states or local authorities.

In four of the headlines, the history standards were reformulated as history. For example, one headline refers to the "battle over history" instead of the "battle over history standards." In two of these headlines, the standards were not only reformulated as history, but were presented as a threat to the history of the United States. Presenting the standards as a threat to America's history played off contemporary fears of rampant multiculturalism and historical revisionism. In the article, "Reteaching History with the Common Touch," the reformulation of the standards in the headline was particularly significant (1994). Although this article mentioned that the standards were criticized by conservatives, the focus was more on describing the standards and what they were designed to accomplish. The headline writer, by naturally reformulating the history standards as history, foregrounded the idea that the standards interfered with traditional history content. Representing the standards in this manner may have played into the fears of those who felt the standards posed a threat to the status quo.

One other headline also reformulated the history standards as something much bigger than they were. In the headline, "Senate Turns Up Heat on Humanities," the standards were reformulated as all of the "humanities" (1995). Equating the history standards with all of the humanities may create the impression that these standards present a threat to all curricular areas classified as one of the humanities.

**Overlexicalization.** Newspaper headlines may be examined for evidence of overlexicalization, the use of a multiplicity of words re-
Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements of the Standards Cited By Supporters</th>
<th>Number of Articles in which Example is Cited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion of selected historical figures:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Paine, William Lloyd Garrison &amp; Eugene Debs</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince Hall and Absalom Jones (former slaves)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional activities:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reenact the Lincoln-Douglas debates</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze the decision to drop the atomic bomb in historical context</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read Abigail Adams' letters to analyze how women's rights improved after the American Revolution</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a skit about slave children's lives based on books of the time</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find political cartoons to examine intolerance faced by Catholic and Jewish immigrants in the late 19th century</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson on the Declaration of Independence</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Carnegie quoted on moral duties of a wealthy man</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>History Standards Reformulated as:</th>
<th>Headlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>&quot;Up in Arms About the “American Experience”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Educators to Alter Course of History&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Battle Over History May Itself Prove Historic”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Reteaching History with the Common Touch”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>&quot;History Curriculum Guides that Conservatives Critized May Be Revised”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Johnston Stands Alone on Curriculum Vote”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An outline of Policy or Conduct</td>
<td>&quot;Critics Object to Guidelines with Missing Links”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Group Agrees to Revise Guidelines for Teaching History”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Humanities</td>
<td>&quot;Senate Turns Up Heat on Humanities”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
lated to a limited number of concepts (Fowler, 1985). Overlexicalization offers insight into the ways newspapers divide reality into categories and the preoccupations of the society in which the headlines are produced.

Table 5 outlines the key concepts that were overlexicalized within the 25 headlines focusing on the voluntary U.S. history standards. This analysis revealed that the newspaper headlines containing lexical groupings presented the U.S. history standards in terms of two pairs of concepts: conflict versus agreement, and change versus the status quo. Use of words and phrases like, debate, pits, disarm, explosive issues, and 'up in arms' immediately alert the reader to the conflict surrounding the U.S. history standards. Similarly, words and phrases like, re-teaching history, alter course of history, and shift historical emphasis suggest that the standards represent a potential threat to what is traditionally taught in U.S. history courses. The emphasis on these word groupings in the headlines foregrounded the U.S. history standards as a document characterized by conflict because it posed a threat to the status quo. Foregrounding the standards in this manner alerted members of society for whom the status quo meant special privileges and power, that the voluntary U.S. history standards posed a threat to their special position within society. For these individuals, preventing change was important, because change might mean a redistribution of power and privilege within society as a whole.

Table 5
Concepts Foregrounded in Selected Headlines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflict versus Agreement</th>
<th>Change versus Status Quo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- debate</td>
<td>- reteaching history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- turns up heat</td>
<td>- a dated approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- flawed</td>
<td>- alter course of history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- battle</td>
<td>- slight while males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- critics object</td>
<td>- make history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- pits</td>
<td>- shift historical emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- disarm</td>
<td>- seeks a more positive spin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- criticism</td>
<td>- history kids should know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- &quot;up in arms&quot;</td>
<td>- issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- debate</td>
<td>- criticized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- criticized</td>
<td>- stands alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- debated</td>
<td>- debated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- history on the march</td>
<td>- explosive issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- raises questions</td>
<td>- won't give national history standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- passing grades</td>
<td>465</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions and Implications

That any standards for U.S. history instruction should be controversial should come as no surprise to those familiar with the history of education in the United States. However, the rapid escalation and ferocity of the criticism, combined with near unanimous opposition in the U.S. Senate, prompts the need for careful analysis of the saga. We undertook this study to help us understand a small part of the picture—how the standards were conveyed to the general public through one medium, the press.

Using content and discourse analytic techniques, we analyzed descriptive articles in major newspapers from throughout the country. Our analysis indicates that most newspapers presented a fragmented picture of the story. Articles framed the story as one of political controversy, highlighted criticisms of the standards, and used language that grossly inflated the nature and scope of the standards. The selection of standards content and the use of naturalized reformulation and overlexicalization tended to present the standards as a threat to the status quo. The typical newspaper reader, we suspect, would come to view the U.S. history standards as a poorly written document with a strong political agenda. More importantly, his or her attention would be deflected from the standards as an educational issue (e.g., How do children currently feel about the study of history? How do youth develop an appreciation of history?), and focused on the political nature of the controversy.

Part of our findings need to be understood within the context of the newspaper industry. News that is new and different, or characterized by conflict, is more likely to be included in the newspaper (Alger, 1989). Further, stories may be reformulated to emphasize uniqueness and conflict, because these qualities grab readers’ attention, and ultimately sell newspapers. By framing the tale of the U.S. history standards as political controversy, and presenting it without historical precedent or reference to the broader political zeitgeist, the articles conformed to traditions within the newspaper industry.

Why, however, were specific examples of standards content cited by critics presented 11 times more frequently than content presented by supporters? Why was the “debate” so lopsided? Were the critics particularly vocal and the supporters unusually subdued? We suspect that part of the answer lies in the complex interaction of social institutions and deeply embedded power structures. The groups most likely to be supportive of the standards—teachers and minority ethnic groups—have historically had weak relationships with the press. And as a practical matter, the vast majority of teachers had not read the standards when the “debate” was at its height. Those most critical of the standards—politicians and conservative interest groups—are
quite comfortable and experienced in voicing their opinions through the press. As a consequence, reporters are more likely to turn to those individuals and groups with whom they have established connections than to seek out those less powerful groups with whom they have had less contact. Similarly, the critics were more willing to initiate contact with the press.

But we must also remember that newspaper production is a business with interests similar to those of other big businesses (Fowler, 1991). The need to make a profit, conduct transactions with other business, and meet production schedules will shape the way news is produced. The timely manner in which newspapers must be produced means that the opinions of “powerful” people will be cited more frequently. Time and money can be saved by turning to people whose credibility has already been established, such as government and corporate sources (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). A number of researchers have found that average citizens have a difficult time gaining access to the media, and thus rarely are their opinions represented among those cited in newspaper articles (Cooper, 1989; Herman & Chomsky, 1988).

As educators, what can we learn from this study? The teaching of a nation’s history is a highly politicized matter. It shapes our national identity, the way we view ourselves, and the way in which we view others. Any proposed changes in the teaching of history in the public schools will meet resistance. An awareness of the multiple rationales for teaching history may help us understand that different people believe history is taught for different reasons (Chilcoat, 1985; Haydn, Arthur, & Hunt, 1997). Without such an understanding, the controversy surrounding the U.S. history standards appears both threatening and frightening. Understanding that multiple rationales guide the teaching of history may prepare us for the concerns raised by parents and members of the community. If we know to expect questions and controversy, we may be in a better position to effectively address the concerns.

In a democratic nation, effective citizenship can only be achieved through the development of a well-educated and informed citizenry. Newspapers play a critical role in ensuring that the general public has the information necessary for making decisions that best serve the needs of the whole country. Our analysis revealed the fragmented coverage of the U.S. history standards in newspapers. The American public must recognize that newspapers do not provide all of the information necessary for developing an in-depth understanding of an issue. Teachers must teach students about both the strengths and limitations of gaining information from newspapers (or any other source, for that matter). Students must, therefore, be taught the importance of
utilizing multiple sources of information, as well as critically analyzing the way in which information is presented.

The critical and discourse analysis performed as part of this study revealed that newspapers presented the standards in a way that supported the maintenance of the existing power structure, or status quo. Given that maintenance of the status quo may not necessarily be what is best for the nation as a whole implies the need for a change in the way we educate students. In order to be prepared for effective citizenship, students must be able to critically analyze the information they gain from newspapers (e.g., Who is most likely to be impacted by this event? Whose views are represented? Whose are omitted?). George Gerbner contends that "whoever tells most of the stories to most of the people most of the time has effectively assumed the cultural role of parent and school...teaching us most of what we know in common about life and society" (Stossel, 1997, p. 94). If we do not develop the ability to critically analyze information presented to us, those who tell most of the stories will continue to have an inordinate amount of power in shaping the future.

Our study points to the need for further research in at least two areas. First, further analysis should be conducted to assess the way educational reforms are framed in U.S. newspapers. Special attention should be paid to how the reforms are typically framed and represented through discourse. For example, our analysis revealed that the U.S. history standards were primarily framed as controversial. The controversy surrounding these standards was presented as a political debate. The broader issue of whether public funds are well spent on the development of standards was not addressed. The impact of framing the standards in this way was to allow questions about how the standards supported student learning to go virtually unnoticed. Researchers should focus on whether efforts at educational reform are presented in newspapers in a manner that supports the status quo, while ignoring the potential impact on student learning. Second, research on the way teachers view educational reforms after reading about them in newspapers should be conducted. This research should include an investigation of how newspaper coverage influences teachers' implementation of educational reforms in their classrooms. We would be particularly interested in a study of the degree to which U.S. history teachers were aware of the standards debate, their assessment of the original standards document, and the ways in which the controversy impacted their teaching (if at all). Did the history standards, both the original document and its revised version, have any impact on the way in which young people learn and come to view our nation's history? Ultimately, of course, this is the most important question.
Appendix
Descriptive Articles Analyzed in Study


Henry, T. (1994, October 26). U.S. history that kids should know. USA Today, p. 4D.*


*Denotes articles for which headlines were subjected to discourse analysis.

Notes

1 Definitions of political and interpretations of liberal and conservative are heavily dependent on context. There are two major debates surrounding the U.S. history standards: (1) whether national standards are necessary and/or valuable, and (2) given that national standards will be developed, what the nature of the content of the standards should be. In the first, broader debate, the liberal position is equated with the belief that investment of human and monetary resources in national standards is misplaced (Ladson-Billings, 1994). The conservative voice argues in support of national standards in the belief that standards will provide students with a challenging, rigorous curriculum, and prepare them for a competitive global economy.

In the second debate, the focus of attention is on the content of the national U.S. history standards. Whether the United States should adopt national standards is not at issue. In this context, the conservative voice presents an attachment to tradition and the belief that the state should assume a strong role in ensuring that students learn the established historical canon studied by previous generations of students. The liberal perspective argues for a more inclusive version of history that represents the voices of groups frequently omitted in traditional versions of history. For the purpose of this study, we defined political in light of how it was used in the articles: as a debate between liberals and conservatives over what history students should learn.

Importantly, none of the newspaper articles analyzed for this study framed the controversy primarily in light of the first debate. Standards per se were not presented as the primary problem; it was the content of the standards—the second debate—which was at issue. By devoting only minimal attention to the broader debate about the value of standards per se, the newspaper articles present the readers with a fait accompli.  

2We recognize that the question of who should control education—the federal, state and/or local governments—is also a political issue. This is a very specific issue, however, whereas the frame we have labeled “political” denotes a broader ideological conflict.

3In the one remaining article, the controversial nature of the U.S. history standards was mentioned without framing it in any way (“Hopeful Start for Bringing,” 1995).


References


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Student Engagement with Social Issues in
a Multimedia-supported Learning Environment

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Abstract
This paper explores high school students’ responses to a technology-supported, problem-based U.S. history unit. Our investigation focused on how participants used a specially-designed multimedia environment, on what meaning this learning experience had for participants, and on how their responses and culminating understandings compared to students who studied the same topic without using the multimedia resources. We wished to explore whether a multimedia-supported learning environment might mitigate some of the identified learner obstacles to problem-based instruction: (1) lack of deep engagement with the topic; (2) failure to weigh competing perspectives, and (3) lack of domain-specific and metacognitive knowledge. Findings suggest that scaffolded multimedia may provide a more authentic context for learning that raises student interest, confronts students with alternative perspectives, and makes knowledge more available for application to social problems. However, expert guidance by the teacher seems to remain a crucial factor for nurturing the disciplined inquiry necessary for addressing social problems critically.

Theorists have persistently advocated problem-centered instruction as a means for engaging students with historical and social science knowledge and for increasing their abilities to reason critically about societal issues (e.g., Dewey, 1938; Engle, 1960; Evans & Saxe, 1996; Hunt & Metcalf, 1968; Oliver & Shaver, 1966). Recent work in cognition, authentic learning, and student engagement supports such assumptions about the benefits of problem-centered instruction (Brooks & Brooks, 1993; Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989; Newmann, 1991a; Resnick, 1987; Scheurman & Newmann, 1998; Stevenson 1990). However, inquiry-centered reforms have not flourished in social studies classrooms (Goodlad, 1984; Kagan, 1993; Shaver, Davis, & Helburn, 1979; Thornton, 1991).

Many technology advocates have claimed that the facilitating power of electronic technology will encourage teachers to move their practice toward student inquiry and problem-solving (Dwyer, 1994;
Ringstaff, Sandholtz, & Dwyer, 1991; Wilson, Hamilton, Teslow, & Cyr, 1994). However, the research base on technology-rich, student-centered classrooms is limited, especially in social studies (Berson, 1996; Ehman, Glenn, Johnson, & White, 1998). Most research that has been done features rich resource settings populated with inquiry-oriented teachers who are technology enthusiasts (Saye, 1997). Studies need to examine what happens when technology is used to support problem-based instruction in more typical classrooms. Noting that many social studies technology tools are inefficient and one-dimensional, Ehman et al. (1998) have also called for development and research with hypermedia-based databases that provide more visual cues and multiple representations of knowledge.

This paper explores high school students’ responses to a problem-based U.S. history unit that incorporated a custom-designed set of integrated multimedia tools and content resources. Specifically, we investigated whether students might find that a multimedia-supported learning environment helped them with some of the identified student obstacles to problem-based learning. Our investigation focused on how participants used the multimedia environment, on what meaning this learning experience had for them, and on how their responses compared to students who studied the same topic without using the multimedia resources.

**Overview of the Problem**

Numerous challenges complicate efforts to develop thoughtful problem-solvers. These include obstacles originating within organizational structures (Cuban, 1984; McKee, 1988; Onosko, 1991), teachers (Doyle & Ponder, 1977-78; Onosko, 1991; Saye, 1998b), and learners (Lemming, 1994; Newmann, 1991a; Rossi, 1995). This paper focuses on three major obstacles originating within the learner: (1) lack of deep engagement with the topic; (2) failure to weigh competing perspectives, and (3) lack of domain-specific and metacognitive knowledge.

**Engagement with the Topic**

Newmann (1991a) defines higher order thinking as the use of knowledge to solve a novel, challenging problem that cannot be resolved through simple application of previously learned knowledge. Such thinking requires skills in processing information as well as reflective dispositions. However, students must first genuinely engage the problem to develop the rich, divergent knowledge base necessary for critical reasoning about social issues (Newmann, 1991a). Engagement in this context involves psychological investment and effort directed toward mastering complex academic work. It is “an inner quality
of concentration and effort to learn” (Newmann, Wehlange, & Lamborn, 1992, p. 13). Engaged learners have a genuine interest in the task because it has “personal, utilitarian or aesthetic value beyond the certification of success in school” (Newmann, 1991b, p. 412).

Teachers have often been unsuccessful in motivating students to seek deep knowledge (Onosko, 1991; Rossi, 1995). Theorists posit that the authenticity of the learning experience influences the degree of engagement (Newmann et al., 1992; VanSickle, 1991). Authenticity refers to the situational or contextual realism of the task (Wiggins, 1998). Authentic school activities correspond to the work that real practitioners do in wrestling with problems in their field of endeavor (Brown et al., 1989). Practitioners draw support from the context of an activity. Similarly, authentic school learning develops knowledge, skills, and dispositions in the context of active student involvement with realistic problems. Authentic school learning may involve actual problems or hypothetical challenges that place students in realistic roles (Gordon, 1998). As in the real world, learning tasks often involve collaboration and use of resources and tools. Final products are judged against real-world standards of quality. Some researchers suggest that the authenticity and richness possible in multimedia learning environments can provide qualitatively different experiences that motivate students to persist, immerse themselves in the content, encounter diverse perspectives, and develop more complex views of issues (Dwyer, 1994; Cognition & Technology Group at Vanderbilt, 1992; Kinzie & Sullivan, 1989; Martin, 1987).

Weighing Competing Perspectives

Claims about multimedia learning experiences have particular importance to thoughtful social studies. Newmann identifies five specific challenges to be addressed in developing complex social studies thinking: empathy — seeing the world from another’s point of view; abstraction — applying conceptual understanding to social events; inference — drawing conclusions from limited data; evaluation and advocacy — developing defensible decisions about social controversies; and critical discourse — participating in thoughtful dialogue aimed at clarifying an issue. Because responsible evaluation, advocacy, and critical discourse require the ability to entertain alternate interpretations of an issue, empathy is among the most crucial competencies (Parker, Mueller, and Wendling, 1989). Empathy is an essential element of dialectical reasoning, the exploration of competing logics or points of view. Critical or dialectical reasoning may be distinguished from sophisticated reasoning by the critical thinker’s active effort to interrogate an issue from alternative points of view rather than seeking only to marshal evidence for defending a chosen position (Parker et al., 1989). If multimedia environments engage students
more genuinely with views beyond their own, they might provide an important resource for developing dialectical reasoning.

**Domain-specific and Metacognitive Knowledge**

**Disciplined Inquiry.** Beyond the challenges of engagement and empathetic reasoning, the quality of student thinking is a primary concern. Students engaged in active problem-solving may display greater enthusiasm for their studies but construct knowledge that lacks significant intellectual rigor. Scheurman and Newmann (1998) argue that authentic intellectual achievement requires that constructed knowledge be grounded on a foundation of disciplined inquiry acceptable to experts in the field. Substantial differences exist between the ways that experts and novices approach problems. Novices lack crucial domain-specific and metacognitive knowledge that experts use to solve problems effectively (Wineburg, 1991; Voss, Greene, Post, & Penner, 1983). Novice learners tend to focus on the surface features of a problem and to ignore abstract, conceptual elements that tie the case to broader knowledge (Chi, Glaser, & Farr, 1988). VanSickle and Hoge (1991) identify several types of knowledge necessary for disciplined inquiry about social problems. First, inquirers must have declarative knowledge, “knowledge about” historical and social phenomena. Second, they must have procedural knowledge of how to apply declarative knowledge to problems. Third, they need schematic knowledge that enables them to conceptualize the dimensions of a problem and perceive what knowledge is needed. Finally, students need metacognitive knowledge that allows them to manage their thinking, to employ general thinking strategies, and to apply knowledge they already possess.

Simon (1957) argues that bounded rationality complicates efforts to comprehend the parameters of a problem and develop workable solutions. He claims that innate cognitive limitations in information processing and short term memory cause individuals to omit much of the available data and to construct greatly simplified models of the world. Knowledge deficits compound these limitations for novices. Because they are particularly ill-structured and multilogical, building models of social problems likely represents one of the largest challenges for novices (Parker et al., 1989). The process of dialectical reasoning and the ability to perceive underlying conceptual structures are central to the challenge of such model-building. Shulman and Carey (1984) suggest that humans may overcome some cognitive limits through collective rationality: cooperative activities that allow them to coordinate individual capabilities and construct shared models of the world that reflect more adequately the complexity of real issues.

**Guided Discovery.** Given the internal obstacles to independent problem-solving, many theorists have advocated guided discovery to
help novices discover pivotal ideas in a domain and develop the types of knowledge necessary for effective model-building and disciplined inquiry. However, the delicate process of guiding while allowing room for discovery has not been explored deeply enough to inform practice adequately (Brown, 1992).

Situated cognition (SC) theorists hold that knowledge is “indexed” by the situation in which it arises and is used. “The embedding circumstances . . . provide essential parts of its structure and meaning” so that knowledge is “coded by and connected to the activity and environment in which it is developed (Brown et al., 1989, p. 36).” Therefore, it is essential that learning be embedded in an authentic situation that is similar to how the pertinent knowledge is used by real practitioners. Drawing from the metaphor of craft apprenticeships, SC theorists advocate guiding school-based learning through cognitive apprenticeship. Such guidance includes: modeling problem-solving in an authentic activity, supporting students through scaffolding, coaching and interrogating developing understandings, and gradually decreasing guidance as students gain competence.

If multimedia environments can provide more authentic contexts for immersing students in a problem, such settings might facilitate the integration of cognitive apprenticeship precepts into learning. However, guided discovery places heavy burdens on teachers who must continuously diagnose the understanding of large groups of learners and develop appropriate responses (Brown, 1992). Studies that have examined social studies teachers attempting such practice have noted the difficulties teachers experienced in managing the cognitive load and the time and energy demands (Rossi, 1995, Rossi & Pace, 1998, Saye, 1998a). Even in technology-supported classrooms, gaps in student knowledge and lack of metacognitive guidance inhibited effective problem-solving (Ehman et al., 1998). How might technology be adapted to help teachers and learners handle the cognitive demands required for disciplined problem-solving?

Hannafin, Land, and Oliver (1998) claim that recent technological developments make possible open learning environments (OLEs) that were heretofore unfeasible. They note that technology-supported OLE’s employ tools, resources and activities that augment thinking and are valuable for exploring fuzzy, ill-defined, and ill-structured problems. The authors identify a number of scaffolding structures for learning that can be built into OLEs. These scaffolds correspond to the types of expert knowledge that VanSickle and Hoge claim are needed for developing thoughtful solutions to social problems: conceptual (guidance about what knowledge, and what relationships in knowledge, to consider), metacognitive (guidance about how to think during learning), procedural (guidance about how to utilize available re-
sources and tools), and strategic scaffolding (guidance about alternative approaches that might assist decision-making).

Cognitive flexibility theorists use the metaphor of exploring a new territory to describe the development of expert knowledge (Jacobsen, Maouiri, Mishra, & Kolar, 1996; Spiro & Jehng, 1990). Coming to know a topographical area requires repeated "criss-crosses" that use multiple paths and view the landscape from multiple vantage points. Similarly, to understand a complex problem, learners must see beyond the superficial two-dimensional surface of a case to perceive the third dimension of the problem landscape, the abstract structural components that are embedded in the specific problem case. For instance, in wrestling with issues surrounding the civil rights movement, expert problem solvers in that domain might reference knowledge related to such concepts as equality, property rights, and civil disobedience. Scaffolded, hypermedia-based OLE’s may be particularly useful in guiding novices toward such connections in their explorations of a problem landscape. Such OLE’s might also complement cooperative learning to address the problem of bounded rationality because embedded scaffolds could help overcome information processing and memory limitations.

Little research has studied the educational efficacy of hypermedia learning environments (Jacobsen et al., 1996). Perfetti, Britt, Van Dyke, and Gabrys (1999) reported improved historical problem-solving when students used strategic scaffolds to interpret a small number of hypertext documents. Spoehr and Spoehr (1994) found that students who used an integrated history and literature database that featured conceptual scaffolds demonstrated richer conceptual representations of that knowledge. Jacobsen and colleagues found that learners using hypertext learning environments performed significantly better on higher order tasks when embedded scaffolding guided them to make connections between the surface features of cases and the underlying concepts and generalizations that linked cases in a more complex knowledge web. Learners who explored the same hypermedia-based cases without expert guidance did not make such connections. The researchers theorize that scaffolding allowed learners to think in a disciplined manner more similar to that of experts. They call for more studies that explore the potential of hypermedia for supporting the acquisition and use of complex knowledge. Ours is such a study.

Theoretical Perspectives and Study Design

This report represents the first phase of an evolving line of inquiry in one site that seeks (a) to explore the potential of multimedia technologies for supporting thoughtful engagement with social issues, (b) to explore what other essential features may be necessary for tech-
nology-supported, problem-based learning, and (c) to develop and describe a model for establishing such a learning environment in normal school settings. Several theoretical perspectives informed our study design. Design experiments view innovative teaching as an experiment occurring in the complex world of real classrooms rather than controlled environments (Brown, 1992). From this perspective, innovative educational environments may be simultaneously designed, taught, and studied. We share that perspective's holistic view of classroom interventions as "inherently multiply confounded" with complex, interwoven social and cognitive elements (Brown, 1992). However, unlike pure design experiments, we did not intervene in all aspects of the environment. We introduced a set of potentially empowering tools that was embedded with socio-constructivist assumptions about teaching and learning, but one of our major interests in this exploratory study was to understand what interpretations the teacher and students made of these resources. The research design gave the teacher great latitude in interpreting this intervention in a way that was feasible for her vision of teaching and learning.

The teacher chose the topic for the unit, the African-American Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 60s. We collaborated with the teacher to conceptualize a unit problem, a collaborative learning strategy, and two culminating problem-solving activities. In consultation with the teacher, the university researchers developed Decision Point! (DP), an integrated set of multimedia content resources and tools for exploring the chosen topic. The classroom teacher made decisions about the structure of each day, the creation and management of collaborative groups, the degree of teacher direction, and determination of unit grades. The university collaborators discussed with the teacher possibilities for how the scaffolding devices in the DP environment might be used. However, the university researchers attempted to minimize imposition of unit structures on the classroom teacher. During the unit we functioned as participant-observers. We tried to answer questions the teacher had during unit design and unit teaching in ways that were informative but not directive. This stance is consistent with our belief that meaningful knowledge must be constructed rather than transmitted.

We view our collaboration as educative research: The idea that deeper knowledge about teaching and learning can arise from dialogues between university researchers and teachers (Clark, Moss, Goering, Herter, Leonard, Robbins, Russell, Templin, & Wascha, 1996; Gitlin, 1990). We expect that our dialogues will give us all richer views regarding the challenges of establishing technology-supported, problem-based learning environments.

This report focuses on student perspectives and outcomes. Our design is best described as an evaluative case study. The assumptions
of qualitative inquiry drive our search for understanding the processes and effects of this learning experience for participants. Qualitative case studies are especially appropriate for studying educational innovations, for evaluating programs, and for exploring effects on participants (Merriam, 1988; Patton, 1987). However, we adopted a hybrid design that incorporated both qualitative and quantitative elements in data collection and analysis. The purposes and functions of qualitative and quantitative data can serve understanding in complementary ways. Some evaluation questions may be determined deductively and others left open to inductive analyses based on direct observations (Patton, 1987). Given the theoretical premises that undergird the design of the DP environment, we could describe in advance some desirable outcomes and develop evaluations to see if they seemed to occur. Qualitative methods allow us to explore possible explanations for any observed effects. Because any study of real classrooms is multiply confounded, we cannot claim that our intervention caused the observed effects. We can, however, look at participants' responses, identify patterns emerging from the data, and speculate about what data-based patterns suggest about how the experience may have impacted outcomes.

**Site and Participant Selection**

This study took place in a high school in a small southeastern city that is home to a large land-grant university. Sixty-eight percent of the 1,163 students who attend the school are white; 28 % are black; and 4 % are Asian. Median family income in the school district is $35,876.

The social studies faculty was in the midst of accommodating substantial change. Two years earlier, each social studies classroom was equipped with four networked student computers and a teacher presentation station. The following year, the school switched from 55-minute to 97-minute block classes. To meet the challenge of lengthened periods, the principal asked teachers to include at least three different activities in every class period. Teachers expressed frustration in attempting to integrate technology into their instruction. Some were also dissatisfied with efforts to develop effective student group work. Our model sought to address teacher concerns.

One teacher and two of her intact classes participated in the study. Because we hope to develop a model that can be implemented in typical classrooms, we sought a typical case for our study. Given consistent documentation of a dominant pattern of social studies teaching and learning (e.g., Shaver et al., 1979; Goodlad, 1984; Thornton, 1991), we recruited a classroom teacher who had little experience in instructional technology use or student-centered inquiry. The study teacher was a seventeen-year teaching veteran. Before we began our collabo-
rative planning, she described her teaching style: "I've always been teacher-oriented [as opposed to student-centered] and a very structured teacher." At the first planning meeting she expressed some trepidation: "I've never tried this, we weren't trained like this. I'm not a hands-on kind of teacher." She reported that she was making "a conscious effort to change" toward more student-centered instruction, in part because the administration had asked teachers repeatedly to "really work on cooperative learning." She had doubts about students staying on task during self-directed work. Despite her uncertainties, she was willing to experiment with unfamiliar procedures and tools and regarded implementing the new unit as "a learning time."

Student participants were enrolled in two sections of a U.S. history course required of all 11th graders not taking honors history. We deliberately avoided elective history classes whose students might feel unusual competence or enthusiasm for the subject. One class (N=21) used the DP resources in its civil rights studies. In order to gain a better sense of how participants' interpretations of the DP resources might affect the overall learning environment, we compared that case to a second class (N=24) studying the same topic with the same teacher but using that teacher's normal methods and resources. We hoped to gauge how experiences in the DP unit differed from social studies topics as they were usually experienced in this classroom and to determine whether student outcomes in the two classes appeared to differ. Using a purposive selection strategy that emphasized diversity in gender, race, ethnicity, and ability and motivation in the subject area (as perceived by the teacher), we selected five students from the DP class for post-unit interviews.

Teacher and student interviews, observations in the study classroom, and multiple classroom observations and teacher interviews with the entire social studies faculty over a three year period suggest that students had little prior experience with complex collaborative tasks or uses of computers to support higher order thinking. Students perceived their classes to be largely teacher-centered. Most faculty used some small group work, but the work did not normally involve higher order thinking or lengthy projects. Tasks rarely required positive interdependence for the production of a complex product. As one student said: "We have groups, and we get into them at least twice a week, but it's [the DP group project] just like on a higher level [Student 3]." Student computer use for social studies was rare and was confined to word processing and retrieval of factual information from electronic encyclopedias or internet sources. Students claimed that these patterns were typical of non-social studies classes as well.
**Description of the Decision Point Unit Design**

Guided by theory and research cited above, we designed a unit to be used for exploring how a multimedia learning environment might support problem solving. Our design assumed that certain features are essential in an environment that nurtures disciplined inquiry: (1) Learning focuses around a meaningful, ill-structured problem; (2) The problem solution demands consideration of diverse perspectives; (3) Learners assume substantial ownership for planning and implementing problem-solving strategies; (3) Learners construct and publicly defend unique problem solutions that are assessed by known performance-based standards; (4) Rich multiple media and multiple sources of knowledge reflect the complexity of real problems and allow access through different ways of knowing; (5) Collaborative tasks encourage individual accountability, positive interdependence, and collective rationality; (6) Disciplined inquiry is supported with clear expectations for performance, models of procedures and exemplary performances, and appropriate and timely cognitive, metacognitive, and strategic scaffolding.

The DP unit scenario placed students in 1968, immediately following the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. Assuming the roles of civil rights leaders, student teams developed a solution for the unit problem: What strategies should be pursued in 1968 to continue the struggle for a more just, equal U. S. society? Students participated in two groups. First, each student joined an expert group who used the multimedia database to research one of three types of tactics pursued by the Civil Rights Movement before King’s death (working within the legal system, nonviolent protest, and black power). Second, student experts formed new decision-making groups who shared expert information, debated alternative solutions, and chose a future course of action. Then, each group used multimedia tools to construct a persuasive presentation that explained possible actions, evaluated the likely consequences of each alternative, and defended their solution as the wisest choice. Following group presentations, students individually composed essays on an issue related to the unit topic.

The DP environment provided (a) multimedia civil rights content resources in an interactive database and (b) scaffolding tools for collecting, analyzing and evaluating historical evidence and presenting conclusions. The database featured primary print documents (news and personal accounts and artifacts) and period news footage, interviews, and music. Conceptual scaffolds were built into the database to help students organize their investigations (Hannafin, et al., 1998). All data was organized thematically into three strands representing the primary change strategies. Inside each strand, information was further organized by major events exemplifying that strategy. Finally, each major event featured an introductory essay, an event timeline,
and a menu of available content resources organized by document type (Figure 1).

To support student investigation, analysis, and evaluation of the historical data, an integrated electronic notebook contained additional conceptual structures as well as metacognitive and strategic scaffolds (Hannafin et al., 1998). For example, a Journal section provided a metacognitive scaffold for groups to monitor the effectiveness of their data gathering. A “Guides” section offered a strategic analysis scaffold by posing categorizing questions that an historian might use to organize and synthesize evidence about an event. Students recorded findings by category, and a linking tool allowed them to connect relevant documents directly to their notes (Figure 2). A Presentation section of the notebook provided generative tools for linking multimedia evidence into a presentation of conclusions about the unit problem (Figure 3).

