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The CUFA Board has announced that ELIZABETH YEAGER will assume the position of editor of Theory and Research in Social Education beginning with Volume 30 (2002). Please direct all inquiries and manuscripts to Professor Yeager at:

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BOOK REVIEW
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There are few surprises in the sweeping education plan George W. Bush submitted to Congress his first week in office. Bush’s plan carries important earmarks of conservative education causes—vouchers and a phonics-based literacy program—and the centerpiece of the plan is mandatory student testing. Bush’s national plan is based on the education reform model used in Texas, with former Houston school superintendent Rod Paige in control at the US Department of Education to assure that the so-called “Texas Miracle” spreads to the other 49 states.

Democrats, while wary of Bush’s voucher plans, have already heartily endorsed much of the new president’s education package. The current Congressional bipartisanship on education policy is to be expected. Of all important public policy issues, education is the one on which Democrats and Republicans most strongly agree, vouchers notwithstanding. In recent years, politicians and education reform advocates from across the political spectrum have rallied around education policies that rely on high-stakes tests as the engine for what is known as standards-based educational reform. Indeed, US public education is in the midst of a standardization craze. Standardization advocates are working to produce, promote, and implement a host of standards-based policies, which coupled with mandatory, high-stakes tests effectively police the classroom work of teachers and students (as well as the involvement of parents in educational decisions). This standardization craze poses a further threat to parents, teachers, students, and local community members by undermining their efforts to define their own interests and desires.

*Vinson is a guest co-author of this issue’s “From The Editor.” This article originally appeared in the March 2001 issue of Z Magazine, 14(3), 34-38.
The Liberal-Conservative Consensus on Standards-Based Education Reform

Standards-based educational reforms should be understood both within the context of neoliberalism and against the establishment of such present-day novelties as the “compassionate conservative,” the “new Democrat,” and the Blair-Clinton project of a neurotically “centrist” Third Way. In each case historically liberal and conservative principles coalesce, morphing into a nearly indistinguishable “muddle in the middle”—a singular caricature of democratic political machinations and populist rhetorical ideals.

A hallmark of the standardization craze is its remarkable capacity to unite seemingly disparate individuals and interests around the “necessity” of national and/or state educational standards—the standardization imperative. Ostensibly strange bedfellows, including for instance E. D. Hirsch, Jr., Diane Ravitch, Chester Finn, Gary Nash, Bill Clinton, IBM chairman Lou Gerstner, the leaders of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and National Education Association (NEA), most if not all state departments of education, and a majority of governors (both Democratic and Republican), join to support standards-based reform and its concomitant “need” to implement systems of mandated, high-stakes testing. Somehow these “divergent” educational leaders manage to pull together around standards-based reform as the medium for “real” public school improvement.

(In the past two years the Education Excellence Partnership, which includes the AFT, NEA, The Business Roundtable, US Chamber of Commerce, National Alliance of Business, Achieve Inc., National Governor’s Association, and US Department of Education, have sponsored over 50 full-page advertisements in The New York Times promoting the standards agenda and, in particular, the use of high-stakes tests as means to both “motivate achievement” and retain children in grade. It should also be noted that the use of tests in these ways contradicts what we know from a large body of educational research, which tells us that grade retention only damages children’s chances to succeed educationally and that high-stakes testing reduces students’ motivation to learn.)

Education policy is being crafted in a milieu distinguished by the pro-standards consensus among an array of both liberal and conservative players. Accordingly, the commitments of the political-pedagogical right—public school privatization, the reduction of national financial support for public education, the promotion of US global corporate hegemony, “creationism,” socio-cultural homogenization around a few dominant “moral” themes, anti-immigration, the assault on organized labor, school prayer, and so on—blend with those of the left—equality, expanded democracy, economic opportunity, social justice, diversity, and so on—to create a clever though fundamentally
confusing admixture of multiple contradictions and inconsistencies. (Consider for a moment the mind-boggling implications of an [oxy]moronic assertion such as standardized diversity within a setting of White-European-Christian-Capitalist-centrism.) Nevertheless, the pro-standards bandwagon rolls on, though undoubtedly it has been relatively more successful in some content areas than others—compare, for example, the broad-based and generally favorable cohesion of educators around the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics' math standards to the deep-seated and heated divisiveness of the national history standards. The tendency among the educationally powerful has been to rally around a few key official pronouncements by professional education groups, academic societies, and teacher unions, and by such "reform-minded" states as Maryland, Virginia, Ohio, Arizona, and New York. Over time these various frameworks (and the textbooks with which they develop a mutually reinforcing relationship) fuse so as to constitute in essence a nationally standardized curriculum.

At its core the pro-standards consensus can be characterized by its commitment to a relatively few defining principles. Advocates argue first that standards-based reform is necessary vis-à-vis school improvement because the current educational "crisis" is rooted in the inability or unwillingness of "failing" schools to offer the same "high quality" programs provided by more "successful" schools. Since the identified purposes, selected content, teachers, and modes of evaluation "must" be better in some (usually wealthy and majority white) schools than in others (usually less wealthy and majority Latino/a and African American), the implications are unmistakable. Elite educational leaders and policymakers are saying that "other" schools can indeed improve, but only to the extent that they become more like "our" schools. Hence, the one-sided standardization imperative and the subsequent normalization of whiteness, wealth, and exclusionary forms of knowledge.

In short, the standardization alliance argues, in most cases without any evidence, that: (1) today's students do not "know enough" (no matter how "know enough" is defined); (2) curriculum and assessment standards will lead to higher achievement (although arguably many students achieve highly now—they just do so differently or in ways not easily quantified); (3) national and state standards are crucial in terms of successful US-corporate-global economic competition; (4) standards-based reform should occur with federal guidance yet be implemented under local control (thus keeping both big government liberals and New Federalist conservatives happy); and (5) "higher" standards/standardization will promote equal educational, thus economic and political, opportunity.
Race, Class, Test Scores, and the Myth of the "Texas Miracle"

The primary justification for the imposition of standardized curricula and/or the seizure of local schools by the state/corporate alliances (such as occurred in Detroit) has been poor test scores and high drop out rates, even though both are less a reflection of student ability or achievement than a measure of parental income. For example, Peter Sacks' book *Standardized Minds* (1999) presents data showing that students taking the SAT can expect to score an extra thirty points for every $10,000 in their parents’ yearly income. A study of the state testing program in Michigan (MEAP), conducted by the *Detroit Free Press*, found that as the level of poverty goes up in school districts MEAP scores go down. In addition, the *Free Press* study found a number of other factors impacting MEAP scores: the percent of single parents in a district; the local unemployment rate; school funds per pupil; the percent of students who speak English as a second language; and the percent of households where no one is a high school graduate (see “Testing MEAP” available on-line: http://www.freep.com/news/meap/main_test.htm).

Last year, Ohio became the 35th state to institute a system of classroom “accountability” based on student test scores. To determine who will move from fourth to fifth grade and who will graduate from high school, officials will use a single test score—a practice long condemned by testing experts and reiterated recently in a report by the National Research Council. Based solely on the Ohio Proficiency Test (OPT) scores of fourth-, sixth-, and eighth-graders, Ohio officials have concluded that 5% of the state’s school districts deserve top grades, while fully a third have been declared in academic danger. A study of the OPT results by Randy L. Hoover, a professor at Youngstown State University, suggests that OPT scores are so significantly related to the social-economic living conditions and experiences of students that the test has no validity as a measure either of academic learning or teacher effectiveness. (Hoover’s study is available on-line at: http://www.cc.ysu.edu/~rlhoover/ClassConnections/OPT/index.html) As the Cleveland Plain Dealer opined, the OPT determines “whether state officials applaud an individual system, or prepare to invade it.”

George W. Bush and other “standardists” (both Democrat and Republican) have claimed that introduction of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) test in 1990-1991 produced a near miraculous turnaround in educational achievement in the Lone Star State, reducing dropouts, increasing student achievement, and reducing the test score gaps among white, African American, and Latino/a students. Recent studies by researchers at The University of Texas, Boston College, The Rand Corporation as well as Rice, Rutgers, and Harvard Universities, however, have raised serious questions about the validity the reported test score gains in Texas.
A study by Walt Haney (2000), professor of education at Boston College and senior research associate in the Center for the Study of Testing, Evaluation, and Educational Policy, found that the TAAS actually contributes to retention in grade and dropping out. He reports only 50% of minority students in Texas have been progressing from grade 9 to high school graduation since the initiation of the TAAS testing program (and evidence suggests that slightly less than 70% of all students in Texas actually graduated from high school in the 1990s). Across the past two decades, there has also been a steady rise in the rates at which African American and Latino/a students in Texas have been required to repeat grade 9; by the late 1990s nearly 30% were "failing" grade 9. Grade retention rates for African Americans and Latinos/as in Texas are nearly twice as high as for white students.

As test scores on the TAAS have soared, researchers have failed to find similar improvements in other, more reliable, measures of Texas students’ achievement (e.g., SAT scores and the National Assessment of Educational Progress or NAEP). Indeed, as measured by performance on the SAT, achievement of Texas high school students has not improved since the early 1990s; SAT-Math scores have deteriorated relative to students nationally, reports Haney. The Rand study found that the dramatic reading and math gains indicated by TAAS results were not reflected in the NAEP. Instead, NAEP results indicate only small increases, similar to those observed nationwide. Moreover, according to the NAEP the test score gap between whites and students of color in Texas is not only very large but also growing.

There is an expanding consensus among researchers that the miracle test score increases on the TAAS are the result of intensive test-prep activities that undermine substantive teaching and learning. In *Contradictions of School Reform: The Costs of Standardized Testing*, Linda McNeil (2000), a professor of education at Rice University in Houston, reports that many schools in Texas are devoting tremendous amounts of time to highly specific “skills” intended to improve students’ scores on the TAAS. McNeil reports that after several years in classes where “reading” assignments were increasingly TAAS practice materials, children were unable to read a novel intended for students two years younger.

The other way Texas schools have improved TAAS scores is by increasing the number of students excluded from taking the test. In 1999, Texas tested 48% of its special education students, down from 62% in 1998—that is an additional 37,751 students not taking the test. Those exemptions include 13% of Latino/a, 12% of African American, and only 5% of white students. The Haney study reports that a substantial portion of increases in TAAS pass rates in the 1990s is due to such exclusions and prompts him to conclude that “the gains on TAAS
and the unbelievable decreases in dropouts during the 1990s are more illusory than real. The Texas 'miracle' is more hat than cattle."

**Regulating Education and the Economy**

It is clear that scores on high-stakes standardized tests as well as dropout rates are directly related to poverty, and none of the powers demanding school standardization or seizure appears seriously prepared to address this condition. Paradoxically, though perhaps unsurprisingly, states instead have increasingly sought to punish low-scoring (read less wealthy) schools and districts by cutting funding that might help them raise their all-important test scores and become more "like" (via smaller classes, greater resources, increased staffing, modernized facilities) wealthier (read high-scoring) schools. Bush's plan for US schools would use vouchers—tax money to reimburse families for tuition at private, including religious, schools—as a punishment for "failing" schools.

Although the established pro-standardization position has been hit with at least some degree of criticism (notably both from the Right, which sees standards-based reform as imposing on local school district autonomy, and from the Left, which sees it as racist, sexist, and classist), one fascinating feature of the consensus view remains its willingness to take such criticism seriously yet still maintain that it can satisfactorily be accommodated by and/or assimilated within the prevailing framework. Thus while particular positions may differ marginally on the specifics (the devil is in the details), the demand for standards-based reform itself—the standardization imperative—goes unchallenged, at least among the alliance of conservative and liberal politicians, corporate elites, chief school officers, and teacher union leaders.

Ensconced within this alliance is an insidious move on the part of elite stakeholders toward the corporate/state regulation and administration of knowledge, a move that enables what Noam Chomsky calls "systems of unaccountable power" to make self-interested decisions ostensibly on behalf of the public when, in fact, most members of the public have no meaningful say in what or how decisions are made or in what can count as legitimate knowledge. This, of course, is purposeful and involves the coordinated control of such pedagogical processes as goal setting, curriculum development, testing, and teacher education/evaluation, the management of which works to restrict not only what and who can claim the status of "real" knowledge, but also who ultimately has access to it.

Moreover, these consensus elites are among the same powerful few who make decisions about and promote such neoliberal policies and institutions as GATT, NAFTA, and the WTO as good for the American public. What exists here is an unambiguous, power-laden connec-
tion between the regulation of knowledge on the one hand and the regulation of the economy on the other, a joint effort by the politically, culturally, and economically powerful (nominally on behalf of the public) designed to stifle democracy while simultaneously enhancing the profits of multinational corporations and the ultra-rich. It is a reproductive and circular system, a power-knowledge-economics regime in which the financial gains of a few are reinforced by what can count as school (thus social) knowledge, and in which what can count as knowledge is determined so as to support the financial greed of corporations.

A conspicuous example is the social studies curriculum where, as John Marciano (1997) in Civic Illiteracy and Education argues, “students are ethically quarantined from the truth about what the U.S. has done in their name.” This is particularly true with regard to US perpetrated and sponsored aggression abroad, which is most often represented to students as unfortunate or accidental -products of essentially humane policies that serve the “national interests,” while what constitutes the latter remains unexamined. Those who administer the economy in their own self-interests are those who regulate the production and dissemination of knowledge and vice versa, all the while working superficially in the public interest but intentionally excluding any authentic public involvement.

Teachers and local school communities are left without the authority to bring their collective resources to bear on a matter as important as the education of their children. The people who know children best—families and teachers—must give way to tighter control over what happens in classrooms by people who are not in the classroom or even from the community. Despite rhetoric linking standards-based reform to benefits for all within the vast constituency of public schools, the cold fact is that those who regulate both knowledge (through standardization) and the economy are working for their own political and economic agendas, acting as though the public extended no farther than their privately secured office buildings and comfortably gated communities.

From a progressive perspective standards-based reforms fail on a number of related levels. Inherently anti-democratic, such efforts oppose, for example, John Dewey’s (1916) two “democratic criteria,” exemplified in Democracy and Education, of “more numerous and more varied points of shared common interest” and “freer interaction between social groups,” both of which weigh heavily on the origins and evolution of US public schooling. Further, standards-based education reforms are oppressive, illustrating in practice not only the late radical educator Paulo Freire’s widely read and influential concepts of “banking education” and “prescription,” but also contemporary political theorist Iris Marion Young’s notion of the “five faces of oppres-
sion” (namely exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence). In sum, standards-based reform privileges certain images of education (for instance, those media critiques of schooling based upon test scores, which David Berliner and Bruce Biddle (1995) so effectively debunk in The Manufactured Crisis) over the authentic experiences of everyday classroom life. Too frequently such images themselves end up promoting the “corporate good” at the expense of any reasonable understanding of the “collective good,” particularly problematic since the extension of the collective good is why we have public schools in the first place.

By not vigorously resisting standards-based reforms, concerned citizens simply capitulate to the government-sponsored corporatization of public knowledge. Still, one might be optimistic given that in many states and school districts students and teachers themselves have spearheaded the opposition. Student-led and teacher-supported protests in Michigan, Massachusetts, California, Arizona, and Illinois, for example, involving organized boycotts, walkouts, refusals to take tests, and faking and accepting intentionally low scores have demonstrated the potential effectiveness of subverting the demands of the powerful in favor of those of the apparently powerless. The standardization craze in education is a cause for either optimism or pessimism, depending, of course, upon how we ultimately make sense of the potential for concerted public action. We are optimistic.

References
The Origins of History's Mission in America's Schools: A Case Study of Hannah Adams

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Abstract
This paper goes back to the roots of education in America at a time when pre-collegiate history was first conceived. It is the study of how one historian, Hannah Adams (1755-1831), along with a group of New England educators, constructed history for America's schoolchildren as a tool for nation-building and citizenship development. These educators went beyond the traditional, European assumption that a classical education was essential knowledge. Instead, under no obligation to include hundreds of years of European history, each educator freely selected the necessary examples and emphasis he/she believed important for future American citizens. Adams's particular historical perspective was a pluralistic one which stressed civic allegiance through toleration of diverse beliefs from all walks of life.

Introduction

Since the inception of the NCSS in 1920 and the development of the subject of social studies, there has been a continual debate over the mission of history and the role that subject should play in social studies's function of citizenship development (NCSS, 1994). The limited research concerning the development and motives of pre-collegiate history education prior to the establishment of the NCSS tends to emphasize the time period after the 1880's (Saxe, 1997; Thornton, 1996; Hertzberg, 1989; Davis, 1996). To fully understand the evolution of pre-collegiate history and citizenship development in our schools, more research earlier in the roots of social studies' historical foundations is needed.

Hannah Adams's (1755-1831) work occurs at the beginning of that investigation. Her publications and beliefs form a case study of why and how one historian created educational material at a time when America was virtually inventing its traditions, values, and educational beliefs. Adams is, in fact, part of a group of New England educators who participated in molding the scope and sequence of citizenship education for the country's first citizens.
This influential circle of educators, which included Noah Webster, Caleb Bingham, Jedediah Morse, along with Adams, actually designed the enacted curriculum for many of the republic’s first schools. While national figures such as Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Rush wrote more publicized theoretical educational plans, the work of this group directly impacted American education. Their popular textbook publications and public influence formulated practical educational ideas and subject matter. Nevertheless, aside from Webster’s linguistic achievements (Unger, 1998), the group’s actual impact upon education in general and social studies education in particular, needs further exploration.

This paper will show how Hannah Adams is both representative and yet unique to this group of America’s first educators. Publishing 13 religious and historical books, as well as a personal history in the form of autobiography, Adams, like her contemporaries, considered herself first and foremost an educator (Adams, 1832). Like others in the educational circle, she published a number of popular and influential school textbooks. Adams’s *Abridgment of the History of New England* (1805, 1807) for example, was adapted in Boston’s schools and elsewhere (Shaw, 1806; Kerber, 1980).

Adams also shared a similar background and education with her contemporaries. All were native New Englanders who lived and/or worked in Massachusetts, a state that not only had a strong colonial commitment to education, but also played a leadership role in America’s educational history (Cremin, 1970, 1977; Kaestle & Vinovskis, 1980; Kaestle, 1983; Martin, 1897). Throughout their careers, Adams and her contemporaries experienced similar economic circumstances and professional decisions. Most important, this circle of educators all shared similar values about the ultimate goal of an American education. All emphasized the development of moral virtue as a condition for democratic citizenship. They also believed that a history, uniquely American, was an essential vehicle for developing civic competency.

Despite their similarities, Adams’s writing differed from her fellow educators in several important areas. Unlike her contemporaries she championed an understanding of different religious views. She also believed that new Americans should visualize perspectives from all walks of life. Adams constructed a historical narrative that crossed religious, racial, gender, and class lines. Her narratives even exposed the vulnerabilities of America’s greatest heroes.

Adams’s gender also made her unique to this circle of educators. Seeking public power through publishing was far more daunting for women than men (Skemp, 1998; Mathews, 1992). Unlike her male contemporaries, Adams had to navigate a gendered world that disapproved of non-traditional female behavior. Differing from con-
ventional female role models of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, she used her considerable intellect and writing abilities to assume an influential public role. Taken for granted tasks, such as the undertaking of original research and the access to information, were more difficult for Adams.

Through Hannah Adams’s case study we can explore a variety of important issues. First, a study of her work could help clarify the initial role of education in the new republic. Adams’s example helps us understand how post-Revolutionary Massachusetts developed a purely American curriculum. The actions and thoughts of Adams and her contemporaries help explain why and how pre-collegiate education in Massachusetts moved away from the European-style classical curriculum which was so popular prior to and during the period of the Revolution.

Second, Adams’s work helps us to understand how an Americanized version of history enhanced the first American curriculum. What was history’s use and function in Massachusetts schools? How did it develop, and in what manner was it used?

Third, Adams’s case study also provides us with motives of why people first wrote histories for schools. Through Adams, we learn how and why women—as well as men—became educators and historians. Adams’s work also enables us to compare and contrast her motives with those of her better-known male contemporaries. Do the professional choices of early educators mirror the decisions faced by contemporary history writers? Does Adams’ example help illustrate enduring dilemmas in the creation of history?

Fourth, through Adams’s vision we are able to explore and analyze what the content of an early pre-collegiate history curriculum actually looked like. What content did Adams consider important for America’s first generation? What people and events did she include and exclude? How does Adams’s history curriculum compare to that of her male contemporaries?

Finally, Adams’s case study adds to the early literature of social education. If one defines social education as how an individual’s “social, political and economic relations past and present” impacts citizenship education (Crocco & Davis, 1999, p.1), then Adams’s accomplishments in life as well as work are important for study. It is the intent of this paper to shed light upon these questions through a comparison of Adams to her educational contemporaries.

**Similarities Between Adams and Her Male Contemporaries**

**Background and Education**

Hannah Adams and her educational contemporaries were fortunate to live during a time of powerful political, social and economic
change. Aside from experiencing the political separation from England, they also witnessed America's growing commercialization. New capitalistic markets transformed traditional methods of earning a living, while a democratic government required individual responsibility. In addition, during their lifetimes, two religious revivals increased the amount of democratic religious participation, as well as the number of denominations (Wood, 1992; Moore, 1989). Such societal changes required educational changes for future citizens. Fortunately, all the members of the educational group were born, raised and educated in New England, an area with a strong commitment to colonial education. New England was, in fact, the only region of the colonies that mandated primary education.

Hannah Adams's education mirrored her male contemporaries far more than her female contemporaries. Her birthplace of Medfield, Massachusetts, 17 miles outside of Boston, was one of seven colonial Massachusetts towns that admitted girls to primary school. (Monaghan, 1988). While a girl was fortunate even to attend primary school, most boys went on to male-run writing schools, and then received a classical education. Massachusetts mandated that towns of a certain size maintain Latin grammar schools which readied boys with the necessary classical education required for college entry. The norm for middle and upper class white Christian boys, such an education was highly unusual for colonial girls.

Adams was one of the fortunate few colonial women who received a classical education. She learned “Latin, Greek, geography and logic” from various college students who tutored her while boarding in the Adams’s large family home (Adams, 1832). The fifth generation of prosperous Medfield farmers, merchants and local politicians, Adams also had the opportunity and encouragement to use her father’s extensive library of classical books. An intellectual by nature, Hannah’s father, Thomas (1725-1809), reluctantly gave up a coveted college education himself to inherit the family farm. Despite societal gender restrictions, he did not want to deny an extended education to his daughter. Adams took as her model her father’s literary passion. “As I always read with great rapidity, perhaps few of my sex have perused more books at the age of twenty than I had” (Adams, 1832, p.9). Adams’s father continued to support his daughter’s intellectual endeavors throughout her writing career.

Economic Backgrounds, Opportunity and Desires

The educational circle also shared a common economic background. Despite her comfortable economic status at birth, Adams, like her educational contemporaries, had to work for a living for most of her adult life. Before she reached adulthood, her family’s wealth disappeared. Unfortunately, Hannah’s father lacked “a suitable knowl-
edge of, or taste for, agricultural pursuits” (Adams, 1832, p. 1). On the eve of the Revolution, he also made the poorly timed economic decision to import and sell British books. While such intellectual resources enhanced young Hannah’s education, it strained the family’s financial situation. A little over a decade after his daughter’s birth, Thomas Adams drove the family farm into ruin.

Adams’s riches to rags situation prepared her well for her unique role as a wage-earning professional writer. She was far from the protected, dependent, and barely literate women generally expected to be found in the new nation. Instead, Adams learned at an early age that financial security was never guaranteed. Adams also realized that sometimes an individual, regardless of gender, must step out of his or her traditional role. To survive she, an unmarried lady, had to leave home and enter the marketplace.

Before she ventured into writing, Adams tried a variety of jobs. Like all of the male contemporaries of her group, she taught school to local students, and was thus familiar with the existing educational materials of the day. For several summers, Adams taught primary school in neighboring Massachusetts towns. Summer primary sessions paid less than winter sessions, but were the only time periods then open to women teachers (Massachusetts School Returns, 1824; Kaestle, 1988).

Exposed to the changing educational climate after the Revolution, Adams and her contemporaries were in the right place at the right time to witness a new demand for an expanding educational market. This new market also had a different focus. Its demand grew out of several important changes. Not only was the student population expanding to include more females and males of various classes, the changing structures of American schools demanded curricular materials with a new American emphasis.

Even before Adams published her New England history textbook in 1805, many Massachusetts towns had already begun to de-emphasize their Latin-grammar schools in favor of locally developed public and private institutions (Martin, 1897; Tilden, 1887). This post-Revolutionary trend away from providing a classical pre-collegiate education had important ramifications. First, it freed towns from arbitrarily limiting their secondary school education to the teaching of young men by male teachers. Many Massachusetts towns replaced traditional male grammar schools with higher grades of coeducational primary schools or English writing schools (Martin, 1897; Massachusetts School Returns, 1824).

The decrease of locally supported grammar schools also opened the way for the growth of male, female, and coeducational private academies. These institutions became extremely popular after the Revolution (Kerber, 1980; Norton, 1980; Martin, 1897; Kaestle, 1984).
Between 1790 and 1830, over 400 academies were established for women alone. Free from any mandatory classical traditions, these schools broadened the subject matter and reading material typically available for children. An increased student population, along with the expansion of non-classical schools, expanded demand for American-made educational materials.

Adams and her contemporaries were among the first to satisfy this new educational demand. Literary markets, particularly in the areas of education and history, offered commercial opportunity for both genders (Baym, 1995). Satisfying this demand, however, entailed a knowledge of the fledgling American publishing industry and a desire to earn money. Adams and her contemporaries all had successfully published educational materials before venturing into the textbook market. Like her male contemporaries, Adams signed her works, and thus took public responsibility for her words and actions. She also looked at writing as her job.

Adams made the decision to publish her first work, *Alphabetical Compendium of the Various Sects...* in 1784 as "the last resort" for income. The book was a compilation of the historical and religious beliefs of diverse religious sects. Adams held out the "faint hope" that her "hobby" of researching the history and beliefs of different religious denominations "might be printed, and afford me some little advantage" (Adams, 1832, p.12). Her first book did indeed sell, and eventually went through several editions.

But to be a financially successful professional writer, authors had to do more than write; they had to understand the marketplace and be able to make important professional decisions. Even though Boston was a leading publishing center at the time, and the new federal government protected local writers by placing a 15-percent import duty on all foreign books (reported in *Monthly Anthology*, Jan. 1824, pp. 162-164), it was customary for authors to directly participate in the publishing process. Aside from individually contracting their own printers and booksellers, Adams and her colleagues often had to guarantee a printer his initial costs by personally acquiring a list of subscribers who agreed to buy the book before it even went to press.

This particular circle of educators also realized the earning potential of keeping books short. The cost of paper and ink was still relatively high in post-Revolutionary America (Boorstin, 1958). "Portable" or "pocket" editions known as "Compends" became popular for an increasingly literate public that lacked both the leisure time and the inclination to spend hours studying and reflecting. Such books claimed to be "all which is necessary to be known on that subject, and comprising the pith of many cumbrous works." These educational books were "eagerly received, as shewing not only the quickest, but the best
way of becoming civilians” (Monthly Anthology, May, 1807, pp. 234-37).

Compendiums such as Adams’s Alphabetical Compendium (1784), later renamed View of Religions (1791), as well as her subsequent Summary History of New England (1799), not only relied upon secondary sources, but also included original research and personal perspectives as well. Adams tackled these subjects as a means of educating a more general audience. She believed her Summary History would “benefit the public”, as well as “be useful to those in early life.” Adams also claimed that there was no complete New England history available at the time (Adams, 1832, pp. 22-23).

The professional decision of condensing educational books specifically for a ready-made audience of schoolchildren also made good economic sense to Adams and her male contemporaries. Adams felt secure in her decision to abridge her Summary History of New England (1799) into a school version. The school textbook, An Abridgment of the History of New England (1805, 1807), specifically addressed a younger audience. Considerably shorter than her Summary History, it was written in a simpler style with a series of recall questions for each chapter. Adams attributed financial gain as a major motive for writing the textbook. In her autobiography she wrote: “My only resource appeared to be abridging [the Summary History] for the use of schools. The profit I hoped to derive from this compilation seemed to me to constitute all I had to depend upon in future... I was made sanguine by my knowledge of the success with which books for schools had been printed...”(Adams, 1832, p. 30).

In addition to deciding upon the size, audience and topic of published works, Adams and her contemporaries were also in the vanguard of a growing number of American authors who considered literary products as personal property with profit potential. To protect their intellectual property rights, all sought state and then federal protection in the form of copyright. Prior to the federal Constitution, for instance, Noah Webster personally traveled from state to state to convince each legislature to pass copyright laws for the protection of his grammar book (Unger, 1998). Adams and Jedediah Morse were also two of the four original petitioners noted in the 1789 Congressional Record as urging Congress to pass the first federal copyright law in 1790 (Copyright Bulletin #8, 1905). The other petitioners were historian David Ramsay and Massachusetts textbook writer Nicholas Pike.

Ironically, these same authors who sought protection for their written work also liberally “borrowed” each others’ ideas and words. Sometimes the authors gave official credit to other works, and other times they did not. Webster’s Philadelphia printer, John M’Cullock, in fact, used much of Webster’s historical material from his language book—and exact wording—to publish what has been called America’s
first history textbook in 1787 (Spieseke, 1938, Nietz, 1961). Much of Morse’s material for his geography textbooks also closely resembled Webster’s material. Neither individual credited Webster (Spieseke, 1938). On the other hand, Adams liberally used Dr. Ramsay’s material for her history books (Adams, 1799, 1805, 1807; Morse, 1814), but referenced him, as well as Morse, in footnotes. Adams even went so far as to write an apology letter to Ramsay for her action, and was sent a bill for 10 dollars by his wife (Adams, American Antiquarian Society; Adams, 1832).

On a more serious level, Morse and Adams became embroiled in a bitter public conflict over similar textbook publications. Within months of each other in 1804 and 1805, the two authors published pre-collegiate textbooks of the history of New England. Adams’s book, *An Abridgment of The History of New England for The Use of Young Persons*, and Morse’s book, *A Compendious History of New England Designed for Schools and Private Families* were both intended for schools in the Boston area. The coincidence of subject matter and timing of both publications led to a well-publicized legal confrontation between the two authors which lasted over a decade, and was eventually decided by a panel of prominent judges (Morse, 1814, Adams, 1814). While a close examination of both books shows a number of obviously similar passages, neither was officially charged with plagiarism.

*Values and Subject Matter of an American Curriculum*

Adams and her contemporaries were educational reformers at a time when the molding of America’s character was in its embryonic phase. They shared a common desire to reject the past and redefine the present. All rejected the strong, inherited customs and traditions of a European education, as well as the influence of their own, individual, classical education. Each individually pondered the needs of a brand new nation and the necessary knowledge and character traits essential to its inhabitants. Their writings reflect similar visions about the content, ideas and values of a new American curriculum.

The writings of the Enlightenment must have influenced the group’s content and ideas. Like Locke and Rousseau, each believed that every individual is shaped by education and experience. Adams repeatedly reiterated that theme in the personal experiences of her autobiography (Adams, 1832). Each also believed that education was vital to fight injustice and ignorance in society. Through Montesquieu, each felt that the creation of a democracy, particularly in the form of a large republic, was the most fragile and delicate of all types of governments. The only way to keep a democracy from slipping into corruption, tyranny and degeneration was the careful education of all its participants. Every citizen had to be aware of his/her rights and responsibilities; every citizen also had to be a decent person. New citi-
zens not only had to be familiar with America’s new laws, but had to actively participate in their preservation. Each had to be morally responsible for the establishment and maintenance of an orderly government. Montesquieu believed that good manners made good laws. The unique nature of a republican form of government depended upon a virtuous citizenry for its very existence (Kerber, 1997; Zagarri, 1992). Such involvement necessitated a thorough education, not for an aristocratic few, but for all American citizens.

The power of God was another important influence upon the writings of these educators. Despite the rationality of the Enlightenment, America was still a deeply religious nation. Religious and moral values had always been uppermost to most New England colonists and continued to be so during and after the Revolution. The Puritan passion of a “city on the hill” had mellowed in the generations after the founding fathers, but Christianity in general, and Protestant values in particular, remained firm fixtures in society. After the Revolution, many Americans realized that they themselves were responsible for their own personal salvation and goodness. Two religious revivals personalized and deepened individual religious involvement (Curti, 1935; Miller, 1954; Wood, 1992).

Adams shared with her contemporaries a belief that Divine Providence destined America for greatness. God purposely provided past examples of mankind’s corruption and failure as learning examples. The educators believed that Europe was drowning in vice. The Old World legacies of aristocracy, patriarchy, and feudalism could not be repeated. America was destined to be different. A new American curriculum, free of hundreds of years of corruption, would emphasize this new beginning by encouraging specific character traits for citizenship.

Moral virtue—one’s unselfish devotion to the public good—was the group’s number-one character trait for American citizenship. Lessons of morality and virtue appeared in a variety of American literature, regardless of subject matter (Elson, 1964; Harris, 1996). Adams and her contemporaries called for the emotional and mental allegiance of both genders to their new country. This definition of civic loyalty was a departure from antiquity’s traditional definition connecting citizenship to male military service. American allegiance offered other aspects of public service and opened the door for a more varied and personalized relationship towards one’s country (Kerber, 1998). Citizens of both genders could actively participate in virtuous activities to preserve the state from corruption. Although American women could neither vote nor serve in the army, republican mothers could use their homes and personal characters to morally model the behavior of future citizens (Kerber, 1980; Norton, 1980).
Several important factors influenced the educators' advocating of moral virtue as a priority for citizenship. First, they believed that moral duty for both genders was God's will and was equal to, if not more important than, the law. Educators of both sexes, for instance, read the popular Paley's (1835) *Moral Philosophy* as a school textbook (Willard, 1861, quoted in Hoffman, 1981, p. 24; Emerson's Appendix to Sullivan's *Political Class Book*, quoted in Paley, 1835, p. 2). Paley (1835) stressed that the Law of Honor was above the Law of the Land. Many supported Paley's argument that there was a higher law which all individuals needed to follow, and that those individuals who did not follow that law were neither moral nor honest individuals.

A moral education was also considered a necessary antidote for the pervasive corruption which many believed still existed inside, as well as outside, the country. Warning that the Revolution itself was as much an internal fight against American corruption as an external fight against British tyranny, public sermons portrayed the British army as an agency of God's punishment for colonial sins, and considered the war an ongoing moral crusade to restore America's lost virtue (Miller, 1961; Greene, 1968). Many also feared that any form of corruption could hurt America's delicate moral fabric.

After the war, Massachusetts law even mandated religious ritual and morality as a requirement for all of its citizens. In John Adams's creation of the Massachusetts Constitution in 1780, for instance, he authorized the legislature to "enjoin" men and women to attend church and required the use of funds to maintain these churches. Adams, Hannah's distant cousin, wrote that "civil government essentially depend[s] upon piety, religion and morality...to promote [people's] happiness and secure good order..." He urged the "support and maintenance of public Protestant teachers of piety, religion and morality" (quoted in Morris, 1970, p. 308).

**The Introduction of American History as a Subject in Massachusetts Schools**

The subject of history was the group's common tool in developing morality as a condition of citizenship. Every member of the New England educational circle took advantage of the growing popularity of local history in the new republic to introduce the subject into the schools (Callcott, 1970; Jameson, 1891). This popularity came at the same time as the gradual demise of the classical curriculum in New England schools.