**Data Collection and Analysis Procedures**

The study incorporated a variety of data collection and analysis methods to understand unit processes and to gauge outcomes (see Table 1). For both the DP and non-DP groups we collected data from parallel pre- and posttests of recall knowledge, from end-of-unit essays, and from classroom observations. DP group data were also collected from group presentation rubrics, attitudinal surveys, and post-unit interviews. Open and close-ended survey items asked students about their interest in social studies and their perceptions about the unit and the DP software. Surveys were triangulated with student interviews that explored more deeply respondents’ perceptions of the technology-supported unit and its effects on their learning. The teacher joined one university investigator in informal discussions at the end of each teaching day and a post-unit debriefing interview. Discussions with the teacher sought her perceptions about the strengths and weaknesses of the unit and any effects that the changes had on student learning and the classroom environment. All interviews were audiotaped and transcribed. University investigators kept field notes of classroom observations and discussions and collected unit handouts and copies of student products. Because engagement is difficult to measure directly (Newmann, Wehlange, & Lamborn, 1992), we identified factors that might suggest degrees of engagement and watched for those during our observations. We included as indirect indicators of engagement the degree of participation in academic work, the intensity of student concentration, expressed enthusiasm and interest, and the care taken in completing work. (Newmann et al., 1992, Stevenson, 1990). We triangulated our observations with teacher and student perspectives expressed in interviews. The appendix provides more information on instruments.
Figure 1. Decision Point! Help Sheet illustrating program features and conceptual scaffolding (given to students at beginning of the unit).
**Notes for Group 6**

**Event:** Selma

**Groups Involved:**
SCLC; SNCC

**Goals:**
Voter Registration

**Strategies:**
Registration Drive
Protest Marches

**Reactions:**
Limited hours of operation at registrars; Arrested those attempting to register; Fired demonstrators from jobs; Attacked demonstrators

**Outcomes:**

**Supporting Links:**
Jim Clark: Andrew Young
Cartoon: Mockery of Our Law; Time (3-19-65)
Confrontation at Pettus Bridge

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**Figure 2.** Sample page from the Student Notebook “Guides” Section: A data retrieval chart to guide student research.
**Action 1**

**Consequences**

- Violence by Authorities Creates National Publicity That May Bring Pressure For Change

- Use of Force In Selma Put Pressure on Congress to Pass the Voting Rights Act

BUT

Some Who Were Attacked Lost Faith In the System & Became Radicals

**Supporting Links:**
- PCT-Protests Attacked By Mob-Jackson MS
- PCT-Assassion - Burning Bus

* "THAT'S IT! I DON'T LET ' EM MAKE A MOTHERF*#ER OUTA LAW!" Ogres & Neanderthals dies...

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**Figure 3.** Presentation Tools. Screen shows one slide from work in progress on a culminating presentation. Contextual tool bars visible at top and bottom of the screen make it easy for students to build an interactive presentation incorporating multimedia data from the program.
Table 1
Data Collection & Analysis Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Type</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comparative Data</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Observations</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Pre/Post Knowledge</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Post Essay</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Decision Point Group Data

<table>
<thead>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Presentation</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Survey</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Interviews</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Teacher; 5 students)</td>
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A key outcome measure for both student groups was an essay test of higher order reasoning that required students to use unit knowledge to make a judgment about an issue related to the unit problem: Who had the greater justification for revolution: American colonists in the 1770s or African-Americans in the 1960s? Building on work done by Parker and associates (1989), we scaffolded a four-paragraph essay to assist students in constructing an argument that was both persuasive and dialectical (Appendix). The introduction to the essay provided a paragraph summarizing factual information relevant to the causes of the American Revolution. In Paragraph 1 of the essay, students were asked to provide a similar summary of civil rights content knowledge that was relevant to deciding the posed issue. In Paragraphs 2 and 3, students were directed to make best case arguments for each group's justification for revolution. Students were to use Paragraph 4 to state and defend their final positions. A detailed set of criteria was established for each element of the essay in order to measure substantive factual knowledge and persuasive and dialectical reasoning (Newmann, 1990; Parker et. al, 1989). These criteria are elaborated in the “Findings” section.

The researchers independently completed content analyses of essay tests and tested their results for interrater reliability. The reliabilities for mean ratings were found to be 70% or higher in all cases except the ratings for dialectical reasoning in Paragraph 4 (27%).
The lack of agreement here was due largely to unrefined scoring criteria. As originally formulated, the criteria required students to reason in a series of hierarchical steps in order to score progressively higher. As we scored essays, it became obvious that this interpretation was unfairly penalizing divergent thinkers who were constructing complex dialectical arguments in different ways. Once allowance was made for divergent paths, the scorers had 100% agreement on ratings for this category. Similarly, discussions about scoring other portions of the essays clarified our conceptions of the standards used to measure complex thinking about social issues and brought agreement to 100% for all categories.

We used several strategies to increase confidence in data analysis. First, we incorporated three of the four basic types of triangulation (Denzin, 1978): use of multiple sources, use of multiple evaluators, and use of multiple methods. Second, the classroom teacher examined interview transcripts and study conclusions, and her feedback was incorporated into the final analysis. Finally, we searched for rival explanations for observed effects.

Findings and Discussion

Observers agreed that students in the two classes encountered the unit topic in different ways and that the DP group exhibited greater levels of engagement with unit activities. Comparative outcomes data suggest that the two classes also developed different understandings about historical events and issues involved in the phenomenon of the civil rights movement. Differences were evident in factual recall and in higher order reasoning.

Observed Classroom Differences

The study teacher allotted six days to the DP unit while she taught a five-day civil rights unit to a second class. The additional day was used for culminating group presentations, a feature not present in the non-DP unit. The teacher made all decisions about the non-DP unit (with the understanding that these students would not have direct access to the integrated multimedia environment). The unit was not problem-based. Teacher-directed lecture, video, and recitation and individual seat work occupied three-fourths of the time. Observations of several earlier lessons suggested that the lessons in the non-DP unit were typical of this teacher's practice. The principal change made from past civil rights units was the addition of two days for time equivalence between the two classes. Some of the new time was used for group activities such as interpreting a primary document or composing a poem empathizing with citizens caught up in civil rights events. The teacher also used some video and photographs from the DP data-
base in her lectures. The teacher seemed confident and enthusiastic throughout the unit; however, students did not appear to be greatly engaged. Although a few students attended to the teacher and responded to questions, most students sat passively with blank expressions while the teacher spoke. Students were frequently off-task in group work. In each class session, two to five students dozed during portions of the lesson.

The teacher adopted a much lower profile in the DP class. Prior to the unit, students were oriented to the database and notebook. The teacher began with the same introductory lecture used in her non-DP class and previewed the unit problem and unit procedures. For the first three days (phase 1), she divided the class into the data-gathering expert teams who explored events associated with particular strategies. Groups were to end each day by reflecting about their progress in their on-line journals. The teacher planned to monitor group entries and to meet with each group to help them focus their work. Upon completion of phase 1, the teacher allotted two days for new, blended groups to debate alternative actions and develop a multimedia presentation that presented the alternatives and used historical evidence to defend a chosen action (phase 2).

The teacher left many procedural decisions to students. She did not sharply define individual roles and responsibilities, and students groped for direction at the beginning of both phases. During phase 1, each group controlled one computer terminal as well as a binder with paper copies of on-line documents. After some initial inertia, most groups began to randomly explore the database without any systematic plan or division of labor. Although the "Guides" section of the database was intended to help them organize and synthesize evidence (Figure 2), students were unclear about how the guides might be used. Staring at a screen listing the documents for one civil rights event, one student exclaimed, "This doesn't make sense! How are we supposed to tie this together?"

The teacher made adjustments each day. She began to monitor work more closely and to prompt students more about dividing the work, focusing on the problem, using the guides, and reflecting on their progress. Groups began to focus on searching for information to fill in the category fields featured in the guides. However, by the end of the data-gathering phase, the teacher realized that teams had not adequately synthesized gathered information. Although she had planned group conferences, she met with only three of five groups before students moved on to phase 2. "I just got busy and ran short of time," she confessed. "I am going to have to find ways to hold them more accountable. I'm not sure how much to let them guide themselves."
At the teacher’s request, the university investigators began phase 2 by modeling the decision-making process and the use of the presentation tool. The teacher provided more organizational structure than in phase 1. However, many students remained confused about how this phase connected to the data-gathering activity. One student moaned, “I’m lost; how do we use this information we collected?” Gradually, groups developed strategies for proceeding. Although some compared bits of evidence from different events, most groups reported without discussion what their expert teams had found. Only after they had discussed possible actions and chosen a solution did most groups look closely at any evidence. Rather than using the evidence to test possible solutions, groups most commonly sought evidence that would support their predetermined solution. A sample from one group’s discussion illustrates these tendencies:

[After individuals had shared expert information and the group had listed several possible strategies]

S1: So, we have to come up with a likely consequence for each strategy. [He gets no response from his group.] Okay, let’s think of a consequence of a boycott of all public facilities.

S2: Increased racial tensions?

S1: Okay.

S3: Hey, don’t you want to put some evidence in there?

S1: Where is that example [the model that researchers used to present the process]? Yeah, we have to prove it.

[Thirteen minutes after Student 1 had focused the group on considering possible actions and consequences, the group had made their decision. Student 1 concluded:] “Okay, let’s get on the computer and find proofs for this.”

In constructing presentations, groups leaned almost exclusively on photographs and audiovisual evidence to support their claims. The teacher reminded groups to develop a script with factual support for their arguments, but groups devoted little time to this task. Students seemed to feel that the multimedia screens would provide all of the structure they needed. When one group member raised the issue of a script, another responded, “I think we can just improvise.” A third student agreed, “Yeah, that part will be really easy.”

Despite the organizational problems, this class exhibited greater levels of enthusiasm, dialogue, and persistence in unit activities than the non-DP group. For example, on the first day of the unit, many students were working so intently at the computer terminals that the bell ending the period caught them off guard. As they scrambled to put away materials, the teacher commented with some surprise, “That never happens!” One student commented as he left, “This is fun!”
The teacher laughed, "A new idea! Social studies is fun!" Engagement and concentration wavered at some points during the week, and there were times when students strayed off task. However, on the final day before presentations, some students began to work in groups before class began. Deep into the period, the classroom was quiet as students focused intently on computer screens and held soft, goal-directed conversations within their groups.

**Comparing Outcomes: Differences in Factual Recall**

Because only the non-DP group received direct instruction for information included in a factual recall unit test, the teacher worried that the DP group would not perform as well as the non-DP group on that measure. However, Kruskal-Wallis analysis of variance tests of the pretest and posttest data suggest that the DP group suffered no disadvantage in factual recall. Analysis of data from pretests for factual knowledge about the civil rights movement found that the non-DP group scored slightly higher on the pretest \(M = 54\%) than did the DP group \(M = 47\%\); however, these results were not significantly different, \(\chi^2(1, N=44) = 1.22, p = 0.27\). At the end of the unit, students in both groups were tested using a parallel form of the knowledge test. Analysis of the posttest data found that the DP group scored slightly higher \(M = 87\%) than did the non-DP group \(M = 86\%). As with the pretest data, no significant differences were found between the two groups, \(\chi^2(1, N=44) = 0.00, p = .99\).

However, when the need for factual information was contextualized, the DP group recalled more information than their peers. In Paragraph 1 of the post-unit essay (Appendix), we assessed students' ability to summarize substantive content knowledge that was relevant to deciding the posed issue. We counted only factual statements in which a student used unit knowledge to demonstrate contextualized understanding of an event's role in the larger Civil Rights phenomenon. Simply naming people or listing an event without elaboration or framing context did not qualify as a substantive use of knowledge. Analysis of Paragraph 1 indicated that students in the DP group included a significantly greater number of relevant statements \(M = 5.5\) than did the students in the non-DP group \(M = 3.9\), \(\chi^2(1, N=44) = 4.23, p<.05\) (see Table 2).

In an evaluation independent of our analysis, the teacher judged the DP group's essays overall to have more specific references to evidence than did the essays of the non-DP class and than did essays from previous units for the DP class. "Their essays show they seem to have a better grasp on what not having those rights meant to people. Before, they would say, 'Oh, they didn't have rights.' But what does that mean? I think them seeing—almost spending enough time that those [people] were real to them [made a difference]."
Comparing Outcomes: Differences in Higher Order Reasoning.

Data also suggest that the DP group was able to bring a more complex view of civil rights content to bear on reasoning about related issues. Essay Paragraphs 2 through 4 measured persuasive and dialectical reasoning. Each paragraph examined a specific competency (Table 2). We examined two aspects of students’ abilities to construct persuasive written arguments. We judged persuasiveness to be the “degree to which a student’s response is capable of persuading the reader” (Newmann, 1990, p. 370). We counted a reason persuasive if it stated a general principle to support a position or if the general principle could be reasonably inferred from a discussion of a specific example. Paragraph 2 measured students’ general ability to construct a persuasive argument independent of the topic under study. We asked students to make a persuasive argument using information about a topic (American Revolution) that was provided in the essay but not studied in the unit. The number of persuasive arguments made by students in the DP group (M = 1.7) was nearly identical to the number of arguments made by students in the non-DP group (M = 1.5). No significant differences were found in general persuasive reasoning ability as measured by Paragraph 2.

Paragraph 3 asked students to make a persuasive argument using unit content knowledge. Significant differences were found in favor of the DP group. The number of persuasive arguments made by DP students in Paragraph 3 (M = 2.5) was significantly greater than the number of arguments made by students in the non-DP group (M = 1.6), $\chi^2(1, N=44) = 6.08$, $p<.05$.

Dialectical reasoning refers to the exploration of competing logics or points of view. The reasoner compares the reasonableness of
one logic with the reasonableness of others in a genuine effort to view
the best evidence for alternative points of view on an issue (Parker, et
al., 1989). We measured dialectical reasoning in two ways. In Para-
graphs 2 and 3 we asked whether students were able to state each
argument fairly without revealing their eventual positions. The essay
was scaffolded to emphasize the need for impartiality in these two
paragraphs. Both groups demonstrated simple dialectical reasoning
with 23 of 24 in the non-DP group and 18 of 20 in the DP group mak-
ing non-biased arguments. Paragraph 4 of the essay measured more
complex dialectical reasoning. Paragraph 4 was scored from 0-2 based
upon how deeply it considered counterarguments in defending a fi-
nal position. A threshold for a genuinely dialectical argument (a score
of 2) required students to acknowledge not only the existence of a
counterargument, but to address at least one line of support for the
counterargument in defending their decision about the posed issue.
Eight percent of the non-DP group made such an argument; thirty-
five percent of the DP group demonstrated such reasoning. A chi-
square test of these data revealed significant differences between the
two groups, $\chi^2(1, N=44) = 4.77$, $p<.05$.

**DP Student Perspectives**

Although comparative data suggest differences between groups
after their respective units, we cannot claim that the intervention
caus ed these differences. However, qualitative data can be used to
explore plausible causes and generate hypotheses about plausible ex-
planations (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). What did participants in the
DP unit believe about the effects of the experience on their historical
knowledge and understanding?

Some students in the DP group perceived their experiences with
history in this unit to have given them different understandings from
those gained in their previous studies. The great majority of the DP
group enjoyed the unit (86%) and wished to study other topics in a
similar way (76%). Interviews provided deeper insight into student
perceptions. Responses suggest that interviewees believed that their
experiences in the multimedia environment provided a more authen-
tic context for encountering historical information that promoted em-
pathy, deeper engagement with historical issues, and greater reten-
tion. Most respondents also claimed that expanded student empow-
erment and collaborative learning in this unit helped them construct
more complex knowledge while making learning more enjoyable.

Student reactions support theorists who have argued that multi-
media can provide more realistic encounters with knowledge. For
example, one student thought that he may have learned more because,
"it was more realistic because you could actually see, like, the people
talking about it... and see the newspaper reports where somebody
actually wrote it down, rather than just have a textbook saying this happened and that happened [Student 1]."

Another student explained: "I could imagine it better... We had more of a picture of what people were like... like, there was a video of [George] Wallace; just the accent and everything, the attitude, everything combined gives you an idea of what they were like back then, and you wouldn't really know all about that just reading a book... We knew about it before, but when you hear it and when you, like, see it, it just kind of takes you there... You don't really get to put yourself into history, you know; it's just kind of like facts, and you're just instilling them... if you could put yourself into history, you know, like we did in this [unit], and, like, if you could relate to history... that would help me more probably... [Student 5] "

Related to its realism, students found the unit gave them a more empathetic view of the dilemmas of historical figures. One student explained, "...it's [Decision Point!] more like on a personal level... You got into how somebody felt about this, or, you know, what they did and how strongly they felt about it. Because sometimes books don't actually convey that to you [Student 3]." Another respondent related: "There was one excerpt from a woman in jail, and she was talking about how she watched... one of the inmates getting beaten to the ground. And it's just, something like that kind of makes you think more than it would if you just read, like, statistics in a book [Student 5]."

Ultimately, some respondents concluded that this deeper engagement promoted more complex understanding and retention. For example: "You can learn more, maybe, in... a book, but will you want to know more? I mean... next year will I remember what I read in this book? Probably not, but I will remember those pictures that I saw because they'll stay in my mind... [When you say 'learning,' I can learn the facts, but I won't learn, you know, the experiences... and that's what a lot of people remember and those experiences help them learn other things... Even though you don't learn more facts, just the fact that you learn more about real things, and, like, actuality itself—that just sticks in your mind more than facts... [Student 5]"

Beyond more realistic resources, some students suggested that the collaborative features of the unit also contributed to more complex understanding of social content and issues. One student liked it that "...there's more interaction between different ideas and people, and you can get maybe a broader view of it... [Student 3]." Another participant stated, "It's more fun to do, to learn working with other people... you have people that know different kinds of stuff, you know, and understand something better or understand something you didn't even pay attention to... [Student 1]"
Finally, some respondents suggested that greater empowerment led to learning that was not only more enjoyable, but more effective. One student was confident that, "I really learned more [than in a normal unit]; I got to see things I wanted to see—more than might be assigned [Student 2]." Another student (Student 4) for whom English was a second language claimed it was hard for him to follow the sequence of the teacher's lesson. He believed that the hypermedia environment allowed him to sequence learning in a way that made more sense for him.

During the interviews we solicited student reservations about the unit by asking them to describe what they liked least about the unit, how the unit could be improved, and whether they wished to study other units in similar ways. For the most part, students remained positive, reporting "there wasn't really anything I really disliked about it [Student 3]," and "I wouldn't change a thing 'cause it was good [Student 4]."

However, students' enthusiasm was not unqualified. Student surveys suggested that many students (24%) preferred not to study other units in this way, and most interviewees thought they would prefer a mix between such units and more traditional expository units. Several interviewees reported that they felt overwhelmed by the volume of information in DP. For instance: "We had so much stuff to cover...I didn't know if it was better to watch the videos or read the newsletters that they had, so we were just kind of all over the place [Student 3])." Another student suggested that DP might be improved "if the material in the computer could not be so spread out to where you didn't have to move around so much to find one place to another, like maybe if you had a real small summary of each [item in the menus] [Student 5]." The same student complained that "A lot of it was really repetitive...the personal accounts and stuff, it seemed like the same thing we were reading again...We just kind of got frustrated after we had been reading the same type of thing over and over." Student comments regarding cognitive overload and disorientation are consistent with classroom observations. The second student's desire for capsule summaries of documents and her frustration with repetitiveness also suggests conceptual difficulties in shifting from received to constructed knowledge. These issues of overload and conceptualization of the task are pertinent to group performances on presentations and are discussed more fully in the next section.

**DP Group Performance on Collaborative Tasks**

Despite positive findings for individual performance and positive perceptions of benefits by respondents, group presentations of resolutions to the central unit problem were superficial. None of the observers rated any of the five groups above a 2 on any of the rubric
standards (A-D) most directly related to complex historical understanding and reasoning. In part, this result may stem from the problem of bounded rationality. The individual essays presented students with a more circumscribed problem than the unit problem which demanded consideration of many more variables. Even with the advantages of collaboration, the complexity of the unit problem made model construction more difficult. Observations and student reports of cognitive overload and disorientation support this hypothesis. The problem landscape may have been too expansive for this class at this stage in their development.

However, differences between individual and group performances also suggest that performance may be enhanced with improvements in scaffolding support. The individual essay task was tightly structured; but scaffolding supports were either underutilized or missing as students participated in group tasks. Students often ignored the guiding structures built into the DP environment. After some prodding they used the categorizing questions in the Guides section, but unreflectively filling in the spaces became the task rather than using the Guides to help them find connections among events. Guided discovery by the teacher and definition of group roles and processes were minimal. For instance, she did not provide intermediate steps in completing group tasks at which she could monitor and refine student thinking; nor did she hold students firmly accountable for completion of scaffolding guides. Although she planned small group meetings, these occurred only sporadically and some groups never met formally with the teacher. Vaguely stated roles exacerbated disorganization and lack of accountability inside groups.

These difficulties may be attributed in part to the novelty of this learning experience for both the teacher and the students. Accustomed to studying units through narrative exposition of events, the thoughtful, collaborative norms that are necessary for student inquiry were not yet established. For instance, students had not seen the teacher modeling inquiry; nor had they come to expect that claims would be interrogated for adequate supporting evidence (Newmann, 1991c). Recall the student's complaints in the previous section about repetition in primary accounts and the lack of capsule summaries. These comments, corroborated by classroom observations, suggest a conception of history as a single, completed narrative. Rather than viewing the repetition as patterns in the data which suggested that reported experiences were not anomalies, students were bewildered by the messiness of raw data. Accustomed to being told what was important, they were not prepared to interpret, synthesize, and evaluate primary materials as disciplined inquirers. Such fundamental changes must be evolutionary. More experiences in problem-based discovery and continued refinements in support structures might be expected.
to nurture more thoughtful dispositions and improve student performances.

Some technology advocates argue that technology does not cause change, but serves as a symbol of change that invites teachers to reconsider their practice (e.g. Ringstaff et al., 1991). Others have claimed that technology may help overcome some of the organizational obstacles that have caused teachers to reject student problem-solving (e.g. Saye, 1998a). Despite organizational problems and superficial group outcomes, the collaborating teacher in this study was encouraged by student enthusiasm and individual performances and by the warmer classroom environment that she sensed in this unit. Surprised that students showed few signs of boredom, she was reconsidering the possibilities of in-depth instruction. She concluded that her experiences in the unit provided significant insight into how she might guide and support student-centered learning more effectively when the unit is taught again in the coming year:

I have a much better feeling for what my role is as a teacher, where I can still ask them to be creative, I can still ask them to do more critical thinking...And without interfering with that, I can put more structure to it. And I feel better about that, because I like structure. But I don't want to do too much for them... I didn't expect each day to need closure and a beginning like I do in my regular classes. I guess I expected it [the hypermedia] to be more a whole thing. But it did need that each day. . . At first, I expected them to pick that [the process] up right away, but I think it's going to have to come from reinforcement in the small groups...the teacher needs to play more of a role in checking.

Conclusions

This study describes the initial effort in a continuing collaboration aimed at building a sustainable model for multimedia-supported, problem-based social studies learning. Its findings should not be generalized. Interpretations emerging from the data of qualitative inquiry may suggest support for theory, but these conclusions are data-based speculations, not generalizable claims. In this study we deliberately chose a classroom where participants had little experience with this type of learning so that we could examine the challenges of problem-centered instruction in a typical setting. It remains for future work at this site and with other populations to extend these hypotheses beyond this particular instance. In particular, other studies need to test the potential of these and similar resources in settings where teachers
are already engaged in problem-based learning with their students. As part of a continuing line of inquiry, conclusions from this case may fit into a pattern of similar findings that build support for theory and its implications for practice.

A number of other explanations for the observed effects might be posited. Since the same teacher taught both groups, teacher enthusiasm for the new unit might be suspected to affect student learning. However, the teacher was not an advocate of problem-based or technology-supported learning and felt most comfortable teaching in a narrative style. Perhaps the novelty of the technology-supported unit and the interaction with the research team led to greater student enthusiasm and involvement. These explanations cannot be discounted. Student enthusiasm for this type of learning might flag with repeated exposure. Respondents' status as participants in a research study might account for some effects. However, both classes experienced some change in their normal unit pattern, and researchers were present in each class for the duration of the unit. Furthermore, although the DP group engaged in new types of learning, the outcome measures have situational validity as normal student evaluation tasks. The patterns emerging from participants' responses regarding engagement with content and development of empathy demonstrate a good "fit" with prior theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Such consistency increases confidence that the hypotheses offered here are plausible explanations for observed effects.

The greatest contributions of multimedia approaches may be in supporting the prerequisites to disciplined thought and more complex historical understanding. Student responses to this learning environment support previous work suggesting that multimedia may afford a more authentic context for learning that raises student interest, encourages deeper encounters with knowledge, and makes that knowledge more available for application to social problems (e.g., Cognition & Technology Group at Vanderbilt, 1992; Martin, 1987). Furthermore, student interview responses and essay performances suggest that the realism of multimedia environments may encourage learners to confront alternative perspectives in a more genuine fashion. These more empathetic encounters may help to nurture dialectical reasoning, a competency that has been identified as crucial to responsible civic problem-solving (Newmann, 1991a; Parker et al., 1989). However, to build adequate models of ill-structured social problems, learners must not only empathize with alternative perspectives; they also must have domain-specific and metacognitive knowledge that allows them to perceive the underlying conceptual dimensions of the problem and make linkages to broader knowledge (Chi, Glaser, & Farr, 1988; Parker et al., 1989, Wineburg, 1991). Our study suggests that although the expert guidance built into a multimedia environment
may support more contextualized views of a problem, multimedia support is not sufficient for cultivating rigorous inquiry.

Studies of problem-solving in environments without technology support have noted that teachers and learners struggle with the cognitive demands of disciplined inquiry (e.g., Brown, 1992; Rossi, 1995). Researchers have suggested that hypermedia scaffolds may provide guidance that mitigates these burdens (e.g., Hannafin et al., 1998; Jacobsen et al., 1996; Perfetti et al., 1999). However, our participants had difficulty managing the cognitive load even though the DP unit explicitly featured technology supports. Their struggles emphasize the difficulty of guiding inquiry and pose challenges for further development of technology-supported learning environments.

In our initial collaboration in a traditional social studies classroom, we were unsuccessful in establishing some key elements of an effective multimedia-supported problem-based environment. Learning focused around a central problem, and students encountered diverse perspectives, assumed responsibility for developing solutions, and publicly presented their conclusions. However, collaborative tasks did not feature rich roles nor structures that demanded positive interdependence. Most importantly, the scaffolding and coaching elements so central to the cognitive apprenticeship model (Brown et al., 1989) were insufficient.

Collaboration might be improved by providing models of collaborative group designs to the teacher prior to introducing problem-centered units. However, expository-oriented teachers must be conceptually ready before such models are meaningful. Informed by her experiences in this unit implementation, our teacher partner’s questions and reflections suggest that she is actively refining her conceptions of effective group designs.

Providing adequate support for thinking may pose a greater challenge for problem-centered learning. Part of our difficulties may have been due to the expansiveness of the unit problem. More circumscribed investigations might be more productive environments for nurturing disciplined thinking, particularly for groups new to this type of learning. But this study also suggests that much of the support necessary for disciplined inquiry must occur off-line. Integrated multimedia can help manage data and experiences with social phenomena. It may support sense-making. But given the ill-structured nature of social problems, it is unlikely that sufficient support for disciplined thinking can be built into the multimedia portion of the environment. Much of the crucial support for thinking must occur in the dynamic, unpredictable social environment of a particular learning group. The teacher must establish and reinforce the norms of a thoughtful, inquiry-based classroom. She must provide the spontaneous feedback so necessary to cognitive apprenticeship. These are demanding, draining tasks.
Ultimately, scaffolds that support the teacher in these efforts may be as important to disciplined inquiry as supports provided to students. Future units might benefit from such supports as video clips that model procedures and exemplary performances and procedural templates that assist the teacher in assessing and providing feedback on student progress.

We need more investigations of how guided discovery may be effectively implemented to support individual and group decision-making. Although they cannot replace the expert teacher, features of integrated multimedia environments might enhance the prospects of building thoughtful classrooms where problems are rigorously examined. The potential of embedded scaffolding for supporting teachers in the difficult task of guiding thought may make the investigation of problems more feasible for more teachers and learners.¹

¹ Support for this research has been provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Auburn University College of Education, and Auburn City Schools.

Appendix

Post-Unit Essay
Comparing Efforts to Bring About Social Change: The American Revolution and the African-American Civil Rights Movement

In 1776, the American colonists revolted from their mother country, Great Britain. Tensions had been growing for some time as the colonists accused Britain of violating their rights. In 1763, colonists were banned from living beyond the Appalachian mountains. Settlers already living there lost their property. The British Parliament imposed a series of taxes on sugar, tea, paper and other necessities. Colonists were not allowed to vote on these taxes. The colonists reacted by writing petitions to the government, by boycotting taxed goods and by threatening and assaulting tax collectors. In 1770, five colonists were killed in Boston when British troops were called out to quiet a mob. When a group of colonists destroyed cargoes of tea on British ships in Boston Harbor in 1773, large numbers of British troops were sent to Boston to enforce the law and keep order. Since there was not enough barracks space for all of the troops, some colonists were required to house troops in their homes. When troops traveled into the countryside in 1775 to seize a supply of weapons and ammunition, shots were fired, people were killed on both sides and the American Revolution had begun.

You have studied efforts in the 1960s by African-Americans to gain their full rights as U.S. citizens. Based upon your understanding of the events in that struggle, who do you think had greater justification for revolution: American colonists in the 1770s or African-Americans in the 1960s?

To answer this question, you should write four paragraphs:

Paragraph 1: Summarize the relevant events of the Civil Rights movement in much the same way that the American Revolution is done above. Be careful to avoid in this paragraph revealing your position and reasons for your position. That is what paragraph 4 is for.

Paragraph 2: Make the strongest argument you can that the colonists were more justified in revolting than African-Americans would have been. State
Paragraph 3: Make the strongest argument you can that African-Americans would have been more justified in revolting than the colonists. State this position and support it by responding to the reasons you gave in your Paragraph 2 argument.

BOTH PARAGRAPHS 2 & 3 SHOULD READ AS THOUGH THEY ARE THE SIDE YOU ARE TRULY TAKING.

Paragraph 4: Choose which group you believe had the stronger justification for revolution.

(1) Be sure your conclusion shows that you have considered the arguments against your position as well as arguments for your position.

(2) State what conditions must be present before people are justified in using force to bring about change.

(3) Do you believe those conditions were present for both groups, for neither group or for only one group?

Group Presentation Assessment Rubric

A. Accurately identifies what is already known or agreed upon about the past event.

4. Presents a thorough & correct account of what is already known. Supplies information that may not be commonly known, but that has some bearing on the topic being studied.

3. Presents an accurate account, with no important omissions, of what is already known or agreed upon about the topic being studied.

2. Presents information on what is already known or agreed upon about the topic being studied; however, the information may not be complete in all particulars, or the student may introduce some inaccuracies.

1. Presents little or no accurate & important information about what is already known or agreed upon about the topic.

B. Effectively interprets & synthesizes information.

4. Interprets the information gathered for a task in accurate and highly insightful ways. Provides a highly creative and unique synthesis of the information.

3. Accurately interprets information gathered for a task and concisely synthesizes it.

2. Makes significant errors in interpreting the information gathered for a task or synthesizes the information imprecisely or awkwardly.

1. Grossly misinterprets the information gathered for the task or fails to synthesize it.

C. Identifies opposing positions on an issue & the reasoning behind them.

4. Articulates detailed positions and the reasoning behind each.

3. Articulates positions and the basic reasoning underlying each.

2. Articulates positions but does not present clear lines of reasoning behind each position.

1. Does not articulate clear positions.

D. Clearly states a position & provides sufficient and appropriate evidence for claim.

4. Presents a clear & accurate treatment of all available evidence that addresses the central point of the claim. Considers what evidence is missing and how it should affect the evaluation of the claim.

3. With no major errors, presents all relevant evidence needed to support the claim.

2. Provides evidence for the claim, but may not address all necessary aspects.

1. Fails to provide convincing evidence for the claim.
E. Expresses ideas clearly.
4. Clearly and effectively communicates the main idea or theme & provides support that contains rich, vivid, & powerful detail.

F. Effectively uses a variety of information-gathering techniques & information resources.
4. Uses the important information-gathering techniques & information resources necessary to complete the task. Identifies little-known information resources or uses unique information-gathering techniques.

G. Creates a quality product.
4. Creates a product that exceeds conventional standards.

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References


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Abstract

In this paper, an historical case study is presented of the transplanting of curricular and instructional practices from the United States to Australia. The case study draws upon a collection of education policy documents (syllabuses, policy statements and correspondence) and oral histories recorded with key curriculum workers in Queensland (one of eight states and territories in Australia) from 1969 to 1989. Analyses of these data provide valuable insights into the complexities and intricacies of two eras of curriculum development and reform, and more broadly, into the validity or otherwise of significant historical assumptions and explanations held about those and other reform efforts. The paper advocates the use of conceptual constructs (social and cross-cultural perspectives) and methodological approaches (document analysis and interview-based fieldwork in the form of “oral histories”) in further empirical research on the transplanting of social studies across societies.