Webster was arguably the first of the group to inspire this trend. As early as 1778, a 25-year-old Noah Webster declared that "America must be as independent in literature as she is in politics, as famous for arts as for arms" (quoted in Morison, 1968, p. 288). Although Webster did not achieve all the specific changes in language he had advocated,
he did create a popular series of language textbooks that promoted nationalism. Upon the advice of Yale’s President, Dr. Ezra Stiles—himself an educator and historian—who was also friends with Hannah Adams and Jedediah Morse, Webster introduced a variety of historical pieces and speeches to illustrate a specifically American language (Unger, 1998; Nietz, 1961; Adams file, American Antiquarian Society).

Webster’s vision opened the door for the other educators of the group to include history in a variety of school texts. Particularly, they realized how essential a knowledge of America’s past and present was for citizenship development. In 1784, Jedediah Morse published the first of his many successful American geography texts called *Geography Made Easy*. The text also contained the history of each state. Stressing the importance of geography in education, Morse wrote in the preface to his 1804 edition, “There is no science better adapted to the capacities of youth.” He also stated that up until that time America’s geography had been “neglected.” “Instead,” wrote Morse, “[O]ur young men, universally, have been much better acquainted with the Geography of Europe and Asia, than with that of our own state and country” (Morse, 1804, iii). Soon after, Caleb Bingham published his popular *Colombian Orator* in 1799 to instruct proper speaking and reading (Nietz, 1961). The text included historical pieces concerning Cortez, Columbus, Pocahontas, and Washington, as well as an oration of John Quincy Adams.

In 1802, Noah Webster moved away from language texts to develop a textbook specifically devoted to American history and geography called *Elements of Useful Knowledge, Volume I—Containing a Historical and Geographical Account of the United States* (Elson, 1964; Nietz, 1961, Unger, 1998). A few years later, in late 1804 and early 1805, Hannah Adams and Jedediah Morse published their textbooks concerning the history of New England. Each wanted the history and spirit of New England to serve as a model of morality and erudition for all young Americans.

The subject of history provided Adams and her circle of educators with the events, examples and flexibility to teach America’s newest citizens to take pride in their republic and develop responsible character traits. Through history, the authors freely picked their own moral examples. No longer bound to a cumbersome past, they could create their own historical narrative by beginning at any place or time period. They could glorify their new republic’s short past and endless future. Adams opened her New England history, for example, with Columbus’ journey, while Morse began his narrative with the events of England’s Henry VIII and the origins of the Puritan rebellion.

Authors were also able to emphasize different areas of American history. For instance, Adams discussed the recent American Revolution for five chapters of her New England textbook—44 pages out
of 184 pages—, while Morse devoted less than seven pages to the same topic (Adams, 1807; Morse, 1820). In his textbook Morse (1820) stated, "[t]he limits of this little volume prevent a detail of the various events, which produced the revolutionary war, and the independence of the United States. Numerous other works contain those details" (p. 278).

Aside from the freedom of content, authors could also make their history interdisciplinary in nature. Each connected history to other specific subjects of their own liking. While Webster and Bingham often connected history to communication skills in the areas of literacy and public speaking, Morse emphasized geography, and Adams emphasized the area of religious diversity in her works.

**Differences between Adams and Her Male Contemporaries**

**The Approach to Pluralistic Beliefs**

Adams differed conspicuously from her contemporaries in her open approach to pluralistic beliefs. This was particularly the case with the issue of religious toleration. In light of the country's religious and moral emphasis, Adams was one of many contemporary authors who openly expressed her particular religious and moral philosophy in textbooks and other educational materials. This was not unusual during the time of the early republic, where religion and education were often one and the same. A self-described religious liberal, however, Adams strongly advocated the theme of religious toleration in her history pieces (Adams, 1805, 1807; Harris, 1996).

While the other New England educators openly stressed morality and Divine Providence, only Adams emphasized toleration of diverse beliefs as a characteristic of citizenship. As noted, Adams had written two popular, educational books prior to her history publication, *Alphabetical Compendium of the Various Sects* (1784) and *View of Religion* (1791, 1805) that objectively described the many religious denominations which existed all over the world. Acutely aware that America was the first nation in history to be established without a state religion, Adams's emphasis upon diverse religious understandings was consistent with the views of the new Constitution.

A comparison of Adams's histories with 12 contemporary history, language, or geography books published in the first few decades of early-19th-century New England indicates that while authors often stressed Divine Providence and moral lessons in their educational works, few emphasized religious toleration. Surveyed books include Bingham's (1815) *American Preceptor* and (1808) *Historical Grammar*; Goldsmith's (1811) *Grammar of Geography*; Willett's (1822) *Geography*; Robbins's (1815) *New England Fathers*; Morton's (1826) *New England Memorial*; C.A. Goodrich's (1823) *History of the United States*; Morse's (1804) *Universal Geography* and (1820) *History of New England*, Webster's...
An American Selection and (1812) Elements of Useful Knowledge; and Whelpley’s (1820) Compendium. Bingham and Webster both ignored the principle of religious toleration entirely in their surveyed works. Webster was openly against the “careless repetition of [God’s] name upon every trifling occasion” (Unger, 1998, p. 69).

Others, like Jedediah Morse’s works, expressed conservative religious agendas and were openly hostile towards diverse or liberal religious beliefs. Often written by ordained Congregational ministers like Morse, many historical narratives openly advocated the superiority of traditional, Protestant religious beliefs.

In Morse’s Universal Geography (1804), for instance, he stated that he disliked the “corruption” of the diverse language and customs existing in the middle and southern states, “where they have had a great influx of foreigners.” Instead, Morse praised “the purity” of language, customs, and religion currently observed in New England (p. 96). Morse also claimed that Roger Williams was “charged with holding a variety of errors” (p. 153). While he described Rhode Island’s religion as “voluntary choice” which is protected by law (p. 148), he also said, “so little has the civil authority to do with religion here that no contract between a minister and a society is of any force.” That lack was the reason, claimed Morse, that there were so many sects, and that “the Sabbath and all religious institutions [were] more neglected” in Rhode Island than anywhere else in New England (p. 153).

Connecticut minister Thomas Robbins (1815) wrote in his book, New England Fathers that many other histories ridiculed the founders of New England churches: “If then their Christian character can be brought into contempt, ours, of course must fall....[T]he sons of infidelity and vice manifest so great a zeal upon this subject and...reproach upon the character of our Forefathers” (iv). This author’s aim was to “vindicte the order of the Congregational churches” (iv).

The Reverend Charles Goodrich (1823) described the development of American Catholic, Baptist, and Quaker congregations in his History of The United States, but then claimed: “They sought improper occasions to inculcate their peculiar tenets...and rudely inveighed against established and cherished opinions....Unanimity of religious sentiment which had hitherto existed was broken” (p. 66). The author also claimed that American religion suffered during the Revolution because “the atheistical philosophy over France” pulled religion into “gloomy mists of skepticism...which acknowledges no distinction between right and wrong” (p. 245).

Of the surveyed works, only Whelpley’s (1820) Compendium shared a liberal religious stand with Adams. The author, the principal of Newark Academy, stated, “Nothing can be more reasonable than that a man should enjoy his own opinions concerning his maker....[While] European churches grew intolerant, haughty and cruel
In the United States... there exists no subordination of sects or parties” (pp. 175-76). Like Whelpley’s *Compendium*, which was a combined world history, American history, and geography textbook, Adams’s history books emphasized a more tolerant religious view.

In the style of earlier Massachusetts historians such as Cotton Mather, Adams openly emphasized New England’s moral superiority; in her case, however, New England was God’s model of tolerance. In her *Abridgment of The History of New England* (1807), Adams praised New Englanders as God’s chosen people because of their religious toleration. New Englanders created “a scene...unparalleled in the annals of history” (Adams, 1807, p. 36). God’s plan was to use the bigotry of England as a means to establish “flourishing colonies” in the new world. Many came to America “obliged to dispose of their large and valuable estates to make provision for their enterprise...[R]eligion was their support.” (p. 22). Adams believed that New England’s “grand object” was the “desire of enjoying religious liberty” (p. 6). Even though some New Englanders enforced uniformity in religion and themselves became bigots, the intolerance of some colonies inspired the formation of other colonies such as Rhode Island (pp. 36-39). According to Adams, intolerant religious beliefs were part of the past. Divine revelation not only defined history but also defined the current and future attitude of religious toleration.

Adams used the theme of religious toleration to teach young Americans to think historically. As many contemporary historians might do today, Adams implored her young readers to realize that one cannot judge the past with the values of contemporary beliefs. Her textbook (1807) stated, “the liberal sentiments of the present age [such as a liberal view of religion] place errors [of New England ancestors] in a conspicuous point of view” (p. 26). We look at “inconsistency,” claimed Adams, but instead we must “consider the political theories of that age” (p. 48).

Through her history textbooks, Adams provided American students with numerous examples of prior religious bigotry which existed in New England’s history. She used these historical examples to point out the necessity of current and future religious toleration:

To us who live in an enlightened age, where the principles of religious toleration are clearly understood, the conduct of the early settlers of New England must appear truly astonishing; and we may be led to asperse them with unmerited censure. In reviewing the conduct of those who have appeared on the theatre of life before us, we ought ever to consider the influence which the prevailing preju-
dices of the age [had upon the environment] in which they lived. (Adams, 1807, p. 72)

Using religious intolerance as her emphasis, Adams also pointed out important instances of historical cause and effect in her textbooks “[T]he bloody persecutions in the annals of popery fill the mind with horror,” she said, “and we find traits of the same intolerant spirit in the conduct of the reformers” (Adams, 1807, p. 72). Adams wrote that the Church of England, in its desire for uniformity, oppressed and drove out the Puritans, who, “[i]nfluenced by the prejudices of education [italics mine], ...considered it as a duty to suppress those religious tenets which they ...opposed” (p. 72). Adams believed that Divine Providence ended the cycle of intolerance with America’s birth and provided “the entire liberty of conscience, which is at present enjoyed in each individual state, and the security of which constitutes a distinguished excellence in the federal constitution” (p. 73).

**Use of Historical Examples from All Walks of Life**

Aside from using the theme of tolerance and understanding to stretch a student’s intellectual skills and develop moral character, Adams also used it to inspire the possibility to achieve. She believed that young people needed to understand how their ancestors endured hardship as a model for stretching their own limits. Influenced perhaps by her own life experiences, Adams wanted her young readers to realize that “by overcoming difficulty the mind acquires new energy” (Adams, 1807, p. 17). In her historical narrative, she stated that God’s plan was to give every New Englander—regardless of status and gender—specific talents which needed continual attention and development. She claimed that many who rose up “from a low situation” did so because of “early habits of preserving diligence” (Adams, 1807, p. 16).

Adams believed that the actual process and history of education was a part of God’s master plan to provide an understanding of man’s diverse beliefs. In her textbooks she stated that “One prominent trait in the character of our ancestors was the attention they paid to the education of the rising generation” (Adams, 1807, p. 57). Adams included a quote from her cousin John Adams concerning their ancestors’ convictions: “…convinced by knowledge of human nature, derived from history and their own experience, that nothing could preserve their posterity from the encroachment of tyranny, but knowledge diffused generally through the whole body of people” (quoted in Adams, 1807, p. 57). Adams also claimed that the founding of Harvard, the colony’s first college “enlist[ed] science and religion under the same banners” to prevent an “illiterate ministry” and qualify students for future professions, adding, “Young people have the
weightiest motives to stimulate them to the acquisition of knowledge” (p. 58).

Unlike the other authors of the educational circle, Adams’s emphasis upon tolerance included historical voices from a more varied mix of religious, racial, class, and gender groups. For instance, while criticizing native American religious beliefs as “pagan” and their way of life as “savage,” Adams still respectfully called Indian leaders “sagamores” (kings) and “sachams.” She also pointed out many positive interactions between the two cultures, such as Roger Williams’s encounter in Providence: “having crossed Seconk River, [Mr. Williams and Company] landed among the Indians, by whom they were hospitably received” (Adams, 1807, p. 40). Even when she described the hostile war with the Pequot Indians from 1637 to the 1640s, Adams (1807) dignified the Indian enemy for her students: “The battle was warm and bloody, and though the Pequods [sic] defended themselves with the spirit of a people contending for their country and existence, yet the English gained a complete victory” (p. 51).

Adams identified as examples historical individuals who varied from the traditional political or military leaders found in the other surveyed texts. For instance, Adams (1807) devoted a page and a half of her textbook to the story of a young, unknown captain in the Revolutionary war who, “animated by a sense of duty,” volunteered for a dangerous mission to Long Island and was caught. Prior to his execution, the young man “lamented that he had but one life to lose for his country” (p. 156). In a footnote, Adams thanked General Hull of Newton “for this interesting account of Captain Hale” (p. 157). Adams may have been the originator of Nathan Hale’s public historical legacy. None of the other surveyed textbooks used Nathan Hale as an example.

Adams included exemplary women as moral and religious role models as well. For instance, in both her Summary History of New England (1799) and her Abridgment of the History of New England for the Use of Young People (1805 & 1807), Adams labeled Mrs. Anne Hutchinson “a very extraordinary woman” (Adams, 1805, p. 38; Adams, 1799, quoted in Harris, 1996, p. 354), who established meetings for women “to repeat and debate on the discourses ... delivered on Sundays” by the Reverend Mr. Cotton (in Harris, p. 355). Adams carefully described the popularity and influence of Hutchinson’s meetings in her textbooks.

Apparently it was rare for historians, even the New England historians, to devote space to Anne Hutchinson. Most of the contemporary history texts completely ignored or minimally mentioned her role. Robbins (1815) New England Fathers claimed Hutchinson had “mental powers,” but that the “demagogue” Henry Vane influenced her (p. 114). Morton’s (1826) conservative Planters of New England In America
actually used Hutchinson and her female companions as negative role models. Morton demeaned Hutchinson's "abominable tenets" (p. 123), and went on to devote an entire paragraph to a detailed description of the "hideous monster" born to Mrs. Mary Dyer, "a copartner with the said Mrs. Hutchinson." Even over 100 years later, more about the beliefs and events of Anne Hutchinson appear in Adams's historical accounts than appear in Perry Miller's famous religious history, *The New England Mind* (1939).

Adams also did not feel the need to whitewash America's heroes. Her emphasis upon the importance of religious freedom made it clear to new American citizens that religious intolerance, even among the most powerful and famous, was harmful. After describing accounts of Roger Williams and other dissenters, for example, Adams noted:

> The intolerance of the first settlers of Massachusetts, shews the imperfection of even the best of men, and their liability to error. The zeal of our Ancestors to deprive their fellow emigrants of those sacred rights, which they had made such sacrifices to obtain; their drawing the sword of persecution in the wilderness...marks their characters with apparent inconsistency. (Adams, 1807, pp. 47-48)

At a time when other history text writers glorified or even created moral myths about the Founding Fathers—such as M. L. Weems's (1810) famous cherry tree story about George Washington—Adams instead chose to expose the human weaknesses of even the most venerated. Ironically Weems, himself an ordained Anglican minister, believed it was necessary to fabricate a story to illustrate "religiously based morality" (Moore, 1989, p. 220). Unlike Weems, Adams believed that real stories—good as well as bad—provided the clearest moral examples.

Including unknown individuals such as Nathan Hale, women such as Anne Hutchinson, non-Christian cultures such as native Americans, in addition to New England's original English founders, Adams's historical narrative included a vast variety of moral lessons. Her goal was to instill a tolerance and understanding of diverse people as a condition of American citizenship. A comparison of Adams's New England textbook to Morse's textbook undergirds the values of both authors (Figure 1). Believing that students "should be induced to imitate [all people's] conspicuous virtues" (Adams, 1807, p. 48), Adams emphasized the good and bad qualities of all types of humanity.

**Gender Differences**

Adams's gender influenced her experiences as a writer, and thus distinguished her from her contemporaries. A female writer in late
18th and early 19th century America had to endure far different dilemmas than male writers. Gender roles generally inhibited women from assuming a public place in society (Mathews, 1992; Scott, 1980). Adams is considered one of the first American women to actually sign her own name and earn money for her work (Harris, 1996; Zagarri, 1995; Tweed, 1992; Vella, 1993). The few women who did write in the early republic generally wrote to a private, family audience, or hid their gender behind a pseudonym (Jelinik, 1986; Zagarri, 1995). Many, like Mercy Otis Warren and Judith Sargent Murray, did not write to earn a living. Unlike them, Adams considered writing to be her job. Autonomous and unmarried for life, she had to make her own way in the world. With virtually no local role models nor business experience, she had to depend upon herself as her sole means of support.

Choosing to remain single for life, Adams escaped what she privately referred to as "the shackles of matrimony" (Adams, The Boston Athenaeum, 1806). In the early republic the responsibility of being a wife and mother often inhibited when and where a woman worked. It is unlikely that Adams would have accomplished her goals as a historian or educator had she married. She probably viewed the institution as an additional patriarchal institution of power. Yet, she never publicly advocated in her textbooks that women enter the public workforce or not marry. Still, Adams paid the societal price of carrying the demeaning label of "spinster" throughout her life (Chambers-Schiller, 1984). She was also mocked for her academic inclinations and unladylike intelligence.

Because of her gender and matrimonial state, Adams had to rely upon men for a variety of tasks. Her father or the Reverend James Freeman often helped her with business arrangements, printer contracts or book deliveries (Adams File, Massachusetts Historical Society; Adams, 1832). Several printers and book dealers refused to personally deal with her. Adams also "felt that my ignorance of the world, and little acquaintance with business, would put me in the power of every printer to whom I might apply" (Adams, 1832, p. 13). One printer even refused to honor her copyright. Barred from most important public professions such as the law, politics or the clergy, women lacked a public network. During her decade-long legal confrontation with The Reverend Jedediah Morse, Adams had to rely upon the legal skills of her male lawyers and judges. Both sides of the dispute even used the issue of gender as an argument (Morse, 1814, Adams, 1814).

Even conducting historical research was far more daunting for a woman—particularly for a single woman—than it was for men. Traveling alone and finding appropriate resources took time and effort. Many college and public libraries barred women. While researching official documents in Providence, Rhode Island, for example, Adams developed severe eyestrain and had to put aside her writing for sev-
eral years. Faced with fading fortune as well as vision, Adams hastily assembled her *Summary History of New England* (1799) into a longer version than she had originally intended (Adams, 1832).

At other times Adams felt compelled to do a great deal of her research in local bookseller’s shops. Fortunately, several men, such as her cousin John Adams, as well as The Reverend Buckminster, opened their private libraries to her. Moreover, the Boston Athenaeum allowed Adams to be the first woman to use their facilities (Adams, The Boston Athenaeum, 1806).

As a woman, Adams paid a dear price for her public exposure and intellectual pursuits. Even signing her name to her work was considered risky. Thomas Prentiss, the minister of the Congregational Church of Medfield, wrote in the preface of Adams’s first publication in 1784 that Adams did not write the book for the “vain ambition of appearing as an author,” but for “her own satisfaction and amusement.” Adams only “yielded to [the book’s] publication at the desire of several judicious friends.” Prentiss also claimed that Adams “has also done violence to her own inclination, by prefixing her own name” (Adams, 1784). In the gender-coded language of the day, Prentiss apologized and explained why Adams was in the unusual position of entering a field where she was openly competing with men.

Despite her successes, many of her contemporaries labeled Adams as odd or eccentric. Throughout history intellectual women have rarely been embraced—particularly when they clashed with dominant male views (Kerber, 1997; Crocco & Davis, 1999, ). Adams’s obituary in the *Boston Courier* on December 20th, 1831, for instance, claimed, “In private life she was amiable, although from an abstraction of mind induced by laborious literary labor, her intercourse with society was attended with many eccentricities.” The label of “eccentric” followed Adams even after her death. The few pieces written about her in the 19th and 20th centuries (Child, 1852; Tilden, 1887; Quincy, 1926; Lutz, 1971; *Notable American Women*, 1971) emphasized her oddities far more than her achievements as a historian.

**Conclusion and Suggestions for Further Research**

Adams and her contemporaries wrote to an expanded educational audience which consisted of all classes and genders. They wrote textbooks for both private and public institutions. Considering the general lack of pedagogical training and the limited educational experience of most primary school teachers at the time, it is likely that the textbook was both the formal and enacted curriculum in the early republic. Rote memorization and regurgitation of the written material was the typical pedagogical strategy of the day. More analysis of these texts is necessary to understand the content of this early cur-
riculum. How valuable and influential were these texts outside of New England?

Aside from the texts, more research is also needed to understand the values and motivations of the textbook authors. Adams, Webster, Bingham and Morse all developed textbooks which emphasized preferable American character traits and unified American beliefs in the new republic. Written in the vernacular and locally printed, their textbooks simplified and “Americanized” the English language and culture for America’s first generation of school children.

More needs to be understood about the background, support and interactions of these early educators. Were other educators of either gender an important part of this group? Considering their contribution to American education and culture, why have these important educators been overlooked in our historical narrative? If there was a “preoccupation with education” in the early republic (Wood, 1992, p. 7), we at least need to know as much about these ideas as the abstract visions of politicians like Jefferson.

It is also important to understand the decisions made by these educators. Knowing how powerfully the traditions of education prevent curriculum change, how were all of these educators able to move beyond the assumptions of their own classical education to develop a brand new American curriculum? How were they able to expand education’s benefits for the changing population? What other factors contributed to this decision?

An understanding of the work and background of Adams and her contemporaries would also contribute to a clearer understanding of the mission of social studies. Introduced as new American subjects of history, politics, literature, religious diversity and geography, the works of these first American educators contribute to the understanding of how the social studies adds to the development of nation-building and citizenship. More research is necessary to understand how this interdisciplinary curriculum achieved its goals. Today, when America’s population is so rapidly changing, and the definition of American citizenship is continually being redefined and re-evaluated, it might be useful to look at the values and skills instilled in America’s first generation of citizens. How might the values of civic and moral virtue of 1800 be reinvented for the year 2000? How might the newly emerging democracies of today’s world learn from America’s early democratic education?

It might also be a good idea to look at the particular subjects and themes of this citizenship curriculum. The teaching of religious toleration as part of the social studies curriculum certainly needs further research. Throughout her textbooks, Adams supported the new constitutional value of religious toleration as perhaps the most important aspect of citizenship. In comparison to her contemporaries, her non-

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biased account of the nation's religious groups was unusual. Her male contemporaries either championed a particular Protestant sect, or avoided the issue of religious freedom entirely. Even today, many educators tend to avoid the topic of religious diversity as part of social studies education. But, as educators such as Noddings (1984) claim, an important aspect of social studies education should be the inclusion of various religious practices.

Commercialism in educational material continues to be as important an educational issue today as it was in the early republic. Even though Peter Novick (1988) and George Callcott (1970) argue that “[f]ew pre-professional historians made a living from history” (Novick, p. 54), Adams and her educational group used financial gain as an incentive to write educational and historical material. How have financial issues continually influenced the professional decisions and dilemmas of historians and educators? How has the profit motive affected the size and content of America’s textbooks? In what ways have commercial considerations affected the quality, background and expertise of people who write educational materials?

Adams and her group demonstrate how freely a historian can create his/her own narrative by including or excluding selected materials and examples. While most of the males in the group used historical examples which tended to glorify powerful, white, male public figures, Adams tended to use examples from a broader spectrum of humanity. How does one’s gender affect the decisions one makes as educator and historian? Adams’s inclusion of people like Anne Hutchinson, for example, may illustrate how a woman historian viewed historical examples from a different perspective than her male contemporaries. Women and other minorities might look differently at the less powerful individuals. Adams chose to humanize even the most venerated American ancestors in order to provide good moral examples.

Adams and her contemporaries are examples of educational reformers. After the Revolution, this group assumed the authority to influence how their new society should reproduce itself (Guttman, 1987). Adams and her contemporary educators realized the importance of stressing the political, social and religious differences between the corrupt old European world and a new American world. These educators agreed that for a democracy’s survival, Americans of all classes and genders needed to be virtuous, responsible, and educated citizens.

Adams’s history writing also fulfilled her own personal civic responsibilities of allegiance. A woman of the new republic, she had the legitimate role of actively molding the proper values of a new generation. But, as an unmarried woman, she did not have a husband or children to nurture. Instead, her public beliefs helped to mold the val-
ues of scores of new American citizens. Fortunately, Adams possessed the education, intellect, and curiosity to be a successful historian and educator at that time. What should be the public responsibilities of today's educators?

Despite societal gender bias and questionable citizenship status, Adams claimed authority as a social educator (Crocco & Davis, 1999). Fortunately, professional writing was one of the few public professions open to educated women at the time. Although her choices were not easy, Adams succeeded as a public individual. Through her writings Adams could both contribute to America's future as well as stress her own values. By doing so she not only embraced pluralism, but took a transformational approach to history instruction. Her pioneering actions resemble many later women educators such as Mary Ritter Beard and Marion Thompson Wright. Adams, like other women to follow, emphasized equity and inclusion (Crocco & Davis, 1999).

Unfortunately, Adams's life as an unmarried intellectual affected her legacy in the historical narrative. She was remembered more as an eccentric spinster than an educator. In fact, until the civil rights movement of the 1960's, few women received their rightful place in the formal historical record (Zinsser, 1993). What is the impact of a male dominated history profession upon history writing and education (Crocco, Munroe & Weiler, 1999)? Did Adams and her contemporaries have only a small window of opportunity to write before Victorian mores prevented a public stage? Until quite recently, women intellectuals were not taken seriously as history or curriculum writers. How many women educators, intellectuals and historians fell into oblivion? Further research is certainly needed to resurrect these individuals.
Appendix

A Comparison of Adam's and Morse's New England Textbooks


Religious Beliefs of Early New Enganders

"freemen must be church members; and as none could be admitted into the church, but by the elders, who first ex amined and then propounded them to the brethren for their vote, the clergy acquired hereby a vast ascendency over both rulers and people." (p. 25)

"...the conduct of our ancestors in the application of the power of the civil magistrate to religious concerns, was fraught with error." (p. 26)

"The inhabitants of New England...enforced uniformity in religious worship, among all those who inhabited the territories...A few years after, they so far forgot their own suf ferings, as to persecute those who re fused to accede to their religious sentiments." (pp. 37-38)

Anne Hutchinson

"Mrs. Hutchinson, a very extraordinary woman, established meetings(s) for her own sex...These lectures for some time were received with general approbation, and attended by a numer ous audience...The fluency and confi dence with which she delivered her sentiments procured numerous pros elytes. The whole colony was divided into two parties, differing in sentiment, and alienated in affection..." (p. 37) The first synod in New England was convened at Newtown...the synod condemned eighty-two erroneous opinions...and pronounced a sentence of banishment upon Mrs. Hutchinson, and Rev. John Wheelright, her brother, who had been a preacher in Braintree." (pp. 41-43)

The Reverend John Wheelright

"The intolerance of Massachusetts, which gave rise to the settlement of Providence and Rhode Island, proved the occasion of enlarging New Hamp shire. Rev. John Wheelright, after his banishment, sought an asylum in that colony...and with a number of his adherents now began a plantation...called Exeter." (p. 45)

The Revolutionary War

"The undaunted courage which the New England militia exhibited at Lex ington, Concord and Breed's hill, affords a convincing proof how much may be done by men inspired with an enth usiasm for liberty, without the aid of mill itary discipline...The prevailing ideas at that time were a detestation of arbi trary power, and a determined resolu tion to resist, even with the sword (p.152)."

"It appears from this imperfect review, that, under heaven, the blessings of lib erty and independence were chiefly purchased by the wise counsels, the undaunted resolution, and the ener getic exertions of the Americans (p.162)."

"[T]he British proceeded to Concord, and executed their commission. Here a skirmish took place between the Brit ish and the militia under major Buttrick. The British having accomplished their object in destroying the stores at Con cord, began their retreat to Boston. The Americans closely followed, firing from fences and walls (pp. 276-279)."

"Before the late war, which introduced into New England a flood of corrup tions and errors, together with many improvements, there was a general uniformity in the faith of the churches; the sabbath was observed with great strictness; no unnecessary travelling, no secular business, no visiting, no divers ions, were permitted on that sacred day (p. 288)."

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Text And Context: Field-Testing The New York State Great Irish Famine Curriculum

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Abstract
A team of historians, teacher educators, and classroom teachers created interdisciplinary units, lesson plans, teaching activities, and class projects on the Great Irish Famine for grades 4 through 12. The material is part of the New York State Human Rights Curriculum and was designed to model standards-driven, document-based instruction and assessment as well as lessons that promote student literacy. This
study examines efforts to ground the Great Irish Famine curriculum in educational theory and research on literacy and social studies education and concludes with a comparative report on the field-testing of lessons in inner-city and suburban middle school social studies classrooms. Its primary conclusions are that students from diverse backgrounds with a range of social studies interest and prior school achievement are capable of developing complex conceptual understandings when social studies educators create literacy and learning contexts and present content information using differentiated texts.

A team of historians, teacher educators and classroom teachers, coordinated through the Hofstra University Department of Curriculum and Teaching, created interdisciplinary units, lesson plans, teaching activities, and class projects on the Great Irish Famine for grades 4 through 12. The material is part of the New York State Human Rights curriculum and was designed to model standards-driven document-based instruction and assessment and lessons that promote student literacy (Murphy, Miletta & Singer, 2000:7-9). This study examines efforts to ground the Great Irish Famine curriculum in educational theory and research on literacy and social studies education, and it concludes with a comparative report on the field-testing of lessons and document-based activity packages drawn from the curriculum guide in inner-city and suburban middle school social studies classrooms.

According to New York State social studies standards, teachers should encourage students to use a “variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points” in the history of the world, the United States and New York State. The Department of Education asks social studies teachers to stress “skills of historical analysis” during instruction, including explaining the significance of historical evidence; weighing the importance, reliability and validity of evidence; understanding the concept of multiple causation; and understanding the importance of changing and competing interpretations of different historical developments. Student mastery of these skills is measured by document-based essay questions on statewide examinations in Global History and Geography at the end of 10th grade and United States History and Government at the end of 8th and 11th grade (New York State Department of Education, 1996: 5, 13).

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New York State Social Studies Standard 1

History of the United States and New York:

Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding
of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in the history of the
United States and New York.

1.1 The study of New York State and United States history requires an analysis of the
development of American culture, its diversity and multicultural context, and the ways
people are unified by many values, practices and traditions.

1.2 Important ideas, social and cultural values, beliefs and traditions from New York
State and United States history illustrate the connections and interactions of people
and events across time and from a variety of perspectives.

1.3 Study about the major social, political, economic, cultural and religious develop-
ments in New York State and United States history involves learning about the im-
portant roles and contributions of individuals and groups.

1.4 The skills of historical analysis include the ability to: explain the significance of his-
torical evidence; weigh the importance, reliability and validity of evidence; understand
the concept of multiple causation; understand the importance of changing and com-
peting interpretations of different historical developments.

The curriculum team saw the development and field-testing of
lessons, units and projects on the Great Irish Famine as an opportu-
nity to a) develop a history-based thematic social studies curriculum
that infuses the history of Ireland into United States and Global His-
tory courses; b) systematically root social studies instruction in edu-
cational theory, especially studies on promoting student literacy in
the content areas and the ideas on teaching of John Dewey and Maxine
Greene, and c) model an approach for field-testing social studies units,
lessons, activities and projects among diverse student populations.

The curriculum team found that Irwin, Lunstrum, Lynch-Brown
and Shepard (1995) contained useful strategies for promoting student
literacy through content area instruction. Moore, Moore, Cunningham
and Cunningham, Developing Readers & Writers in the Content Areas K-
12 (1998: 3-30), surveys literacy theory and makes a powerful case for
the intersection of literacy and thinking skills. In addition, we ben-
efited from papers by Smith and Singer (2000) and Zaleski and Costello
(2000) on the promotion of student literacy through participation in
reader response groups and an article by Ehlers (1999) in the OAH
Magazine of History on the use of literature to help students situate
themselves in historical contexts.

The Great Irish Famine curriculum guide consists of 150 inter-
disciplinary lessons and projects and is not intended to be used in its
entirety in one classroom. It provides teachers with a choice from a
broad menu of lessons, activities and projects and a variety of ap-
proaches to instruction. These include full class, individual and group
work, the use of word banks, songs, cartoons, pictures, charts, maps,
literature, letters and personal testimony by students about their ex-
periences. Lessons are designed to encourage social studies teachers
to provide and help students uncover and explore meaningful literacy contexts, by stimulating student interest in the subject being explored, building on prior knowledge and skills, creating a community of literate learners, promoting critical thinking, and creating a conceptual context, or scaffolds, for examining difficult written material (Graves & Graves, 1994; Langer & Applebee, 1986; Rosenshine & Meister, 1992).

Teachers are encouraged to organize student experiences in ways that create appropriate literacy and intellectual contexts that make concepts and content accessible to the students in their particular classes (Dewey, 1963). Of particular concern in our work was Maxine Greene’s argument that “In many respects, teaching and learning are matters of breaking through barriers - of expectation, of boredom, of predefinition. To teach, at least in one dimension, is to provide persons with the knacks and know-how they need in order to teach themselves. No teacher, for example, can simply lecture youngsters on playing basketball or writing poetry or experimenting with metals in a chemistry lab, and expect them to meet the requirements or standards she or he had in mind for that activity. Teachers must communicate modes of proceeding, ways of complying with rules and norms, and a variety of what have been called ‘open capacities,’ so that learners can put into practice in their own fashion what they need to join a game, shape a sonnet, or devise a chemical test” (Greene, 1995).

**Research Design**

Members of the Hofstra University New Teachers Network, an alumni group of new and mentor teachers who maintain a relationship with the university, field-tested social studies units, lessons, projects and activity sheets in ten school districts in the Greater New York Metropolitan area (Hines, Stacki, Murphy, Singer & Pezone, 2000). Middle school and high school students in selected classes were informed that they would be helping to develop a new social studies curriculum for New York State and that their input in this process was valued. Demonstration lessons were videotaped for analysis of student responses to questions, student reports on activities and projects, and student-to-student interactions during discussions in order to determine the appropriateness of material and the depth of student understanding of concepts and content introduced during instruction. Observers from social studies methods classes at Hofstra University assisted individual students and groups with assignments and identified reading passages, vocabulary words, questions and instructions on activity sheets that needed editing or clarification. In addition, student understanding was assessed through evaluation of an assortment of projects and written assignments. These included letters, written as historical fiction, from immigrants to family mem-
bers in Ireland describing conditions in the United States and creation of a Great Irish Famine Museum where students displayed dioramas, “trading cards,” and posters (Murphy, Singer, Miletta & Singer, 2000).

Where possible, the curriculum team selected inclusive middle school and high school classes with students who were performing at different academic levels. We also worked with students in honors, regular and remedial tracks and with schools with diverse student populations, including affluent, middle class and working-class poor districts, districts where the student population was overwhelmingly European American and districts with large Asian, African American, Caribbean and Latino/a populations. These choices were particularly important because of the history of contentious debate in New York State over who gets included in multicultural curriculum and concern whether lessons on the Irish experience in the 19th century could be presented in ways that engaged students from different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds, especially students in inner-city minority schools (Cornbleth & Waugh, 1995).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suburban Districts</th>
<th>% White</th>
<th>% Black</th>
<th>% Hispanic</th>
<th>% Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Herricks</td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hicksville</td>
<td>75.1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Beach</td>
<td>64.9</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oyster Bay</td>
<td>81.4</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roosevelt</td>
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<td>90.8</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uniondale</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westbury</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Urban Schools</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>0.6</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queens MS</td>
<td>72.4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queens HS</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>87.1</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some schools preferred that the Great Irish Famine curriculum team work with their most advanced students because teachers working with other students were expected to use separate remedial lessons and concentrate on developing basic skills. We believe this approach is a fundamental error. Margaret MacCurtain, head of an international committee of historians that reviewed the Great Irish Famine curriculum guide, noted after a series of site visits that some of the best class discussions she had observed were with lower performing students who seemed to feel free to offer opinions, speculate about the past and make comparisons with the present. Too often, students in honors classes were either silenced by concerns about correct answers and grades, or were competing with each other for attention during discussions rather than exchanging thoughtful ideas (internal memo, December 9, 1999).