Introduction

Since the First World War, social studies has been institutionalized as a school subject in its birthplace of the United States and in many other diverse societies (Shafer, 1981; Shermis, 1989). Despite its transnational significance, the adoption and evolution of social studies outside of the United States has received very little scholarly attention (Hertzberg, 1982; Marker & Mehlinger, 1992). As a consequence, little is known about the transplanting of specific curricular and instructional practices from the United States to other societies, and particularly during periods of significant curriculum development and reform (Parry, 1998).

Historical accounts of the New Social Studies movement in the United States throughout the 1960s best exemplify this scholarly neglect. For instance, Mehaffy (1979) examines the contributions of four prominent educators—A.W. Foshay, Philip Phenix, Joseph Schwab and Jerome Bruner—on the nature of knowledge and role of disciplines in social studies in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Fraenkel (1992, 1994) and Isham (1984) analyze experimentation in social studies curricu-
lum development in the 1960s and the contributions and legacy of the theoretical perspectives of Hilda Taba. Dow (1992), Fenton (1991), Massialas (1992), and Rossi (1992) offer introspective accounts of the successes and failures of particular curriculum projects during the 1960s. These accounts provide insightful and contrasting commentaries on “one of the most significant reform movements since the 1950s” (Marker & Mehlinger, 1992).

But the impact of this reform movement on the adoption of curricular and instructional practices of social studies in societies outside of the United States remains a glaring omission. For as the late Hazel Hertzberg (1982, p. 5) has remarked more broadly, “Relatively few American social studies educators have written about the social studies outside the United States. Perhaps the fact that the social studies are an American invention has discouraged us from looking elsewhere (Hertzberg, 1982, p. 5)”. Such sentiments are shared by Marker and Mehlinger (1992) who describe social studies research in the United States as being “rather ethnocentric”. The absence of what Hertzberg (1982) calls a “comparative (cross-cultural) international perspective” is not unique to scholarly activity in the United States.

Australian scholars too have been reluctant to move beyond national boundaries in their accounts of the New Social Studies movement. They have discussed the adoption of key curricular changes and instructional practices in individual states throughout the 1960s and 1970s (Anderson, 1981; Encel, 1970; Hill, 1994; Whitehead, 1973). They also have compared the conceptual and design features of syllabuses developed by individual state educational authorities during this period (Kydd, 1971; McLeod, 1969; Pearson, 1985; Quinn, 1992; Reed, 1976). And like other Australian educational historians, these scholars have neglected the impact of intellectual and other contextual influences from broader national and international settings. As Connell (1987, p. 50) succinctly notes, “One of Australia’s besetting sins in many areas, not least in the writing of the history of education, has been that of parochialism”. “For many”, asserts Connell (1987, p. 50), “Australian education has been what happens in their own state...oblivious to interstate connections or of the world-wide flow of educational discussion.”

This historical case study responds to the challenges advanced by both Hertzberg (1982) and Connell (1987) by focusing upon curriculum development and reform efforts in the state of Queensland (one of eight states and territories in Australia) from 1969 to 1989, and by situating these developments within a comparative (cross-cultural) international context. It is premised on the belief that our understandings of the transnational phenomenon of social studies will remain fragmentary and incomplete until the processes and outcomes of its
adoption in societies other than the United States have been fully documented.

The study focuses upon official state level efforts and does not seek to examine the impact of curricular and instructional practices associated with the New Social Studies at the school and classroom levels. In other words, it examines the conceptualization and development of the “official” state curriculum and not the “actual” curriculum as experienced by teachers and their students in schools and classrooms. There are likely to be enormous differences between the official state curriculum and the actual curriculum, or what Ross (1997, p.9) calls respectively the “formal” curriculum and the “enacted” curriculum. Cornbleth (1985) similarly calls these the “technical curriculum” and the “social process curriculum”. It is hoped that this study will be complemented by empirical research that takes the “enacted” or “social process” curriculum as its starting point.

Objectives

This paper sheds some light on the transplanting of curricular and instructional practices in Queensland (Australia) that have their origins in the United States. It focuses upon two eras of curriculum development and reform from 1969-71 and 1981-89. Specifically, the paper seeks to: (a) discuss the conceptual constructs and methodological approaches that have informed the design and implementation of this study; (b) present some of the major findings of the study, particularly in relation to the validity or otherwise of significant historical assumptions and explanations held about curriculum development and reform efforts; and (c) outline some research questions to guide further empirical research into the adoption of social studies across societies and its actualization in schools and classrooms. The paper begins with a discussion of the conceptual constructs and methodological approaches employed in the study.

Conceptual Constructs and Methodological Approaches

This study advocates the use of the conceptual constructs of “social” and “cross-cultural” perspectives and the methodological approaches of document analysis and interview-based fieldwork in the form of “oral histories”. These constructs and approaches are discussed below.

Social and Cross-cultural Perspectives

This study contributes to an emerging body of scholarship that emphasizes the social interactions of small-scale cases of curriculum development and reform, and their relationships to broader, cross-
cultural influences (Collins, 1989; Cremin, 1988; Goodson, 1988; Johnston, 1989; LeRiche, 1987, 1992; Lundgren, 1987; Parry, 1998; Shermis, 1992; Smith, 1984). This scholarship seeks to illuminate the thinking, decisions and actions of individuals and groups involved in the process of curriculum development and reform efforts, and the transplanting of curricular and instructional practices across societies.

But how may relationships between small-scale cases and broader, cross-cultural influences be examined? The complementary conceptual constructs put forward by Silver (1983), Mattingly (1983) and Goodson (1992) are useful in the investigation of such relationships. These constructs include Silver's (1983) proposal for tapping into the "cross-frontier resonances" of curriculum development, Mattingly's (1983) notion of viewing educational institutions as "historical prisms", and Goodson's articulation of "localized and historical studies". To Silver (1983), small-scale curriculum histories can illuminate multi-dimensional aspects of curriculum development and reform. They can provide a "sense of variety and individuality" as they can lean "on individual perceptions of the educational condition, as well as on cross-frontier resonances of larger dimensions" (Silver, 1983, p. 191). Similarly, Mattingly (1983, pp. 49-50) advocates that the investigation of a single institution (such as a state educational authority) affords the opportunity to examine broader contexts as it "generally reveals even local complexities or at times translocal connections". These translocal connections may involve broader, cross-cultural influences. "In these senses", Mattingly (1983, pp. 49-50) goes on to state, "the institution acts as a kind of historical prism, identifying individuals, rhetorics, and groupings of a significant collective endeavour over time". To Goodson (1992), a cross-cultural history can be undertaken by analyzing the "unique" evolution of school subjects in specific social, cultural and educational milieux, and their relationships to local, national and international milieux. He writes:

the subject-based curriculum might be an aspect of globalisation and modernisation but we need to know precisely how this global pattern interacts and collides with more local/national cultures and structures...social histories of school subjects need to be undertaken in national and local milieux...Only where these aspects of uniqueness have been fully explored can we begin to pursue more overarching analytic frameworks, more comparative and general perspectives...We need detailed local and historical studies of how common school subject labels override different patterns of knowledge formation and institutionalised practice (Goodson, 1992, p. 23).
In these constructs, the investigation of curriculum development and reform efforts may be perceived as a “social construction” in which curricular outcomes are viewed as products of human endeavor which take place within an institutional setting (Grundy, 1987). In this sense, the formal or official curriculum is viewed as a social artifact, conceived of and designed for deliberate human purposes. This conceptualization is useful for two reasons. First, it allows for the identification and interpretation of the dynamics and complexities of social interactions (including the role and relationships of individuals and groups) in curriculum development and reform efforts. Second, it allows for the identification and interpretation of the significance of intellectual and other contextual influences (within a broader comparative international context) and their impact upon the endeavors of curriculum workers.

**Document Analyses and Interview-based Fieldwork in the Form of “Oral Histories”**

As alluded to earlier, this study adopts a set of research methods and techniques that are designed to illuminate the endeavors of curriculum workers as well as provide an opportunity for them to recall and perceive their experiences in those endeavors. It includes document analysis and interview-based fieldwork, in the form of oral histories. Although related, these research methods and techniques served different purposes in the study.

Key education policy documents (syllabuses, minutes of meetings, and correspondence) held by the State Department of Education (Queensland) were surveyed for the purposes of identifying the design features of each syllabus and the processes employed by curriculum workers in their development. Despite inconsistencies and shortcomings in these documents, they afford us with a range of insights into “the visible and public testimony of selected rationales and legitimating rhetorics” (Goodson, 1992, p. 23) in social studies.

To complement these data, curriculum workers were given a “voice” that sought to illuminate the dynamic and interactive aspects of curriculum development and reform in particular contexts and at particular times. This voice was articulated through the use of oral history methods. These methods not only complement documentary sources but also contribute a unique and authentic perspective to the historical record in their own right (Parry, 1994). Oral history methods can, as Thompson (1988) succinctly points out, “give back to the people who made and experienced history, through their own words, a central place”.

In this historical case study, we are concerned with the voices of curriculum workers who developed elementary social studies sylla-
buses and related curriculum materials in Queensland from 1969-1971, and 1981-1989. Their oral histories provide a means of examining the complexity of curriculum development as experienced and understood by curriculum workers, and of balancing an interest in individuals with an understanding of their institutional lives and contributions. This approach provides an in-depth, balanced and interpretative historical account in which evaluative, impressionistic and judgmental accounts are valued. When taken with traditional documentary sources, the analysis of these empirical data may result in the rewriting of existing historical assumptions and explanations. Such reassessments are of fundamental importance to this particular historical case study.

**Description and Rationale for the Research Design and Procedures**

In adopting “social” and “cross-cultural” approaches, this study seeks the confirmation or otherwise of significant historical assumptions and explanations advanced by Hazlett (1979), Hertzberg (1971, 1981, 1982) and Musgrave (1979) in the light of “new” empirical evidence. Some of the more significant historical assumptions and explanations of interest to this particular study are discussed below.

First, the study relates to earlier work undertaken by Hazlett (1979) and Hertzberg (1971, 1981, 1982) as it is concerned with the sources and dynamics of curriculum development and reform efforts in the past, and their implications for the teaching of social studies. Hazlett (1979) argues that curriculum development and reform efforts ordinarily are practical, normative endeavors conducted with urgency in a crisis atmosphere. “Almost invariably”, writes Hazlett (1979, p. 130), “it is an unsettling time of crisis, which challenges curriculum workers either to catch up with society or to adapt quickly to some precipitate veer”.

In echoing this crisis-driven and deterministic perspective, Hertzberg (1971) views phases of curriculum development and reform in social studies as distinct events, and products of larger trends and concerns in society. “While it is possible to identify basic curricular models”, argues Hertzberg (1971, p. 21), “history does not repeat itself with exactitude”. “Each model operates”, according to Hertzberg (1971, p. 21), “in a specific and different historical context, as part of a larger curriculum reform effort, and in response to broad societal concerns”.

Hertzberg also contends that curriculum developers have had largely inadequate understandings of past curriculum development and reform efforts. “The leadership of each type of curriculum reform”, she goes on to state, “seems to remain largely ignorant of the work of its predecessors” (1981, pp. 21-22). “The newer reformers”,
she argues, "seem quite unaware of the historical antecedents, and are thereby cut off from a body of experience which could be highly relevant to their concerns" (1981, pp. 21-22).

Second, the study relates to work undertaken by Musgrave (1979) as it is concerned with the influence of ideas upon the social studies curriculum in Australia that originated in the United States and elsewhere. Australian education, according to Musgrave (1979, p. 99), "has always been derivative and eclectic, originally owing to the difficulty of disentangling itself from its colonial apron-strings, but more recently because of the great ease of international communication". "There has been a tendency", adds Musgrave (1979, p. 99), "to convert theories from overseas into slogans so that in a not over-subtle way vital application of any theory fails". "Ideas are imported", concludes Musgrave (1979, p. 99), "and, when applied at second or third hand, lose their cutting edge".

In investigating these historical assumptions and explanations, the study examines deductively the validity of two specific contentions. They are:

First, that curriculum workers in Queensland from 1969 to 1989 were influenced heavily by curricular and instructional practices associated with the New Social Studies from the United States, and that these ideas were adopted with little local (state) adaptation; and

Second, that curriculum workers involved in syllabus revision and development in Queensland from 1981 to 1989 were more distanced from the curricular and instructional practices associated with the New Social Studies and were less committed to those educational ideals.

In examining the first contention, the study is thematic and cross-sectional as it examines the particular and specific rather than the general and collective. It seeks to understand the uniqueness and complexity of each era of curriculum development and reform in elementary social studies in Queensland from 1969-1971 and 1981-1989. In examining the second contention, the study extends across the particular and specific to include the general and collective. As such, the study goes beyond the uniqueness and complexity of each era by focusing upon relationships which may exist between them. It seeks to discern patterns of continuity and change, and commonality and difference, in the understandings, deliberations and actions of curriculum workers separated in time.
Findings of the Study

This study investigates the sources and dynamics of curriculum development and reform efforts in social studies in Queensland from 1969 to 1989. Within this period, two distinct eras of curriculum development and reform (1969-1971 and 1981-1989) are compared and contrasted from “social” and “cross-cultural” perspectives. My intention is to provide a comparative account of these two eras of curriculum development and reform and to indicate what they tell us about the two contentions put forward above.

The First Reform Era, 1969 to 1971

In the first era of curriculum development and reform from 1969 to 1971, eight curriculum workers collaboratively developed a “new” social studies syllabus for use in Queensland elementary schools. Clarke was a School Inspector who was appointed as the project leader. He was an enthusiastic and meticulous individual who had a longstanding interest in social studies. He worked with Wright (policy officer), Hughes (lecturer from a teachers’ college), and Adams, Bauer and Graham (school principals). Taksa and James (school teachers) were co-opted towards the end of the project. Clarke describes his colleagues as “a pretty good team” in which “contributions were made from all levels, from the infant level right up” (Clarke, 1993). Their new syllabus, popularly known as the “new social studies”, was implemented in all state elementary schools in 1971-3 and remained in use until the late 1980s.

In designing the “new” syllabus, the curriculum workers responded to both localized (state and national) and international influences. At the local level, they were concerned primarily with state issues concerning the perceived inadequacies of the preceding syllabus that was introduced in 1952 (and revised slightly in 1964). This syllabus took citizenship education as its central goal, emphasized the rote learning of important historical and geographical information from an Anglo-Celtic perspective, and arranged this information in a continent-by-continent and country-by-country approach (Parry, 1998).

Apart from responding to these localized concerns, curriculum workers were also influenced by the educational movement of the New Social Studies that had gained popularity in the United States throughout the 1960s, and embraced the educational ideals of humanistic progressivism. The New Social Studies movement was ushered in by the Soviet launching of Sputnik in October 1957 and was characterized by large-scale, discipline-based curriculum projects that emphasized the structure of the social sciences and modes of inquiry adopted by social scientists. More than fifty New Social Studies cur-
riculum projects supported by scholarly societies and Congressional funding were undertaken by university professors and trailed in school districts throughout the United States (Haas, 1977; Hertzberg, 1981; Fenton, 1991). The projects employed a "top-down" model of curriculum development in which project materials were researched, developed, disseminated, and finally, adopted in schools and classrooms (Fenton, 1991). Their objectives were drawn overwhelmingly from the knowledge, structure and modes of inquiry of history and social science disciplines rather than the child or society (Bruner, 1960; Goodlad, 1966; Fenton, 1966a, 1966b). They employed discovery methods of teaching which encouraged students to use facts, concepts and generalizations to generate new knowledge (Fenton, 1966a, 1966b). They experimented with scope and sequence, multimedia materials, and the infusion of social sciences in curriculum designs.

It was not until the late 1960s that curriculum materials associated with the Anthropology Curriculum Study Project, the Harvard Project, and the Fenton/Good Project at Carnegie-Mellon began to appear. By 1972, the bulk of the New Social Studies materials were published (Hertzberg, 1981). By the mid 1970s, "the movement was dead and the materials were gathering dust on bookroom shelves" (Fenton, 1991, p. 85). Many of these projects, according to Hertzberg (1989, p. 98), "used, or rather discovered or perhaps reinvented all unwittingly, many of the methods of teaching and learning that humanistic progressive educators had created and popularized". Humanistic progressivism, as Hertzberg (1989, p. 98) points out, "seeks to nurture the development of the individual while at the same time encouraging students to participate actively as citizens in a democratic society."

In endorsing this philosophy, curriculum workers in Queensland adopted scholarship as the central goal of social studies and expanded the role of the newer social sciences of anthropology, sociology, politics, and economics in the new syllabus. The term "citizenship" was deleted from the statement of goals, and the preparation for "active participation in the life of the community" became but one concern amongst others. The syllabus recognized "that individuals had different goals, values and expectations" and explored "how you could get pupils used to change and how we could do something about predicting change and initiating change" (Adams, 1993).

In refocusing the relative importance of scholarship and citizenship education in the syllabus, curriculum workers were enthusiastic about specific curricular and instructional practices associated with the New Social Studies movement in the United States. They were mainly attracted to the theoretical perspectives of Hilda Taba at San Francisco State University (at that time, San Francisco State College). Taba and her project team had developed a series of instructional
guides that emphasized the development of cognitive processes in children in the elementary grades. The innovative and exemplary approaches of "inductive teaching" and the "spiral curriculum" were fundamental to her approach.

These practices filtered back to curriculum workers in Queensland by word of mouth, correspondence, and the educational press. They acknowledge openly the influence of these practices upon their deliberations and decisions. For as two curriculum workers succinctly note:

Taba was god-like. Practically, every person interested in social studies syllabus development in those days used her books (Adams, 1993).

It (the 1971 syllabus) is Taba through and through (Taksa, 1993).

Taba's ideas were something of a revelation and their presentation in elaborate and expensively produced publications were "simply irresistible". The adoption of these ideas by curriculum workers resulted in a significant reassessment of their preconceptions of social studies, the structure of knowledge, and the development of thinking processes. For as Hughes (1993) points out:

Taba was certainly an awakening, a renaissance to us. It was clear that she had approached curriculum planning in great depth. It looked very enticing. There is no doubt that we were much influenced by Taba. We were seduced by the terminology and excited in the sense that for the first time we were recognizing that the thought process was critical.

In adopting these new practices, curriculum workers emphasize that their work involved more than "just copying" (Clarke, 1993). They claim to have been engaged in an extrapolation exercise that necessitated a complex process of translation and adaptation from California to the localized social, cultural and educational context of Queensland. For as these representative statements suggest:

Taba provided the framework and we definitely adapted that to the local needs...there is no doubt about that (Graham, 1993).

We anguished over the extrapolation exercise. I found that rather exciting. The difficulty we had was to extrapo-
late from the Californian scene and put it into place here (Hughes, 1993).

Wright (1993) explains how the processes of extrapolation unfolded:

It was the main theoretical base of Taba that appealed to us. It was the framework that Taba talked about, and it was particularly her emphasis on teaching thinking and development, and her ideas on teaching strategies. They were the things that really won the day for her work as a model. We applied those things to the local situation as much as we could. In a sense, we took the best things and tried to integrate them. But, I think Taba was the real basis of the whole syllabus.

The complexity of these processes is most evident in the selection and development of key concepts in the syllabus. The selection of concepts, their relationship to the social science disciplines, and their wording generated a great deal of debate and discussion. For as a number of curriculum workers recall:

We discussed concepts ad nauseam. We used to have terrific arguments about what a concept was. It was a long and protracted process (Adams, 1993).

We would argue for a whole meeting over the selection of concepts and wording of main ideas. We wanted it just right. We wanted it to be clear so that teachers could understand it (Graham, 1993).

Concepts in the 1971 syllabus were fewer in number than in Taba's program and related directly to the social sciences disciplines. For as some of the curriculum workers point out:

Taba's concepts incidentally were nothing like ours, simply because there were too many concepts in Taba. The other Queensland syllabuses (Language Arts, Mathematics, etc.) did not have innumerable concepts (Adams, 1993).

What was taken was the idea of the structure, not the structure itself. We went back and did the original work of designing it. We didn't just take the concepts and the structure of everything that Taba had developed. We didn't
just Australianize it. What we did was go back and do our own original research in developing what we saw to be appropriate key concepts. We took the idea of key concepts, main ideas, and so on. What the Queensland syllabus did was to start from the basic things that we wanted to make sure were included: history, geography, sociology, anthropology, economics, and so on. What are the key concepts there? How do they relate? How do we put them together? What key concepts can we make? There is a fairly close relationship between those disciplines and the seven key concepts in Queensland. So we took a very different way forward and it wasn’t just a case of taking all the work that Taba had done (James, 1993).

We didn’t use the concepts that Taba had developed. We basically whittled them down to seven key concepts. The idea was that we would be covering this mass of other concepts that the Californian curriculum had come up with, with just the seven key concepts (Wright, 1993).

Curriculum workers also adopted a “spiral” approach in the syllabus. They recognized “that certain concepts, grasped with varying degrees of understanding according to the abilities of the children, are presented in increasing degrees of abstraction in successive grades” (Department of Education, 1970, p. i). They recognized that children are able to deal increasingly with broader and more abstract content with chronological age. In this approach, “many main ideas, concepts and skills are continually re-introduced in succeeding units, each time at greater depth and breadth” (Department of Education, 1971, p. iii). Year 1, for instance, deals with concepts and main ideas taken from experiences which children have close at hand, while in year 7 the concepts and main ideas are more remote and abstract. For in the words of Clark (1993):

A lot of the concepts that had to be developed were introduced as early as the infant school. Children had to grasp concepts. For instance, they had the concept of “rules”. They would start off with the rules in the home and go up from that until they came to the system of government and the system of rules that may have been made by tribes and clans. They would look at why the rules were necessary and how they may have led to conflict. The same thing applies to “trade and industry”. You get concepts of barter, why money took its place, and how trade devel-
oped. These things were done at a meaningful level. The children could do role playing and acting. There was a good deal of group work. Children worked in groups and actually observed things such as traffic at the front gate. They would classify the cars and come up with some sort of deduction. They could weave wool and make clothes. They would come to the notion of “specialization” and the “division of labor”. The children could role-play a lot of those things. The whole grasp of society was given more meaning.

They also recognized that the acquisition of knowledge involves the process of inquiry and not merely the acceptance of a static body of facts. They emphasized the importance of thinking processes and, for the first time, explicitly employed the notion that “thinking” is a process that can be learned. James (1993) sees this approach to teaching and learning in the syllabus as prescriptive. He states:

It is interesting that the policy was very, very intrusive on teaching approaches. That syllabus didn’t leave it open to just any sort of teaching. The deductive, stand up and deliver “chalk and talk” as the one and only method following a textbook from beginning to end, just wasn’t on with that syllabus. The policy was, “You will take an inductive approach to teaching!” So, it was a policy that set that global framework for the teaching approach.

These new, prescriptive approaches were intended to transform the teaching and learning of social studies, and were integral to broader educational changes occurring in Queensland. For as Taksa (1993) and Hughes (1993) remark:

I believe that teaching in the classroom was the radical step. I believe it was the major radical step in education for many years. There was such a change of image during that period of time as well as a change of syllabus construction, and a change of teaching methodology. In that time, we had open area schools and open climate schools. In that time, we talked individualized learning, group work dynamics, all at once. That’s what the “new social studies” syllabus landed into (Taksa, 1993).

One of the interesting things about the Taba curriculum was that for the first time we pronounced, in our transla-
tion of Taba into Queensland, that knowledge was not important for its own sake. That, of course, was revolutionary. If you couldn’t rattle off the Tudor Monarchs, there was something wrong with you; you were an educational flop. I could never understand why that was so. It was a change. It was part of this whole era which threw everything out - the Vietnam War, the “Flower Society”, all of this - that’s what it was. This was our little “flower society” rendition (Hughes, 1993).

It was an era that also acknowledged the professionalism of teachers. “It let teachers have their own head”, recalls Adams (1993), as “they had been so restricted by Scholarship examinations and inspectors that they were not game to do anything but follow the book”. “Teachers”, adds Adams (1993), “now began to be treated as professionals”. Taksa (1993) concurs by pointing out that:

One of the plusses of that era, I believe, was that it opened a door to teachers for professionalism. It opened the door even wider to let them know that they had the right to select knowledge and experiences to suit their children, and that had never been available before. The flexibility was there to still come up with an end result. The same end result, but to use different approaches and resources.

With the adoption of these curricular and instructional practices, curriculum workers initiated a shift from a traditional, conservative academic curriculum to a humanistic curriculum. The attainment of conceptual understandings was emphasized over the rote learning of factual information. Concepts were drawn from various social science disciplines, including the emerging disciplines of anthropology, sociology, politics and economics. They were arranged in a “spiral” curriculum and sequenced for cumulative learning based on chronological age. Teaching strategies were employed to encourage both the acquisition of knowledge and the development of specified thinking skills and processes. Finally, children were encouraged to examine their own and other people’s attitudes, values, feelings, and sensitivities.

Reform Era 1981 to 1989

In the second era of curriculum development and reform from 1981 to 1989, eight curriculum workers collaboratively developed a revised social studies syllabus. This new generation of curriculum workers included Hyne, Kelly, Lyons, Mackle, Stuart, Taksa, Thompson and Wright, with others joining throughout the duration of the
revision and development process. Taksa and Wright were the only continuing curriculum workers from the 1970s. Mackle, a School Inspector, was appointed as the project leader. He was an enthusiastic supporter of social studies and committed to the development of mapping and other academic skills. Their new syllabus, popularly known as the "revised social studies", was implemented in all state elementary schools in 1987-9 and continues to be used in schools and classrooms at present.

In designing this syllabus, the new generation of curriculum workers engaged in a "revision" rather than a "reconceptualization" of the "new social studies" syllabus. They responded mainly to localized problems associated with its implementation in elementary classrooms across the state throughout the 1970s. For instance, Mackle was acutely concerned that teachers appeared to be unaware of the philosophical and theoretical intentions of the "new social studies" syllabus. As Mackle (1993) points out:

> Teachers just picked out the content, taught it as content, gave a test on it, and didn’t try to develop anything from it. A lot of them didn’t know where the skills were supposed to be taking the children, and what was supposed to come out of the activities. A lot of them were activities for the sake of gathering data or content rather than developing a skill.

Wright concurs with this perspective. Some observers, comments Wright (1993), saw it "as being too heavy a move, too early, too strong, and too difficult for many teachers. I think for some of them it might have been like speaking another language".

In this revision, curriculum workers simplified the theoretical underpinnings of the Taba Social Studies Program and reinforced the curriculum development work undertaken by their predecessors a decade earlier. They wished to see social studies taught effectively by classroom teachers. For as one curriculum worker comments:

> There was never any discussion of whether there should be anything other than Taba’s model. That was a given. Our task was to make it (the "new social studies" syllabus) more useable in classrooms (Lyons, 1993).

Indeed, the perceived need for a "useable syllabus" was so great that another curriculum worker speaks of a concerted effort to "purify" and "cleanse" the syllabus. They sought to do this by presenting the inductive teaching strategies of Taba in the absence of a theoreti-
cal framework, or in the words of Thompson (1993), "without the trappings". She states:

Taba was still paramount. Because, what we tried to do was look at the pure philosophy without the trappings that had been put around it in the 1971 syllabus. And, it was Taba that we came back to time and time again. Every time we came back to Taba, we found that it was a sound philosophy and a sound approach. We hoped teachers would pick up on that and forget the trappings that had painted Taba in the way that we thought, between 1971 and when our materials started to come through, had really turned them away from social studies and turned it into something quite trite. But, the philosophy itself we thought was still sound (Thompson 1993).

As such, Taba's philosophy was translated into specific classroom activities that were published as sourcebooks for each year level of the elementary school. It was demanding and stressful work. Members of the project team thought of themselves as "work-horses", who according to Lyons (1993), "were meant to churn out teaching materials". The sourcebooks were seen as "baseline" documents. They were intended to support those teachers experiencing difficulties in actualizing the 1971 syllabus and to ensure that social studies was being taught "appropriately" and "correctly" by classroom teachers across the state. As the project leader, Mackle (1993) promoted this notion and had great faith in the capacity of the sourcebooks to achieve those goals. As he explains:

Our aim was the sourcebooks...that was number one. We had to get those sourcebooks into classrooms so that teachers had a range of realistic and approved activities that they could use to develop their concepts, skills, and main ideas. They had all the elements built into them. If teachers followed those activities through, they would automatically be doing the things they were supposed to do (Mackle, 1993).

Thompson (1993) also embraced this notion and claims that the classroom activities included in the sourcebooks were "appropriate" for teachers. As Thompson comments:

And that was the key point - appropriate for teachers. Because we weren't looking to move them enormously
from what they had been doing. We were simply trying to show them that they had to be more systematic about what they were doing.

In preparing the sourcebooks, curriculum workers were hampered by ambitious timelines, limited resources, and management decisions. Lyons (1993) comments:

We just felt that we were going to be working on the syllabus forever. So while we were under pressure in terms of the writing commitment, there was also a sense that we were just on the never-never in terms of the overall project completion, document publication and distribution.

Thompson (1993) concurs:

The pressure that we wrote under as a project team led to enormous difficulties at times, and at times there was extreme stress. There was a lot of pressure there to meet the timelines and a lot of pressure for us to ensure that teachers were not left without materials. There were times when people got very irate. But, I look back at that and see it in terms of really being part of the territory. Social studies was “Ho-hum, old hat”. It was a revision, consequently we had to meet our deadlines, our resources were limited, we couldn’t get project team members when we needed them, and we worked under an enormous amount of pressure; probably, because we were trying to do as much within our mandate as we possibly could. I know that the work pressure was enormous. But we had to get the classroom activities completed.

As a consequence, curriculum workers referred more to the 1971 syllabus and teachers’ guides than to the original writings of Taba and her associates. For as Mackle (1993) readily acknowledges:

We didn’t go to authors very much that I can recall, because all that was done previously. We were not writing another syllabus. We had to reinforce what had already been written. So, it was all there for us. We dwelt heavily on the 1971 syllabus.

Mackle, Thompson, Stuart and others contend that the revised syllabus reinforced and simplified faithfully the theoretical underpinnings of the Taba Social Studies Program and the “new social studies”
syllabus. "It was a revisit", acknowledges Stuart (1993), "designed to raise an awareness of and improve existing teaching practice". "I think", he concludes, "we were successful in achieving that". In contrast, Wright and Hyne believed that the development of "baseline" classroom activities was a retrograde step as they were "probably seen by some project members as very much a support" (Hyne 1993). "I felt", continues Hyne (1993), "that the sourcebooks just provided teachers with recipes. They didn't add to their professional development or help them to understand the philosophy of the syllabus more clearly". This perspective is shared by Wright (1993) who felt that "the syllabus revision in many respects did a very bad injustice to the 1971 curriculum". "We tried to translate the Taba model through those resource materials", Wright (1993) goes on to state, "but did not do it all that successfully". "I think", concludes Wright (1993), "that it led to a lot of unthinking teaching".

In developing the sourcebooks, curriculum workers also experienced difficulties with the construction of significant social and cultural knowledge in the classroom activities. In fact, one sourcebook (year 5) was withdrawn by the Department of Education from Queensland elementary schools in 1990, amidst much public controversy, for its failure to depict adequately the belief systems and contributions of Indigenous peoples and immigrants to Australian society. And to further simplify the theoretical underpinnings of the syllabus, curriculum workers devised a scope and sequence chart that drew on the "expanding communities" curriculum advanced by Paul R. Hanna in the United States. This framework was superimposed over the conceptual pattern advocated by Taba and emphasized the study of Australia to the exclusion of other societies.

With the revision of these curricular and instructional practices, curriculum workers sought to consolidate notions of teaching that were introduced in the 1970s and influenced by the New Social Studies movement in the United States. Some curriculum workers (Mackle, Thompson & Stuart) maintain that the revised syllabus adhered strictly to the theoretical underpinnings of inductive teaching and the spiral curriculum popularized by Hilda Taba. But others (Hyne & Wright) believe that their efforts were not as theoretically informed as their predecessors, and failed to extend the teaching and learning of social studies in elementary schools.

**Analysis of Contentions in the Light of Data**

In reviewing these small-scale cases of curriculum development and reform, it can be argued that empirical evidence gathered in this study and reported here both supports and contradicts aspects of the two contentions (as stated earlier) and existing historical explanations

In relation to the first contention, it may be concluded that curriculum workers in Queensland from 1969 to 1989 were influenced profoundly by curricular and instructional practices from the United States. Indeed, the theoretical and curriculum development work of Hilda Taba associated with the New Social Studies movement in the United States informed, directly and indirectly, the construction of syllabuses in social studies in Queensland over two decades. Those influences continue, as the 1981 syllabus is currently used in state elementary classrooms. But there are sufficient differences between the two eras of curriculum development and reform to endorse Hertzberg's (1971, p. 21) contention that "history does not repeat itself with exactitude".