**Preliminary Findings**

The initial plan for the Great Irish Famine curriculum guide was to develop separate high school and middle-level lessons and document packages which included edited and adapted material. The goal was to make it possible for students working at different academic levels to act as historians and social scientists as they analyzed and wrote about primary sources, participated in sophisticated group and class discussions, and drew conclusions about the past. Edited documents, designed for high school classrooms, were primary sources shortened to highlight key points with some definitions inserted into the text. Adapted passages were rewritten for upper elementary and middle school students with an effort to translate text into language more accessible to students while retaining main ideas, information and at least some sense of the original language. Documents used to explore the experience of famine-era Irish immigrants in the United States included material excerpted from the diary of George Templeton Strong of New York, a book by an Irish actor who toured the American South in the 1830s, an historian’s account of Philadelphia during the Jacksonian era, and a letter from an immigrant to New Brunswick, Canada who wrote to family remaining in Ireland (Binder & Reimers, 1988; Gray, 1995).

Through field-testing the lessons and documents in classrooms, participation in and observation of group work, and in follow-up discussions with students, we discovered that our distinction between social studies curriculum materials designed for upper elementary/ middle level and high school level students often did not take into account the range of student performance. When analyzing the documents, many high school level students expressed that they were more comfortable with the adapted documents, while some middle-level
students felt comfortable reading the edited material. On both middle school and high school levels, some students with a record of poor academic performance could not read either set of material. Teachers working with these students recommended that some of the documents be completely rewritten. In response, the team reorganized the curriculum guide to offer teachers the option of using differentiated edited, adapted and rewritten text with major language revisions, either with an entire class on any grade level or with selected students.

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**Edited document:** "One of the greatest works now in progress here is the canal planned to connect Lac Pontchartrain with the city of New Orleans. I only wish that the wise men at home who coolly charge the present condition of Ireland upon the inherent laziness of her population, could be transported to this spot. Here they subsist on the coarsest fare; excluded from all the advantages of civilization; often at the mercy of a hard contractor, who wrings his profits from their blood; and all this for a pittance that merely enables them to exist, with little power to save, or a hope beyond the continuance of the like exertion."

**Adapted text:** One of the greatest works now in progress here is a canal. I only wish that the men in England who blame the condition of Ireland on the laziness of her people could be brought to New Orleans. Here the Irish survive on poor food and are at the mercy of hard employers who profit from their blood; and all this for a low wage that only allows them to exist, with little power to save or hope.

**Rewritten text with major language revisions:** A great canal is being built in Louisiana. I wish people in England who think the Irish are lazy could see how hard they are working here. Irish immigrants in New Orleans are treated badly by their employers. Their wages are low. Their food is poor quality. They have little hope.

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A number of researchers have expressed concern with academic and social tracking, both between classes and within classes (Singer, 1997; Wheelock, 1992; Oakes, 1985). Jeter and Davis (1982) and Sadker and Sadker (1994) document the impact of differential expectations by teachers on female students. Since the 1970s, researchers have repeatedly concluded that African American students do not receive equal learning opportunities in many classrooms (Gay, 1974; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Because we share these concerns, curriculum writers and classroom teachers met regularly in focus teams to question potential bias when assigning material to students, teaching full classes, and setting up study groups. In addition, the research team which evaluated the lessons described in this paper was racially and ethnically diverse. It included six classroom teachers, two of whom are European American, one who is African American, one who is Carib-
bean American, and two who are of mixed Latino/a and European American heritage. The primary curriculum writers, who also led many of the demonstration lessons, are both European American. As a group, the team believes that the type of differentiated instruction modeled by these lessons offers an alternative to tracked and segregated classrooms.

As the classroom teachers and curriculum writers field-tested the Great Irish Famine curriculum at the ten sites in a total of 23 classrooms, the team also learned other valuable lessons. While the content of lessons was important and students were concerned with the plight of Irish immigrants, the way it was presented was fundamental for capturing their interest and promoting learning. When teachers engaged students in activities, used references that had meaning to a particular group of students (Thelen, 1986), reviewed vocabulary and provided a context for language, provided readings that were accessible, and encouraged freewheeling discussions (Nagy, 1988), every group of students responded enthusiastically to the curriculum (Irvin, Lunstrum, Lynch-Brown, & Shepard, 1995). Inner-city and suburban students, immigrants and native-born, and students from different ethnic backgrounds were all fascinated and engaged by events prior to, during, and after the Great Irish Famine. This is detailed later in the study in a direct comparison of one urban and one suburban middle school social studies classroom.

The specific lessons on Irish immigration to North America in the mid-nineteenth century that are the focus of this report were designed to establish a literacy and learning context. They were taught to one seventh, one eighth and two eleventh grade classes. Before breaking into teams to examine document packages and prepare reports, classes read, sang, and analyzed the songs “Paddy Works on the Railway” and “No Irish Need Apply” (Fowke & Glazer, 1973) and examined a political cartoon, “St. Patrick’s Day, 1867,” by Thomas Nast (Keller, 1968). They also discussed the reliability of folk songs and political cartoons as historical sources and compared attitudes toward Irish immigrants in the mid-nineteenth century with attitudes towards immigrants in the United States today. Group singing of the songs tended to be spirited. In some classes, students joined for the chorus, while in others they grappled with the traditional tunes and sang the verses as well. In a few classes, volunteers transformed the songs into contemporary “raps.” During opening discussions, a number of students testified about their personal experiences as immigrants or discussed problems faced by their families and relatives when they arrived from other countries. In concluding discussions, students drew connections between the treatment of immigrants in the past and present as they tried to understand the Irish experience. During the time period when the curriculum was being field-tested, a group of
New York City police officers were acquitted of criminal charges in the death of an African immigrant, and students in the urban schools repeatedly referred to this incident during discussion.

In New York State, teachers are under considerable pressure to prepare students to pass rigorous assessment tests to meet state-wide standards. The percentages of students achieving proficiency and mastery levels on these tests are published in local newspapers. As a result, teachers often assign reading materials geared to the level of the exams. Unfortunately, students who cannot navigate the material successfully are unable to perform learning activities. Instead of gradually developing their literacy and social studies skills, they become disengaged or disruptive, and fail to learn. In response to this problem, the differentiated material in the Great Irish Famine curriculum is designed so that students can explore social studies concepts and content on the highest levels while they continue to develop literacy skills.

Based on classroom observations, an analysis of lesson videos and follow-up discussions with teachers, we found that as long as teachers had available reading material appropriate to a particular class or even specific individuals in a class, lessons were successful. This was especially true in inclusive classrooms. Teachers commented that having the same material available in different formats made it possible to teach students social studies content, concepts and analytical skills while they worked at developing their reading and writing skills.

Teachers who field-tested the curriculum adapted lessons to make them more appropriate for their classes and used different teaching strategies successfully. For example, working in middle schools where the New York State curriculum is less proscribed, Adeola Tella, Rachel Gaglione and Lynda Costello had the freedom to concentrate on projects. Their students participated in creating displays for a regional Great Irish Famine museum that was exhibited at a local university. The teachers also were able to set aside time where students could directly comment on the lessons and the curriculum material.

High school teachers like Siobhan Miller and Nicole Williams had to fit lessons into crowded calendars. When teaching the sample lesson on Irish immigration, Miller and Williams organized students into expert groups and each group reported to the full class on the Irish experience in a different locale—New York, New Orleans, Philadelphia or New Brunswick, Canada. Full classes compared information from the group reports and drew general conclusions about Irish immigration to North America in the mid-nineteenth century. Miller was able to use the edited version with all of her students and did the lesson in one class period. Williams allocated two class periods. The first period started with "Paddy on the Railway." The sec-
and period, where groups reported back to the full class, began with "No Irish Need Apply." Williams used two different approaches with her classes. In one section, students were heterogeneously group and all students used adapted versions of the documents. In the other section, she created homogeneous groups of three or four students with similar reading scores and assigned the groups either adapted or rewritten texts based on their performance level.

Cheryl Smith works primarily with inclusion classes and emphasizes differentiated group-based instruction (Tomlinson, 1999). She prefers mixed-level student teams and assigns edited, adapted or rewritten versions of documents to individual students based on their reading performance. When possible, each team member examines a different aspect of the topic by using a different source. In this case, each team member studied conditions faced by Irish immigrants in a different location. Smith's approach makes it possible for every student to understand material and requires that they each provide information for their group's final report to the class. Smith is a strong proponent of teacher-prepared organizers that help student teams arrange information and necessitate contributions from every team member. The organizer for this assignment required the team to report evidence of anti-Irish stereotypes, violence against immigrants, unsafe working and living conditions, and positive experiences in each locality.

Teachers generally reported that interest level among students was extremely high and that the lessons on Ireland easily connected with other curriculum topics, including colonialism, industrialization, human migration, and human rights. They contributed to promoting student understanding of National Council for the Social Studies themes, especially Culture and Cultural Diversity; Time, Continuity and Change; People, Places, and Environment; Power, Authority, and Governance; Production, Distribution, and Consumption; and Global Connections (NCSS, 1994).

Comparing Urban And Suburban Classrooms

Final versions of a two-day sample lesson on Irish immigration to North America in the mid-nineteenth century were field-tested under controlled conditions at an urban and a suburban middle school to establish whether lessons on the Irish experience in the 19th century would engage students from different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds. The participating teachers in both schools frequently assign group activities and generally have students sit at tables with their teams. In both cases, lessons were taught by one of the curriculum writers from Hofstra University and videotaped for analysis. The lesson that was evaluated emphasized the creation of a learning con-
text for students and included activity sheets available in edited, adapted and rewritten formats. The lessons utilized student discussion of their own family histories as the basis for comparing the experiences of different immigrant groups at different points in United States history, with a particular focus on similarities and differences in the experiences of contemporary immigrants and Irish immigrants from the mid-nineteenth century.

The Urban school is located in an inner-city Brooklyn, New York neighborhood. According to the school’s published profile, 98 percent of the children are “Black” or “Hispanic,” 22 percent attend some form of special education, and 14 percent have limited English proficiency (New York City Board of Education, 1998). On standardized New York State reading tests administered in May, 1997, only 30 percent of the sixth graders achieved passing scores, and the eighth graders scored significantly below city and state averages. Only 56 percent of the teachers are fully licensed and permanently assigned to the building.

At the Urban school, students generally study immigration to the United States at mid-year during the eighth grade as part of a unit on immigration and industrialization. An eighth grade social studies class was videotaped as part of the testing of the Great Irish Famine curriculum material. In the spring of the previous year, while seventh graders, students had been tested for reading performance by the New York City Board of Education and were evaluated against national norms. Of the 31 students in the class, two were not tested, eight scored between the sixth and 20th percentiles, 12 scored between the 21st and 30th percentiles, one scored between the 31st and 40th percentiles, seven scored between the 41st and 50th percentiles and one student scored between the 51st and 60th percentiles. All students in this class receive special instruction in separate, smaller, reading classes. However, in social studies, the teacher works without assistance.

The Suburban school is located in a district outside of New York City. Seventy-Five percent of the students in the district are “White,” 2.2 percent are “Black,” 11.7 percent are “Hispanic,” and 11 percent are listed as “Other” (New York State Education Department, 1998). Ninety-eight percent of the district’s sixth graders achieved the minimum state level on standardized reading tests. Seventy-seven percent of the teachers have permanent state certification.

At the Suburban school, immigration to the United States in the pre-Civil War era is included in the curriculum towards the end of seventh grade. Two seventh grade social studies classes were videotaped as part of the field-testing of the Great Irish Famine curriculum material. Students in both classes (Suburban A and Suburban B) were tested for reading performance on the Metropolitan Achievement Test earlier in the year and were evaluated against national norms. Of the
26 students in Class A, one scored below the 20th percentile, one scored between the 21st and 30th percentiles, one scored between the 31st and 40th percentiles, four scored between the 41st and 50th percentiles, five students scored between the 51st and 60th percentiles and 14 students scored above the 61st percentile. Of the 26 students in Class B, one scored between the 21st and 30th percentiles, two scored between the 31st and 40th percentiles, three scored between the 41st and 50th percentiles, five students scored between the 51st and 60th percentiles and 15 students scored above the 61st percentile. Each of the classes in the Suburban school has three students who have registered learning disabilities. As a result, a special education teacher assists the regular teacher in instructing the classes.

**Urban Students Study Irish Immigration To North America**

At the Urban school, the first day of the two-day lesson began with students working individually, reading the song “Paddy on the Railway” and answering three questions. At the Urban school, only three students could complete the opening questions in the five minutes allocated for the initial activity. Many students were stuck trying to decipher the phrase “Filly-me-oori-oori-ay.” While students read, the special instructor and the regular classroom teacher (below, the term “teacher” refers to the special instructor) circulated around the room answering questions. After five minutes, the teacher decided to pull the class together and proceed with the lesson.

During full class discussion, four students identified themselves as immigrants and at least two-thirds of the class had at least one parent who is an immigrant. Many students argued that immigrants in the United States are subject to discrimination today. Three students spoke about personal experiences being harassed by police or store owners. Other students argued that this was because “you are Black, not because you are an immigrant.” The teacher asked students how these experiences compared with what they read in the song about Irish immigrants to the United States in the pre-Civil War era, and students launched into a comparison. A student responded, “like the Irish, we are not respected.” Two students specifically referred to widely publicized local cases where police officers had been accused of unjustified attacks on immigrants and African Americans. The teacher used this opportunity to define “stereotype” and “nativism” with the class.

At this point in the lesson, two students went to the map and located Ireland. Then the class sang the song. Based on analysis of the videotape, approximately half of the students sang the verses as well as the chorus, and all students were following along on their activity sheets. During the ensuing discussion eight students spoke to the ques-
tion of whether the song was a valid or “true” historical source. They weighed their own ideas against comments by other students. Andrew (student names are pseudonyms) said he could not accept it as true because he “did not even know who wrote it or when. It’s been passed down and changed. It has too many exaggerations. How could she have so many children so fast?” Lisa responded that the song was “extending the truth to show the way people feel. It’s not a lie. It’s the way people experienced things.” To support Lisa, Anna drew on her past understanding and compared the song to “a poem by Maya Angelou. She explains herself in her poems. These people explain themselves in their songs.”

The teacher showed the class a political cartoon by Thomas Nast depicting Irish immigrants as wild, drunkards and ape-like. Students discussed whether the cartoon was evidence in support of Paddy’s complaints in the song. Tanika was concerned that only some people might be prejudiced and that students needed to know what was happening to Irish immigrants in different parts of the United States. The teacher asked what other sources they would like to see before arriving at a conclusion. Students wanted to see newspaper articles from the time and to check an encyclopedia. The teacher explained that they would organize the next lesson to help students answer their own questions by bringing in newspaper articles and other evidence from different parts of the country.

Toward the end of the period, the teacher asked the class if there were other questions. A student wanted to know why people hit Paddy with stones and sticks. The teacher asked if anyone knew what a strike was or had a parent who had gone on strike. Four students raised their hands. Two had fathers who were drivers, one had a mother who worked in a factory, and one had a mother who cleaned offices at night. They each spoke about strikes and told the class why someone would be “really angry if a person tried to take their job even if they were hungry.” The teacher explained that part of the problem faced by Irish immigrants was competition with other groups to get jobs. The Irish needed the jobs very badly and were willing to work for lower wages. Sometimes this led to fighting and people getting attacked with “stones and sticks.”

The second lesson in the Urban school opened with a review of student questions from the previous lesson, particularly whether similar problems were facing Irish immigrants in different parts of North America. Four “rewritten” primary source documents describing conditions for Irish immigrants in New Orleans, New York, Philadelphia and New Brunswick, Canada were provided to help the class research its answers. The teacher explained the procedure for the assignment. Students in the teams would take turns reading to their teammates aloud and then the team would decide on answers to the questions at
the bottom of the page. Each team would explain its answers to the class and then the entire class would fill out a chart on the Irish immigrant experience in pre-Civil War North America. Before breaking up into teams, student pairs came to a map of North America in the front of the room and located New Orleans, New York, Philadelphia and New Brunswick.

At their tables, students sat in eight groups of either three or four students. Activity sheets consisted of the “rewritten” primary source documents and four questions. Each group was assigned one of the locations. While students worked in their teams, the teacher circulated around the room assisting them. Students worked diligently on the assignment, continually referred to the documents in their conversations and written answers, and built from each other’s understanding.

For example, group A was one of two teams reading about New Orleans, Louisiana. Three students were present, all female, and one student was absent. One of the three was the only student in the class with a reading score above the national norm. The other two both had reading scores that placed them at the low point in the spectrum, at the ninth percentile. Lisa, the strongest reader of the three students, organized her teammates to read the passage and answer the questions. Their conversation focused on two of the four questions. The first question asked: “The author wishes that people in England who think the Irish are lazy could see how hard they work. In your opinion, why does he make this wish?” According to Lisa, “(H)e makes this wish because since everybody treats the Irish people wrong, they need to see how bad it is for them.” Denise believed “(H)e wishes this because they are calling the Irish people lazy and they really are working hard. If they see how they work they will see they are strong.” Nyema added “(T)he people in England don’t know what the Irish are doing so they maybe think they are lazy and they are prejudiced. The people in England should come here and try experiencing what they (the Irish) are going through.”