Empirical evidence also calls into question Musgrave's (1979) assumption that curricular and instructional practices (such as conceptual development and inductive teaching) were adopted with little localized (state and national) adaptation. Indeed, curriculum workers support the view that the theoretical and curriculum development work of Hilda Taba from the United States underwent significant adaptation in Queensland, and particularly in relation to the selection and arrangement of knowledge as social science concepts and main ideas. Indeed, these aspects of Taba’s Social Studies Program were revised completely and adapted to suit the localized social, cultural and educational milieux of Queensland.

The second contention also is supported by the findings of the study. Empirical evidence suggests that curriculum workers from 1981 to 1989 were distanced from the curricular and instructional practices associated with the New Social Studies and less committed to those educational ideals. Their work was characterized by a desire to provide teachers with "appropriate" and "acceptable" activity-based teaching materials and resources in the form of sourcebooks. In so doing, they overlooked the educational ideals espoused in the writings of Taba and her associates (Fraenkel et al., 1969) and the theoretical underpinnings of the preceding 1971 syllabus. This finding is significant and supports Hertzberg's notion that curriculum workers seem "to remain largely ignorant of the work of their predecessors" and "are thereby cut off from a body of experience which could be highly relevant to their concerns" (1981, pp. 21-22).

But it challenges Hertzberg's (1971, p. 21) notion that eras of curriculum development and reform respond directly to broader societal concerns. The design and development of the "revised" syllabus in social studies in Queensland indicate that curriculum development and reform do not always respond to broader social and cultural changes. They appeared to be less concerned with broader social is-
sues and neglected the inclusion of significant Indigenous and immigrant perspectives in the syllabus. As such, this era demonstrates that curriculum development and reform may take place for perceived "educational" and "pragmatic" reasons. Curriculum workers responded to the perceived concerns of teachers by undertaking "practical, normative activities urgently in a crisis atmosphere" (Hazlett, 1979).

Conclusions

This analysis of two contrasting eras of curriculum development and reform sheds some light on the transplanting of curricular and instructional practices from the United States to Australia. It specifically indicates how two generations of curriculum workers interacted with ideas associated with the New Social Studies in the United States and how those ideas influenced the design of two state syllabuses used by elementary teachers in Queensland from the early 1970s to the present.

Curriculum workers in the 1970s were inextricably linked to the curriculum development and reform efforts of the New Social Studies in the United States. They were provided with a broader theoretical base that enabled them to view the teaching of social studies in exciting new ways. As we have seen, they enthusiastically embraced the theoretical perspectives of Hilda Taba and sought to translate those perspectives into the localized social, cultural and educational context of Queensland. Their work could be interpreted as a theoretically informed and highly innovative era of curriculum development and reform that sought to transform the teaching and learning of social studies in Queensland elementary schools.

In contrast, curriculum workers in the 1980s were more distanced from the curriculum development and reform efforts of the New Social Studies in the United States. They were less enthusiastic about the theoretical perspectives of Hilda Taba and more concerned about the development of teaching materials that sought to address perceived teaching difficulties associated with the actualization of the New Social Studies in schools and classrooms. This supports Musgrave's (1979, p. 99) notion that "ideas are imported and, when applied at second or third hand, lose their cutting edge". This certainly seems to have been the case in the second era of curriculum development and reform in Queensland reviewed here. Their work could be interpreted as a reactionary era of curriculum development that addressed the pragmatic concerns of teachers and sought to re-establish more centralized, Departmental control over the teaching of social studies in schools and classrooms.
The findings of the study also suggest that more needs to be known about the transplanting of curricular ideas and practices across social, cultural and educational boundaries, and more broadly, about the emergence and evolution of social studies as a transnational phenomenon. It also suggests that such research needs to be complemented by studies that explore the implementation of curricular and instructional practices within the “enacted” (Ross, 1997) or “social process” (Cornbleth, 1985) curriculum. Such studies need to focus upon the “actual day-to-day classroom interactions of teachers, students, and ideas” (Cornbleth, 1985). This would provide a more balanced and accurate picture of curriculum development and reform efforts and go some way in addressing Marker and Mehlinger’s (1992, p. 845) concern about the “relative lack of sound research on school practice”.

Posed as questions to guide further empirical research, we could well ask: Why has the concept of social studies been adopted in different social, cultural and educational systems, and what is its relationship to progressive education? What local and national cultures, structures and curriculum practices facilitated the adoption of social studies and which ones worked against it? How has the adoption of social studies transformed national and local cultures, structures and curriculum practices? How has social studies been actualized in schools and classrooms during periods of transformational curriculum development and reform?

In other words, we need to explain how and why social studies has evolved into an emerging transnational phenomenon and account for its varying manifestations in different social, cultural and educational contexts. In such localized and historical accounts, it is hoped that “social” and “cross-cultural” perspectives and the methodological approach of “oral history” will play an integral and significant role.

Notes
1 This paper draws on research findings reported in an unpublished Ph.D. dissertation entitled “Ideas, Educators and their Contexts: A Study of Curriculum Development and Reform Efforts in Queensland, 1969 to 1989” (University of Queensland, 1995).
2 Pseudonyms are used to identify all interviewees reported in the text. Interviews were conducted with all of the key curriculum workers associated with the design of the social studies syllabuses from 1969 to 1989. All interviews were conducted between 18 August and 11 November, 1993.
3 The aims and objectives of the syllabus stressed both cognitive and affective components. It sought to develop basic knowledge, thinking processes, academic and social skills, and attitudes, feelings and sensitivities (Department of Education, Queensland, 1971, pp. 1-2).
4 “Inductive teaching” is an approach designed to help children attain and develop social science concepts through the use of specific thinking strategies. In this pedagogical approach, teachers are required to utilize a number of inductive teaching
strategies specified by Taba to promote the development of concepts, analytical skills and thinking processes, but exercise considerable freedom in the selection of content. The inductive theory of Taba represents a theoretically well informed and innovative approach to the teaching of social studies. Similarly, the “spiral curriculum” is a theoretical model designed to structure and sequence content as concepts rather than as isolated and unrelated facts. In this model, concepts appear at each successive year level in a spiral fashion, which expands outward, and children revisit these concepts at increasing levels of sophistication and complexity, and at varying degrees of abstraction and generality.

5 The seven key concepts selected for the 1971 syllabus include “needs”, “groups”, “rules”, “change”, “resources”, “interdependence”, and “culture”. In contrast, the Taba curriculum utilized the eleven key concepts of “causality”, “conflict”, “cooperation”, “cultural change”, “differences”, “interdependence”, “modification”, “power”, “societal control”, “tradition”, and “values”.

6 Correspondence from school principals and regional directors to the project team (1987-1989) drew attention to the social and cultural inadequacies in the trial sourcebook materials. Writing in May 1989, O’Malley (District Inspector of Gulf, Cape and Torres Strait) observed that the sourcebooks provide “an offensive and total misrepresentation” of Australian history and “reinforce Eurocentric and racist views”. On receiving this and other advice, the project team made only minimal changes to the classroom-based teaching materials.

7 The “expanding communities” curriculum is a largely geography and history based scope and sequence pattern which begins with the experiences of the child in a specific geographic setting and proceeds in subsequent years in a gradual series of expanding, yet interdependent, communities ranging from the family to the global community. The seven year themes (from year 1 to year 7) selected for the 1981 social studies syllabus include “Living in Families”, “Living in Neighborhoods”, “Living in Australia”, “The Local Area”, “The Past in Australia”, “Other Societies” and “Australia Today”.

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“We Have Always Been Pragmatists”
Beauty, Power, and Consequences


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The pragmatic method...is to try to interpret each notion by tracing its respective practical consequences. What difference would it practically make to any one if this notion rather than that notion were true? If no practical difference whatever can be traced, then the alternatives mean practically the same thing, and all dispute is idle. Whenever a dispute is serious, we ought to be able to show some practical difference... from one side or the other’s being right. (James, as cited in Reed & Johnson, 1996, p. 86)

Reading Pragmatism, by Cleo H. Cherryholmes (1999), is an excellent and important book. As a contribution to the Advances in Contemporary Educational Thought Series edited by Jonas P. Soltis (it is volume 24), it carries on the tradition of high quality critical inquiry that series readers have come to expect. Those familiar with Cherryholmes’s previous work, especially Power and Criticism: Poststructural Investigations in Education (Cherryholmes, 1988) and “Reading Research” (Cherryholmes, 1993), will recognize this effort as both an extension and a reorientation of his earlier pedagogical thought. In effect, Reading Pragmatism explores and presents the intersection of a number of themes and ideas with which Cherryholmes has long been interested and which have long grounded his writings—ideas such as educational criticism, language, democracy, and postmodernism/poststructuralism—as they ultimately represent and converge (and, arguably, have always represented and converged) within the dynamic, complex, and diverse meanings of contemporary philosophical pragmatism.
In this review I first overview and summarize the organization and content of Cherryholmes’s text. Next, I offer my critique—one “reading”—of Reading Pragmatism in terms of its various strengths (many) and weaknesses (few). Lastly, I reiterate my case and draw conclusions relevant to social studies theory, research, and practice.

**Overview**

The main text of Reading Pragmatism is arranged into four parts, each with a specific purpose and set of aims, and each contributing to Cherryholmes’s overall picture of contemporary pragmatism as well as to his rendering of his own particular and personal reading (usually by way of example and/or explication). In addition, Cherryholmes includes an epilogue and two complementary and helpful appendices. In this section I present a brief summation of what I see as the major focus of each segment of the book.

In Part I, “Reading Pragmatism” (Chapters 1 and 2), Cherryholmes lays out his vision of pragmatism as well as defines or “outlines the task of reading pragmatism...” (p. 1). Further, in Chapter 2, he, “for the purposes of illustration, contrasts a pragmatist reading of [Bloom’s (1956)] The Taxonomy of Educational Objectives with three alternative readings as preface to a more detailed investigation” (p. 1). It is, in effect, Part I in which Cherryholmes sets the stage and introduces the themes that provide the foundation for his principal arguments.

In Chapter 1, Cherryholmes addresses four questions fundamental to his overall task: (1) “Why pragmatism?” (2) “Why now?” (3) What is “reading pragmatism?” and (4) “Why this reading?” (pp. 3-8). In response to the first, he locates his answer to “why?” in pragmatism’s connections to the “realities” of the “everyday” and “experienced” world—especially vis-à-vis the pragmatic emphasis on “outcomes” and “consequences.” Here, the why is answered rather directly in that “pragmatism looks to consequences that we endlessly bump up against” (p. 3), that we all face. It offers us, then—all of us—at least something meaningful, something relevant and significant. It considers and says something about who we are, what we do, and what we experience. For as its advocates “conceptualize the world where we...are constantly thrown forward as the present approaches but never quite reaches the future” (p. 3), they are in a sense dealing first and foremost with our contemporary being. Consequently, pragmatism is the philosophy of the “real world”—the present as it exists and the future as it might be “imagined” or “anticipated” from within our own personal and unique, yet multiple and complex, experiential and contingent vantage points. For, ultimately, this is not a philosophy that “look[s] ...backward” (p. 3); it is instead a philosophy that looks ahead.
But still, "why now?" Why today's renewed interest in pragmatism (as indicated, for example, in the recent works of well known ["neo-pragmatic"] philosophers such as Cornell West [e.g., 1989] and Richard Rorty [e.g., 1982])? Cherryholmes offers one version of pragmatism's rise and fall and resurrection—in his telling, a quite succinct and interesting story—as situated within the 20th century history of philosophy in the United States. Although rightly recognizing several plausible start dates—including the early 19th century works of Emerson—Cherryholmes takes as his own beginning the work of Charles Sanders Peirce (especially his “pragmatic maxim”; see Peirce [1878/1989, 1905/1984])3 and approaches pragmatism as essentially a 20th century phenomenon.

According to Cherryholmes, although pragmatism was well "articulated and developed... [by] the early decades of the twentieth century, [especially] in the work of William James and John Dewey...[it] was largely ignored by philosophers, educators, and social scientists during seven or so of [its] middle decades...” (p. 3). It was in actuality "eclipsed by logical positivism and empiricism" (p. 3) as well as by the growing “influence of structuralism” (p. 4). Their relative popularity, that is, contributed to the downfall of pragmatic thought. In fact, next to pragmatism, they were seen as attractive—as “hard” not “soft,” as “precise” not “ambiguous”—and were perceived as properly “modern and scientific,” able to offer “stable” truths, “accurate” descriptions, and “functional” prescriptive norms. And yet, ironically, it was their own collapse and failure (although Cherryholmes correctly admits their lingering influence), their fundamental inability to deliver on promises and to provide for their own goals, that paved the way for pragmatism’s subsequent rebirth. Moreover, not even their antagonistic intellectual heirs and descendants, the many currently fashionable poststructural and postmodern frameworks—those that “take up...where structuralist [and other modernist] endeavors break down” (p. 4)—have accomplished (or even sought to accomplish or can accomplish) what pragmatism can provide (even granting the powerful critiques they make possible); that is, a “forward-looking...project that looks to action” [italics added] (p. 4) instead of a backward-looking one that seeks primarily interpretation and analysis. And yet, as Cherryholmes indicates, by pointing out its underlying flaws and inherent inconsistencies, the postmodern/poststructural critique of modernism (i.e., positivism, empiricism, structuralism) opens the door for the recent reemergence of pragmatism.

How so? According to Cherryholmes,

Pragmatism looks to results. First principles, foundational assumptions, fundamental beliefs, and fully rationalized practices [as modernist constructions] are not on its
agenda ....Pragmatists try to bring about beautiful results in the midst of power and oppression and ignorance. (pp. 4-5)

Think of pragmatists as artists, if you will. They are artists who seek to generate beauty and satisfaction in the context and circulation of power. Their productions are never finished. They are interpreted, reinterpreted, and criticized indefinitely. As a result, they are continually open to new experiences and problems and opportunities. Pragmatist productions deconstruct....And their deconstruction invites, indeed requires, revision and replacement. This reading is an exploration in thinking about consequences. (pp. 5-6)

Cherryholmes's pragmatism is indeed geared toward thinking about results and consequences—especially as influenced by Peirce's maxim, Dewey's aesthetics, and Foucault's conception of power. It is though, a perspective that takes seriously (and draws from) both critical pedagogical theory and recent postmodernist/poststructural viewpoints (perhaps especially those of Foucault and Derrida). In sum, Cherryholmes's pragmatic reading challenges the dominance of science and positivism, the universalist tendencies of philosophical/pedagogical/social modernism.

In considering his own "reading," Cherryholmes first reminds his audience of the contextual nature of all readings, and that his is "from [his own experiential] time and place" (p. 6). Second, he identifies his strongest pragmatic influences—Peirce's (1905/1984, 1878/1989) pragmatic maxim and the first chapter of Dewey's (1934/1980) *Art as Experience*. Third, he argues that his subjective reading "is a rhetorical and pragmatic exercise in enacting that for which it argues. It is an exploration in thinking about consequences. It is also someone reading for the consequences of pragmatism" (p. 7). It is in this sense Cherryholmes's effort both to read *pragmatically* and to *read* pragmatism—to provide a critical pragmatic *reading* as well as a *critical* reading of pragmatism.

Cherryholmes defends his particular reading as an extension of the "critical pragmatism" he called for in *Power and Criticism* (Cherryholmes, 1988). He distinguishes it from what he terms "vulgar pragmatism," the extensive misreadings he believes to be common among many contemporary scholars and policy makers. While maintaining his critical view, Cherryholmes (1999) incorporates it into a larger and more holistic vision of pragmatism, one that "sets the art
and aesthetics of ordinary experience in the midst of power” (p. 7). He argues that we understand consequences in terms of aesthetics—art and beauty—and that we anticipate consequences based upon our own subjective senses of the artistic and the beautiful. But we do so, he suggests, only within the contextual conditions of power. As he defines it, “Power is used to refer to asymmetric relationships among individuals and groups where some benefit and are rewarded and others are penalized and deprived” (pp. 7-8). According to Cherryholmes, any reading of pragmatism—including all the many plausible readings—must take into account that by which we consider experiential consequences (as his does with respect to aesthetics) and the circumstances within which their various meanings are created (as his does in terms of power).

Cherryholmes turns next to “Bloom’s Taxonomy” (e.g., Bloom, 1956) against which he offers four successive and alternative readings. In the first, “The Taxonomy as a Statement of Authorial Intention” (pp. 12-13), the reader takes the authors of the Taxonomy at their word—that “They wanted to modernize thinking about education by rationalizing what schools taught” (p. 12)—and explores the “assumptions” by which they operate (e.g., “that scientific and legitimate knowledge is structural and hierarchical” [p. 12]). This reading relies on the belief that both authors and texts speak for, and are justified and capable of speaking for, themselves.

In the second reading, “The Taxonomy as an Object of History” (p. 13), Cherryholmes (drawing on Foucault) provides a take on the Taxonomy as a product of its specific time and place. He argues that the Taxonomy is an object of “modernity,” and that a reader here might posit “that it is difficult to imagine how the Taxonomy could have turned out differently in the United States in the 1950s. The effects of power...speak Truth through the Taxonomy” (p. 16). Further, “the Taxonomy [then] represents an historically and culturally provincial way of looking at knowledge, education, and society” (p. 17)—one grounded in modernist assumptions about knowledge and the nature of (educational) science. As the Taxonomy has often been taken as objective and/or transcendent truth, this Foucauldian inspired reading paves the way for a certain “discursive” or “genealogical” critique.

“The Taxonomy as a Deconstructing Text” (p. 17), the third reading, applies Derrida’s principles of deconstruction—specifically “that meanings (1) are dispersed throughout language and texts and (2) are deferred in time” (p. 17)—to explore the extent to which the Taxonomy in fact “deconstructs.” Cherryholmes concludes that it does so on a number of significant levels: (1) by supporting a specific ideology while claiming a direct neutrality; (2) by advocating values while pursuing the value-free; and (3) by defining a structured and precisely defined hierarchy while enabling a multitude of flexible knowledge
orderings. In this case, whether one reads the Taxonomy as the intentions of the authors or as a move toward modernization, the project ultimately fails. Here, Cherryholmes's work is both interesting and precise, intriguing as well as rational.

Cherryholmes's fourth reading is of "The Taxonomy as Pragmatist Exercise" and is a reading presented as "a dramatic alternative to" (p. 20) his earlier interpretive examples. Here Cherryholmes asks the reader to "[t]hink of the Taxonomy as an experiment, as artistic artifact" (p. 20). He asks: "Does it produce desirable outcomes? Is the Taxonomy as object d'art satisfying?" (p. 20). Further, "If one affirms the Taxonomy by acting on it, does it produce desirable consequences? What kind of educational practices are created? Are these practices appealing? Do they promote satisfaction? Do they point toward a good way of school and life?" (p. 20).

Cherryholmes argues that a pragmatist reading challenges the Taxonomy and its interlocutors to negotiate its consequences while simultaneously demanding that its readers assess them aesthetically in terms of their possibilities for a "satisfactory" and "fulfilling" schooling. He suggests potential outcomes both in terms of "enacting" (e.g., "It complements and reinforces modernizing trends in education that value specialization, fragmentation, individualization, accountability, and rationalization" [p. 21]) and "denying" (e.g., "The role of teachers as curriculum planners becomes elevated" [p. 21]) the Taxonomy and its legitimacy.

By engaging in such multiple readings, Cherryholmes asserts, we learn a great deal, including that by reading pragmatically we can make the most of other (e.g., postmodern/ poststructural) critical readings. Specifically, we learn that: (1) texts are created within particular historical and geographical settings; (2) "texts that present themselves as natural...are deceptive and misleading" (p. 22); (3) even so-called "modern and rational and noncontradictory" (p. 22) texts deconstruct; (4) "[w]e should be cautious whenever we are tempted to claim that our texts are accurate, correct, truthful, logically consistent, and authoritative" (p. 22); and (5) texts are "useful" to the extent that they provide positive and "desirable"—aesthetically pleasing—consequences.

In Part II, "Reading Pragmatism: Aesthetics/Knowledge/Power," Cherryholmes expands upon and clarifies his understanding of pragmatism by focusing on its ultimate meaning as "a fuzzy and ill-defined approach to thinking and living...[one that] points, very generally, to ways of looking to the future" (p. 27). Again drawing on his principal sources—Dewey's aesthetics and Peirce's maxim—he refines his interpretation of pragmatism to emphasize its significance as a "term of art" (p. 28), an "effect and cause of knowledge and power" (p. 33), and as a "democratic, inductive, and anti-essentialist experiment" (p. 39). Here he convincingly argues that: (1) pragmatism re-
fers to practical consequences as we understand them contextually; (2) it transcends the assumptions of modernism; (3) we assess consequences aesthetically (i.e., to the extent that they are "aesthetically desirable"); (4) conceptions of consequences both produce and are produced within settings of both power and knowledge; and (5) pragmatism and democracy are inextricably and necessarily linked.

In Part III, "Reading Research: Consequences and the Construction of Meaning," Cherryholmes applies his pragmatism—his emphasis on consequences and his understanding of Deweyan aesthetics and Peirce's maxim—to Palincsar and Brown's (1984) frequently cited study "Reciprocal Teaching of Comprehension-Fostering and Comprehension-Monitoring Activities." He interprets the consequences of affirming the study's findings from the perspectives of feminist, critical, and deconstructive readings, and argues that each is, in effect, a pragmatic exercise—a pragmatic reading. Seeking thus to explore the potentially less than apparent complexities—the multiplicities—of pragmatism, Cherryholmes poses two questions: (1) "What does it practically mean to read research for its conceivable consequences (following Peirce's maxim)" and (2) "What does it mean to discuss and deliberate conflicts among consequences that are conceivable (exploring Macke's [1995] 'discourse on the consequences of thinking')?" (p. 49).

To Palincsar and Brown, Cherryholmes asks the pragmatic question: "What do these findings mean?" (p. 58). He argues that "The assumption is that their findings as stated are true; that is, they are the most reasonable things to believe under the circumstances" (p. 58). He contends, though, that in fact "[t]hey mean different things...Things that are not easily reconciled" (p. 58). In providing a feminist reading, a critical reading, and a deconstructive reading of "Reciprocal Teaching" Cherryholmes considers according to each the practical consequences of accepting Palincsar and Brown's findings as true. In his feminist reading, for example, he asserts that a potential practical consequence of "Reciprocal Teaching" (as one might imagine it) is that "Readers are not taught to connect to text or to situate it in their lives" (p. 62). In his critical reading a possible consequence is that "Reciprocal teaching produces and reproduces the exercise and effects of power that are embedded in texts" (p. 67). And in his deconstructive reading he postulates as a consequence that "Reading skills [italics added] were central to reciprocal teaching and comprehension [italics added] was marginal [even though comprehension was claimed as a primary concern by the authors]" (p. 73). Cherryholmes concludes, in sum, that "reading research" is (and must be) a pragmatic exercise—that pragmatism enables a variety of readings while a variety of readings are consistent with the understandings of critical pragmatism. Each reading indeed is pragmatic to the extent that it disavows dogmatism and considers practical consequences and to the extent that each consid-
ers a unique "conception of beauty" (p. 75) as it contributes to the *creation* of meaning and truth.

In Part IV, "Pragmatism/Analytic Philosophy/Program Evaluation," Cherryholmes presents his defense of pragmatism against the modern educational tendencies toward what might be called "faddism" and "lockout"—that is, the propensity of new ways of thinking and doing to "come and go and come and go" and to be dismissed if perceived as not "scientific" enough or as not strongly enough grounded in "research." These twin dispositions are similar to those identified by Mary Kennedy (1997) as plausible and explanatory "historical hypotheses" with respect to the apparent disconnect between contemporary educational research and practice. In short, Cherryholmes contends that the current interest in pragmatism will endure—that it has staying power—because it (1) is consistent with what we understand with respect to the various weaknesses and shortcomings of pedagogical/philosophical/sociological modernism; (2) supports what we have learned as a result of postmodern and postanalytic critical thinking; and (3) is borne out as useful in terms both of fomenting and actualizing meaningful efforts toward educational change.

More precisely, Cherryholmes links pragmatism's resurgence to the "transition" from modernism/structuralism to postmodernism/poststructuralism. For as the postmodern critique challenged (and continues to challenge) modernism's privileging of truth, acceptance, empiricism, logic, hierarchy, and universality, it simultaneously made (and continues to make) way for constructed meaning, antihegemonic criticism, interpretation, rhetoric, equality, and contextual specificity. As the "transparent truth" of empirical rationality collapsed (and continues to collapse) in the face of multiplicity and uncertainty, pragmatism became (and continues to become), in effect, a sensible and attractive alternative. For without the taken for granted and foundational assumptions of science, the need to consider and conceive of practical consequences in *action*, and to *evaluate* them according to some criterion (e.g., aesthetics) as they might be imagined within some fluid and dynamic and influential context (e.g., power/knowledge), seemed (and continues to seem) intellectually sound.

Moreover, drawing on the seminal work of Quine (1953/1971) and Davidson (1985), Cherryholmes relates pragmatism's rebirth to the move from analytic to postanalytic philosophy. In that linguistic philosophers have recognized the very impossibility of speaking "truthfully" about the world, the will-to-dogmatism has become threatened by the alternative will-to-pragmatism. In postanalytic philosophy's eradication of certain binary distinctions (predicated in part on the work of analytic philosophers themselves)—for example, logic vs. rhetoric—lay the roots of pragmatism's artistic experimenta-
tion, its experimental artistry. We thus do not “know” the “truth” of the world; we “test” our predictions vis-à-vis practical consequences according to our subjective aesthetics, that is our senses of beauty based as they are upon our abilities to create meaning within our own unique contextual settings—as well as our understandings of them—and as they occur (and are invented) according to various, multiple, hidden, changing, and interpretable situations of power/knowledge. For Cherryholmes, this accounts in part for the relative ineffectiveness of many recent educational change programs—modernist, logical, rationalist, positivist. Further, in terms of reform, it posits the very necessity of coming to terms with myriad “paradoxes, dilemmas, contradictions, and ambiguities” (p. 106). In the end it illuminates the many implicit and explicit calls for a contemporary pragmatist (re)turn (especially Fullan, 1991; Sarason, 1990)—a reconsideration of practical consequences, a reorientation toward subjective aesthetics, and a re-examination of power-laden contexts of interpretive knowledge.

Critique

Cherryholmes’s success cannot easily be overstated. In short, he has written a solid and meaningful book, one that offers a great deal in terms both of excavating and explicating the various and diverse causes, concerns, characteristics, and commitments of contemporary educational pragmatism.

Perhaps most impressive, though, is Cherryholmes’s evident and repeated ability to explore directly and clearly a range of complex ideas (including those from across disciplines and schools of philosophical thought). Moreover, he does so within the confines of a relatively small number of pages while avoiding the potential and contiguous temptations of oversimplification and overgeneralization. Reading Pragmatism should be a model for dealing comprehensively yet succinctly with difficult and challenging material.

More specifically, readers will, I think, appreciate the work’s timeliness, especially perhaps in view of the somewhat recent proliferation of educational issues on the national level (e.g., national standards for curriculum, instruction, assessment, and teacher education; school choice/vouchers; class size; etc.). Cherryholmes’s effort, in effect, represents and suggests a reconsideration of policy and practice, an anti-dogmatic reorientation toward pragmatism. It leads us to ask, for example, what might be the practical consequences of national standards, or of actualizing or not various school choice, voucher, and/or class size initiatives? Simultaneously, it welcomes and makes possible a multitude of competing yet overlapping critical and interpretive perspectives.

Overall, Cherryholmes’s achievement is broad and deep, explicit and comprehensive. It covers concisely the range of pragmatic thought,
from the early writings of Peirce through the recent and (in some ways) more challenging works of Rorty and West. Throughout, he considers pragmatism in its holistic construction—from the purely artistic to the blatantly political and back again—without losing sight of its potential relevance for contemporary educators and philosophers. As such, Reading Pragmatism should appeal to a wide variety of audiences, from undergraduates to professors, and from beginners to experts. It should, in fact, attract (and indeed deserves) an array of readers, whether seeking an introduction to the field, a quick review, or a refreshing and renewed set of pedagogical and philosophical insights.

One possible criticism rests side-by-side with one of the book’s very strengths, that is its brevity. I was at times left wanting Cherryholmes to go on, to explore and pursue more. But, even this (selfish?) criticism is misleading. It simply provides more evidence on behalf of Reading Pragmatism’s accomplishments. If anything, like-minded readers will seek out Cherryholmes’s other works and be substantively rewarded for their efforts. If my own past experience with this author is indicative, this will most certainly be the case for newcomers.

**Summary and Conclusions: The Social Studies**

Reading Pragmatism presents clear and important implications for social studies education. In terms both of research and practice, including policy and policy-making, Cherryholmes’s work suggests a return—a reorientation—toward social studies’ pragmatic roots as well as a forward-looking incitement toward contemporary and future reflective action. Certainly, his argument supports first considering potential practical consequences. For example, in (or before) creating and seeking to implement policy, initiatives again such as national curriculum standards, educators and/or politicians/bureaucrats might ask: What might be the practical consequences of actualizing such a decision? What good might occur? What bad? To what extent are we (or would/should we be) satisfied with these potentialities? Why? What, then, should we decide? Or, in terms of practice, we might ask: What practical differences would it make to pursue, say, lecture as a method over project-based learning? Why? What should we do?

But second, Cherryholmes’s project asks us as social educators to reconsider our own understandings of pragmatism and of its various and complex meanings. Typically (or at best) we have recognized and pursued, for example, Dewey’s notions of “reflective thinking” (Dewey, 1910) and “democracy” (Dewey, 1916/1966). But how many social studies educators engage or are even aware of Dewey’s aesthetics? To what extent are they (we) familiar with the works of Peirce and James (not to mention Rorty and West)? To consider a pragmatic, reflective, and problem-solving pedagogy may very well mean acknowledg-
edging the role of artistic satisfaction, of subjective and interpretive notions of beauty.

Above all, perhaps, Cherryholmes's pragmatic reading(s) leads us away from the dominance of ideology and dogmatism and toward the possibilities of practical action. Obviously this is consistent with a multitude of approaches to social studies instruction. Historically, for example, it agrees with our claimed commitment to promote democracy, citizenship, and democratic citizenship. That is, it corresponds favorably with questions about whether what we do advances or inhibits what we advocate.

In the end, Cherryholmes is correct. We all are pragmatists. As social studies educators we do care about consequences, and we do seek that which we feel does or will encourage democracy, freedom, social justice, and equality. Of course, we can and do bring to our "readings" our own unique and experiential perspectives, be those feminist, Marxist, postmodern, or (even) conservative (or some eclectic combination). For there may well be, finally, a multitude of meaningful and convincing pragmatisms, a variety of pragmatic readings. Yet from Cherryholmes's perspective (and from mine) this is all the better. What are the consequences indeed?

Notes

1 I wish to thank E. Wayne Ross and Paula M. Vinson for their insightful and helpful comments.

2 Interested readers might refer to some of Cherryholmes's efforts directed specifically toward social studies (e.g., Cherryholmes, 1980, 1982, 1985).

3 Cherryholmes draws greatly from Peirce's maxim and cites it frequently, preferring the 1905 version to the 1878 original for its clarity and succinctness. Compare:

"Consider what effects which might conceivably have practical bearings we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of that object." (Peirce, 1878/1989, p. 88; cited in Cherryholmes, 1999, p. 113)

"The method prescribed in the [pragmatic (Cherryholmes's insertion)] maxim is to trace out in the imagination the conceivable practical consequences—that is, the consequences for deliberate, self-controlled conduct—of the affirmation or denial of the concept; and the assertion of the maxim is that herein lies the whole of the purport of the word, the entire concept." (Peirce, 1905/1984, p. 493; cited in Cherryholmes, 1999, p. 113)

4 Readers, of course, should refer to Palincsar and Brown's (1984) work in the original, although Cherryholmes does offer a reading of their article based on their specified authorial intent. Further, perceptive readers will recognize this section as an extension of Cherryholmes's (1993) earlier work, "Reading Research."

References


Perhaps the social studies needs a good screed. The discussion on an internet listserv attended by readers of TRSE is alive with notes which rise from the questions posed by the Rouge Forum several years ago: How do I keep my ideals and still teach? Why have school? Indeed, why have hope? Within this screed I am going to explore the particular social context of teaching in Michigan, the general situation, and review several texts which offer answers to our questions. I will also tender some answers of my own. I think the way into this is an anecdote.

From 1995 through 1999 I visited Detroit and suburban schools. My plan was to visit classes of friends and students, to reconnect with the classes I attended and taught many years ago in my hometown, and to research the relationship of school and social change. In a Detroit high school, I met with a group of students and asked them about their vision of the future. One student replied quickly, heatedly, "Whatda you mean future?"

"What do you think you want to be doing, say, at the turn of the century?"

"What’s up with that? My future is to get as much stuff as I can—RIGHT NOW."

Why?

"We all know we aren’t gonna make twenty-one."

Thinking, "...adolescent hyperbole," I asked the other students if she spoke for the group. They confirmed her position and added plenty of chapters and verses about their chances for survival. After class, their veteran teacher affirmed the sincerity behind the young woman’s comments and added, “Actually, I don’t want to live in the world these kids will inherit. She wasn’t entirely wrong, you know.”

In a suburban school not far from the 8 Mile Road moat which separates mostly African-American Detroit from suburbia, things were a bit different. In a college-bound history class, I met a kid who said, “The future is more of the same trash. More school.”

Which trash is that?

“Bogus classes and tests. College. Then managing a Mickey D.” His comments were uproariously ratified: school is rubbish. After class, their teacher gently pointed to a Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP) test, “We get a lot of chatter about teacher-empowerment, professionalism, and student-centered classrooms. Then we get more standardized tests, bigger classes, and the blame for bad scores. Hell, we’re clerks. Luckily we can still close our doors.”
This interplay of alienation and despair, a shared depression, is endemic in schools and society. To deepen a contrast, consider the Richmond Hill prison in Grenada, where the former leadership of the New Jewel government, overthrown by a U.S. invasion 16 years ago, is conducting classes today in a dank prison built in the seventeenth century. The classes are full of life and dispute, while classes on the rest of the beautiful island are stilted and directive. The prison-school test scores are higher than most of the schools in the country. The New Jewel prisoners, sentenced to life, are far more hopeful than their teaching counterparts on the outside (Coard, 1997).

While the daily practice of many school workers and students everywhere is a good counter-argument, that many people are swimming upstream because they have embodied hopeful beliefs; it remains that our conversation in Detroit was restated so frequently, it is a suggestive tendency.

Many of the participants on the TRSE-L listserv agree that teacher time is being overcome with illegitimate standardized curricula built around high-stakes exams, both designed to deepen the segregation of kids and educators, first by class, then race or caste. Children, the curricula, teachers and parents, all become commodities and objects of the designs of others. Educators' creative humane work is replaced by alien commands directing what shall be learned, when, and how—all reverberating back on the scaffold of testing, sorting kids. These mandates originate in locations ever more distant from the classroom, ever more separate from the community, the children, and front-line educators. In a occupation that is comprised of 85% women, the pattern continues that the workers' mind is overpowered, becoming the clerical body taking direction. Learning for joy becomes learning for extrinsic rewards, or the fear of hierarchical consequences. It is no longer possible to just close your door and teach. Complaints on the listserv hint that we are in new territory, and that this tendency toward an intense command system in schools is over-archingly true. At issue, at least in part, is: how shall we as educators understand this and what shall we do? (Ross, 1999). The collective efforts of the Whole Schooling Research Project in Michigan serve as a basis for much of this essay. Our research indicates that teachers in Michigan spend about 30% of their time teaching to standardized exams which break their connections, affective and cognitive, with kids. Educators don't receive the scores for some state tests for six to eight months. While teachers usually get scores for individual kids, they do not get an analysis of what went wrong—or right. The high-stakes exams require that kids be separated, usually by predicted ability to test, even in schools that promote inclusion at every level.

The Michigan Education Achievement Program (MEAP) deepens the separation of children and their educators at every conceivable level, within an inequitable social context. In 1994, Michigan
passed a reform bill that was presumed to ease funding inequities. Today, the richest district in the state receives about double the per-capita funding of the poorest district. Over time what equity was built into the initial bill, which shifted the tax base to the sales tax, was thoroughly eroded, a process that continues. The state lottery was passed with promises of money for education. The income goes to the general fund. The usual differences between wealthy and poor districts, like the surrounding resources of cash donations and available time from volunteers, were never addressed. Now, money that was won from a lawsuit against tobacco companies is earmarked to reward students who take and pass the MEAP, a payoff for birthright, as we shall see. Detroit is especially isolated by an economic crisis far deeper than anything in the state. The city receives about $1000 per capita more than the poorest district in Michigan, but the crisis of the infrastructure of the city is far more profound. In Michigan’s poorest district, where many children do not have running water, there are libraries in the schools. In many Detroit schools, there are none.

Even so, especially in elite schools and the economically poorest schools, but also among the tenured or popular, educators have a good deal of freedom to do as they choose. If our initial observations are correct, it appears that some teachers self-censor, create boundaries that are not necessarily there, or they respond to authorities in more disciplined fashion than their immediate employer expects. It seems that there is truth in the analyses discussed on the listserv, but it is incomplete, lacking historical context at one end and wise direction at the other.

Once I have interrogated the social context in which educators must work, I am going to examine five popular well-meaning texts which offer to answer the questions asked on the listserv. Our authors, using different approaches, are going to suggest ways to teach well—for democracy and equality. I am going to ask: What is the method of analysis here? How is it situated in a social context? How does it stand up? What is urged? What will happen if we do this? What is the DNA of the text, that can help us understand what has been and what can be—and how we can work for democratic change in school and society? Where does this author locate hope, or despair, and how can hope be rationally drawn from our present conditions?

At the outset, my screed needs foreground. Any good screed requires assertions. Here are mine:

“Find Yourself a Place Where There Isn’t Any Trouble”

Our world is simultaneously becoming more united, through systems of production, exchange, and distribution; and divided, through systems of politics and economics which require that people be estranged from one another, in life and death competition. People are set apart from their work, their creativity, their collective intellec-
tual explorations, and the ways they reproduce themselves and their societies, even their sexuality: their humanity. The evidence of rising inequality is overwhelming, even within a prosperous nation. (New York Times, October 2, 1999, p. A7). Intensified authoritarianism trails close behind. Nationalism, the reification of borders, holds a continuing appeal. Obscurantism, irrationalism, is now public policy, as is the fear of sexuality. Some states are offering vouchers to religious schools. President Clinton fired his Surgeon-General for promoting masturbation, before the President was impeached for masturbation. These deepening social antagonisms, summed up as social versus anti-social being, has its marrow in three interrelated requisite conditions of advanced capital: (1) the extraction, theft, of value, or surplus value, from the labor of people who must work to live, by people whose inheritance or luck offers them ownership, (2) alienation of productive life (the loss of control over the process and product of labor), (3) reification and fetishization of social relations (people become as commodities, relations among people disguised as relations between things within a given historical context are transformed into relations which take on a "phantom objectivity," which makes oppressive human relations appear to be the natural order). In other words, value is extracted from the work of masses of people, who cannot be paid the full value of their work, by individual owners. People without property who must work for others to live do not consider their work to be their lives, but an intrusion on life. The more people engage in work, the more that work enriches their enemies. As the process deepens, intellectual work becomes alienated as well. A wall is placed between many people and their ability to comprehend and transform their world. Capital and the people who embody it are able to obscure a system of dominance with a variety of maneuvers which appear to place a sense of permanence and normalcy over what is in essence a historically transient moment: God made things this way. The law says it is illegal to strike. Tests prove you are born to be a collegian, or a coolie. You should rely on the union president to protect you and interpret your work rules (Lukacs, 1971, p. 83).

These social processes necessarily intensify with the equally imperatively expansion of capital. The processes turn up in every aspect of human interaction, including school. Capital is an encompassing socio-political system, turning human relationships into base economic transactions, often a quest for cruel petty advantage. Capital, the war to pluck surplus value from the work of someone else, I think, has little meaningful to offer to anyone anymore, including school workers. Capital can indeed offer spectacles and treats to conceal meaninglessness and to inveigle one group to rule over the next. In the most ostensibly powerful country in the history of the world, capital can dole out sensational pomp and rewards with surgical precision—and couple that with punishment for those who behave outside the bounds.
While race, class, and national divisions are fundamental to capital, elites often have enough sense to offer social mobility to a few from the substrata, and to integrate, to a degree, their own ranks. Today, dominance is far more multi-cultural than schools or educators. The arms industry, for example, is thoroughly integrated at the top, caring just a whit about race or class. Arms dealers know profits are not stamped by skin color. Organized religion, or the trade unions, involving millions of poor and working people, are apartheid operations, as are many U.S. professional educator groups.

In the U.S., the highest stage of capital’s development as yet, the economic system has evolved to the point that its key goals, its own re-creation and expansion, is ever more apparent. The “personifications of capital,” the people who temporarily hold capital, take a secondary interest to even production, a primary interest in Capital itself (Meszaros, 1995, p. 601-624). The practical effects of this are, on one hand, the movement of key industrial bases to other areas, where profits are higher, coupled with an obsessive focus on creating value through the exchange of capital itself, currency profiteering, the stock market, etc. On the other hand, in ideology, capital is left with few ideas for motivating the people who must finally create it. For example, the military now rarely attempts to indoctrinate troops by telling them the general situation they face, the specific challenges directly in front of them, and the long term hopes that are expected to make their potential sacrifices worthwhile: “Fight Fascism for Democracy,” “A War to End All Wars”, etc. Now, when the battles are rather clearly fought to protect bald oil interests for example, the bottom line ideology presented in boot camp is: “Protect your buddies, for your life depends on it.” This is capital in organized decay, not the heady days of capital expansion when young men lined up to enlist. The U.S. can no longer offer ideals of democracy and freedom as an international beacon. Instead, it must offer more stuff, greed; a technologically superior military, force; and a system of ideas underpinned by the thought that we are all in this together, irrationalism. In school, nationalist irrationalism is met by religious irrationalism: Kansas bans the big bang and evolution.

In this, teachers play a crucial role as a force for equality and democracy—or in opposition. In a deindustrialized society, North America, teachers inhabit the organizing center of the community. They are the most unionized people in the U.S., a total of about three million educators belong to the American Federation of Teachers or the much larger National Education Association. More importantly, teachers have demonstrated a wise distrust of their union leadership, and a willingness to act on their own, to take risks for the good of their children and their community, as evidenced by the 1999 Detroit teachers strike, and the refusal of the National Education Association (NEA) rank and file to adopt the undemocratic structure of the American
Federation of Teachers (AFT) in the failed merger engineered by the NEA leadership in 1998 (Gibson, 1999). Educators are often natural organizers. Done well, teaching parallels organizing technique: know the terrain, know your community, know your subject, know yourself, adopt flexible principles and strategies, listen a lot, build on people's strengths. Teachers frequently have deep professional and personal ties in their communities. Their complex product, children and their relationships with ideas, evokes at least sympathy. Many educators love their kids and are eager to teach well. Teachers have invaluable skills. Most educators communicate reasonably well. Many have been trained in reflection. They must repeatedly move quickly between the spaces of theory and practice. Some practice social critique every day. People in electoral campaigns love teachers. They can follow directions, make phone calls with little supervision, and fund-raise among the wealthy. Teachers union representatives were the largest single constituency at the last Democratic national convention.

Teachers, as intellectual activists, can also devise interesting methods to unmask the reasons for the rise of inequality and strategies to mobilize conscious citizens to compose a more rational future. Or teachers can allow themselves to be purchased, usually at low cost, to be segmented along the lines of the parental income and caste/race of their students, and to assist in the creation of social divisions which will make social control more viable, to tamp down the expectations of children who will enter a society that will likely offer them a lower standard of living than their parents.

Some teachers have fought hard for democracy and equality. In the U.S., Margaret Haley stands as a beacon as a teacher-activist, as we shall see. Many teachers, however, turned the other direction. There is no historically grounded reason to believe that most teachers are going to be in the forefront of progressive social change, although there is a great deal of evidence, in history and social context, to say that many of them will. In a country with incredible largesse available as a carrot to be distributed with personalized precision, in a job imbued with the mythology of the elitist side of professionalism, the subtle purchase of teachers to become agents of their own and others' oppression has had success. Those who are bought off will, in time, discover that an injury to one does indeed precede an injury to all. As their colleagues' livelihoods collapse, so will theirs, perhaps more slowly. In a more and more inequitable world, teachers must answer the old labor question, "Which side are you on?" more often—and the consequences are more transparent.

Choosing sides is not simple. What appears to be two sides may be the unreality of legitimate alternatives thoroughly shrouded by dominance. For example, one is supposed to be either for or against public schools. The liberal cry to save the public schools seems a bit
disingenuous, as are the proofs that the crisis in public school is either abysmal or manufactured. There never was one public school system in the U.S., but probably four or five—serving to reproduce and recreate different classes and castes of people. Dominance used public schools to integrate their ranks, minimally, and to sever others. Even now, in a period of near hysteria about the need to save public schools, important elite forces are right in the front of the march to do so (Steinberg, 1999). Choosing sides in this debate requires an inquiry into why schools are there at all, whose interests they serve.

Following O'Connor, schools are funded by surplus value routed through the state (O'Connor, 1971, p. 11). Per Weber, schools are structures for domination (Weber, 1946, p. 426-434). Schools are also immense markets (consider the busses and architects, salaries, lunches, etc). They perform a vital child-warehousing function, serving as a tax-paid babysitter in a society where daycare is a necessity, as any school strike demonstrates. Inside, educators create and recreate the skills of society, its ideologies and myths grounded in its relations of production and exchange (note the shift from religious to industrial education). While the main message of some schools is, "You cannot understand or change your circumstances," many students learn otherwise. Teachers fashion hope: real and false. This has been the practice for a century. To doggedly fight for public education without recognizing the competing interests at work and the underlying conditions that make public and private schooling inequitable, is to ignore both the basis for political work, and the potential of confounded results.

Kansas and Tornadoes:
Some Particulars To Illustrate the Generalities
"There's a Storm Blowin', a Whopper"

Divisions of caste and class in schools are surely pronounced, reflecting deepening inequity in society and the turn to authoritarian answers. Things are more intense. For example, the rich seized the Detroit Public Schools in March 1999. The reported reasons for the takeover were fiscal irregularities, the drop-out rate, poorly prepared employees, and low scores on the state standardized exam, the MEAP. Detroit schools, though, scored mid-range on the exam, with dozens of districts, many in large communities, scoring lower. The Detroit distinction: race.

Fiscal irregularities on the school board have been chronic in Detroit. In 1973 the board failed to pay teachers when they ran out of funds. The crisis was averted by the sale of high-interest bonds (Ewing, 1978, p. 190). Even so, in 1998 what is now the former board had a balanced budget for the three years preceding the takeover. The drop-out rate is and has been extraordinarily high, but the new board's solution, the end of social promotions, would seem to be incongru-
uous. Moreover, the Detroit schools reported an 84% graduation rate in October 1999, seven months post-takeover, a statistic that is simply laughable. It may be true that Detroit schools are not preparing employees for local business. Dave Bing, former Detroit Piston, complained that the kids who appeared at his 1000 worker auto parts factory had to be retrained, that his taxes for schools had to be duplicated in his training programs, “to get a good employee” (“Business pleads for overhaul,” 1999). But corporate maneuvers to cut their taxes have contributed to the inequitable funding and resources that has hurt Detroit schools. It is reasonable to seek other explanations, which requires some foreshadowing.

“Professor Marvel Never Guesses, He Knows”

In February 1999, a white Republican governor, John Engler, a lifetime beneficiary of racist voting patterns, abolished the elected school board and directed the black Democrat Mayor to appoint a new board. He did, demonstrating the unity of class at the top. The board then hired a Chief Executive Officer who, alone, has full authority over all school operations. All of the press, even the local cultural weekly, supported the new board, which became known as the “Takeover Board.” Six of the seven members of the new board are unmistakably representatives of wealth. Allow me to introduce them and the CEO:

Dr. David Adamany, the CEO of the Detroit schools, who resigned as president of Wayne State University in Detroit in 1997, lives in one of the richest suburbs of the U.S. He was roundly despised by WSU faculty, campus workers, and many community people. While Dr. Adamany was adept at transforming the physical structures of WSU, as well as the fiscal structure, he was “famous for his vindictive memory,” and was “never able to get the rank and file to behave.” “As King, he was good at scaring the princes, but the peasants just kept quietly refusing to work.” While he declared he achieved his “every teacher on the same page of the same text” every day goal, few people actually did it. “All the staff knew his ‘quality of work life partnership’ was a sham.” He resigned, following a faculty vote of no confidence. “David Adamany lives in a world of giving orders, and pretending they are implemented. Does not work well with others; goes on his report card” (Interview with a Wayne State University AAUP official, June 1, 1999).

The Takeover Board

Mike Murphy: as a Michigan state treasurer, white Murphy lives in a suburb of Lansing, the state capital, about 90 miles from Detroit. When he attended his first Detroit School Board meetings, he required a police escort to enter the school, not because he was threatened, but because he was fearful. Murphy, as the Governor’s appointee, nota-
bly, holds veto power over any action of the board as a part of the takeover rules.

Pamela Aguire, a suburban socialite, daughter of the famous Detroit Tiger left-hander, owner of a low-wage downtown Detroit factory, never lived in Detroit, never attended a public school as a student or a teacher. Teachers of her own children, at a prestigious private Grosse Pointe academy, never met her. She attended only three of the first 14 board meetings. For at least one of these meetings, she was counted as present when she attended via cell phone. During the meeting, she could be heard giving directions to her cook. Aguirre was forced to resign from the board recently. It was discovered she lives mostly in Arizona. Ms Aguirre, according to one community activist, “should have been arrested for truancy.”

In October 1999, Aguire was replaced on the board by Nelida Bravo, who with her husband Facundo, also owns a small southwest Detroit plant, employing about 200 workers, a subsidiary of her larger plant in rural Howell, Michigan. Most of the workforce in Detroit is Latino. The Argentine woman came to the US in 1971. She reports she taught in Argentina and in California. She now lives in a nouveau suburb, White Lake Township, about 30 miles from Detroit, but claims knowledge of the schools: the people who apply to her for jobs lack skills (Ortiz, 1999).

Marvis Cofield, the owner of an east-side Detroit Martial Arts Academy which also serves as a community center, is the only Detroit resident with connections to the schools on the board. A former Detroit substitute teacher, Cofield has clearly demonstrated a commitment to the community over time. His colleagues on the board pay scant attention to him, referring to him as “The Citizen,” to his face. Cofield was placed on the board a week after the Mayor, a former state Supreme Court Justice known for his bourgeoisie background, overheard Cofield discussing Detroit schools in a barber shop. They had never met. The only time the question of racism was raised by the press during the takeover was when a columnist in the weekly cultural newspaper attacked Cofield as “a racist,” when he criticized the selection of Dr. Adamany, suggesting that available and equally qualified black candidates might be better choices.

Freeman Hendrix, the chairperson of the board, is a mayoral aide to Dennis Archer, who would like to be chief of the Democratic National Committee, and is a practiced authoritarian like Dr. Adamany. Unaccustomed to being challenged, he is extraordinarily brittle when people oppose his views, as demonstrated by his inciting a police assault on middle school kids and older women at a March 1999 board meeting. Required by a residency law to live in Detroit, Hendrix sends his children to Catholic schools, declaring his deep faith. Hendrix would like to be mayor, according to other members of the board.
Frank Fountain is the vice-president for marketing for Daimler Chrysler. He lives in an opulent northwest Detroit suburb. Fountain, whose allegiance has to be primarily to the profits of a German auto company is one of those who, during the recent teachers’ strike, charged educators who allied with community people as working with outside agitators. Fountain’s suburban school system receives $11,239 per child from the state. Less than 2% of the children get free lunches. Nearly 99% of the students graduate. Detroit receives $7,802 per pupil. Two thirds of the Detroit children are on free lunch. Less than one in three graduate (Michigan Department of Education, 1999).

Glenda Price is the head of Marygrove College, a small walled Catholic school on the city’s northwest side. Price came to Detroit in July, 1998 from a job as a provost at Spellman College, a women’s college in Atlanta. She has no background in the city of Detroit and lives in a suburb.

Bill Beckham carries the trump card on the board, and should know the terrain, though like the others hubris and arrogance hold him back. Beckham, recently appointed to head the Skillman Foundation, was the CEO of New Detroit for more than ten years. New Detroit is a committee created by industrialists and retailers like Henry Ford and J.L. Hudson during the 1967 Detroit rebellion. In one of their founding documents, New Detroit declares that all of the citizens of the city, many of whom were fighting an invasion of U.S. troops on their streets, share a common interest, “there has been much talk about them and us, but it isn’t that, it is we” (Ewing, 1978, p. 250). The son of a UAW official, Beckham was an aide for long-term Mayor Coleman Young. His is a voice of power on the board.

Beckham has not only a good grasp of the city, he has the results of extensive surveys and focus group interviews, done in 1998 at school district expense by a GM public relations firm, which detail the problems in the schools. Beckham, however, is inclined to ignore the survey results and listen to his own instincts. Other board members like Beckham, respect his leadership and analytical abilities, as well as his links to power, and they are inclined, when push comes to shove, to follow his lead. Mayor Archer, once a state supreme court justice, also appointed his former law firm, Miller-Canfield, to be the board law firm. The firm has a long history of international corporate law, with branches all over the globe. A check of the biographies of the firm’s partners on their web page reveals not only corporate expertise, but extensive intelligence connections. In toto, the board of education is a whipsaw for wealth and privilege.

Although a local radical attorney, George Washington, filed suit against the Takeover Board on constitutional grounds, the new CEO quickly got the board to adopt his agenda: every kid in a uniform, every teacher in the same grade on the same page of the same text every day, arrest parents of truant kids, end social promotions, extend
the school day, intensify the use of national examinations—up to eight a year in core subjects, close schools with low scores, military schools for troublesome children, merit pay for educators. That this was the program of the 1998 school board seems to go unnoticed. The previous board was so corrupt and incompetent, a tradition in Detroit going back a century, that hardly a peep of protest was heard from the community. The old board was notoriously paralyzed by bickering about who should get the pickings from a 1.5 billion dollar bond issue voters had passed to repair the schools, that is, whose relatives and friends in which firms should get the construction contracts. The new CEO embarked on a school repair program, promising that every school, many of them in utterly decrepit condition, would be fully repaired by the beginning of the 1999 school year. In part, the project succeeded. However, on October 3, 1999 *The Detroit News* in a front-page copyrighted series revealed that the repair project was rife with corruption (there was no bidding process) and many schools are left unrepaired. This means that the children in White Elementary, a multi-story east side school holding more than 1,000 kids, will breathe the fumes from a 90 year old coal furnace for another year. The CEO explains that the bidding process was skipped, “for the children, and I would do it again.” Bill Monroe, a parent activist with the Whole Schooling Consortium who sought to expose school repair fraud for four years said, ‘They always pose this ‘for the kids.’ It’s the same thing, year after year, and it is really for their pockets” (Gibson, 1999).

Coupled with the forceful takeover of the schools is a campaign to deepen the surveillance of students and educators, to link that surveillance to consequences, and to simultaneously set individual schools against one another in competitions for survival. Part of the school repair campaign has been to dramatically raise the number of metal detectors and police in the schools, a national trend. One principal, on the first day of school, routinely has his school “swept” by squadrons of cops, arresting students and others, not only in the school but near it, for minute infractions. Invariably, the offenders are released without charge after a trip in a squad car, but the principal thinks this sets a good tone for the year. Suburban schools banned back-packs in the fall of 1999, after a series of bomb threats in the spring, post-Columbine, shut down the administration of the state exams. The suburban back-pack ban was lifted after powerful parents complained. The Detroit sweeps continue. This is the relationship of the iron fist behind the more benign forms of surveillance, like the high-stakes standardized exams, which will become a greater part of the reform project with time.

School reform in Detroit is a mix of private and public blessings. The Annenberg Foundation is deeply involved in Detroit schools, as is the Skillman Foundation. Annenberg held out promises of significant grants to clusters of schools, groups of three or four schools
banded together ostensibly to make change—and get the cash. Led by ambitious and well-meaning principals, dozens of schools in the city adopted a variety of well-known school reform models and wrote proposals. The Annenberg promise was that ten clusters would be funded. Competition was dizzying, one cluster seeking an advantage over the next. In September 1999, Annenberg announced they would fund seven schools clusters, including one working with the Whole Schooling Consortium. Top insiders tell me they could not fund ten. The remainder were too poorly written.

Detroit’s school CEO attempted to order up a contract with Detroit educators whose union leadership from the American Federation of Teachers had agreed to every aspect of the takeover, including the CEO’s promises to dispatch the unions of the blue collar and administrative workers in the system. At the start of the school year, the union rank and file rebelled against the contract, engaging in an illegal wildcat strike that lasted 8 days. The strike was in clear violation of a purportedly tough state law and was openly opposed by their union leadership. The demands of the strike—smaller class size, books, school libraries (although there are no libraries in many Detroit schools, resourceful educators have stocked incredible classroom collections) and supplies, and a fair wage system—united educators, parents and students (Gibson, 1999). Hundreds of parents and students joined the picket lines, participated in integrated planning meetings. The Detroit Federation of Teachers leadership had no plan, other than to re-establish control, sign another contract, and to return their members to work. The press attacked the strike, offering to represent the anguish of children kept from school, though the New York Times did note that the overwhelming majority of parents supported the action. The Mayor bitterly criticized the strike, saying it shattered, “the euphoria of Detroit’s comeback.”

The final contract contains no victories on any of the key issues. Indeed, the new contract insists that in order to get raises, the majority of the teaching force (75% of the teachers are at the top of the pay scale) will need to subject themselves to racially-biased tests like the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards exams; tests which will guarantee that the deepest crisis of the profession, the fact that soon a teaching force that is 95% white and middle class will face a student population that is mostly kids of color, remains unresolved. The new contract allows closures of schools with poor test scores. The teachers wearied of an assault from the media and government agencies, had done their best, and went back to work. They ratified the contract, 6,328 to 2,030, on a ballot that gave them the false option of a “yes” vote or a longer strike. The state government, recognizing that punitive action against 11,000 teachers would be unwise, chose to ignore the anti-strike law it had passed five years before, a law both the state representatives and the teacher union leadership had told edu-
cators was too tough to defy-proof that the only illegal strike is a strike that loses. Within two weeks, professors at Wayne State, the city's urban university, and bus drivers, followed the teachers in illegal work stoppages. The impact of the Detroit teacher wildcat continues to echo through the state as other educators remind one another of strikes in the past.

The CEO, Dr. Adamany, and the new board believe they are well on the way to school reform. The CEO boasts his past as president of Wayne State University, a dubious record of attention to the physical plant, where he survived four faculty strikes, finally leaving after the vote of no confidence. He left, but not before he named a new undergraduate library after himself. Wayne State librarians say the new building is a metaphor for Dr. Adamany's work. It is full of computer stations, with very few books located in a small area on one floor. During his tenure, change was apparent, superficial. He demanded that all freshman and sophomore basic classes adopt a common curriculum, on the same page of the same book. After awhile, he was told they were. They were not. His summer 1999 repairs of the Detroit Public Schools went fairly well, until corruption throughout the process was exposed by the press.

The reform that the Detroit teacher contract codifies is a paean to the reality of current school reform efforts, ostensibly built around partnerships of business (every Detroit schools has been adopted by a business), government, union leaders, and educators. The partners from wealth certainly understand their interests as a class. They meet privately, often using their inter-linked relationships with private foundations and shared legal assistants as a cover. They send their children to private schools, and behave as a relatively cohesive group. The government partners have their own ambitions: to be Vice-President (Engler), to be head of the Democratic Party (Archer), to be the next Mayor (Hendrix), to be CEO of a bigger college or private fund (Dr. Adamany, Price, Beckham). The union leaders now make, on the average, twice what teachers make. They live in places where teachers do not live, but administrators do. They discovered fashionable shops and long vacations—out of the classroom. The partnership works for these partners. The partnership is only crumbled at its foundation, where most of the people are. The 1999 Detroit teacher contract which allows for schools to be closed, and teachers to lose their jobs, based on the scores of standardized tests which research for the last three years demonstrates is clearly class and race biased. The reform will not work in the interest of most kids, partially because this reform is entirely top-down, but primarily, as Jean Anyon (1997) has richly described, reforming schools without reforming the economies they are situated in is like washing the air on one side of a screen door. The partners cannot be partners. The bases of their existence are at odds with one another. They have nothing in common but contradic-
tion. The companies represented by seven-eighths of the people on
the new board are not only the companies which are largely respon-
sible for the collapse of the Detroit economy, but they are the compa-
nies who intend to profit from the low-skill jobs now offered in the
city. There is indeed, contra New Detroit, an Us and a Them.

We’re Off to See—Detroit!

Detroit is a rust belt city that never recovered. Located adjacent
to one of the most prosperous counties in the world, the Motor City is
third world. The most racially segregated metropolitan area in the U.S.,
the city has a long history of race and class violence (Sugrue 1998;
Widdick, 1973). The only plan for economic reform is the opening of
three casinos, and the restructuring of the downtown as a sports-en-
tertainment center, which is at the base of the current school takeover.
The casinos were born after four consecutive votes inside Detroit re-
jected their construction. Then the issue was placed on a state-wide
ballot. It passed. The casinos, located just blocks from pockets of gro-
tesque poverty, depend on social peace, social control, which cannot
be won from people who have no hope—a key answer to the question:
Why seize the schools now? The city community college advertises a
curriculum devoted to blackjack dealing.

Linda Ann Ewing examined the genesis of power in Detroit in
1978, tracing a genealogy based on industrial and retailing might
(Ewing, 1978, p. 151). The turn to casinos, and the school seizure, may
reflect an economic shift in power at the top in the city, from indus-
trial capital to finance capital. Specifically, of the top 25 industrial pow-
ers listed by Ewing in her 1978 study, only 6 remain in the city in 1998.
The banks have gone through a succession of mergers, but remain in
place. Although the retailers too have merged and been bought out, at
least two of the six listed continue to operate in Detroit (Ewing, p.
294).

Besides the casinos, another major new player in Detroit is Mike
Illitch, who owns the Detroit Tigers, the hockey Red Winds, and sev-
eral downtown theaters and buildings—and Little Caesar’s Pizza. Illitch
the pizza maker is not Henry Ford the auto builder. Finance capital-
ists have somewhat different interests from industrial capitalists. The
latter need engineers, technicians, scientists. They need many Robert
Oppenheiners but no Klaus Fluchs (of A-bomb fame). Finance capi-
tal wants clerks, gamblers, etc. Twenty years ago the downtown area
was mostly owned by auto magnates and related banks. The compet-
ing interests of these groups, and their fundamental unity, must be
recognized in unraveling conditions in Detroit, a town which has been
a head-water.

The Depression started in Detroit, as did the Students for a Demo-
ocratic Society. What happens in the city seems to happen with more
force, sooner. Because of the bellwether nature of the auto industry,
the adage once went that if Detroit sneezed, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Chicago, Youngstown, Gary, Cincinnati, Milwaukee, and South Bend all got pneumonia (Sugrue, 1998, p. 12). The escalating attack on poor and working people in the U.S., over the last 25 years played itself out early in Detroit. First came the closure of the mental institutions, those least likely to resist. Patients were frequently dumped in front of welfare offices and told to apply. They were ineligible: no addresses. Then came the attack on welfare, a system that expanded dramatically after the 1967 Detroit rebellion and receded as resistance ebbed. About the same time came the end of most city auto production and the destruction of families who for generations had counted on jobs in the plants.

How bad is it in Detroit? It depends on where you live, a geographic form of volunteer adult tracking determined by caste and class; and whether or not you are a shopper. There is not one department store left in the city. Detroit lost 1.3 million residents in the last 40 years. Since 1968, the school population dropped from 300,000 to around 180,000 (Kerner, 1968, p. 90). Racist white-flight, buttressed by color-coded federal home loans in the suburbs, was a key factor, forging strict lines of race and class between school districts. White resistance to school integration was significant—and led to considerable violence. The city schools are now about 90% African American, 4% white. Detroit is the poorest sizeable city in the country, based on median family income ("The Detroit schools takeover," 1999).

In the 1970's and 1980's, joblessness in the city reached 60%. The Department of Housing and Urban Development issued fraudulent loans to contractors who took the money and skipped town. The houses they owned went empty. Cold and hungry people invaded vacant homes, stripped them of wiring and plumbing to be sold for scrap, then tore up the floorboards to use for fuel. The vacated homes became uninhabitable: drug dens, homeless hangouts, etc. Then the national media ridiculed Detroiters who burned these hulks on Halloween evenings ("Devil's Nights"), evidence to the journalists that the city, by then 85% black, was ungovernable. When the vacant homes were finally bulldozed, the fires stopped.

Seven hundred-fifty thousand auto workers were laid off in the last fifteen years. In the 1970s, Chrysler was in such poor shape that CEO Lee Iacocca demanded a one billion dollar bailout from the State of Michigan and the federal government. He got it. The same day, Michigan welfare grants were slashed. The auto companies now report record profits. Welfare is virtually non-existent, steep eligibility requirements and forced work programs, coupled with a booming economy, nearly wiped out the safety net. Since 1975, Michigan transformed a proud superstructure of roads, libraries, medical care, social services, and schools into a privatized skeleton, in the midst of a relative economic boom. Like the rest of the U.S., the last twenty years in Detroit saw a massive drop in industrial jobs. While state unemploy-
ment levels are officially low, like the rest of the nation it now takes two workers in a family to support what one provided in the past. The incredible amounts of surplus value that makes it possible to operate the standard of living in the U.S. are generated, for the most part, in the third world, the reality of globalization. The problems of a one-trick economy were not entirely learned in Michigan. Auto still rules, but less lavishly. Finance capital is potent, as is Amway, but the car, really the SUV and light truck, is still boss in metro-Detroit. With the industry temporarily reaping record profits, in the suburbs outside Detroit there is an anxious sense of well-being.