The third question introduced an issue that at first puzzled students. It asked: “The author writes that slave labor is much too expensive to use in the building of the canal. In your opinion, why does the author believe this?” Lisa thought that this question meant the author believed slavery was a good thing. She called the teacher over to check her interpretation of the question. The teacher helped them locate the area in the passage where the author discussed slavery. Lisa examined the passage and said, “(I)t’s because the Irish are cheaper than slaves because they come from another place and need the jobs. The bosses have to buy slaves but not Irish.” Denise interjected, “If a thousand slaves became sick and died working on the canal they (the bosses) would go out of business.” The second team that examined
the Irish experience in Louisiana became more involved in a question that asked them to describe conditions for Irish immigrants who were working on the canal in Louisiana in 1833. This group never discussed the issue of slavery. However, Lisa’s question and Denise’s insight about slavery became part of the overall class understanding of the Irish experience in America when their group reported on what they had read.

Both groups that examined the Irish in New York City focused on the issue of citizenship and prejudice. In group C, Andrew began by saying, “Strong (the author) doesn’t want them to become citizens because they are from another country and they get treated bad.” Lawrence responded to Andrew’s general statement by pointing to the passage where Strong says “(l)it is enough to make you sick.” Lawrence told the group, “(H)e calls them (Irish and Italians) the scum of humans. He’s saying that the Irish are animals.” A girl on the team, Yvette, agreed with Lawrence, “(H)e doesn’t want them to become citizens because they are like animals to him.” Another Black girl on the team, Makeba, commented, “That is the way White people talk about Black people, the way he talks about the Irish. It’s racism.” Andrew added, “This is full of prejudice.”

**Suburban Students Study Irish Immigration To North America**

As a result of experience with students in the *Urban* school, activity sheets were rewritten by the curriculum team before teaching the lessons in the *Suburban* school. A word bank was added to the song “Paddy on the Railway” including the phrase *Filly-me-oori-oori-ay* and explaining that it “is a nonsense word that gives the song spirit.” Reading passages were double-spaced, and the lesson organizer that was provided to teams was made easier to follow. Whether as a result of these changes, because of differences in reading performance between students in the two schools, or because a special education teacher was working with the special instructor and the regular classroom teacher, every student in both classes of the *Suburban* school was able to complete the opening assignment in the allotted time.

As students in the *Suburban* school entered the room, they copied the AIM question, “What was life like for Irish immigrants to the United States in the 1840s?” and copied and defined the day’s vocabulary word - *famine*. The regular classroom teacher had students exchange definitions of famine and explained that a famine in the 1840s led many people from Ireland to immigrate into the United States. At this point she introduced the special instructor who distributed the activity sheet “Paddy on the Railway” and asked stu-
dents to read the song and answer the three questions at the bottom of the sheet. Students were given five minutes to complete the assignment, and while they worked, the teacher circulated around the room assisting them. As noted above, every student in both classes was able to complete the assignment, with students who finished early helping others who were still working.

During full class discussion in *Suburban A*, three students identified themselves as immigrants and seven other students identified themselves as having at least one parent who is an immigrant to the United States. Each student briefly discussed what he or she knew about their family’s experiences and listed the problems faced by immigrants today, including getting jobs, earning money, making friends and learning English. A student from El Salvador said that “Americans felt they were better than immigrants,” and a student whose family was from Colombia agreed with her. These comments were the only concerns expressed about possible contemporary discrimination against immigrants and did not lead to broader discussion. However, they were used by the teacher to help the class define “stereotype” and “nativism.”

In *Suburban B*, six students identified themselves as immigrants and five others as having at least one parent who is an immigrant to the United States. Student responses to questions and the dynamic of class discussion were similar to *Suburban A*. A student whose parents were from India mentioned the problem of having to earn “new credentials so they can follow their profession.” A Latina student, whose parents are Dominican, introduced the problem of discrimination and stereotyping. According to this student, “People always assume that my mother can’t understand English because she has an accent.” Her statement was supported by another young man of Indian ancestry, who discussed his mother’s difficulty finding a job. The comments by these students led to the defining of “stereotype” and “nativism.”

Following discussion of problems facing contemporary immigrants, the teacher explained that the song “Paddy on the Railway” tells us what happened to Irish immigrants when they came to the United States in the 1840s. In both *Suburban A* and *B*, there was an uneven student response to singing the song. About half of each class joined in singing the chorus, but the special instructor sang the verses by himself. Discussion of the song in both classes began with an effort to place it in historical time, prior to the Civil War during slavery days. In the full class discussions, students in both classes explained the content of the lyrics in great detail. In *Suburban A*, a number of speakers made connections between discrimination against the Irish in the song and examples of discrimination against immigrants to the United States mentioned earlier. One student referred to stories
in the local newspaper about “people beating up immigrants who are looking for work.”

In both Suburban classes, the students who initially spoke felt that the song should be accepted as an accurate historical document because, according to one student, “it is from the time when the Irish came to the United States.” The teacher had to introduce the ideas of exaggeration and uncertainty of authorship before students began to question the song’s reliability. At this point, the classes compiled lists of alternative sources, including diaries, newspaper articles, books, the original words to this song, other songs, letters and pictures, that they would want to examine as “historians” in order to evaluate the accuracy of “Paddy on the Railway.”

In Suburban A, in response to a request for pictures, the teacher introduced a political cartoon by Thomas Nast depicting Irish immigrants. A student immediately responded, “those drawings look like gorillas.” The class got very animated and, when asked, about one-fourth of the students in Suburban A identified themselves as descendants of Irish immigrants. Two students commented on the cartoon using vocabulary words introduced at the start of the lesson. One declared that “these are stereotypes about Irish people,” and the other that “this is racism, nativism.” After viewing the cartoon, students decided that they wanted to examine other sources that would help them figure out whether Paddy’s story painted an accurate picture of the Irish immigrant experience. Students suggested reading newspaper articles and diaries.

In Suburban B, when the cartoon was introduced, a student immediately shouted out, “the people look like monkeys.” As a result of questioning, the class discovered the cartoon was accusing Irish immigrants of drunken behavior on St. Patrick’s Day. In this class, only two students identified themselves as descendants of Irish immigrants. One of these students explained to the class the significance of St. Patrick’s Day, and the class discussed the implications of the cartoon. One student commented that “drawing people like monkeys says they are not really human. That’s the way they treated Black slaves, too.”

At the conclusion of this lesson, four students in Suburban A argued that conditions for immigrants to the United States were worse in the past than today. Tiffany stated it was worse because “now people know it isn’t right to treat people this way and discrimination is against the law.” Bernice said, “it was worse then because they made immigrants do the hardest work.” Dave added that “we better understand the meaning of the Constitution now and that everybody is equal.” None of the students disagreed with them. In Suburban B, students continued to question the reliability of sources at the end of
the lesson. One student asked the teacher if the song “was really from the past.” Another asked if discrimination against the Irish was “only on railroads.” Students in this class wanted to see sources from other parts of the United States.

Because of the range of reading levels in these classes, a decision was made to have the students who were assigned to read about New York City use edited versions of the text, to have students reading about New Orleans and New Brunswick use adapted versions, and to have students reading about Philadelphia use rewritten versions. If a team had an extra member, that member was assigned one of the adapted texts on either New Orleans or New Brunswick.

Reassignment of students to new teams for specific lessons is a regular occurrence in these classes. Decisions about the assignment of students to particular groups and about who would receive which material were made in advance. Based on the recommendation of the inclusion teacher, the material was organized so that while working in teams, students performing at lower academic levels would be the third person in their group to report to the team. This was done to permit more academically advanced students to act as models for the activity.

The second day in Suburban A and B began with students reexamining the political cartoon by Thomas Nast, reviewing the vocabulary words famine, stereotype and nativism, and restating the question from the conclusion of the previous lesson, “Can we rely on the song “Paddy on the Railway” as an accurate report of the Irish immigrant experience in America?” Following the review, teams were reorganized and, once the classes were settled, the teacher explained the group assignment. Each student received a document about the Irish immigrant experience in a different city in North America. Team members had fifteen minutes to read their documents and answer questions at the bottom of the page. At the end of fifteen minutes, the teams, working as a group, completed a summary sheet comparing the Irish experience in the different cities. Teams had five minutes to complete this part of the activity before reporting to the full class.

Before distributing readings and summary sheets to students, the teacher had volunteers come to the front of the room and locate New Orleans, Philadelphia, New York and New Brunswick, Canada on a map of North America. Students needed help to find New Brunswick, but remembered the location of New Orleans from studying the Louisiana Purchase. Students were also asked, “Why do you think Irish immigrants ended up in these areas?” In both classes, students responded that these places “probably had jobs” and were “near the Atlantic Ocean and people came from Ireland on boats.”
Students in both classes in the Suburban school worked very effectively, both individually and in their teams. Once again, the regular teacher, the special instructor and the inclusion teacher circulated around the room assisting students with difficult passages and questions, and students who finished their assignment early helped their teammates. In Suburban A, teams listed examples on a summary sheet. Because of time considerations, the activity was modified so that students in Suburban B wrote either YES, NO, or NOT SURE for each category.

One team was videotaped during group work in each Suburban class. In Suburban A, the team's captain was Bernice, a young woman who has certified learning disabilities but who reads at grade level. The group also included one student, James, who reads significantly below grade level, a student, Kevin, who reads above level, and two other students who read on grade level. Bernice kept the group on task, read the categories on the summary sheet to each of the team members who answered for their localities, and recorded their responses.

At the conclusion of the two-day lesson, an overhead projector was used to project a blank summary sheet. In Suburban A, because of the number of examples provided by each of the teams, the class was unable to complete the entire summary sheet. The final discussion of the similarities and differences between the regions was based on incomplete data. However, students unanimously agreed that the predominance of evidence supported what they had learned about the Irish experience from the song "Paddy on the Railway."

In Suburban B, the class easily completed the modified summary sheet. During discussion that followed, students disagreed about particular conclusions and whether they represented anti-Irish stereotypes or nativism. For example, they argued about whether "not caring about what happened to Irish immigrants" qualified as an example of nativism. However, this class also agreed that the predominance of evidence supported what they had learned about the Irish experience from the song "Paddy on the Railway."

As a follow-up activity, students in the Suburban classes were asked to write "letters home telling families in Ireland about their experiences in North America." The letters were evaluated by a team of middle school teachers and participant/observers and provided further evidence that students, across-the-board in both Suburban classes, had a firm understanding of the content and concepts presented in the lesson.
Conclusions

We believe that field-tests of the New York State Great Irish Famine curriculum demonstrate that upper elementary, middle and high school students from diverse backgrounds with a range of reading performance and prior school achievement are able to develop complex conceptual understandings when social studies educators create literacy and learning contexts and present content using differentiated texts. The units, lessons, activities and projects included in the Great Irish Famine curriculum offer teachers a variety of materials written for students with different academic levels for use throughout the school year. They make it possible for teachers to tailor activities to meet the needs of individual students and to gradually move all students in their classes to higher levels of academic performance.

In addition, our research suggests that social studies curriculum designers need to take the following considerations into account as they prepare curriculum material:

- Each social studies classroom has its own internal dynamic. This is related to the lived experience of students and the goals, individual talents, preferences, and experience of teachers. The same lesson plan with the same goals was used in Urban and Suburban classrooms but different, though related, lessons were taught. Perhaps, because of social class differences, Suburban students were less concerned than Urban students with discrimination, both in the past and today, and less skeptical about the reliability of official documents.

- In the Suburban classrooms, where students had more experience with group work and using document packages, full class and team instruction was more structured and student teams worked more efficiently. On the other hand, there was less student-to-student interaction during class and group discussions, which may have resulted from adherence to formal structure. An effective curriculum should balance structured and open-ended activities.

- In the Urban school, students tended to be less reserved, both during discussion and during singing. This made discussion more dynamic, but also more difficult to direct. In full-class discussion and in groups, students continually responded to each other’s comments. As a
result, the process took longer and required the teacher to carefully monitor the progress of the lesson.

• Significantly, there were differences within, as well as between, the classes at the two field-test sites. The second half of the first day of the lesson took different directions in the two Suburban classes. During group discussions, teams in both locations gave their own focus to the material they were reading. Scaffolding on prior learning was clear in all classes. However, student references to previous experiences were markedly different.

• The significance of the ability of students to locate themselves in the lessons was apparent in student responses to questions about the experience of contemporary immigrants, connections students drew between immigration in the past and present and in the parallels students discovered between the Irish and the African American experiences. However, it is important to note that the lessons proceeded satisfactorily, though with less animation, in classes with a smaller immigrant presence. Options for establishing a context and motivating discussion in other settings might include distributing a newspaper article or headline on problems facing contemporary immigrants to the United States or a discussion of the way that teenagers feel stereotyped and discriminated against by people in authority.

• As we wrote, edited and field-tested the Great Irish Famine Curriculum, we were continually reminded that no curriculum can or should be "teacher-proof." All contingencies and contexts cannot be anticipated in advance. Student difficulty deciphering "Filly-me-oori-oori-ay" was an unanticipated problem and underscores the value of flexibility in curriculum design and the importance of respecting teacher experience and choice.

References


Authors

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A Search For Decision Making In Three Elementary Classrooms: A Pilot Study

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Abstract
This study examined teaching practices of three elementary teachers (Grades 1, 3 and 5) in terms of the Decision Making Model advanced by Shirley H. Engle and Anna S. Ochoa in their book, Education for a Democracy: Decision Making in the Social Studies. The study examined practices of exemplary teachers for elements of the two major curricular dimensions of this model: (1) controversial social issues as the content focus and (2) intellectual processes: critical thinking and decision making. Teachers did not have prior awareness of the model. Secondly, we examined teaching practices related to democracy, diversity and gender. The study also allowed us to identify teaching practices common to these three teachers.

A major purpose of public schools in the United States is to prepare the young for intelligent citizen participation in a democracy. The challenge embedded in this goal lies not only in maintaining, but also in strengthening public practices in behalf of democracy’s future. Social studies in public schools is considered the prime academic area devoted to fulfilling this goal. Importantly, research indicates that attitudes start to develop early in life in a cumulative manner (Hess & Torney, 1967). Personal attitudes develop from the theorizing resulting from early experiences (Nisbett & Ross, 1980). These years represent a critical period for educators who work with young children.
and who bear a special responsibility to prepare them to be the successor generation in behalf of democracy's future.

Social studies has been evident in the elementary school's curriculum for approximately the last half century. Yet, even today, its presence is far from universal in elementary schools and it is given meager attention in many schools. However, a number of commercially published K-6 textbook series are available and many teacher education programs require a course in social studies methods. Concurrently the literature in social studies has emphasized that across grades K-12, social studies is taught in a dismal fashion. Too often the blame is placed simplistically and mistakenly on classroom teachers. These disappointing claims may describe the practices of some teachers, but for this study we assumed that they do not accurately portray all teachers.

More specifically this literature has emphasized that the textbook and the lecture mode are overused and that learning experiences emphasize memorization (Engle & Ochoa, 1988; Goodlad, 1984) rather than higher-level thinking and decision making. In this study, we wanted to document existing teaching practices in elementary social studies, particularly practices of teachers with strong reputations to see if these practices were consistent with the Decision-Making Model advanced by S. H. Engle and Anna S. Ochoa in their book, *Education for Democratic Citizenship: Decision Making in the Social Studies.* (See Appendix A for highlights of the Engle-Ochoa Model.)

Engle and Ochoa proposed a curriculum, interdisciplinary in nature, that would give substantial attention to controversial public issues as its content and this content would be intertwined with critical thinking and decision making as its intellectual processes. The proposed curriculum was derived from the role of citizen in a democracy which requires informed, intelligent and dedicated citizens. While all nations and all political systems try to enculturate the young into their values and traditions, the U.S. democracy is built on the assumption that people can govern themselves. Consequently, the manner in which the young are educated is distinct from that conducted by other political systems. In their book, Engle and Ochoa endorsed a vision of a democratic citizen who, though critical of weak or unattained practices and policies, was vocal in the name of strengthening democracy, not in degrading it. Martin Luther King and his cry "We shall overcome," serves as a powerful example of someone who pointed out the severe shortcomings and inequalities of the system but at the same time called for peaceful change and passive resistance in order to make this democracy honor its commitments to all people.

This curriculum can be described as Issue-centered Education. While others have advocated such a curriculum for the middle and high school grades, Engle and Ochoa proposed that the foundation
for fuller development of the model might be laid in the elementary grades. At this level, the curriculum would not be as depthful and the selection of issues needs to be immediate to children’s lives and concrete in nature (Skeel, 1996). Anyone who works with young children knows that they make decisions that apply to their lives continually. Often these issues involve values such as fairness, honesty and friendship. Furthermore, their decisions are usually not thoughtfully chosen. They may decide that might makes right or they take the path of least resistance. Their decisions do not grow out of a set of alternatives nor a thoughtful consideration of values and consequences. They seem to rush to judgment and begin to develop decision making habits that are not thoughtful. Such approaches to decision making do not contribute to qualities required by citizens of a civil democracy.

In our experience we have seen first graders write brief letters to their local newspaper admonishing citizens to recycle and third graders who participated in courtroom-style activities to decide on the fate of a classmate who was charged with assault on the playground. Spending class time in this manner is particularly valuable for fostering democratic citizens.

The present study took an initial step to better understanding of teacher practices in elementary social studies in the classroom of three teachers who had earned strong reputations. The following questions guided this study.

1. Did these teachers select content that emphasized controversial public issues? (content)

2. Did these teachers involve their classes in critical thinking (giving reasons, identifying alternatives, predicting consequences, providing evidence and the like?)

Did these teachers involve children in making decisions related to topics/issues that they studied or ones that the children faced? Critical thinking and decision making constitute the intellectual component of the Engle and Ochoa Model. See Appendix B for questions that guided our observations. These two aspects are certainly not exhaustive of the model. Rather, they are seen as necessary though not sufficient to comprehensive implementation.