Sometimes living in Michigan seems surreal. In September, 1997, as the Governor moved to close some of the last mental hospitals in the state, state workers picketed at what was once one of the largest sites in Detroit. Inside, the lone administrator was a volunteer retiree who had continued to come to work for nearly a year to supervise 140 employees. There was one patient.

Children in Wayne County, encompassing Detroit, suffer a thirty per cent poverty rate: about 169,000 kids arrive at school hungry. Statewide, about 600,000 kids live in poverty—reflecting the rapid increase in income inequality in Michigan (Citizen, 1996). Once a generous state where every child could receive free dental care, Michigan now has the largest number of kids without immunizations in the U.S. A once-proud public library system, with branches throughout the city and a door-to-door delivery system, collapsed as the tax base evaporated in the period from 1965 to 1990. Corporations left town, along with employed citizens. At the same time, Detroit gave generous tax breaks to profitable companies like General Motors and Chrysler whose leaders threatened to leave Motown. The tax shifts accompanied political shifts, reflecting changes in the population, which rang through the schools. A Detroit schools' principals' academy, a rigorous training center for school leaders, was abolished in the 1980s on the charge that it was a method of racial selection, as in some cases it was. However, principals became political appointees, chosen by a notoriously corrupt system of administrators reporting to an equally corrupt school board. Dr. Adamany, meeting with principals in the summer of 1999, informed them that one of his goals is to dispose of, "about one-half of you." The administrative sector of the school system bloated as the city simultaneously allowed school physical plants to decay. Administrators fill an eight story building. Inside that building are notorious bottlenecks. The personnel office requires a fee from applicants to apply for jobs. The clerks routinely lose applications, reportedly less by mistake than design. People they like get return calls. New hires frequently go months without a paycheck—and quit. In October 1999 the secretary for the new board admitted that approximately 10% of the teaching force, about 1100 educators, had not been paid all school year,
blaming the problem on a "glitch." However, educators say this problem is habitual.

The CEO guaranteed this bottleneck would be changed. Dr. Adamany also recognizes the school bureaucrats as a monumental waste of money. On September 30, 1999, Dr. Adamany announced his effort to have the legislature pass a bill abolishing the AFL-CIO affiliated administrative unions. On October 1, he advised that he will be replacing top administrative officers in DPS, like the chief of personnel and the finance officer, with executives from industry, General Motors, Ford, Michigan Consolidated Gas, Thysen Foods, who are on paid leaves of absence from their companies (Stroud, 1999).

The site-based management plan which the CEO has discussed with board members is to shift administrative responsibilities to individual schools, to lower the cost and number of personnel involved in distributing layers of oppression. That is, under the rubric of site based management, individual schools will be given authority to determine who is hired, to carry out school worker discipline, even to determine the distribution of budget resources, all within the context of enforcing a standardized curriculum, high-stakes exams, and uncritical support for the budget process as a whole. Onerous responsibilities are shifted downward, without the necessary authority or money to solve the larger problems (Gibson, 1999).

While the administration grew, the teaching force grew older and comparatively poorer. Detroit educators were once among the top-paid school workers in the U.S., probably due to two factors: the organized activism of the Detroit Federation of Teachers and the largesse available from a booming Detroit industrial core. By 1999, Detroit teacher wages slipped to the lower one-third in Michigan. At the top of the pay scale, they average about $10,000 per year less than suburban teachers. Teachers and prized skilled principals, especially educators of color, were heavily recruited by nearby suburbs. Many left, but few I have interviewed indicated that pay was critical. Instead, they raised issues of curricular freedom, available technology and facilities, smaller classes, more time for continuing education, all ahead of pay. This verifies a 1999 union survey of 100 respondents, Detroit teachers who resigned, which indicates that lack of administrative support (34%) and class size (10%) were the top reasons they left (Michigan Education Reporter, 1999).

Detroit is where Ken and Yetta Goodman honed many of their founding notions about Whole Language, an optimistic student centered vision of literacy and learning. There are still, in the city, many educators who remember the halcyon days when they met regularly in study groups to sharpen their skills, to share kid-writing and stories, to build a community of educators. Some of them still meet, carrying on the work, swimming upstream. But those I have interviewed feel under siege, isolated, even defeated by the aggregate alienations...
(e.g., class size, standardized exams, crowded rooms, weak leadership, hungry and despairing angry kids) of a system that demands steep emotional sacrifice, and which offers too few rewards. Overcrowding is severe in Detroit. According to district records, more than 50 schools hold 100 or more children over the physical limits. Grade school classes, in October 1999, meet in hallways, closets, basements, wherever a spot can be found. The new Tiger stadium, to be called Comerica Park, is nearly complete. It will hold 40,000 people, cost $260 million, most of it in public funds. The first casino cost $300 million, was built in seven months. My colleagues in the Whole Language schools say their kids can easily read that signal.

School drop-out rates, veiled by administrators, have increased exponentially for the last 8 years. Drop-outs nearly doubled from 1990 to 1994. For Detroit's mostly black youths, the chances of reaching the twelfth grade are one in three. Thirty percent of the people in Wayne County never finished high school; only thirteen percent finished college. Immediately to the north, across a virtual moat called Eight Mile Road, in overwhelmingly white Oakland County, the figures are simply reversed: thirty percent finished college, fifteen percent never graduated from high school. The median family income in Detroit is about $18,000 as compared to a $31,000 national median. Recently, the state legislature shifted the bulk of the Michigan tax burden to a regressive income tax, and boosted the sales tax, capping a move away from taxing non-productive income like inheritance, profits, and property. Michigan class size rates now rank 47th in the nation (Gibson, 1998a).

In the mid-1980's, Detroit's two newspapers engaged in what is best called a phony war. They created appearances of cutthroat competition in order to win court approval for a merger. During that period, one paper published an internal memo of the other paper, a directive from an editor to the staff advising them that the purpose of the paper was to become a topic of conversation at suburban cocktail parties. The Detroit newspapers, three years ago, defeated a strike of their unions. A newspaper boycott, which cut circulation by one-half, continues today. The Detroit papers are so notoriously bad, they are routinely banned from use in area classrooms. Residents rely on tabloid television for local news.

The Kerner Commission on civil uprisings, formed after the Detroit rebellion in 1967, wrote that key factors underlying urban insurrections go beyond a loss of hope and joblessness, a culture of depression, segregated schools and housing, and a city rife with rumors, to hatred for and mistrust of the police. (Kerner, p. 299) The commission sharply criticized police brutality, suggesting that society cannot jail its problems, and that a social policy of inclusion must be the answer to the exclusion of people from economic life. Thirty-five Detroit cops, including the last chief of police, caught with $1 million in cash
stuffed in his ceiling, are now in jail for corruption, most of it related to the drug trade. The head of the narcotics unit was removed from his job, in September 1999, when his daughter was found in his driveway with a kilo of cocaine in her car. The city has settled, with one attorney alone, more than $1.8 million dollars in lawsuits directed against police brutality in the last year. The first people charged with robbing a casino, on October 4, 1999, were two Detroit cops. Another two police officers, convicted of murdering a young black man in front of his home in 1994, won their infamous cases on appeal and were freed, a signal to the citizenry. This is a pattern of corruption extending back to Lincoln Steffans’ *Shame of the Cities*, written three-quarters of a century ago, perhaps in a period too early to state that the businesslike work of big-city police is to organize crime, not prevent it.

Commuters are routinely herded off major roads due to what the media calls “police situations,” usually robberies or shoot-outs of some sort. Detroit’s major streets are lined by miles of boarded up vacant buildings. The roads leading to the casinos were recently improved, the rest are known to citizens as “tank traps.” The drive on Jefferson, a major spoke running east from city center, goes by much of Detroit’s history of organized decay. To the south is the river front where the city was first settled. The precious property decomposed for decades; old vacant buildings with smashed windows looking across the river to once-placid Windsor, now a casino hot-spot in its own right. The land on the river, promised the Mayor, would belong to the people in perpetuity. The casinos would be located elsewhere. When the casino bill passed, he changed his mind.

The black churches are a powerful force in a city overwhelmingly African-American. For decades the churches have played at least a dual role of passivity and resistance. Many black churches were in the forefront of city civil rights struggles, and the solidarity of black church leaders made the UAW’s organization of Ford’s possible—even though the white UAW had done little to deserve the support. As the casinos pressed for legalization, black church leaders were on the horns of a dilemma. As the city’s retail and financial structures had toppled, church attendance went up, as did church income. Some predominantly black churches now own dozens of city blocks, encompassing housing and retail stores. Church leaders vehemently opposed casinos in the city on moral grounds until the state ballot passed. Then, presented with a black mayor’s singular hopes for an urban resurrection, hints of chances for casino funded vouchers for parochial schools, or social unrest, the church leaders went silent. On October 5, 1999, the federal mortgage company announced a massive federal home loan program for Detroit, which will be administered by a coalition of black churches.

To the north of Jefferson was the “black bottom” or “paradise valley,” a ghetto of music and poverty and gambling and honky-tonks
and homes, systematically ripped apart by expressways and urban removal. Farther north still, the Brewster-Douglas project, some of the toughest in the city, was birthplace to Diana Ross and several Motown artists. They moved to L.A. in the early seventies. Brewster-Douglas was recently refurbished, but it will be torn down now. It is too close to the new Comerica Baseball Park. Aretha Franklin, queen of soul, whose father's ghetto church was a sacred organizing point of the civil rights movement, moved to a posh northwestern suburb. She joined an exodus of many of the black bourgeoisie, a population shift which quietly integrated several nearby suburbs. Detroit's mayor is part of a group who stayed, but who live in enclaves sequestered from the woes of the city. Whites continued to flee north. At her last Detroit concert, in August 1997, Franklin led a eulogy for a monarchist, deceased Princess Diana.

Farther east is the United Auto Workers' solidarity house, where the solidarity-unionists only recently tore down the sign, "Park your foreign car somewhere else." It became a problem when the UAW-Chrysler team was purchased by Germans, giving the UAW-driven, "Buy American," campaign a special meaning. Then traveling east on Jefferson comes a former jewel of the city, Belle Isle, once called Hog Island. The hogs were originally taken there to eat the snakes. An enormous park, with a petting zoo, an aquarium, a boat club, early in the century it was a family playground. In 1967, it became a holding area for the hundreds of people arrested during the rebellion against racism. In the 1990s, youths mixed with the families, and the latter drifted off as gunfights and murders hurt the island's reputation. The mayor tried to institute a pass system.

All along our Jefferson Drive are hulks of destroyed businesses. Drug dealers swarm just off the block. On the corner near Hibbard, a street once filled with the single-family homes of workers from the Ford Rouge Plant, you can buy crack, heroin, weed, speed, women, boys, and Hilfiger knock-offs, all on half a block. The Rouge once employed more than 100,000 workers. Now there are just about 9,000, some of them employed by a Japanese company that bought part of the plant. In 1999, ancient huge boilers in the Rouge exploded, killing and burning nearby workers. The UAW leadership, repeating that they are part of the UAW-Ford family, quickly issued statements sympathetic to the workers families, and William Clay Ford, who said he was having one of the worst days of his life, and through the UAW-Ford family, quickly issued statements sympathetic to the workers families, and William Clay Ford, who said he was having one of the worst days of his life. Ford and the UAW solidified their partnership with the 1999 auto agreement in which Ford promises to organize plants on the behalf of the UAW, as the union promises labor peace while the company shrinks the wages and the workforce at the 23,000 employee Visteon parts subsidiary.

The people who live off Jefferson are among the, "one-half of the male adult population," with no connection to the city's labor market, living outside even the margins. (Sugrue, 1999, p. 262). This was the
turf of the Earl Flyns [sic] and the Chene (a street, pronounced chain) gang in the 1970’s, when Detroit won its reputation as the “Murder City.” One initiation rite for the gangs was to kill somebody. They did, at the rate of two or three a day. Then-mayor Coleman Young declared that the toughest gang in the city was his gang, the cops, and told the criminals to “Hit 8 Mile Road,” the legendary northern boundary of the city, more of a moat than a road, that has long separated white and black as worlds apart. (The color line in Detroit is perceived as black and white, although there is a growing Hispanic population, and a large nearby Arabic community). Suburbanites, encountering a black mayor for the first time, believed Young was exporting crooks. Instead, the Detroit Police interpreted his remarks as an order of, “by any means necessary,” and, according to substance abuse counselors in Wayne County, introduced the gangs to heroin. The gangs were soon defunct. There was a heroin epidemic.

The children who attend elementary schools near Hibbard and Jefferson walk past burned out wrecks of homes, through piles of used needles, to get to schools that have no books, are heated (sometimes) by 90 year old coal furnaces. Class size is often 40, though the schools count on absenteeism to balance the failure to hire educators. In the summer of 1999, computers were delivered to the elementary schools in the area. They were promptly stolen. There are no libraries in the elementary schools. The librarians who protected the libraries were shifted into classrooms as the budget decayed. Principals, who do not live near this area, lectured parents on the need to set up security patrols for the buildings. In 1998, there were more than 1,000 vacant positions in the Detroit Public Schools, another 1,000 jobs were filled by permanent substitutes, some skilled veterans, others uncertified novices. The profound Black-White-Latino-Arab segregation that is the crux of the school system also echoes into the question of inclusion, or the isolation of labeled kids, kids with disabilities. They are shunted apart in separate schools, an interrelated form of sequestration that goes unnoticed, the default drive. Class size in the Hibbard neighborhood is sometimes 28, with absences playing a key role; and sometimes 55, because teachers are often absent too. The older kids on Hibbard often walk to school. Bus passes were slashed for Detroit’s kids three years ago. The younger kids on Hibbard must walk along decayed sidewalks, across crumbling paved playgrounds unblemished by serviceable equipment, to get to school.

Suddenly, like exiting a tunnel, the traveler eastbound on Jefferson at Alter Road enters Grosse Pointe, the richest suburb in the U.S., home to the Fords, the Dodges, and the Mob. Burned-out wrecks are replaced, immediately, by magnificent trees forming a canopy over the street, monumental homes with stained glass windows looking out onto Lake St. Clair. Police patrols are methodical. Driving while black is a commonly known crime. There is no busing problem for
kids in Grosse Pointe. They either drive, or their parents drive them. One school library I visited has 20,000 books and computers everywhere.

It is common in metro-Detroit for even suburban residents to lose electrical power for up to two weeks, so common that citizens in several communities are suing Detroit Edison, which announced a major merger with Michigan Consolidated Gas on October 3, 1999. In early November, Edison settled a discrimination suit filed by its employees for $45 million. Public transportation is nonexistent in the Motor City. People without cars cannot be timely for work. Electric trolleys which spanned the city were purchased by the auto industry and shipped to Mexico City. The fall 1999 Detroit bus drivers' strike was couched in terms of passenger safety. The crippled old busses in use are brakeless. In the winter of 1998-1999, the city was paralyzed for seven days by a moderate winter storm. Schools and businesses closed because Detroit has no equipment to plow streets. During the same storm, Northwest, the major airline serving Detroit held passengers prisoner on planes on the tarmac for up to 14 hours. The airline had no contingency plan for a storm. In October 1999 the entire sewer system at Metro backed up, demolishing travel for another day, and making airport sleep impossible. The airport was voted by airline passengers as the worst in the U.S.

Detroit is home to federal empowerment zones, what one alternative paper called Maquiladoras of the North, low-wage zones where mostly third-world workers are paid at the minimum, offered few environmental protections or work rules, no unions, and employers are paid federal cash for hiring people.

The state incarcerates 443 per 100,000 citizens, about 10% more than Ohio, 25% more than Illinois. The land where Hemingway learned to love the woods, the "Up North," is surrounded by razor wire, one prison bumping into the next, as local citizens compete for jobs in the jails. Chicago educator and reporter George Schmidt calls the prison system, "the only educational structure that America has been willing to pay top dollar for, for young minority males" (Schmidt, 1990). The prison guards are loyal members of the AFL-CIO, as are the local police. In downtown Detroit, however, where the bulldozers have created huge empty fields in the city which once held more single-family homes than any other, it is commonplace for residents to kick up a pheasant. Some of the state's prisons are run by for-profit corporations which now compete in the labor market. Factory jobs are moved inside the jails. Managers appreciate the punctuality of their new employees. Furniture workers in western Michigan say they may have to do crime soon to keep their jobs.

There are now about 150 charter schools in Michigan, 18 of them in the Grand Rapids area, home of Amway. The charters enroll about 50,000 students, and are growing rapidly. Both the charter schools, as
many of the prisons, are for-profit operations. Public school, in some quarters, is beginning to be seen as a loss item. But only a tiny percentage of parents, less than 1% in the metro-Detroit area, chose charter schools for their kids in 1998-1999. In 2000, an amendment to the state constitution allowing vouchers for parochial schools will likely appear on the ballot. It is favored by Amway and the Catholic church, opposed to the conservative Republican Governor who wants to be president (Michigan Education Report, 1999).

Detroit was once a rowdy city, where honky-tonks, blues bars, rock and roll, all found a home on the streets and in the plants. Now, perhaps leading the nation, Detroit is commodifying and confining what was once the margins and giving the citizens a healthy dose of authoritarianism at the same time: a capitalist hug. The casinos, gambling joints, promote themselves as family entertainment centers, replacing the back-room card games and the music that fronted for them in all-night bars. Prostitution is moved off the streets, into trendy counter-culture newspapers, into the casinos, and into burgeoning strip joints surrounding the city. Even action as a form of entertainment becomes the alienated life of the spectator—the crux of the revival of downtown is sports stadiums, dice-joints, and movie theaters. The suburban voters who thought they could locate gambling and immorality in Detroit alone are finding their daughters turned into dancers.

An annual Woodward Dream Cruise is designed as a nostalgic look back at late 1950's cruising of the street that a popular national magazine once called the “Longest Unrecognized Drag-way in the World.” It was a scene of kids racing cars, fighting cops, coupling, drinking, night after night, for their right to enjoy cars, sex, and rock and roll. In July, 1999, more than 1.2 million white auto fans showed up for the Fifth Dream Cruise. 5,000 suburban cops, some riding in armed personnel carriers, shut down Woodward at 9:30 p.m., threatening anyone walking on nearby sidewalks with arrest, simply because, “Too many people are here.” This, like most city cultural events, and churches, is profoundly segregated.

Solidarity Forever, Somewhere Over The Rainbow
"Are you a Good Witch, or a Bad Witch?"

The labor movement, once the choice of those seeking social change, and a school for the leftists who created it, was born in Michigan strife. It is now a nullity—as is most of the left. While some communists, socialists, and democrats did attempt to build an anti-racist labor movement, big labor was never truly open to people of color, and grew especially distorted in Detroit by the systematically racist policies of the UAW under Walter Reuther. This form of ideological alienation blows back on those who cultivate it (Hill, 1998).

The AFL-CIO today cannot mobilize its members to Vote Democratic, cannot mobilize mass strike action nor organize new plants,
and represents just about 12% of the workforce. While the most powerful sectors of the AFL, like the UAW, claim to have bargained good contracts, in fact they have assisted in the shrinkage of the work force, with those who remain earning wages which only keep up with inflation—at the cost of a sixty hour work week. While a declining number of North American workers have continued to live relatively well with the temporary economic boom; the distance between the workers and their employer-owners has increased exponentially (Mishel, Bernstein, & Schmitt, 1999, p. 119). The workers’ labor has deepened their own dependence on and distance from capital, while allowing capital to expand into other areas—a maneuver which will eventually impoverish the workers who made it possible when capital, ever fickle, abandons them for sweeter fields of surplus value (Marx, 1973, p. 88). Within this context the AFL-CIO does not unite or mobilize working people, it urges them into struggles distant from the workplace, where the issue is undeniably control, to arenas like electoral politics, where the issue is to ascertain the good capitalist. The AFL-CIO divides U.S. workers, from each other and the workers of the world.

Michigan’s homegrown UAW serves as simile for the betrayal of the leadership of labor. On the one hand, leaders like Mr. Reuther chose to continue the segregation of the work force, especially the skilled trades and the better jobs in plants, a racist practice that quickly rebounded (Sugrue, 1996, p. 101). In the 1996 strike against the Detroit newspapers, labor leaders expected the “union town,” to pour out in solidarity. While there was considerable community support, the black community mostly stood aside, as the skilled trades-workers strike disintegrated. On the other hand, the UAW leadership worked through the logic of the AFL-CIO: if workers have more in common with the owning class than less, it finally follows that the task of union leadership is to formalize a marriage with the employers, a partnership, and to organize the capitulation of the workforce, to ensure the success of national capital at all costs (Hill, 1998; Keeran, 1986; Serrin, 1973). There is now a generation of people, even in Detroit, who know nearly nothing about unions at all. The AFL-CIO frightens nearly no one, except perhaps its own members. The failed newspaper strike in Detroit was not lost because of employer opposition, but internally; because of a lifetime of racism within the strikers’ ranks, and because the UAW and Teamster leadership joined forces to systematically disorganize mass community pickets at key plants—because they did not want to saddle William Clinton’s presidential campaign with labor violence.

John Sweeney, president of the AFL, proclaimed his devotion to the spirit of capital, and a partnership with its personifications, when he rang the opening bell on the stock exchange, early in 1999. The AFL-CIO continues to spend nearly one-half of member dues income outside the U.S., most of that spent on efforts to organize AFL-style
unions in competition to indigenous worker organizations. The big labor federations are inordinately close to U.S. intelligence, the police (Buhle, 2000; Schmidt, 1990). The AFL line is: U.S. workers will do better if other workers of the world do worse. A small labor resurgence, publicized by the Labor Notes collective and academics like the prolific Michael Yates among others, has these politics at its heart.

The left is hung on its own labor petard. The communists and socialists who gave up lives and careers to establish an organizing committee for working people did indeed succeed in confronting capital early on. The 1937 battles in Flint that formed the UAW, in Minneapolis that formed the Teamsters, the fights all over the U.S. that forged the steelworkers, even the struggles that put the American Federation of Teachers on the New York map, were all led by radicals of one stripe or another (Linder, 1967; Kraus, 1947). But the unions they formed also assumed the structures the radicals proposed, frequently undemocratic designs to insulate the top. When radicals found themselves on the outside, after Joseph McCarthy, and after the Communist Party’s vacillations and capitulation to racism and employers during WWII, there was no way to make union reform using democratic means. Today, the AFL-CIO affiliates are nearly impossible to change. The only union of any size that retains a formal tradition of internal democracy is the 2.3 million member National Education Association, independent and unaffiliated with the AFL.

Opportunism is made ever more possible because of the expansion of U.S. capital following the disintegration of the Soviet Union, and the meanness of a life in poverty located as an example is not too far from most suburbs. The internal structural make-up of the unions make them nearly impossible to change, and the general organizational structures, dividing workers by craft or industry, make them undesirable to revive. There is no reason to believe the industrial working class or its leadership in the U.S. will be a force for democracy and equality for some time to come.

For workers in schools, poverty has a very practical effect. The superintendent of schools of Saginaw, a mid-Michigan city just north of Flint, an area still feeling the reverberations of the shift in auto production to more exploited sections of the world, says more than half of the students in his elementary schools move at least twice during the school year and change schools. One student changed schools 13 times in one semester. The administrator’s solution: urge parents not to move. In one Detroit Whole Schooling site, the principal tells me that less than one-fifth of the kids are there through an entire semester. She has mixed feelings about the idea of having every kid in the same grade on the same page, everywhere in Detroit, every day.

The Detroit 1996 school year began with student walk-outs at three high schools which planned to eliminate basic classes like English, required for graduation. Other walk-outs followed, around ques-
tions like the absence of toilet paper, textbooks, and the erasure of once-free transportation to school. On opening day, a young girl was shot to death in front of one of the largest high schools. Early in the school year, the city Board of Education, claiming near-bankruptcy, found funds to seek an injunction to prevent a long time board critic and lawyer-activist from attending public board meetings. The injunction was overturned. Another board critic was maced and arrested for speaking during a public comment session. The board’s accountant, having been brought to task for being unable to account for several million dollars in bond money earmarked for school renovations, resigned after admitting she had been less than candid about her background: she had no accounting experience. Shortly thereafter, she bought one of the most expensive restaurants in the city. But the superintendent, unable to explain the misuse of millions in unspent bond money, retained his job. White suburbanites were appalled, citing this as further evidence that the city leadership was incapable of governance. They had forgotten that early in the century, Detroit’s populist (white) mayor, Hazen Pingree, had ordered the arrest of the entire (white) school board on the grounds that “You are so corrupt you won’t stay bribed”. As had been the case in the early 1970’s, the last deep financial crisis, there was growing social unrest emanating out from schools (Conot, 1988; Ewing, 1978, p. 188).

In 1999, when the Governor took over the Detroit schools, the newly appointed board was so fearful that the citizens would attack them that their initial meetings were surrounded by police, up to two hundred officers from gang squads, SWAT units, narcotics squads, beat patrols, surrounded their meetings, and continued the tradition of beating citizens who complained, urged on by the board chairperson, Freeman Hendrix, who screamed into a microphone, “Get them! Get them now! I am telling you to get them!” as the police pounded on a group of mothers and middle school girls who rose to speak at an early board meeting. The police assaults, repeated at several meetings, only stopped when a cordon of men took the microphone and announced that Hendrix would be held physically accountable if, “you continue to beat our women.” Hendrix became almost demur.

Detroiter are proud of their spunk. The defacto city symbol is an enormous sculpted clenched fist on an outstretched arm, a memorial to Joe Louis, aimed toward the Renaissance Center. The RenCen is a remnant of Mussolini-era architecture on the river front, circular towers designed to make people feel lost and insignificant, separated from the rest of the city by huge concrete berms. On the Fourth of July, when people come to the river to watch fireworks, the berms serve to completely close out the riffraff. In 1984, the Tigers won the pennant. During the last game of the series, the police repeatedly warned citizens not to invade the field at the end of the game. Cops on horseback ringed the outer area of the playing field, menacing citizens with billy-
clubs. The people obeyed. They went outside and rioted through the night, while the police held the field. A celebrated photograph shows a young fan, Bubba Helms, belly protruding beneath t-shirt, waving a Tiger flag, standing beside a burning Detroit police squad car. Each New Year’s Eve air traffic is canceled over the city. At midnight, celebrating armed citizens open fire with a variety of weapons, shotguns, pistols, semi-auto rifles, making the city sound like a battle zone. The police know the Detroit working class is armed. People who survived the heady war years when Detroit was the arsenal of democracy, the 1967 rebellion, the uprisings in the plants led by the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement and others, the collapse of auto, the quietus of the social service safety net; Detroiter would appear to be patient and wise strugglers, retreating when necessary, ready to fight when there is hope. The city is large enough that events in Detroit often have national import, small enough that a demonstration of 500 people is an event (Georgakas, 1998, p. 121).

There has been a sense of collectivity, perhaps solidarity is a better word, in Detroiter for a very long time. The city was among the first to make heat, lights, water, etc., public property. Even some of the rich in the city, uncommon philanthropists who sometimes did not simply seek ways to recreate their power in other disguises, took on public issues. The Couzens Foundation, created by a $25 million grant from one of Henry Ford’s first investors, guaranteed medical care for the children of the entire state for 25 years, until 1957, when the stipulation of the will required all of the money to be spent. The union movement in the city goes back a long way, to the Marine Engineers Benevolence Association, Great Lakes shipworkers. In the 1840’s a fellow named Cronenweth was jailed for being the “chief disturber” in a series of job actions on ships on the Great Lakes. Joseph Labadie, a founder of North American anarchism, was widely accepted, even beloved, in Detroit. Even today, a traditional annual gathering, the Buck Dinner, involves nearly one thousand city supporters of radicalism. In Detroit, there is a deep-felt tradition of neighbor caring for neighbor, coupled now with memories of a union movement and public services not so long gone.

Most suburbanites never see Detroit at all but for televised images of depravity, violence, and crime. They miss the day to day lives of 600,000 employed adults, most of them African-American, who work in factories, in public service, teach, and worry about house payments, college tuition for the kids, and burned out lawns in the hot summer months. Many of the leaders in the U.S. labor movement are from Michigan, even today. Rumors that the “Michigan Mafia controls the NEA,” the largest union in the U.S. by far, are not unfounded. The top staff and most of the key political leadership in NEA’s recent history has come from Michigan.
While it is true that Detroit is the most segregated city in the U.S., it also is home to thousands of citizens, Black, White, Arab, Hispanic, Native American, who have participated in common anti-racist actions, like strikes, or more importantly, integrating neighborhoods, and whose dedication to a lived sense of multiculturalism has passed life or death tests (Hartman, 1997, p. 218). Grace Lee, a Chinese Ph.D. and daughter of prominent restauranteurs, married a Black factory worker, James Boggs, and moved to Detroit in 1953. The Boggs' gained international renown as Marxist intellectual activists. Part of the ongoing development of their thesis, which has also been a continuing self-critique, has been the centrality of the struggle over what W. E. B. Du Bois called the "color-line" and the critical role of the resistance of black poor and working people. Since 1992, Grace Boggs has led a community organizing project on the east side of the city, designed to restore civic life in areas savaged by a destroyed economy. Thousands of youths, elderly people, and community workers have participated in the "Detroit Summers," bringing murals, flower and vegetable gardens and literacy education to breathe vitality into the apparently barren streets. Before his death, James Boggs posed this question to those who seek an inclusive society: "How can we put our hearts, minds, hands, and imaginations together to redefine and create a City of Compassion, of Community, Cooperation, Participation, Enterprise in harmony with the Earth?" Grace Boggs' Marxism is tempered by a deepened sense of humanism today, but has lost none of its critique of tyranny.

Domination in Detroit has routinely met stiff resistance. The Ku Klux Klan elected a Detroit Mayor in the 1920s. He was forced to resign in a year. Anti-integration movements did well in the city in the 1950s and 1960s, but most of the racist right is now located in the distant suburbs. The fascist movement has a history in Detroit's suburbs too, probably most graphically represented by the radio priest, Father Coughlin, whose church, the Shrine of the Little Flower, still towers at a major intersection four miles north of Detroit's boundary (Warren, 1996, p. 79). The Michigan Militia, a force to be taken seriously, is an unconnected movement of anarchists, states-righters, and nationalists. Father Divine, a religious black nationalist, had currency in the city, but recently the Nation of Islam and other nationalist movements have never gained a real foothold. Street gangs exist, like the Crips, but they are not powerhouses like their colleagues in Los Angeles or the Black P. Stone Nation in Chicago (Schmidt, 1990). In 1978, the Ku Klux Klan held an unannounced demonstration in downtown Detroit. They were beaten and thrown back into their rental truck by a spontaneous mob of citizens.

Most recently, integrated demonstrations of hundreds of citizens from every area of the city protested the building of an incinerator, a monstrosity twice the size of a new casino, designed to burn hazard-
ous waste. The smokehouse is owned by Phillip Morris. The citizens lost. Brown hot air, spruced up by a variety of cleansing methods, blows directly south and west across the Detroit River to Canada. A slight wind shift sends the effluent directly into the new Comerica Park. In early October 1999, more than 20,000 Detroit citizens led by the Catholic Focus: HOPE group marched in favor of integration and cooperation. Their march carried them right past the new Comerica Park, the replacement for Tiger stadium, renowned as one of the most beautiful of ballparks, which is empty and vacant, with no plans for renewal (Oguntoyinbo, 1999).

Spectacles are worth something. With the opening of the casinos and the promise of new sports stadiums like Comerica Park replacing Tiger Stadium, property values are up for the first time in two decades in some parts of the city. The mayor sponsored a campaign in 1998 to stop the New Year's shooting. In mid-August 1999, the Wall Street Journal praised Detroit's comeback. On August 30, 1999, the day Detroit teachers voted to strike, the Washington Post carried a long article lauding Detroit's black mayor for leading a "dramatic turnaround," calling him a leader of the "post civil-rights era." White people, a rarity inside the city limits after dark for quite some time, did return to attend Red Wings games, and held their own million white peoples' march when the team won two championships. Nearly 1,500 mostly white educators from all over the U.S. stood in line for hours at a Detroit schools hiring fair in the summer of 1999. Full of hope, they were offered signing bonuses, deeply resented by long-time Detroit educators. Later, their new union negotiated a 6% raise for entry level teachers, over three years, leaving them about 4% behind projected inflation rates. The same day the first casino opened, the county closed 29 lakes due to ecoli pollution. Days later, the lake inspectors were laid off.

One Detroit teacher has a resume that stretches across the recent history of the city. Bill Saratt is the grandson of the main character of the film/book, "Cheaper by the Dozen," the fellow who ran his prodigious family based on F. W. Taylor's time and motion systems, every family member performing a specific task within the unit, with each movement prescribed by the thinking overseer. In 1972, as a worker at the Chrysler Mack Avenue plant, a hellish pit where injuries were commonplace, our grandson helped lead a sit-in strike that lasted for three days. On the fourth day, before sunrise, citizen-supporters who picketed outside watched busses arrive at the plant. In the mist, the busses disgorged dozens, perhaps hundreds of men, carrying nunchuks, iron pipes, baseball bats, sap gloves. They wore UAW jackets. Thinking they were there for support, the pickets parted and watched them go into the plant. A second phalanx from the busses then attacked the pickets, beating most of them senseless. The first wave entered the plant. Surprised workers welcomed them, until the
UAW staffers attacked, pounding the sit-downers into the oily cement floor, dragging them out, and turning them over to the police. The UAW leadership defended its action, saying they had to protect a contract which promised Chrysler labor peace. The UAW came full turn: born 35 years earlier in a massive sit-down strike in Flint, they smashed their own strike.

This was a severe message from the white-dominanted UAW to the fledgling Dodge Revolutionary Movement (DRUM), an organization of Black auto workers taking a far more militant tact, drawn from UAW history, urging the control of the plants by the people who work in them. Before the Mack sit-down, DRUM had led plant seizures in three other Chrysler factories The rank and file leader at Mack, a teacher today, was charged with a variety of felonies. But, this was Detroit. The boy from “Cheaper by the Dozen,” a Maoist, was tried in front of a Marxist judge, Justin Ravitz, elected by the citizens, and eventually freed to become a teacher years later. Now an anarcho-communist, he teaches at the end of the public school line, in a school designed for kids as the last place before they drop out or go to jail. His kids will either do well on the state standardized exam, written by people from the richest suburb in Michigan, a test which has nothing at all to do with Detroit students’ daily lives, a literacy test they must translate through suburban double-speak like “Our Core Constitutional Values,” or their school will close and their teacher will lose his job. The children in the school have told me in vivid language that they believe there is utterly no hope for their future, that their chances for survival alone are not good. This educator, active on the picket lines during the Detroit teacher strike, also faces the dilemma: How can I keep my ideals and still teach?

I'd Give Anything to Get Out of OZ

Detroit is not Mars. These are the specifics of the social context of schools at the millennium: carrot and stick, divide and conquer, hollow spectacles, surveillance so common it goes unnoticed, crime made a family affair, commodified high-stakes exams as substitutes for the authentic struggle to gain and test knowledge in a reasonably free and honest atmosphere, obscure inequality and methods of analysis. Social control and despair meets work, hope and desire. This is the content of the construction of hegemony. People are driven together by systems of production and exchange, split apart from their work and the rest of humanity by systems of politics and economics that require alienation so deep it goes unnoticed. Educators from Margaret Haley to Dewey, Hilda Taba to Counts to Neill to Dubois to Freire have all addressed estrangement in education. But all of them have tried to resolve the appearances of the problem without resolving the key questions that underlie it. That is, they want democracy without the revolutionary battle against tyranny, for equality, an anti-
racist society attained without considering the profitability of racism, literacy for democracy without the organization and upheavals that the reach for democracy must require, the productivity of socialism without egalitarian practices in schools, or anti-authoritarianism until the authority becomes themselves. I suggest those fundamental issues are: the contradictory relationship of labor and capital, the need for elites in an inequitable society to ultimately obscure rationalism and reason—and to turn to forms of authoritarianism to back them up when necessary—and the role of sexual oppression of all forms in buttressing undemocratic and unjust practices.

So what is the role of an educator or school in this mix? The dead end of reform is that it seeks to address the appearances of conditions that have their origins in the essence of all social relations, without ever addressing the contradictions within those constitutive relations. The common good, or democracy, or peace, is offered as a transparent overlay to what, in screed, is clearly class warfare. The cul-de-sac of sectarian or mechanical revolutionism is that it seeks to resolve the fundamental contradictions of society without preparing itself to address the appearances that reverberate in the minds of everyone who lives in an inequitable and undemocratic society: subservience, the hope that someone else will interpret and act on the world, racism, sexism, etc.; nor does mechanical revolutionism often address the question of the relationship of democratic decision making power to productive capacity, nor the key question of how we can learn to love one another as we fight relentlessly against a resolute opposition. In philosophical practice, revolutionary truth has mirrored the truth of dominance, one emanated from the party, another from the higher reaches of the church, or ownership. Both have it wrong, reifying truth outside the processes of social engagement: practice.

The juncture of socio-economic decay and hope for the future creates tiers of overpasses, connecting one route or another. The difficult thing is to make sense of the map of the past and find within it legitimate reasons for optimism, hope; to locate the quarks of what ought to be within what is, and to find transformative practices to make hope more than a reverie Teaching for democracy and equality is to assault the system of capital, which can tolerate neither for long. The puzzle is, which way out?—when some of the routes are disguised, others are dead-ends, as we have seen.

The Yellow Brick Road
“What Makes a King Out of a Slave?” Part One

There are five books I want to examine, each offering pathways for educational artists who seek to create a better world: Teach Me! Kids Will Learn When Oppression is the Lesson, by Murray Levin, The Discipline of Hope by Herb Kohl, Transforming Teacher Unions by the
Rethinking Schools collective, *Race, Class and Power in School Restructuring*, by Pauline Lipman, and *The Naked Children*, recently reissued by Daniel Fader. These texts represent a good assemblage of ideas on change in or through school.

**Teach Me!**

Murray Levin arrives via the Marxist Monthly Review Press, publisher of a wonderful monthly journal by the same name, and a prodigious sweep of reformist and revolutionary texts ranging from socialist ecology to political economy, a publishing house that raises expectations. *Teach Me!* comes well touted, recommended by radical and liberal icons like Francis Fox Piven and Howard Zinn. Levin taught political theory to freshman classes of 500 at the college level for more than three decades. Then, at 70, as a “good deed,” he worked for three years at a community high school, a “holding pen to keep the students unarmed, uneducated, and off the streets…” (Levin, 1999, p. 1). With all that experience, he didn’t want to ask a co-worker how to teach, so he winged it (p. 58). Over the years he interviewed 63 kids. He taped them. He offers their brief quotes, and, annoyingly, his interpretations of what they say.

Like most education writers, Levin asserts what people should know and how they should come to know it. He suggests his work is political, but not partisan (p. 141). Levin says, “I planned to teach them how to think,” and he points toward Marx’s materialism and Hegel’s dialectic as the method (pp. 4, 18, 24, 140). It is fair then to look at not only the internal dialectical contradictions of his work, but also to question his materialism (in brief, “being determines consciousness,” as set apart from the idealist, “I think therefore I am.”)

Levin sees his ghetto kids as without constitutive skills, intuitive, musical—not literary, hopeless, “robbed of their patrimony,” instinctual, disorganized, unable to relate cause and effect, filled with paranoid conspiracy theories, chaotic, unable to think beyond the present with really no sense of time, religious, and nationalist—almost worse than empty vessels who need to be “shocked back to life” (p. 144). They live in an “urban jungle” (p. 60). Their problem is “nihilism and self-hatred, the twin scourges of the ghetto.” In describing his trip to the ghetto from a wealthy suburb, Levin captures the appearances of poverty, an ugly landscape, but is never able to get to its sources. There is precious little here about jobs, labor, racist unemployment, who rules the area, and how. He lands hard on the side of appearance, which is indeed important, but soft on the side of essence, which is key.

“I decided to overestimate them” (p. 110). His caricatures have a disturbingly familiar ring. At the same time, within this missionary project, there is a sense of kindness in Levin and the kids that seems to transcend some of the problems that he goes on to create, and then seeks to overcome. If anything, the book may allay the fears of some
future educators; the ghetto is more kind to visitors than the surrounding world is to ghetto-residents who leave.

Levin sees no commonality of ghetto kids and the college kids he taught. He seeks to design something special for the former. He is clear about his project: his form of Marxism. However, his is not so much Marxism but an earlier viewpoint, Hegelian objective idealism, a nonetheless rich viewpoint that sees ideas as a weapon, dialectics as a study of change, and the discovery of order and purpose out of chaos (p. 61). Levin's idea of Marxism is a naive, idealist, teleological take, which sees ideas, and appearances, not the totality and irreducible contradictions of the capital system itself, as the key source of oppression. This leads him to a common binary in those who seek to change schools: the inability to bridge reform and revolution through a careful examination of concrete circumstances, where the clues to the future are secreted, which then becomes a sense of what is, hopelessness, (“I did all I could,”) and descriptions of what ought to be (“remedial work in vocabulary...small classes...tutored with affection and discipline...called on in every session...intimate settings...where they can be unashamed to plead ignorance...p. 147) and no clear descriptions of how to address the real knowledge, and social upheaval, that will be necessary to get there.

Because Levin is not a materialist, does not root his view in a careful study of concrete conditions as they change, he works with a limited form dialectics, a caricature. He leaps from one side of a contradiction to another, without being able to examine the spaces between. For example, Levin says he wants to show the kids that an acorn is best defined as an oak tree (my emphasis, p. 145). But an acorn is not an oak tree. It has the capacity to become an oak tree, but it may become fertilizer. It is the examination of the unity and struggle of internal potentiality, within the social, political, environmental context, that is the heart of the materialist dialectics that Levin says he adopts, but clearly does not fully understand. He grasps, in a closing sentence, that the core of the crisis in schools is political economy, but has no plans to alter the social relations that buttress it. Caught on one horn of the dialectic or another, not seeing dialectics as a study of relationships but as the shopworn thesis-anti-thesis, Levin gets stuck.

Levin had the sense to quickly toss the assigned textbook, and then he also tossed his choice of a counter-text, Zinn’s book, *People’s History of the United States*. He focuses on a very small class that met once a week. He lectured on competing historiographies (Carlyle, Marx, etc.); chose the subject (“the most important decision teachers make is what shall be taught” (p. 141), his emphasis): The Cuban Missile Crisis, and began to teach. One youth suggests, “Let’s buy the missiles from Cuba and end it... Everything has a price.” Levin disapproves. (p. 87)
The presumption is that Murray Levin knows how to think and the kids do not, that he grasps how change occurs in the material world and they do not, that their reality and their solutions are fantasies. They need someone to straighten them out. He suggests he offers a non-partisan, but political education, a conundrum insufficiently explored. But Levin thinks Ghandi and non-violence paved a wise path for India, that the moral high-ground is determinative, which is a profoundly partisan stance, as is any claim to change what people know or how they come to know it. Levin’s non-partisanship is pacifist. His kids, under his tutelage, finally see his light on India and exchange high-fives when he nods approval.

Levin wants people to vote. He presses his kids into another research project, on his past research about alienated voters. He starts with a lesson on illusion and reality, using this statement from a student, “Elections change nothing. We are no better off no matter who is elected. Doesn’t matter... the real power is not in the government. It’s in the big money, the big dudes in the corporations, and the drug money, not affected by our elections” (p. 130). Levin is unclear whether this view of the government as primarily a weapon of the powerful, an unaffected summation of Marx, needs to be corrected or not. In response, though, Levin does not go to the issue: Why have government? Where do governments come from? What is the history of this? What are the contending philosophies? Instead, he goes right to his old research: “the alienated voter,” harking back to the Dukakis presidential campaign, when Levin interviewed a series of political consultants and saved the notes. It seems the project here is to convince the kids that they should take special note of Republican schemes to get them not to vote, and then be sure to go vote, a dubious prodding.

Levin’s great strength, which powers the book despite its theoretical and pedagogical shortcomings, is that he genuinely cares about the kids. He is willing to listen to them and to take some limited direction from them (the discussion on voter alienation progresses into a wonderful talk about the relationship of racism and the fear of sexuality), and finally to affectionately build some personal ties with them, even if in a limited way. He ate lunch with them, every month. He wanted the kids to understand how power works. While I see no evidence that they questioned his own assumptions, it is clear that because of the trust he was able to establish, he was able to go much farther than many others in the same spot. These are the beginnings within Levin which might allow him to return, with a self-critique, and teach again.

**Discipline of Hope**

Now comes Herbert Kohl, inspiration of a generation. He is part of a generation of teacher-scholar-activist who kindled hope in the
schools in the 1960's. Jonathan Kozol, Daniel Fader, John Holt, James Herndon, and Kohl are (male) icons of the 1960s. Indeed, I owe Kohl. This, from 36 Children, in 1973, I have never forgotten:

I wanted the children to see themselves in the perspective of history, to know the changes of fortune, of the balance of wealth and power that have constituted history, and of the equally real change of the oppressed into the oppressor. I wanted them to be able to persist, revolt, and change things in our society and yet not lose their souls in the process (p. 55).

Let us see where Kohl is today, with The Discipline of Hope.

Michael Apple and James Beane, in Democratic Schools, paraphrase John Dewey, "If people are to secure and maintain a democratic way of life, they must have opportunities to learn what that way of life means and how it might be led" (p. 7). Kohl cast his life in this mold. He aimed at democracy with a series of books that trace his struggle as a "craftsperson of learning," whose work grows out of an abiding sense of hope that transformation of social institutions can rise up from, at least in part, the belief that all kids can learn and have a right to. He's the boogeyman to the right: he wrote the book on open schools (Kohl, 1998, p. 10).

Discipline of Hope is a retrospective on a phenomenal career, but it is no sigh. It's an honest, often humble revisiting of his work in New York City when he left Harvard and entered the k-12 world just before the 1964 Harlem rebellion, his rejection of the AFT's racist 1968 strike against community control and his decision to cross the picket lines despite a long lineage of unionism, his shift to Berkeley in the height of the anti-war years, and the construction of his educational vision that the keynote of school must be that every child can learn. He taught at every level of schooling, for more than thirty years. He paid his dues. Discipline of Hope is a counter-denouement in many ways. Nothing is tied up, nothing finished. It ends with an outline of what Kohl hopes to learn next, like how children learn to read—even though he knows he can teach them.

Kohl knows good teaching and offers advice through a wise and memorable filter: stories. He must be organized and sentimental. He still has kid-writing from his first class in 1963. He uses it to good effect here. From the stories, we can see his pedagogy develop and grow rich: know your kids and build on what they know; kids need to see themselves somewhere in the curricula; love them as your own; never accept prescribed limits on what kids can learn; listen; create a safe place where honest personal exchanges, affective and cognitive, are probable; listen some more; have them read and write in their own ways, and read to them a lot (in a crisis, grab a story); go to their
homes and understand their families and communities; never dog-
matically make the kid fit the system; kids are often wise and will get
you through and even protect a good teacher if you let them; spend
the time and make the emotional sacrifice to understand the kids; stay
on the side of your kids; fight racism every day; listen some more still.
Learning is a great method of defense. Be fair, the central quality of
teaching (p. 58). He offers a nice outline of good pedagogy to answer
rightists who suggests that caring egalitarian teachers give not a hoot
for skills. The reader would do well to wend the way through the
stories to find advicet.

This is the stuff that student teachers should see first, the righ-
teous writing that can remind everyone of the community of scholars
that has stretched across the centuries to memorialize ideas about good
pedagogy. As Kohl’s honesty demonstrates, there are, however, prob-
lems. There is a sense of impatience and individualism here that prop-
pels his good work, on the one hand, and becomes a weakness on the
other. For example, his advice to teachers who must encounter stan-
dardized exams is contradictory: teach the kids how to pass (p. 17),
and reject the demands of the system, follow the kids (p. 14). Kohl
knows this. It may be why he quickly decided he could not stand the
conditions in his public school in New York City and went to Berke-
ley, where he worked in a series of alternative schools, most of them
with relatively small classes. He did not support, early on, the 1960’s
school boycott in New York, because he felt it was more important
that the kids encounter him. Yet, he wisely chose to cross the picket
lines of the 1968 AFT strike. He feels the reading wars, phonics versus
Whole Language, are simply silly, because phonics are part of a cur-
riculum that allows kids to struggle for meaning. He has a naive take
on the potential of teachers unions, which he believes must be a bul-
wark for public schools. Yet he understands that the union’s promo-
tion of standardization, and high-stakes exams, for teachers and kids,
will only segregate children and the profession. And one of his projects
is to work toward the certification of teachers of color. Teacher unions,
following the racist craft union path of the AFL, promoting the notion
of worker-employer unity, are an unreliable ally in the fight for demo-
cratic schooling, as we have seen in Detroit. Kohl does not see the
politics of social control versus the politics of exploration beneath the
appearances of the arguments.

His sense of counter-dogma is powerful. There is distinctness in
his work, perhaps coming from his many experiences. He understands
that small schools, or even small classes, do not make much differ-
ence if they are filled with bad teachers (p. 105). He worries about the
fear of sexuality in schools today, fear that sanitizes the bond between
students and teachers when they can never touch, for any reason (p.
67). He is clear that he is teaching for democracy, and he believes there
is no one way to get there. Good teaching, he believes, stands above

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political planning. What is primary to him is the process and content of teaching, not overcoming social and political oppression (p. 69). This is where I think he sets up a contradiction that, I hope, is not there. To the contrary, there is a relationship, an interpenetration, an exchange, a unity and struggle, of the process and content of teaching and teaching for political reasons—which we all do. *Discipline of Hope* is especially powerful because Kohl opens the breadth of his experience to this kind of critique, and has the humble good sense to let his students offer him some guidance. For example, his students in a psychology course he set up, listened to him carefully and began to convince him that the key feature of our lives is not loneliness but community, and that people must create it when it does not exist (p. 141).

He has not simply listened to his students, he has engaged their lives in his day to day practice. He goes out and sits on the stoops. His students pop up in his later life, sometimes as teachers themselves. Through his willingness to risk encounters, he has studied the role of racism in the classroom and the community, and struggled to find ways to bridge the terrific gaps that exist between the emotional and social lives of young people of color and white middle class educators who face them. He has the sense to say that the kids have been good to him.

Like Levin, Kohl has problems in finding the indications of what ought to be within what is. Instead, he is inclined to utopian solutions, the idealist solution to unresolved antimony, seeking to create that one great school in the midst of capitalism, even in his own life. In pedagogy, Kohl is still choosing the important vocabulary words for his kids, despite his urging about following their desires. He cites Sylvia Ashton Warren, an inspiration to the Whole Language movement, and the exceedingly directive Soviet, Makarenko, as intellectual mentors (p. 56). Kohl wants to shy away from the primacy of politics, but he wants to pursue, “situational teaching...(which answers).. Who are my kids? What is happening in the world, the nation, the community, and the social lives of my students that can be brought to bear upon their mastery of the subject?” (p. 317). This, clearly, is a politicized program. He says he does not teach through psychology, but given a chance, one of the first things he does is start a psychology class. He employs Freireian methods of picking generative words, a problem in a language like English, which, unlike Freire’s Portuguese, takes inconsistent phonetic paths. Yet Kohl keeps seeking out alternative school settings, rather than returning to his public school roots—though he does rue the privatization of the public sector.

Kohl is at war with despair. He is inclined to locate hope, though, more in dreams than in the concrete conditions of day to day life. But it is his engagement with everyday life that leads him to reflect on his dreams in more profound ways (p. 330). Like Levin, surprisingly, Kohl measures the success of his pedagogy, the proofs that his students are
defeating alienation, in part by indicating that they vote, perhaps the most alienating of all political actions. Today, the deeply contradictory Kohl works for the foundation run by the richest man in the world, George Soros' Open Society Institute. He and his wife Judy live on eleven acres with three houses in California. He says he has an ongoing love affair with teaching. "I want it all." (p. 18). A life for change that has this bibliography of writing and students, and these living conditions, appears to have come close. There is within Kohl both the implications of a better world, and some clues on how to get there. What is missing is the perseverance that it takes to pursue a long career in one spot long enough to build a community for change and the political understanding of a community prepared to fight real opposition, which is not merely an imposed ideology, but a political and economic necessity. This is a kind of internally contradictory monism that hopes good teaching can overcome the domineering relationship of surplus value and alienation, which I think is quite unlikely. But making radical change without grasping what Kohl embodies as the future would make that change quite incomplete.

**Naked Children**

A generation of teachers who had the good fortune to encounter Kohl may have met Daniel Fader at the same time, the late 1960s. Those who did also met Uncle Wiggly, Cleo, Wentworth, Superduck, Rubbergut, Sis (Cicero), and Snapper, the kids who taught him to reread the world, their community and their junior high school in Washington DC. Fader wrote *Naked Children* about his 1965-66 experience in school reform. Boyton-Cook, in a terrific series, has re-released the book as a companion with others from the genre; Ken Macrorie’s *Uptauted*, and John Holt’s *What Do I Do Monday?*

*Naked Children* is Fader’s passionate story about disconnects: kids from literacy and print, the language and values of school from community, students from teachers, formal knowledge from the paradigms of the streets, the hope people once had for schools from the despair even great educators seem to feel today, disinclination from disability, pleasure against subservience as a motive, the appearances of kids who make themselves invisible from the essential investigation requisite for good teaching, the lies and double lives required in schools against the truths schools purport, the barrier of working class kids of resistant caste and middle class teachers, real resistance from the appearance of resistance that only recreates oppression. Over and over, Fader addresses the question: Whose side are you on? He answers: You must be on the side of the kids, love the kids, even at the risk of losing your career.

Fader seeks to bridge the disconnects by using a powerful interplay of storytelling and reflection, a memorable span. He probes the relationships of language, literacy, and power. His immediate project,
in 1965, was to build his, "English in Every Classroom," program, a system he initiated at Michigan's Maxey Boys Training School. The plan is reasonably simple: surround kids with print, often magazines, newspapers, cartoons, etc., focused on questions that interest them, and let them read—everywhere. Let them work in groups and talk about their work, where they can get the attention and build the communities that class size and individualized exams make impracticable. His notion of collective work signals his convictions about the collective nature of the construction of knowledge. Study the kids, listen, learn from them, and if necessary let them organize the school for you.

Fader learned from Wentworth, who could not read. Rather, in his school he could not and would not read formally. He read hot rod magazines under his desk. Wentworth had learned that if you tell them you can read, they will make you read trash and answer inconsequential questions. Another youth was labeled in the "dumbhead" track. He had memorized the names and full backgrounds of everyone in the baseball Hall of Fame. Uncle Wiggly was a tracked dumbhead, but he could make intricate maps of the city. Sis couldn't talk. His peers understood him. One Fader thesis is that functional illiteracy is a decision to reject formal literacy, and that motivation must be reestablished, connected to pleasure.

Fader showed up in D.C. from the University of Michigan with a plan for change and a great deal of faith in schools that he says is now mostly gone (p. xi). Fader had the sense to locate truth, not in himself or a textbook, as many teachers do, but in the social practices of the school, which meant watching and listening and historicizing and contextualizing. He spotted Wentworth and the gang led by Cleo, a girl who led a gang of boys with wisdom and sexuality. Fader was warned by the faculty not to be seen with that kind of child. His literacy project, which he insisted must maintain its integrity by demonstrating its worth in any school rather than to create a lab, gained limited support from the teachers, yet Cleo's gang adopted him and improved the plan. They had read his theoretical framework, distributed to the faculty only, and determined that it might be worth pursuing. Fader understood that his program was meeting teacher resistance and took the chance to have the kids organize the program for him, to have other kids be sure that the texts he was delivering to classrooms were at least handled. He took the side of the kids, a risk in many schools. They did the job and met some teacher resistance of their own. Many of the documents were only handled. But the gang took up a literacy project: Sis. They read to him, made sure he was fed, had him read into a tape recorder to overcome his self-propelled idiom.

Fader knew restraint and patience, learned at Maxey and elsewhere. He knew some kids would battle his program, although they could not win in the traditional classroom. The latter was recognized
with the imperator of habit and respectability as school. Fader’s literacy program was not. Cleo predicted that his work would not survive.

Fader took the gang on trips; to used bookstores where they selected texts in which they could see themselves, to the National Gallery, to campuses, to restaurants, where he learned they could navigate and were hungry for food and knowledge. They learned they could gain tools to understand and effect their world—a dynamic counter to what Fader says is the message of most schools: You are not competent and what you do does not matter (p. 151). He was sufficiently open to learn what the kids already knew, the turf at their school. They knew little about their city or its many invitations. They began to read and explore. On one of the adventures Fader describes, the kids venture out in his rented cars and meet unfriendly cops in Washington National Airport, other kindly cops on horseback who allow a brief pet, a generous bookstore owner who teaches the kids about anti-Semitism, and a black college student who Wentworth, competing for Cleo, thinks is too glib.

The program was dead in a year, after the gang of kids and Fader left. Cleo was right. Fader suggests that it is the disconnect of the linguistic alienation of the kids, the depressed sense of literacy, that rage turned inward of people whose egos are under incessant assault, on the one hand, the arrogance of educators whose class invades a community created by inequity that they do not understand, on the other hand, that underpins the continuing death throes of public education, which he identified as near-asphyxiated thirty years ago.

He goes at a key assumption, “we have been feeding on false hope.” We thought that school was the route through illiteracy. “However, we may regard the classroom and literacy, it is time we realized that significant portions of the impoverished community now regard both as deadly enemies of their self regard and self preservation.” (p. 214).

Fader takes a linguistic turn: the most formidable gap he sees between him and Cleo’s gang is—language (p. 203). He represents Uncle Wiggly, who might say anything at all in a classroom, as having a “distrust of verbal people” that characterizes his caste. For Fader, the problem is not that some live off others, but that we do not listen, we do not understand. He asks that others pay attention.

We are hung on the pillars of thesis, anti-thesis, brittle oppositions. Language is abstracted up and out of, above, material life, inequality lodged in exploitation. Then the abstraction is declared to be the crux, in this case a crux suspended on antimonies: the language of the ghetto and the language of privilege. Hence, the way out, literacy, is blocked by distrust, or the correct perception of competing interests. Language as a reciprocal process of recreating life and under-
standing within a social, political, and economic context, is reified as the barricade. Inside the abstraction, language alone, there is no bridge, no potentially shared trust and literacy. There is no way out. Language, ideas enacted, is the key gap for Fader. The gap is impossible to bridge if one community sees itself as the victim of the other, especially if social structures require this victimization. Fader’s way out would be to change the status of literacy, but the way out keeps failing. Washington, D.C. schools look a good deal today like they did when Fader did his work three decades past. In fact, on September 29, 1999, the New York Times reported that writing scores in D.C. on the National Assessment for Educational Progress exams are the worst in the country. Only one percent of the nation’s students scored at the advanced level (p. A-18). But what if everyone can read? What is solved? One would be hard pressed to find a more literate society than Germany, say, in 1935. Hope must be more than a literate population.

What is the ethical teacher to do, confronted by the demands of high-stakes standardized exams which rupture the key relationships of an honest classroom? That depends on where the teacher’s ethics come from. If they are ethics of the ages, standing outside and above social construction, reified ethics, then perhaps the teacher should beat her breast, denounce acquiescent colleagues, take consequences as they may, write a screed and a petition demanding concessions, and quickly become a memory. A teacher whose ethics rise up from a careful study of the material world, whose choices on the question of “Whose Side Are You On?”, are not fixed but contextualized within the process of historical struggle, a teacher whose ethics are stamped with the brand of working people, is likely to fight, retreat, organize, and fight again, all the time answering the question with: Love the Kids, survive!

However, again, it is Fader’s willingness to engage in practice that rebuilds the power of his project and his book. It is within his struggle to fashion a literate and critical environment, within his honest report about pedagogy, kids, and the particulars gained from a scrupulous reconnoiter in circumstances that many teachers do not enter or know, that we can see many clues to the process and product of the future. His battle to overcome racist barriers to human interaction is, as he demonstrates, repeatedly made profound, and often met with more kindness than he predicts, when he entangles himself, connects, with day to day life. The answers he offers in theory are more deeply offered in an examination of his practice. All of this is captured in his understanding of the foundations of good teaching, placed within a simultaneously hopeful and despairing book. The truly despondent do not write, as Fader sees.

Wentworth’s grandmother offers a semaphore of wisdom that begins to answer a foundational question that must be answered to fashion a more equitable and democratic world: What is equality? When asked if she would take in Sis, whose uncle was headed south
and who would have to leave school if he followed, she said she would manage: “His need is bigger than ours” (p. 141). Those who want to know the fate of the kids who they remember from earlier readings are urged back to the text; worth the full reminding.

**Race, Class, and Power in School Restructuring**

Pauline Lipman has composed a brilliant analysis of educational change, a model of educational research that should become a benchmark for ethnographic research in schools. This book is a terrific example of intellectual work on the reciprocal roles of education, research, and social change. Her task, as she sees it, is to examine a particular school system, Riverton, a mid-sized southern district, within the social context of schools and society. Lipman does not conceal her background, views, and aims. She pretends no false contemplative objectivity outside the struggle between those who own and those who do not. In a moving introduction, Lipman eulogizes civil rights activists who died in Greensboro, shot by the Klan, many years ago. She says, in a paragraph too good to paraphrase,

> “the negative educational experiences of children of color are rooted in their oppression in society…daily life in schools can reproduce, disrupt, or transform dominant relations of power…academic failure and student alienation must be analyzed through an examination of educational policy and practice. My goal was to understand how schools can be changed to support the efforts of marginalized students and communities to transform their lives. (p. 17)

Lipman writes with clarity and meticulous precision, in a dissertation-like style that is both rigorous and sometimes repetitive. She writes things, not words; she describes the particulars of hegemony as she sees it. Her effort to communicate parallels her opening statement of views in setting her apart from once-radical academics who have concluded that the world is too complex to comprehend, so their writing should be too. The task she adopts moves the concerns of marginalized people to the center of academic discourse. She exhibits a remarkable ability to report and reflect upon unexpected consequences, surprising connections, unpredictable events, which complicate and enrich any analysis that attempts to go beyond the dogmatism of reality bent to a template. This is a dynamic investigation of complex interconnected processes as they occur, even within a rationally framed inquiry. It’s a good story with people you are going to cheer for, but it is also a thorough-going report from someone who is expert in the humbling art of the reconnoiter. As a white northerner
entering a southern school, she was wise to enlist local colleagues who could "triangulate" her work.

Lipman investigates both the social context of the school and the ideologies, habits, and traditions that motivate Riverton educators. Riverton is a pseudonymous school district, deeply segregated by class and race, as is the city in which it sits. Segregation replicates itself in the internal operations of schools. Riverton schools are carefully tracked. Black Riverton students were being suspended at a rate more than double the rate of white students; black students failed classes at twice the rate of white students, etc.

Lipman researched foundation-initiated efforts at two junior high schools, Gates and Franklin, in 1991-1992. Gates is a relatively wealthy public school. Parents in the PTO contribute thousands of dollars every year. 65% of the students are black, 34% white. The black students in Gates score far lower on standardized exams than the white students. There are 41 white teachers, 8 black educators, most of whom are in positions with little prestige or power. Gates' principal is strong, and is able to rely as well on the power base of active, involved parents and a long tradition of academic success.

Franklin's students are over 80% African American. The teaching force at Franklin is 50-50, black and white. It's known as a problem-student magnet, with unpaved parking lots, little parent participation. Delisa Johnson, Franklin's principal, is deeply involved, knows every kid by name, and seeks to set up every event, including punishment centers, as a learning moment. While little moves in Franklin without her consent, she is a new principal, unable to call in long-standing bureaucratic debts or to turn to powerful parents in her community. Teachers Lipman calls "Othermothers" and "Mentors," build close ties with the children, bracketing their school work with their lives, their language, and their community. While Lipman believes that exclusion impoverishes us all, it is clear that the key to understanding the context and practices of the two schools is to grapple with the multitude of negations which counter her vision: racism in the teaching force and in the school structures buttressed by power and tradition; cultural differences between students and the school's organizational complex as well as between students and curriculum and instruction. Although Lipman does examine in detail the contradictions that exist between progressive educators, at all levels, and the school bureaucracy as well as the community, she is reasonably clear that the key contradiction is that between students and the state, the government that initiates and propels school.

Lipman sets up a four explanations that Riverton educators used to interpret the failure of African American students to perform at exemplary levels on standardized exams: (1) a deficit model aimed at "at risk" students, a euphemism for black students who were assumed to have nearly insurmountable problems or inheritances originating
outside the school, (2) a social relations model which psychologized the foundations of the issue and which saw the answer in esteem-building, (3) a critique of racism focusing on the kids' strengths, examining the ways students were alienated from the educational system, and (4) an educational critique which in theory directed investigation at the failing education system as a whole, and in practice sought to make school experiences more relevant. While this template offers clarity for interpreting any educational paradigm, what is most interesting is Lipman's use of it, never forcing the circumstance to fit the profile, never reifying her own work, but an exacting reconnaissance that demonstrates the many interrelated ideas held within some of the same individuals, which makes them tough to categorize, illustrating what Lipman calls the, "complexity, contradictoriness, and fluidity of ideological make-up" (p. 97). Nevertheless, Lipman has captured tendencies which make it possible to anticipate what may come next. There was no skin color attached to the model. Black and white teachers alike adopted one outlook or another, some crossing the entire spectrum. Only a handful of teachers represented the critique of racism, and most of them had little power. Class background and outlook appears to hold a centripetal role.

School unions were not players in this southern town. Change agents were not organized other than at the top and within small groups of relatively isolated rank and file school workers. The flow of restructuring in Riverton was consistently from top down. The hierarchical relationships, teacher to administrator, student to teacher, that rise out of the reification of inequity were rarely acknowledged or challenged in the reform effort. As Lipman aptly demonstrates, potent forms of domination rely on invisibility and disingenuousness.

The crux of any classroom exploration must be truth and honesty, unless one seeks a subservient student. It is hardly worth the candle to gain and test knowledge in an essentially dishonest relationship. The host of forms of alienation working in any school system, grades, a standardized curriculum and exams, were multiplied in Riverton by cultural misunderstandings surrounding African American student behaviors, teachers' negative racial stereotypes and fear of African American males, and a cycle of resistance and punishment" (p. 224). In addition, those who had won small shares of power, like teachers, principals, and administrators, sought to gloss past real differences in the spirit of demonstrating the cohesiveness of the education family.