These two aspects of the model represented the primary focus of this study. As secondary research interests, we asked: Did these teachers demonstrate any attention to democracy, diversity and gender? See Appendix B for questions related to these concepts.
Methodology

Purpose

Primarily, this study searched for teaching practices related to (1) teaching about controversial social issues as well as; (2) teaching to foster intellectual development regarding critical thinking and decision making. Secondly, we searched for teaching practices supportive of democracy, diversity and gender. Lastly, as a result of our classroom observations we identified aspects of overall teaching styles that these teachers revealed in common and we have related these findings to the Decision Making Model.

A Purposive Sample

Three teachers, grades one, three and five, in a small neighborhood elementary school were selected. These teachers met two criteria: (1) Each of them devoted instructional time to social studies on a regular basis and (2) the principal confirmed that each teacher had a strong reputation. These teachers were not familiar with the Engle-Ochoa Model.1 Our goal was to identify existing practices that could serve as a basis for further professional development and research. Further details about these teachers are provided below. All three teachers are white and had completed (or were working on) master’s degrees. The first and third grade teachers had 14 and twenty years teaching experiences, respectively. The fifth grade teacher was in his fourth year of teaching.

The Setting

This school in a small college town, served a neighborhood that was dominantly Caucasian working class and included a small African American population. The building is overcrowded with approximately 350 children. The principal was vigorous, buoyant and caring. He supported his teachers and was proud of them. His presence was always evident to children, teachers and visitors. The school’s motto was “Caring, Sharing and Preparing” which was manifest in a spirit of community and what we observed to be relatively high teacher morale.

We provide an operational definition of social studies as used in this study. Actually, there were two definitions. The use of the Engle-Ochoa Decision Making Model captures one conceptual view of social studies that is inherently present in this study. However, another view of social studies is evident in our observations of these teachers. The topics they taught, the teaching procedures and materials they used and the way they treated the children were, taken together, a pragmatic perspective of social studies.

Data Collection
Data Collection

Classroom observations of ongoing teacher practices were the main sources of data in this study. Each teacher was observed for 8-10 hours during the period that the teacher allocated for social studies. It is this short observation period that resulted in viewing this investigation as a pilot study. Clearly a longer observation period would be desirable. This data was collected in April and May of the school year.

Two of the four members of the Research Team served as observers and the other two assumed the roles of bibliographic assistant and auditor. The latter would verify our categories in light of the data collected. Including an auditor was a way of rendering our findings reliable. Also, teacher interview data was collected before and after teacher observations.

Questions were designed to guide the observations and interviews regarding decision making, democracy, diversity and gender. While we recognized gender as part of diversity, we wanted to see what attention teachers gave to this category independently of other manifestations of diversity. See Appendix B for a listing of questions for all of the above categories.

Two training sessions were held with the Research Team. The director of the study reviewed the Observation Notes she had taken in one classroom, established norms about the level of specificity required and reviewed questions guiding the study. Those conducting observations were instructed to rewrite their notes immediately after each class session. Teachers were interviewed both before and after the observation periods for approximately an hour on each occasion. After the observation periods, a member check was conducted with each teacher in order to validate observations. While the teachers suggested some changes, they were very few in number.

All observers had had previous teaching experience, including supervision of field experiences and student teaching. The observers reviewed and discussed the questions until it was clear that there was common understanding. The observers were instructed to rewrite their notes immediately after each observation and bring them to the next Research Team meeting to be reviewed by members of the team including the director of the study.

Research assistants and the director met to discuss emerging patterns on a weekly basis. When data gathering was completed it was used by the research assistants and the director to identify common teaching patterns across these three teachers. The director of the study identified patterns independently from the research assistants. The research team (except for the auditor) met four times to review the common teaching patterns as well as teaching practices related to the model. The auditor reviewed these categories independently of the research assistants to see if and how well our categories matched the data collected.

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Early in the process, observation notes revealed some similarities in the teaching styles of these teachers. We recognized that although these practices were not specific to the Decision Making Model, they were likely to have some influence on it. After the data were collected we used the Constant Comparative Method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to group teaching practices in light of the questions that guided this study. The auditor did not attend meetings where the rest of the Research Team analyzed and sorted the data in order to maximize the independence of her judgments. After reviewing our notes, the Auditor was asked to submit the form that appears in Appendix C. Her review did lead to a change regarding the description of group work. Otherwise she found the data compatible with our groupings.

In terms of the Decision Making Model, we looked for evidence of content related to controversial public issues adapted for young children as well as intellectual processes, in the form of critical thinking and decision making sensitive to their level of cognitive development. Taken together, these are basic dimensions of this model. Secondly, we looked for teaching practices related to democracy, diversity, and gender. Lastly, we identified teaching practices other than those associated with the model. These practices can be described as aspects of the overall teaching style of each teacher. Furthermore, we found some aspects that were common across these three teachers. The entire research team reviewed these questions but external reviewers did not subject them to scrutiny.

**Teacher Practices Related To Decision Making**

**Content: Practices Related to Controversial Issues**

**Observations.** Each teacher, to some extent, influenced social studies content in these classrooms. Although a curriculum guide was available, it was minimally used. Since a state testing program was in force, it is likely that it had some influence on the amount of time spent on social studies. In two classrooms the content used was not at all connected to controversial issues. These teachers organized their content around topics rather than issues. Such topics as pioneers in first grade and community in the third grade did not concern themselves with issues that might have been integrated with these topics. However, the fifth grade teacher focused on the Civil War, a historic issue that certainly entailed controversy. He used that controversy to elicit some higher level thinking that involved the children in generating possible compromises and creating arguments in favor of either the North or the South. In his classroom, a textbook was used as a base with the children reading paragraphs. This teacher went beyond the text by creating opportunities for developing some critical thinking and decision making skills. However, he did not probe the chil-
dren for evidence to support their views. In a few instances knowledge held by the children was honored, but usually the topic and its related knowledge was controlled by the teacher who relied on the textbook or teacher-selected material.

In the first grade the topic studied during our observation period was pioneers. At other times such topics as dinosaurs and space were addressed. No textbook was used. In the third grade the teacher used the textbook but had also used units she had developed on such topics as African Americans and Native Americans. During our observation period this class was learning about communities and used the textbook and published worksheets as basic materials. In the fifth grade the teacher used the textbook on the Civil War and he involved the class in a study of U.S. presidents using a series of books the school had purchased. Each president was represented by a book and each child was asked to prepare an oral presentation on one president. The content of these books favored each president. No criticisms or shortcomings appeared. These oral presentations did not reveal any controversy about these presidents (Observation Notes 1st, 3rd and 5th).

As expected, these teachers did not raise controversial issues with the exception of the fifth grade where the historic conflict between the South versus the North was studied. Neither were the children’s interests drawn upon as a basis for curriculum content. One exception was evident in the third grade when the teacher encouraged a youngster who had lived on a farm to share what he knew about farming and she tapped another child to talk about places where she had traveled.

Reflections. These teachers were not aware of the Decision Making Model. To have told them would have risked artificially compliant behavior (the demand phenomenon). As a result we believe we observed more authentic teaching practices. Our findings were not surprising. These teachers had not experienced teacher education programs that emphasized the teaching of controversial issues and their state goals for social studies seemed to vary somewhat from the goals of the model (Teacher Interviews 1st, 3rd and 5th). However, neither were their goals contradictory to it. Furthermore, even if the teachers had known the goals of the model, they may have avoided controversial topics that might have raised concerns from parents (Teacher Interview 5th).

In the third grade, textbooks and supporting materials did not present controversy. In the fifth grade the teacher had the children volunteer to read a paragraph from a textbook and he followed each reading with questions that enhanced comprehension and raised the thinking levels of the children. This teacher did arrange for controversy, for example, by dividing the class into two groups (the North and the South), and another time he asked each group to think of a
compromise that might have avoided the Civil War. The children responded vigorously and a strong discussion followed that included higher-level thinking on the part of the children (Observation Notes, Teacher 5th).

**Intellectual processes: Critical Thinking and Decision Making**

Observations: Examples of critical thinking and decision making come in several forms. In the first grade the teacher allowed two children to settle a dispute about seating themselves, an action consistent with a democratic climate and higher level thinking. The children appeared to be solving the issue and the teacher did not intervene until two boys used mean words. At another time, a child asked why pioneers moved west, which could have elicited higher-level thinking in the form of speculation and generalization, but the teacher (Observation Notes, Teacher 1st) did not pursue this matter.

In the third grade the emphasis on intellectual abilities was very evident. The teacher created problem situations for the children to solve on a daily basis. These problems were not associated with the social studies period but they led to higher-level thinking consistent with the Engle-Ochoa Model. The teacher asked the children to think of solutions and select the best one, giving reasons why they thought it was best. For example, “While waiting in line at the movies you see a five dollar bill on the ground. List three things you might do and circle the one you believe to be the best.” At another time she asked her class to write and send letters to the authors of trade books they had read and raise questions about the way the story was presented. She also used economic education materials that led the children to make decisions about their distribution of money. This teacher asked the children to list any five things they did not understand. They responded with such questions as: “Why can’t children have credit cards?” “Why is there a set time when I have to go to bed?” This teacher was very well planned and exercised a very high level of control. At the same time she stimulated the children’s thinking consistently (Observation Notes, Teacher 3rd).

In the fifth grade the teacher relied heavily on the textbook and worksheets. Nonetheless, he also engaged the children in higher level thinking and some decision making. Specifically, after children read from the textbook this teacher asked questions at the comprehension and analysis levels and by inserting questions in between readings he seemed to minimize the boredom that can set in when the textbook is read aloud. The children were eager to read (many hands volunteering) and to answer questions (Observation Notes, Teacher 5th).

Reflections. These teachers gave considerable attention to developing intellectual abilities with some problem solving included. Given these observations, we believe further professional development could
expand their repertoire to be more consistent with this Decision Making Model if they were interested. Importantly, their attention to fostering critical thinking affirmed our view that seasoned and dedicated teachers may indeed support the intellectual development of children. Replication of this study with longer periods of observation with strong teachers would be especially useful. It would be desirable to coach these teachers in order to develop a broader array of teaching practices related to the Decision Making Model.

**Teacher Practices Related to Democracy**

*Observations.* Did these teachers emphasize democratic values in the curriculum or in the way the related to the children? Democratic values such as freedom and equality did not receive explicit curriculum attention in Grades 1 and 3. However, in the fifth grade, the teacher emphasized the emancipation of slaves, which entailed the democratic values of equality and freedom. The teacher expressed these values in a manner that communicated the deep importance he attached to them.

In their relationships with children these teachers engaged in practices that were only minimally democratic. Each of them encouraged participation from the children and for the most part, the children responded enthusiastically. Furthermore, the third grade teacher involved her class in analyzing hypothetical problem situations and asked the children to select and defend their best solutions, while the fifth grade teacher gave the children some freedom beyond the typical classroom regarding where they sat as well as freedom to get out of their seats as needed. However, it was clear that classroom control resided in the hands of these teachers and that the power arrangement was hierarchical. This finding is consistent with that of John Goodlad (1984) who reported that social studies teaching could be characterized by authority and memorization in most cases.

*Reflections.* A democratic learning environment is a difficult concept to implement. It is hard not only for the teacher but also for children who have developed habits and expectations that support a teacher-directed classroom. To involve students in shaping the curriculum by responding to their interests, asking them to decide what classroom rules are needed and letting them make judgments about infractions by their classrooms mean teachers need to give up control, power, and time. Many teachers have worked hard at developing classroom control and hardly want to give it up once they have established it. Seldom do the norms of elementary schools support a democratic shift in the role of the teacher. However, teachers can become more facilitative rather than directive. They can elicit knowledge and experiences from children (and we saw a few instances of such efforts in these teachers), and they can involve children in inquiry projects to
reduce the reliance on the teacher or textbook as the only sources of authority and knowledge. Teacher education can certainly play a part in preparing teachers who can, at a minimum, soften the learning environment and provide children with opportunities for meaningful and active participation.

**Teacher Practices Related to Diversity**

*Observations.* Responsiveness to diversity of many forms and increasing respect and affirmation of marginal peoples has been the order of the day in educational circles for the past several decades. While practices vary from teacher to teacher and school to school, these three teachers were somewhat mindful of the values embedded in diversity and gave way to those values in their professional work. (See Appendix B for questions related to diversity).

In the first grade an angry mother who wanted the teacher to break up a friendship between two girls (one black, the other white) confronted the teacher. This teacher refused to do so, stating that she wanted her classroom to foster the acceptance of differences. While this mother was incensed, the teacher held her ground. At the end of the year, the teacher received another phone call from the same parent who emphasized how pleased she was at her daughter’s development across the school year (Observation and Interview Notes, Teacher 1st).

The third grade teacher had developed two curriculum units on African Americans and Native Americans. She elected to create units to increase the respect the children had of diversity. Furthermore, the physical environment of the classroom appeared to be supportive of the climate needed for probing controversy and for critical thinking and decision making.

Honoring individual differences was a continual aspect of the overall attitude of respect exhibited in the fifth grade classroom. Although explicit references to ethnicity did not occur during the observations, it was clear that children of color were treated in respectful ways with equal importance placed on all students’ ideas. In the fifth grade the teacher’s emphasis on the desirability of the emancipation of slaves was unequivocal. He repeated the term three times in succession and followed by asking the class why he had done that. He also made the values of freedom and equality especially salient. Given the tight relationship between freedom, equality and diversity, his emphasis is worth noting. His relationship with the three black girls was mutually respectful. One of them was quite assertive and she participated voluntarily in class. The teacher encouraged her activity. The other two black girls sat together, a condition this teacher allowed, but were quiet unless called upon. During this observation period, they were both on task virtually all of the time. None of these teachers
engaged in overt discrimination. Moreover, some of their practices were directly affirming the value of diversity.

Reflections. In each of these classrooms, there were very few African Americans (two or three) and no children with visible disabilities. Nonetheless, these teachers demonstrated an appreciation of diversity that was authentic and salient. No signs of deliberate discrimination were evident.

To some extent their teaching practices in the area of diversity supported the Decision Making Model. From our standpoint, expanding attention to diversity in the curriculum at each grade level would be very desirable. Particularly, more affirmation of African American children and attention to ethnic minorities would be desirable. We ask: What kinds of affirmation of minority and/or marginal children are needed to respond to minority children effectively? What are the effects of an emphasis on diversity on minority and majority children? What teaching practices are needed to increase the chances of their effective participation in democratic public life? Such questions are important and they deserve more attention.

Teacher Practices Related to Gender

Observations. We examined the treatment of gender in two ways. First, we looked for curriculum content about women that was integrated into the content studied, and, secondly, at the way these teachers handled gender in their interactions with the class as a whole and with individual children. (See Appendix B for questions in this category.)

In the first grade some attention was given to pioneer women but the hardships they faced in moving west were not mentioned. When a child compared the roles of pioneer women with her parents, her comment was overlooked. This classroom had eighteen boys and eight girls. By the teacher's own admission and confirmed by our observations, she was able to elicit more participation from boys than from girls (Observation Notes, Teacher 1st).

In the third grade, the teacher did not focus on gender in her curriculum. The attention given to boys and girls appeared to be fairly distributed. The teacher also made a point of calling on one especially assertive girl repeatedly to share her travel experiences. However, this teacher did note that boys held all the major roles in her economic education program. In this classroom, the children were lined up according to gender and when the girls passed out papers, they passed them out only to girls and the boys did likewise prompted by the teacher's direction (Observation Notes, Teacher 3rd). In the fifth grade, the teacher emphasized the contributions of Clara Barton during the Civil War. On another occasion, he asked the girls to identify roles they would have liked to play in the war. The girls gave conventional
responses, such as being nurses, providing supplies and preparing meals. Especially noteworthy was his routine and deliberate practice of alternating between boys and girls as he called for class response (Classroom Observations, Teacher 5th).

While gender was not the primary focus of this study, we inferred that teachers, whose teacher preparation was a decade or more behind them, had not been prepared to deal with gender concerns in the classrooms. The teacher with just four years of experience was the one who demonstrated the greatest attention to this area.

**Reflections.** Signs of omission are harder to spot than signs of commission. However, what we observed in two of these classrooms, in terms of both content and teacher-child interactions, was a minimal level. We regard the recency of their teacher education to be one possible explanation. Teachers prepared more recently are likely to be more gender sensitive. However, we want to emphasize these teachers were not intentionally discriminatory. They treated all students with respect and caring. Nonetheless, much more attention could have been paid to give girls more opportunities for leadership and participation as well as integrating more content related to women and girls.

**Common Practices Across Teachers**

Importantly, our observations of these teachers revealed certain common patterns that appear to support this decision making model. Their persistent affirmation of students, their strong level of planning and organization, their enthusiasm and caring, their judicious use of learning time, their procedural values, along with the provision of a wide range of learning experiences, including field trips and group work appeared to be supportive of the model. These common practices will likely apply to this or any other decision making model. Since we found these common teaching practices across the three teachers, we asked ourselves whether they were compatible with teaching of the Engle-Ochoa Decision Making Model. To a large extent, these commonalities appeared to support the model. However, somewhat ironically, the competence of these teachers as classroom managers along with the high degree of classroom control they exhibited had potential conflicting consequences for this model. Their mastery regarding classroom management, however benevolent, may have interfered with their classrooms being open to more democratic procedures and controversy. Many teachers, we feel certain, would argue that without control, nothing meaningful could happen in the classroom.

**Affirmation of Children**

These teachers affirmed children regularly and created classrooms where teacher-student respect was evident. We were able to
identify the following common teaching patterns in these teachers with strong reputations.

Observations. Each of these teachers consistently affirmed the children and treated each child with respect. In turn, the children respected them. Their repeated acts of affirmation contributed to highly interactive communication patterns in these classrooms. In the first grade, the affirmation of the children was unmistakable. Whenever the children returned from lunch, this teacher stood at the classroom door and greeted each child individually. When one child went directly to her seat, sidestepping the teacher, she walked over to the child’s desk with a few words of greeting. She told the observer that she did not want this child to feel left out. When she talked to the class, she was buoyant and positive, showing a lot of affect when the children answered questions. When a child could not answer, she called on another child to help out, without humiliating the first child (Observation Notes, Teacher 1st).