Restructuring at Riverton did not work. To the contrary, the reform stratagem allowed the powerful to win again in struggles about race and class, and controversial issues, especially questions of race were not brought forward; to the contrary, they were suppressed. In one instance, Lipman documents the development of a yearbook project, initially led by African American educators, which was sup-
planted by a “Keepsake book” initiated and controlled by white teachers and students, as part of the restructuring project. All of the powers of the institution shifted from the former to the latter. The Keepsake book became the yearbook of choice. No one openly criticized the shift. From the top down came the need to create an appearance of racial integration, but never the understanding that might get to the essence of white supremacy or racial oppression in Riverton schools. Lipman not only reports this as a Riverton reality, she offers a thoroughly researched review of the history of this keeping of the secrets in schools.

So where is the hope? Lipman is not only studying dominance, but resistance, at least in terms of teaching well despite the grinding structures and messages from above—and all around. For Lipman, hope is located in those teachers who “provide an empowering education to students who are failed by the institution as a whole...these teachers are a crucial bridge between what is and what might be in restructuring schools” (p. 245). She suggests that these teachers (she reports on three) are central to the transformation of school in the interests of “all children” (her emphasis, p. 246). These educators started with student strengths, aimed high, reinforced kids’ knowledge and self-worth, created respectful classrooms, built close ties to students, and had few discipline problems. But all of these teachers ran into a power so embedded that it appeared benign. Indeed, teachers were repeatedly told they were empowered, which meant they were allowed to discuss how policy would be implemented.

The entire educational community assumed a vision of education so deeply ingrained that it did not need to openly resist challenges, it simply drowned them in disregard. Only one of Lipman’s model educators was not wholly marginalized on the faculty and she was not seen as an educational leader, but as a teacher with innate talents that probably could not be duplicated.

Lipman does not offer a close examination of circumstances in Riverton, perhaps because she lives elsewhere, but most likely because her research focus was centered on the schools. This only weakens her project in the sense that she is unable to fully trace the ideas and practices of the district back to the competition of interests which hovers over education. However, her urgent signal is that to grasp schools, one must address how they are socially situated.

The restructuring in Riverton did not challenge existing belief systems, did not wear away social or educational inequality, and in many ways appears to have deepened the peripheral role of educators and students of color. To understand how this might have worked, Lipman offers three themes: the power of the social context, the influence of ideology in school, and “the essential role of marginalized groups to change the equation of existing power relations...” (p. 288). She then offers examples of how these tangled themes worked out in
daily practice, one weaving with another inside the complexities of teachers and her focus schools. Lipman's close study of the development of hegemony as a reciprocal process which involves its victims suggests that it is imperative, somehow, to place the interests of the least powerful in the front of any reform. A significant part of this process is good teaching itself.

Good teaching, which Lipman interrogates in fascinating detail, is but a part of the way out, the passage to hope. She is quite clear: school restructuring, if it is to match its rhetorical promises, must be part of a struggle for democracy and social justice. In brief, it must be organized.

Transforming Teacher Unions

The Rethinking Schools collective, led by practicing k-12 teachers in Milwaukee, came to prominence in the early 1990s, when they published Rethinking Columbus, an inexpensive text that helped reposition the celebration of Columbus' 1492 discoveries as an invasion. The magazine sold thousands of copies and spoiled Columbus' party. Revenue from that success made further efforts possible. The group publishes a model newspaper, Rethinking Schools, presenting the writing and drawing of school workers, kids, public intellectuals like Howard Zinn and Michael Apple, and community people. They put out a book, Rethinking Schools: An Agenda for Change, in 1995, used by most of the teacher education faculty that I know. If there is an apparently organized left in education, similar to Labor Notes within the labor movement, this appears to be it. In fact, I consider myself a member and have promoted their texts in my classes.

There are three unfortunate things about Transforming Teacher Unions. A lot of hopeful people will buy it. They will probably read the worst parts in it, missing the longer and better stuff. These people might actually act on what they have read. The many political and pedagogical tendencies within the Rethinking Schools constellation will likely be seen as in agreement with it; the blowback being that the group will be defending a line that many people only tangentially support, at best.

Peterson and Charney succeeded in publishing a short version of their school reform vision in the September 8, 1999 issue Education Week, and were promptly attacked by the right in the September 28th edition. Letters to the editor accused the National Education Association and American Federation of Teachers of conducting an anti-choice "jihad" to keep their mandatory dues. With this thinking as the opposition, many activists will want to circle the wagons, to put debate in the education family on the back burner. My goal is to the contrary. 

Transforming Teacher Unions addresses the complex question of school unionism, social justice, and pedagogical life with a series of short articles, the kind that appeal to people who live in a period when
time is a commodity related to privilege. Teachers don’t have much of it. They will be drawn to the little essays and may well miss the longer historical lessons like those drawn by Dan Perlstein who authors a fine piece on New York City unionism. This time, though, the editors (Bob Peterson and Michael Charney, both asserting modest union backgrounds in the NEA and AFT respectively), abandon the standard format that has typified a lot of Rethinking Schools’ work. Instead of plenty of kids’ voices and writings from the rank and file, Peterson and Charney present work from the top, like Sandra Feldman, protege of Al Shanker’s AFT, and Bob Chase, inheritor of Mary Hatwood Futrell’s position as president of the NEA, and Adam Urbanski, AFT media favorite from Rochester. If appearances are significant, then the form of the transformation we are to see is heavy at its pinnacle.

Peterson sets the stage for what can be portrayed as a series of brief presentations from people in leadership roles who have addressed school reform. He outlines what he sees as the context: public education is under attack, unions are in retreat, we need a kind of unionism that addresses social justice, on the side of children. Peterson says there are really three viewpoints within teacher unionism: 1) professional unionism, as represented by the NEA’s Bob Chase’s call for “New Unionism;” 2) industrial unionism, as seen in the labor-management conflicts built into traditional contracts; and 3) social justice unionism, which “is grounded in the need to advocate for all students which in turn leads directly to confronting issues of race and class” (p. 11). He suggests that a good example of this latter vision, which Peterson believes is a “class conscious perspective” is addressed in a section, “Confronting Racism in British Columbia,” by Tom McKenna, which I will take up later (p. 16).

The triangular construct Peterson creates is disingenuous, addressing apparent differences as if they were fundamental issues. The initial philosophical and practical question to a unionist is not, what form shall our union take, but why is the union there? Each of the three categories of unionism that Peterson proposes fails to wonder if the reason for existence is that union members have less, not more, in common with their employers, with capital. Peterson’s notion of class consciousness, as represented here, is extraordinarily thin. Indeed, history demonstrates that industrial unionism and New Unionism believe that they have more in common with capital than not and Peterson’s social justice unionism is willing to mention class, but not capital. There is nothing whatsoever new about “New Unionism,” which NEA’s Chase has repeatedly described as an alliance of business, government (especially schools), teacher union leaders, and the rank and file wrapped in the language of national interest, children’s interest. Peterson never analyzes the state corporatism that underpins this stance, though he must be intimately familiar with it. Chase’s intellectual model comes from the work of Detroit’s Barry Bluestone,
author of *The Great U-Turn*, with whom Chase is extremely close, and Charles Kerchner and Julia Koppich, authors of *A Union of Professionals* (Gibson, 1994). The practical model is the worker/boss partnership of Saturn Corporation, which Chase highlights at every NEA representative assembly. New Unionism has been a contested issue with Saturn's work force for a decade. The New Unionist proposed partnership is not only between the union members and capital, but between union members and the top leaders of the union, like Feldman and Chase, which is a problem, as we shall see. Moreover, Peterson unwittingly raises a dual problem with teacher unions, and with reformist unionism in general: "Historically, teacher unions have operated on the premise that their overarching responsibility is to protect their members...in the long run, unions will be able to do so only if they adopt a social justice union model" (p. 19).

In fact, if we are to measure by history, the NEA hardly operated in the interests of its members. It operated in the interests of school administrators, textbook publishers, etc., as Peterson is aware (Sinclair, 1923). The AFT, which has historically operated in opposition to internal democracy since at least the watershed year of 1968; worked to promote not the interests of most teachers, but to protect banks (Selden, 1985). Even so, what if the interests of many, even most teachers are in fact in conflict with the children they face, or even more significantly, with the children of the world? What if white teachers benefit from racism, or perceive themselves as beneficiaries, as the practice of the AFT would indicate? Would not the role of the union be to protect the interests of its members? Once unionism has identified itself with capital, with the interests of the national elite, that unionism cannot escape the question, nor the obvious answer.

For example, NEA's Chase's New Unionism promotes the kind of teacher professionalism, also adopted by Peterson's social justice unionism, that on the one hand encourages the multiplying hoops of teacher education programs, like the testing processes of National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, which systematically work to segregate the teaching force, by cost and by the racial coding of the exams themselves. On the other hand, Chase's New Unionism promotes the standardization of the curricula and the high-stakes testing attached to the standards, which deepen the separation and inequities in schools (Ross, 1999). Peterson is too kind to Chase when he says, "Professional unionism as a whole tends to downplay the issues of race" (p. 19) Chase’s unionism is racist, as is Sandra Feldman's.

Feldman is the heir-apparent of Albert Shanker. She earned her spurs with her support for the racist AFT 1968 strike at Ocean-Hill Brownsville, which Herb Kohl best describes in his chapter in *Transforming Teacher Unions* (p. 93). Let us look at what the NEA had to say about the practices Feldman endorsed in the AFT, before the leadership of the NEA and AFT tried to go to the altar.
1. At the 1975 AFT convention, Shanker gave up the gavel to speak from the floor to oppose a motion from the union’s black caucus “to endorse and support busing” as a means of urban desegregation. Shanker “won”.

2. In 1977, AFT submitted an *amicus curiae* brief to the United States Supreme Court in support of Alan Bakke’s challenge against the University of California’s affirmative action plan. The brief argued against the use of quotas in employment.

3. In 1978, Shanker sought to have the AFT submit another amicus brief, this time on the Brian Weber case, which would have opposed a union negotiated affirmative action plan. Black leaders who prevailed against Shanker now consider the result of their effort, the union’s “no position” on Weber, a major victory.

4. In 1985, again behind Shanker, AFT did submit an amicus brief in the Wygant case. Here AFT argued that a NEA negotiated affirmative action plan in Jackson, Mississippi, should be abolished. NEA had bargained an affirmative action agenda for the employment of minority teachers. The plan included an affirmative action retention policy. The Supreme Court upheld the right of a union to negotiate an affirmative action plan, but voided the retention policy.

In this instance, Shanker used the old craft union argument, seniority above affirmative action. But, as many critics point out, Shanker’s own locals take peculiar stands on seniority. In New York City, teacher seniority is counted on an “at site” basis, that is a teacher with 20 years in the system but three years in one assignment has three years of effective seniority. (See “AFT—An Historical Outline” by Don Keck and Dan Mckillip, 1990 NEA publication)

The three-pronged perspective that propels Peterson, influences and taints the entire text. For example, Margie Slovan, a freelancer in Seattle, writes about the New Unionism instituted in part by longtime NEA staffer Roger Erskine in her city. In doing so, she interviews Seattle educator Doug Selwyn, who she quotes as supporting the concept of New Unionism “wholeheartedly,” although she says he has a few problems with it in practice. Selwyn, however, does not support the New Unionism. Here is what he has to say, cut and pasted directly from e-mail exchanges with me on October 1 and 2, 1999:

What new unionism in Seattle has meant, from what I can see, is the administration says what it says and the union
says, ok. I don’t see the union standing for anything right now, and seems mighty in bed with the folks across the street.

These changes are no better, I think for three reasons (or more). One, the same people are still entrenched in the union hierarchy so they still do what they’ve always done. Second, teachers are so fried and overwhelmed and, by nature, apolitical (at least at elementary) that they rely on someone else to do what needs to be done. No system works if people are uninvolved and uninformed. The rep assemblies are filled with procedure and internal politics and almost no substance so no one goes to the meetings, but little else is happening. Third, the union here spends much of its time allowing the district to set its agenda, or nursing grudges held against other unions in the state rather than working with them. Sad story

The theory of people working together for a common goal is an attractive one, and that’s the story of the Saturn type contract. It was also the story that was fed to us in Seattle, the myth of the trust agreement. One major flaw in the ointment is there has to be trust to have a trust agreement. We had a power/publicity crazed ignorant general to trust and now we have a banker. And Roger Erskine. So that’s one minor flaw. The second is that no matter how the agreements shape up, if the same people are in place at the top there is no real change. We have regular district shake ups downtown and what happens is the same people have different signs over their doors, different secretaries and go about their business as usual. So, in reality, I don’t like the new unionism any better than the old one, and maybe less (though I like the theory more). I like fairy tales ok and it makes sense to me that we should really work together to make good decisions for all the people involved.

This is not the voice of a person who can be fairly represented as a whole-hearted supporter of New Unionism, unless one begins with the frame and chooses to make the picture fit. Selwyn does, however, do more than flag a certain dogmatism within the interpretations of this book. He signals a wide gap between school workers (tens of thousands of people in school are not teachers, but provide vital services, from bus drivers to media specialists to cooks and custodians) and their union representatives. This gap is both indicative of the histori-
cal sexism of teacher unions (all of three top leaders of NEA in 1999 are men) and the material reality that union staff and leaders lead lives aligned with a social class out of the reach of many school workers.

According to NEA Secretary Treasurer Van Roekel, the average NEA member makes about $40,000 a year. In this sense, at least, the gap between leaders and the membership is fairly wide, though surely not as wide as many CEO's and their workforce. Van Roekel reported staff and leader salaries, allowances, and expenses to the Labor Department in 1997. Executive Director Don Cameron's total was $216,593.55. (Cameron, in the NEA structure which clearly demarcates staff and governance, is staff.) Bob Chase's total was $301,302.03. Weaver reported $275,162. Van Roekel's predecessor tallied $252,658. That year, while Van Roekel was on the NEA Executive Board, he collected a total of $50,723 in expenses and allowances. NEA secretaries, who like school secretaries, are often actually in charge, average nearly $50,000 per year. A typical NEA staff person, an organizer, made a salary and expense total of $104,669.

The NEA is not poor. In 1997, it reported assets of nearly 145 million dollars. The union long ago decided to travel first class, to reward its staff and leaders well. The NEA spent millions in the late eighties and early nineties to refurbish its building in downtown D.C., while many of its members lived and taught in trailers. NEA Board of Directors members are feted with generous expense accounts. They were given around $1800 per person for unaccounted expenses the week of the 1998 representative assembly. They get free trips, time out of the classroom with union-subsidized substitutes, free luggage, briefcases, dinners, trips to resorts for meetings, chances to meet with high-ranking officials, etc. For classroom teachers, this is often seen as the big time—a lot to lose if one votes wrong. There is sometimes a lot to gain in exchange for an affirmative vote: jobs with AFL-CIO related organizations, for example, during the conflagration over the AFT-NEA merger. Delegates from one large southern state are convinced their president was promised a job with an insurance company controlled by the federation in exchange for the state's "yes" vote. In sum, with the rigors, and occasional terrors, of the classroom counterposed to the multiple carrots of a leadership role, many school workers choose the later, and lose sight of their beginnings.

Peterson suggests that the work led by the AFT's Adam Urbanski in Rochester, New York, might serve as an example for social justice unionism. Let us look at some of Urbanski's history. The president of the Rochester local has been in place for well over a decade, an indication of the kinds of internal democracy that plague both the NEA and the AFT, but that typifies AFT large locals. Urbanksi led the charge, with Shanker, for his brand of New Unionism, corporate-educator
unity, which focuses on teachers disciplining teachers: the euphemism being teacher-mentors.

In Rochester, the AFT local cultivated the teacher-mentor plan for about three years. There, after a period of intense implementation, both the teachers and the school board voted to reject a new contract based on the continuation of the plan and to start from scratch. The board was unhappy that pay for performance wasn’t being measured sharply enough. The teachers refused to ratify the contract because their experience demonstrated that measurement of performance was mostly subjective. But the AFT made the members vote until they got it right (three times), the teachers chose to let the Rochester Plan drag along. (For the AFT’s side of the Rochester debate, see “Real Change is Real Hard” by Adam Urbanski, Education Week, October 23, 1991, p. 29). Historians are a strength of the book, though, and Christine E. Murray’s essay makes it clear that over the years Rochester teachers have struggled mightily with Urbanski’s plans, rejecting contracts over and over again. In addition, Urbanski’s plan does nothing to address the power of capital as it erodes public life. Indeed, following Urbanski’s path exacerbates the trend. Now, Rochester teachers face an impoverished student population. About 50% of the kids move in and out of a given school in a year. To link wages to performance in Rochester is to link wages to capital’s decay. Since the district will not pay for advanced degrees, the call for greater professionalism remains an unpaid piper (p. 49).

Peterson, as I noted above, suggests that the substance of at least one issue vital to social justice unionism is captured in Tom McKenna’s article, “Confronting Racism in British Columbia,” an illuminating and honest piece which offers the opportunity for an exchange (p. 52). McKenna is a Portland teacher whose interest in the BC teachers’ union anti-racist project grew from explorations on the internet. Believing that U.S. unions do not have programs against racism (actually NEA at least has a small department of staff devoted to the question) he was happily surprised to see such a program at work just across the border. He describes the struggles of educators who sought to adopt a program against racism emanating from their union. Established in 1977, the Program Against Racism (PAR) was once funded at more than $300,000. The two key examples of action that McKenna cites are an early slide-tape presentation about the internment of Japanese citizens in B.C. during World War II, and a later video (linked to lesson plans) that emphasizes “social action. PAR outlines four elements of a racist incident: (1) perpetrator, (2) target, (3) bystanders, and (4) interveners.” The goal is to make bystanders interveners (p. 55).

There is considerable evidence that when people speak out against racist jokes or sexist comments, the number of incidents decreases. However, this kind of activity, laudable as it may be, will not get to the kernel of racism. McKenna never develops a class-conscious
sense of the construction of racial privilege, just as Peterson seeks to have class consciousness without a developed notion of where social classes originate, and the necessarily antagonistic contradictions between classes that follow. Critique becomes a cry of indignation, a call for guilt, rather than a radical examination of concrete circumstances as they change. This spare take on racism has pedagogical and political consequences which I hope to illustrate as part of a broader critique of weaknesses in Peterson’s social justice unionism. Here I offer two perspectives on racism, one based in Hegelian idealism, the other drawn from dialectical materialism, Marxism. This simplification splits apart positions which often intermingle, but the oppositions I offer may clarify differences or sharpen critique.

For the idealist, racism is a system of ideas that has always been with us. Racism hurts everyone, since we are all in the same boat. The way to eradicate racism is to appeal to higher moral codes, suggesting that racism is unkind or unfair, either to other people or as an offense to god.

The key to white opposition to white supremacy is motivation through guilt. Opposition to racism from its victims must largely come through their unity as a given race. Diversity and limited notions of multiculturalism, that is, pluralism, are effective ways to combat racism in that they combine the united efforts of given races with an underlying appeal to white guilt. Pluralism is embedded in the notion of a common national (U.S.) interest. Since racism has no particular history, transmitted mind to mind, there is a deep-seated hopelessness in this position, that is, racism will always be with us. The other side of this coin is to simply declare that we have all changed our minds and that racism is no longer an issue.

A class conscious reply goes as follows: Racism is a system of ideas constructed and buttressed by economic and political requirements of the development of inequality. Racism has a history, coming into being as we now know it with the rise of capitalist nations. Racism hurts most people but some people profit from racism (lower wages, dividing work forces, building ideology for armed violence against other nations, etc.). Opposition to racism is a matter of material interest, not missionary work. An injury to one precedes an injury to all, that is, class solidarity. The key to opposition to racism is integrated movements striving for democracy and equality. While racism is a powerful ideological system, its foundations can be eventually erased by obliterating the socially structured need for racism, that is, inequality in material life. Given that it appears the trajectory of human history is equality and democracy, and given that domination has regularly been met by resistance, there is hope built even within an inequitable system, that is, the many do not forever tolerate the ideological and material oppression of the few. Hence, this is an optimistic vision of the possibilities to end racism..
McKenna's brief analysis suggests the PAR program fits almost neatly inside the idealist paradigm. If this is what Peterson sees as social justice unionism, it appears well-meaning, but too hollow in a period when racism must be addressed as a life and death question. McKenna's Program Against Racism in British Columbia was shifted into an umbrella project, joined with issues of homophobia, justice, First Nations grievances, and sexism. Originators of the program are probably rightly concerned that their work will lose its focus, be diluted with larger Federation projects. Some of the founders of PAR are organizing their own network, Educators Against Racism, in hopes of retaining the spirit of PAR.

The idealist pattern of thinking also permeates the analysis of the merger of the NEA and the AFT which the top leadership of the two unions had secretly tried to engineer for more than a decade. Authors in *Transforming Teacher Unions* predicted the passage of the merger, indicating their close relations with Chase and Feldman. The two union leaders were shocked by the NEA rank and file vote which overwhelmingly opposed the merger (p. 132). Ann Bastien, an official of the New World Foundation, suggests the NEA delegates were simply backward, not prepared to accept New Unionism, "the new paradigm in education politics," as represented by the Teacher Union Reform Network, a coalition of activists led by Adam Urbanski, which addresses, "a much larger of educational entitlement for children as well as professional empowerment for teachers (p. 101).

This banal and uninformed representation patronizes a secret ballot vote of thousands of NEA rank and file members who democratically rejected a top-down maneuver designed not to innocently create one big union of teachers, but to push the NEA into the AFL-CIO, to have the NEA adopt the AFT's undemocratic structure, and to ratify the partnership with corporations which is the substance presented by Chase at the 1998 NEA representative assembly. Chase and his officers at the assembly on a Fourth of July weekend wrapped themselves in rhetoric about children and the flag in a demagogic display unparalleled in NEA history. They sought to portray their opposition as people who would also reject the Bill of Rights, the American Revolution, and the needs of hungry children throughout the world. The people who led the opposition to the merger were from industrial states like Illinois, Michigan, and New York, many of them with parents in the AFL and friends in the AFT, and who were knowledgeable not only about the potential of educator unification, they also knew that the potential unity would be subverted by the undemocratic structure which was part and parcel of the merger. And, probably most of all, they had come to distrust and resent their leaders. Chase, it must be noted, never put his New Unionism to a vote. He has, however, lost the vote in every major disputed initiative of his tenure as NEA president (Gibson, 1998a).
The anti-racists portrayed by McKenna and many of those who rejected the NEA-AFT merger may be unwittingly following, or veering from, a path described by Dan Perlstein in his lucent historical article on the New York City teacher unions. Perlstein highlights the work of educators in the communist-inspired Teachers Union (noted with appreciation in Herb Kohl’s essay) which made racism the focal point of its work. The TU militantly fought for what the Communist Party then called “interculturalism,” which implied a unity based on the kinds of Marxist principles described above. The CP-TU stretched across a span of perhaps thirty years, from the early 1930’s to around 1965. The TU was banned by the New York board in 1950, but its former members kept the struggle alive. They had organized in opposition to corporal punishment meted out against black students, for an anti-racist curricula, for better school buildings, for hiring black school leaders, and for free lunches for kids. They mobilized parents, school workers across the spectrum, kids, and community people in front-line actions against more than bad schools, but linking that fight to a battle for a better world, against capitalism (p. 86-92).

In a parallel essay on the legacy of the Chicago Teacher’s Federation, Robert Lowe digs into history to explain the present and to seek grounded premonitions of the future. In a revealing piece which refuses to iconicize Margaret Haley, a lighthouse for many education activists, Lowe problematizes the history of her work, underlining the real potential conflicts of school worker unionism with the interests of children. Haley did lead the Chicago Teachers in a series of actions designed to force corporations to pay their share of the education budget. She also took the lead in denouncing the de-skilling of teachers, in 1904. But the Chicago Teacher Federation also promoted the interests of teachers whose qualifications were minimal; “it resisted higher educational qualifications for teaching staff” (p. 82).

In this composition Lowe addresses children, not as an innocent or demagogic abstraction, but particularly the children who are born into a world which promised them democracy and meritocracy, but whose birthright does not include the property which makes the exercise of the myths possible. He suggests a kind of unionism in line with the intent if not the analysis of Peterson’s ideas of social justice unionism, one that “responds to the claims of kids and particularly the claims of communities of color that have been poorly served by public schools” (p. 85).

As Transforming Teacher Unions demonstrates, there are, in brief, a complex of problems within teacher unionism: many teachers in the U.S. teach in wealthy communities, and identify with them. Other teachers, who work in urban areas, often live outside those areas and see themselves as missionaries, like Levin, doing a good deed. The very limited democracy within teacher unions, especially the AFT, makes them difficult, at best, to change. Even so, teacher unions may
well be the terrain where struggles about inequality and democracy are played out. Bob Peterson is right that in the long run the interests of most teachers is equivalent with the interests of the kids. But just which kids? As Bill Monroe, Detroit parent-activist, says, concerns about kids can be demagogic.

The very existence of Rethinking Schools, and the National Coalition of Education Activists with which it is an affiliate, demonstrates recognition for the need for organization outside the traditional structures of teacher unionism and educational reform. The groups have, in form, served as models of the potential unity of progressive school workers, kids, parents, and community people. But, as Lipman’s discussion of the organization of a school restructuring which simply deepened alienation and inequality demonstrates, organization in the absence of a material analysis, or a commonality of material interests, can misfire. At issue, throughout this screed, is “Where is the hope in this?”

In Toto: “You Always Had the Power to Go Back to Kansas”

There is another reason to have hope about schools. The struggle for knowledge is built into the struggle, with nature and industry, for survival. Even in the worst of conditions, as in Grenada’s prison, people join that wrangle because they must. This is a universal struggle, involving all of humanity. But when it is taken in its specificity today, as it must be, the universal need is stilted, retarded, by the needs of a social class which seeks to portray its interests as universal interests, its values, history, and methods of knowing as universal values. This class, born from inequality, division, greed and wealth, then moves to mask the roots of its supremacy and to solidify its power by obscuring, organizing the decay of, the struggle for knowledge. In schools, this is true in science, the assault on evolution and the processes of change; in social studies, the denial of the centripetal role of labor and industry in relation to nature; in economics, the reification of value into a commodity outside of and above the relationships of people. This will not long prevail. Philosophically and scientifically, hope can reasonably be found in the incessant struggle for what is true.

The binary approach, superficial materialism which must leap to utopian insistence on what ought to be as exemplified in most of the books under review, picks up the universality of the struggle for knowledge and fails to recognize its specificity, social class contradiction. Misusing philosophy, the binary approach is camouflaged religion. It finds harmony where there is disharmony, and in practice, by seeking to resolve the contradictions of capital with a pretense of universality, this objective idealism deepens disharmony by adopting practices which address capital piecemeal, without addressing the temporal totality of domination. The binary approach then reifies teaching, which dominance is more than willing to pose as in the in-
terest of all humanity, as long as that education does not investigate or puncture the bases and consequences of domination. In other words, the attributes of all of humanity are transferred to an abstract child, who then represents the illusory proposition that good teaching is good for everyone. In practice, through standardized exams for example, real children are transformed into abstract ciphers who must acquiesce and perform on tests. These tests are so permeated with the standpoint of class rule that the tests themselves are proof that there is no abstract child, but particular children in specific social contexts. The tests alone are evidence of class strife, and the requirement of passage is proof alone that there is no abstract universal humanity. To accept the binary construct, which turns the process of reality inside out, addressing the class-bound regulation of the struggle for knowledge without addressing its birthplace in surplus value, is to finally adopt to establishing the regulations for alienated teaching.

Real hope cannot be manufactured out of the mists. Optimism, the affective side of Marxism, is not discovered by divining the world dogmatically, not by collecting appearances and declaring hope within missionary work or philanthropy, but by a radical reconnaissance that understands the solidarity necessary for hope exists right now. What ought to be has its origins in what is. Nothing can come from nothing. The anecdote in *Naked Children*, "his need is bigger," is a stunning interpretation of the past; Babeuf's, "From each, according to their ability, to each according to their need", and a harbinger of a future in which working people can determine collectively the complex working out of solidarity. All the practical conditions for a just, democratic, and equitable world are in place today. What is necessary is a massive shift in consciousness, a good project for educators.

School workers who wish to defend science, rationalism, even academic freedom, are going to have to go well beyond piecemeal reform in the period ahead. The constant oscillation between a focus on the appearances of oppression which vaults to empty idealist calls for what should be, must be, transcended by an examination of the processes of social relationships as they develop, finding the seeds and tendencies of the new world within the old. Every teacher causes change in unique circumstances, but toward what end? Educators must answer for themselves questions like: What value do teachers and their students create? How is it that they might exert control over that value? What kind of student do you hope you will bequeath? How did you come to understand your circumstances, and how does that link to your pedagogy? What must people know to recognize the man behind the screen, and how should they come to know it?

With Meszaros, I believe that we now approach a period when attempts at capital’s reform in the absence of an analysis of, and action upon, the inequities of a class society are not viable options. Humanist, constructivist and critical pedagogy which demonstrates the
collective nature of the construction of knowledge, which locates truth in a mediation between the teacher and the student, needs to also admit the social context in which it exists, that is, in toto, the struggle between social and anti-social being which evolves from unequal property relationships (Meszaros, 1995, see Chapter 20). Whole language, now illegal in some areas, needs to meet Marx.

This will not happen by declaring it, but by uniting teaching and organizing for it. The traditional defense organizations of the working class, to which most teachers belong, no longer serve the interests of the class as a whole, but interests which fragment the class. Alternative examples already exist: The Whole Schooling Consortium principles which highlight the relationship of inclusion, democracy, equality, community, and pedagogy; *Rethinking Schools* notion of parent/student/educator/community unity; the study groups established by Whole Language practitioners long ago; the dedication of the Teacher Corps which drew on the commitment of educators to live in the communities where they taught, the true professionalism grounded in love for the kids, a solidarity exhibited in each of our texts, the anti-racism of the communist-led New York Teachers’ Union. To critically adopt the forms of these oppositional groups is not to tack Marx onto them, but to thoroughly reconsider their potentials in the light of their real context.

School reform movements from the top, like that in Detroit or Riverton, are not significantly different from the dogmatic sects still living in the graveyards of socialism which are for the class, but not of it, or the liberals in search of a good deed—often working in the same context. School reform in Detroit will fail because the new board members know nothing about schools in general and Detroit schools in particular, and seem unprepared to learn, because they work by issuing orders and not including the people involved, because contradictions of race and sex are far more profound than they are willing to address, but most of all because they have no plan whatsoever to deal with the rising racist inequality and the economic crisis which lies at the heart of the problems. Indeed, the board represents interests which rely on segregation, inequality, authoritarianism, and irrationalism. They are Them; a stubborn fact which Lipman and Perlstein understand.

So, what to do? What are the pathways to becoming a radical educational artist? Radical pedagogy must sometimes confront, sometimes circumvent or dodge the sources of alienation, surplus value, authoritarianism, irrationalism, with patience, wisdom, passion, which considers the importance of survival of change agents in relationship with the necessity for change. This goes to the ego-transcending construction of collaborative power, on one hand, in tension with personal and social ethics, tested by social criteria of integrity, on the other hand. This takes the grounded patience that does not mistake appar-
ent acquiescence for stupidity, speechlessness, or submissiveness, but grasps that this story is told not only in outbreaks and revolutions, but in the interim silences, which like the silent spaces between the music of a symphony, are necessary for comprehending the notes. Stillness is not acceptance or approval. Waves of resistance come from oppressed people who have given change considerable thought. The struggle on the color line (inseparable from the struggle of class and sexuality) remains the struggle at the close of the century. Black workers and poor people have played centripetal roles in the progressive changes of the twentieth century, and are key to the future. To build a more democratic society, to confront tyranny, the white working class will need to demonstrate real solidarity to earn the trust of Black workers—which for good reason has yet to be achieved. Following the work of Grace and James Boggs, this involves the creation of a community of people engaged in gaining and checking ideas and practices to discover what is true, a society of people who can be critical yet loving, which is at the same time prepared to critique and act on the reality of Them and Us.

Teachers create momentous value and surplus value. School workers and their students and communities, all of whom are daily confronted with the social nature of constructing ideas by creating value collectively, can act together to gain greater control over what they create, and can challenge the foundations of capital at the same time. In screed: justice demands organization. Pay attention to the man behind the curtain.1

Note

1 The Whole Schooling Consortium, designed to promote democracy, equality, and inclusion through education, is described on the World Wide Web at: http://www.pipeline.com/~rgibson/index.html. I have changed the names focus group participants and interviewees in each case that I felt identifying them might interfere with their future. Much of the data in this essay is drawn from field notes gained from the WSC qualitative study that is ongoing in Michigan schools. While I have visited rural, city, and suburban schools, I also attended 12 Detroit school board meetings between March and October 1999 and interviewed more than 70 citizens, as well as takeover board members. I thank Bob and Kathy Apter, Nancy Lee, Michael Peterson, and Amber Goslee for their criticism and insights.

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