In the third grade, the children seemed to know that they were very important to the teacher and she enjoyed a strong relationship with them. By carefully listening and responding to the children’s experiences, along with her ready smile and direct eye contact, she persistently validated the children in her class. She helped the children expand on their brief answers with a very animated, “Tell me more!” Or “Why do you think so?” When a correct answer was given, she exclaimed, “Oh, yes! What a good idea!” Incorrect answers were dealt with sensitively by asking for ideas from other children or by saying, “I see what you mean, but the right answer is...” (Observation Notes, Teacher 3rd). She would also repeat thoughtful responses. This teacher created an atmosphere where children felt safe to express themselves—a condition that is basic to thoughtful probing of controversial issues. For fifth graders, respect was communicated by the deep and genuine interest that the teacher showed when the children spoke. He was a very careful listener and would often recall a previous conversation he had with the child. The effect of this teacher’s communication style was poignant and the children showed a great deal of enthusiasm in their interactions with him. Furthermore, he consistently affirmed the children’s ideas with such comments as, “Wow! What a good point!” or his distinctive and enthusiastic, “Bingo!” (Observation Notes, Teacher 5th).

Reflections. The abilities of these teachers to elicit respect were not only impressive but they are essential for democratic decision making. Although their styles varied, each teacher was able to create positive, constructive relationships with the children. Without affirmation and respect no set of teaching practices will be effective and certainly these teaching practices are essential for this model as well.
Teacher Control and Classroom Management

Observations. These teachers fostered procedural values and were adept in classroom management. By procedural values we mean standards that govern the classroom behavior of teachers and children. Their standards for classroom behavior created constructive environments where learning could take place. Values embedded in these standards included order, neatness, politeness and attentiveness among others. They were revealed in what the teacher and children said and did. Furthermore, research indicates that when teachers establish clear expectations for student behavior, increased student learning becomes evident (Soar & Soar, 1976). Their clarity about their preferred procedural values may have functioned in a similar manner for these teachers. We noticed that almost all children were on task most of the time.

In the first grade, the teacher emphasized a sense of responsibility and independence. She believed that the value of responsibility would serve them well for the rest of their lives. She used the unit on pioneers to highlight this value and emphasized that the pioneers were examples of hard work and responsibility and further emphasized that these qualities made the pioneers successful. She also used group work and frequently stressed responsibility and teamwork as the children worked with their classmates. During group work, the procedural value of cooperation received attention and the children were observed to be sensitive to each other’s needs. This first grade teacher softened and lowered her voice when she wanted attention. On occasion, she would tap a child on the shoulder as a signal to stop talking. Never did she communicate anger verbally or raise her voice (Observation Notes, Teacher 1st).

In the third grade, the teacher’s most salient procedural value was order. She did not tolerate interaction between children and the classroom was pin-drop quiet most of the time. The teacher frequently reminded the class not to speak while others were talking and to look at her when they were speaking. She also had the children keep a daily chart, organized by subject, on which children entered textbook page numbers and worksheets that were covered in class on that day. This orderly classroom was highly teacher-directed. It provided children with a stable and quiet learning environment. This teacher maintained persistent eye contact with the children usually accompanied by a smile. All desks faced the front of the classroom and the seating arrangement allowed the teacher to move around easily. Classroom rules included, “Raise your hand before talking,” and very occasionally she would say, “Do you need to step into the hall?” or “Are you paying attention, John?” (Observation Notes, Teacher 3rd). These procedural reminders were given in a calm and pleasant voice.

In the fifth grade, the rule of not talking while others were speaking also applied. At the same time, this teacher gave children some
freedom. For example, he allowed class members to get out of their seats without asking permission and speak to another child briefly as long as they did not disrupt the rest of the class. A few children were observed using this procedure and no one abused it. He also allowed the children to sit where they wanted. However, if a child complained of being bothered by a classmate, the teacher adjusted the seating pattern (Observation Notes, Teacher 5th).

Reflections. The procedural values that these teachers implemented are commonplace among elementary teachers. We believe most teachers would agree they are essential if learning is to take place. Do these values support this Decision Making Model? To some extent, of course they do. Respect and some degree of order are the foundation of an interactive learning environment. Children need to be respectful of each other and the teacher must respect them. Without behavior guided by such values, a thoughtful dialogue that involves critical thinking or decision making is not likely to take place.

Nonetheless, questions need to be raised. How can order be balanced with freedom so children can be accountable for their own behavior and learn from their own mistakes? Each of these teachers was respectful of the children. In effect, they modeled the civility they wanted from the children and the children responded in kind. A sensitive and significant question arises in this context. When is the mandate for order, neatness and politeness overdone and when do these procedures compromise the use of democratic practices necessary for the implementation of this or any decision making model? We speculate that some children will resent too many rules and consequently may reduce their compliance with classroom norms. But, others may not. In addition, we ask: Are some of these procedural values alien to children from different cultural groups? Furthermore, is it possible for teachers to create classroom climates that value controversies and accommodate diversity in their classrooms? Can young children engage in controversial discussions and still have order maintained? Do the needs of children vary by gender, by culture and/or by social class? These questions beg further investigation.

Teacher Planning and Organization

Observations. Teacher dedication to planning and organization was evident in each of these classrooms. The first grade teacher made sure she had the artifacts, filmstrips and teacher-made handouts ready to use as she taught the unit on pioneers. The third grade teacher made sure she had acquired sufficient knowledge to support her units on Native Americans and African Americans. Each Monday, the fifth grade teacher provided his class with a schedule of the week’s activities, which revealed his prior planning (Observation Notes, Teacher 1st, 3rd, and 5th).
Their organization was demonstrated in the many projects they conducted with their children. Making quilts, building a replica of a Native American community and arranging a number of field trips were additional learning experiences that these teachers planned and implemented. We never heard any of them complain about the extra time involved. In fact the third grade teacher commented that she wished she could be with her students for another month of school because: “I have so much more I want to study with them” (Teacher 3rd, Interview 2). Their dedication to planning appears to be consistent with the research of Good and Brophy (1984) who concluded that planning and organization prior to instruction correlated positively with student achievement.

Reflections. Organization and planning have always been heralded as basic to good teaching. Certainly, they are vital to this Decision Making Model. Nonetheless, in order to honestly examine our assumptions, we ask: Is organization used by teachers as a control mechanism that subtly coerces student behavior? Is it possible for third and fifth graders to participate in creating an organizational plan for learning rather than simply being the recipients of a predetermined plan? Would this kind of student participation help to achieve the democratic goals associated with this model? Can experienced teachers who have found “procedures that work” in their classrooms reconsider and modify their teaching to give more attention to democratic practices where children are given choices much more frequently?

Teacher Enthusiasm

The research literature on teaching has underscored the importance of enthusiasm in successful teaching (Brophy, 1987; Rosenshine, 1970). Expression of enthusiasm can take many forms such as a sparkle in the teacher’s eye, a buoyant momentum, eagerly listening and responding to children’s comments, a pat on the back, as well as animated facial and verbal expressions.

Observations. The first grade teacher constantly had a happy lilt to her voice and a smile on her face. Most of the time she moved around the classroom in an animated way and paid a lot of attention to the children as they worked in groups. She praised them frequently. Her buoyancy and momentum communicated her enthusiasm to the children (Observation Notes, Teacher 1st).

Likewise, the third grade teacher showed enthusiasm using eye contact and careful listening. She clearly took the children’s thoughts seriously. She, too maintained a buoyant momentum that communicated her enthusiasm. In addition, she acted as if she were genuinely enjoying herself (Observation Notes, Teacher 3rd).
In the fifth grade, the teacher’s style conveyed enthusiasm at virtually every turn. His tone of voice was notably conversational, not authoritative, and lively. In the language of today’s youth, he could be described as “cool.” He often talked to children individually in an animated way that demonstrated active listening. His interactive style was particularly productive as witnessed in the eagerness of the children. His use of the term “Bingo” when a child came up with a good answer carried enthusiasm and caring in its wake (Classroom Observation, Teacher 5th).

Reflections. We regarded the quality of enthusiasm as crucial, regardless of the goals the teachers held for social studies. This position has been supported by existing research and by our experience as teachers. It would be interesting to find out how learning suffers, if it does, when teachers do not express enthusiasm. Can enthusiasm function as a veneer for lack of academic depth? Can teacher enthusiasm confuse animation with learning? Can too much enthusiasm be counter-productive or meaningless? These are significant questions deserving further investigation.

Teachers Use of Variety of Learning Activities

A maxim communicated in many teacher education programs is that a wide range of learning activities is desirable (Berliner & Gage, 1989). This practice, supported by the theory of multiple intelligence advanced by Howard Gardner, is more likely to maintain student interest and reach children with different learning strengths (Gardner, 1983). Other research has reported that a variety of teaching methods are correlated with increased student interest and increased student attention (Berliner & Gage, 1987; Good & Brophy, 1984).

Observations. Each of these teachers went to considerable effort to design and use a variety of learning experiences. Even though reading the textbook was a dominant activity in grades three and five, additional learning activities were also provided. In the first grade, the teacher described herself as a hands-on teacher and indeed she was. Using artifacts and filmstrips, involving first graders in writing stories about the topic, reading related trade books, as well as question and answer periods were all evident. Since this teacher did not use a textbook, she designed her own unit on pioneers suitable for first graders (Observation Notes, Teacher 1st).

In the third grade, the teacher’s range of learning activities was especially wide and varied. She had the children create mock travel brochures about hypothetical countries. They also kept journals, did worksheets and solved dilemmas that she created daily. For instance, “You are on your way to school and see your neighbor’s dog far away from his home. What should you do?” The children were asked to list
three possibilities and to defend the solution they thought was best (Observation Notes, Teacher 3rd).

The fifth grade teacher involved the class in writing reports, presenting oral reports, taking tests, completing worksheets and debating a historic issue surrounding the Civil War in groups. Some children worked on the word processor and all presented oral reports. The first and fifth grade teachers made considerable use of group work to write stories, to develop arguments from a particular point of view and for test review (Observation Notes, Teacher 5th).

Reflections. Since creating and implementing many alternative activities adds to teacher workload, we infer these teachers received enough positive feedback from the children and perhaps each other to sustain this practice. Other forces may also contribute. The principal may reinforce this activity and parents may express their pleasure as well. It appeared that these teachers had created a professional norm among themselves for developing additional and interesting learning experiences for their classes.

The practice of using a variety of learning experiences may or may not support this Decision Making Model, depending on the nature of the particular activity. If the activity stimulates higher-level thinking, critical inquiry, decision making or the use of evidence and analysis, the model would be supported. However if the activity only encourages rote memory or involves the children in memory-based recitation, such activities are not consistent with the goal of the model. Which kinds of activities are most helpful invites further research.

The fact that all three teachers used group work at times is worth noting for two reasons. First, group process skills are conducive to the Decision Making Model, and secondly, in the elementary grades ability groups in reading and math usually represent the only activities for which children are grouped.

**Teachers Maximize Classroom Time for Learning**

These teachers used almost all of the classroom time for learning. Whether it be a directed teaching situation, a discussion, or use of trivia information questions during transition times involved opportunities to learn.

Observations. In the first grade, very little time was wasted. During the time set aside for social studies, the teacher moved from one activity to another smoothly. To illustrate, on one occasion she showed a filmstrip, followed by a question/answer sequence, and then had the children work in groups. Matters of discipline were handled almost imperceptibly (a tap on the shoulder or a stern glance) and took virtually no classroom time (Observation Notes, Teacher 1st).

In the third grade, the teacher also managed the class so that little time was lost. She did this by being very well planned and orga-
nized and by requiring eye contact from the children when they spoke. As stated earlier, she implemented a wide range of activities from problem solving to letter writing as well as question/answer sessions. She had a little box on her desk that contained trivia-type questions extracted from her third grade lessons that she would ask of the class while waiting for all students to finish their work or during the times before lunch or recess. (Observation Notes, Teacher 3rd).

In the fifth grade, the teacher followed each section of the textbook with the thought provoking questions such as, “If you had lived at the time of the Civil War, how would you liked to have helped?” (a question directed at the girls in this class) or “Why did I repeat the word? (freedom)” (Observation Notes, Teacher 5th).

Reflections. These teachers spent their time involving children in learning. Classroom time was not wasted. Very little time was spent on housekeeping or disciplinary matters. Both they and the children were on task. This serious, down-to-business environment is, of course, necessary for a decision making curriculum.

Connections Between Teaching Practices Specifically Related To Decision Making And Teaching Practices Common To These Teachers

Importantly, our observations of these teachers revealed certain common patterns that appear to support this decision making model. Their persistent affirmation of students, their strong level of planning and organization, their enthusiasm, their procedural values, along with their provision of a wide range of learning experiences, including field trips and group work appeared to be supportive of the model. Competence as teachers had seemingly guided their teaching practices in a similar direction. Especially important was their attention to higher level thinking that represented some of the intellectual processes that characterize this model.

While the inclusion of controversial issues as content was not evident (nor did we expect it to be), some attention was observed in the fifth grade class with its study of the Civil War. It needs to be noted that historic controversy is usually less problematic than current controversy such as: Should we have a new highway and if so, where should it go? And historic controversy is not as likely to elicit parental complaints since emotions often run high on such local and contemporary issues.

As a result of this study, we suggest the following for consideration.

1. The intellectual component of this decision making model appears to be interactive with democratic teaching practices. In other words, the more freedom and
responsibility that teachers give children, the more the
teacher was able to implement this model. Furthermore,
the more the teacher attends to the intellectual
component, the more likely he or she is to exhibit demo-
cratic teaching practices in the classroom. Logically,
these two kinds of teaching practices are clearly con-
sistent with each other. In this study, they appeared to
be related empirically.

2. A combination of common teaching practices includ-
ing teacher enthusiasm, affirmation of children, the pro-
vision of a variety of learning experiences (particularly
ones that involve critical thinking and decision mak-
ing) appear to be supportive of teaching practices con-
sistent with the intellectual component of this Deci-
sion Making Model.

3. Some teacher practices that result in classroom control
(such as not allowing children to influence learning
activities or not giving them any discretionary class-
room freedom) are likely to detract from the implement-
tation of the Decision Making Model. However, class-
room control is essential for serious debates and dis-
cussions.

4. Teacher Momentum: We advance the idea of teacher
momentum very tentatively. Each of these teachers
seemed to have accommodated to the children in their
classes in creating a momentum that kept the children
and the teacher engaged on a constant basis. It is not
only difficult, but also impossible, to capture the idea
of momentum in words. To this end a video of one of
these classrooms has been made. Each of these teach-
ers varied from each other in the manner in which they
exhibited this momentum but each of them appeared
to have worked out a pace and level of intensity that
was not only comfortable for them but seemingly was
comfortable to the children as well. For those who con-
sider teaching to be an art, or partially so, this obser-
vation should be reassuring.
Conclusions

The primary purpose of this study was to ascertain whether strong teachers at the elementary level demonstrated any teaching practices that supported two fundamental dimensions of the Engle-Ochoa Decision Making Model: I.A. Teaching procedures that focus on controversial social issues as content and I.B. Teaching procedures that foster critical thinking and decision making which comprise the intellectual dimension of this model.

Controversial Issues as Content

Only one of these teachers addressed controversy deliberately and vigorously. This occurred in the study of the Civil War at the fifth grade level. The other two teachers addressed topics such as Pioneers and Communities which held the potential for introducing controversy but none was evident. In the third grade the teacher did use open-ended dilemmas that entailed some controversy. Since these teachers were not aware or prepared to teach this model, this result is not surprising. Furthermore, controversial content has not been a conventional part of elementary school curricula. Some teachers argue that the fifth grade is the easiest level in the elementary school grades to introduce controversy because the children are at a higher level of intellectual development and can better handle competing ideas. However, even in the third grade, we saw children who dealt with hypothetical dilemmas, identified their best solutions and defended them. They also raised questions to which they did not have answers. Much more investigation is needed to ascertain whether controversy deserves a more prominent place in the elementary school curriculum.

To this end we suggest a subsequent study that selects willing and highly recommended elementary teachers and prepares them as vigorously as possible to address controversy at these early grade levels. Intense and sustained observations of their teaching is needed as these teachers make every effort to implement the model more deliberately and completely. It is critical to tap the insights these teachers have while attempting to teach in this manner. Follow-up interactions with participating teachers are essential after each observed teaching session (or review of videotapes). This kind of research is necessary in order to gain firm understanding of what is possible with elementary children and what problems such teaching encounters.

Spring 2001
Teaching Practices Related to Critical Thinking and Decision Making: The Intellectual Dimension

In the area of intellectual development these teachers held the greatest promise. Each of these teachers provided examples, though in different ways and with varied levels of emphasis. Each teacher engaged in some practices that encouraged to thinking at higher levels. The third and fifth grade teachers gave a good deal of attention to these intellectual processes. Critical thinking was encouraged on an on-going basis by debates, dilemmas, open-ended children’s stories and question-asking activities. Furthermore, not only did these teachers display teaching procedures associated with this dimension of the model but they deliberately structured learning experiences beyond the textbook to challenge children’s thinking. A significant omission, however, was the absence of teacher probes for reasons or evidence that would support the opinions that children expressed. Again, we underscore the fact that these teachers were not prepared to teach the model and were not even aware of it. We feel certain that, if they were interested, these teachers could easily attain the competence to strengthen their teaching practices in this area.

Without question, more research is needed. Furthermore, research that parallels that suggested under the discussion of controversial issues is in order here. A structured study that prepares interested and recommended teachers to teach the Decision Making Model and is followed by intense classroom observations and dialogue with teachers is an important way that a greater understanding of the application of the intellectual dimension can be realized.

Secondly, we used this research opportunity to observe teachers to search for teaching procedures that reflected the concepts of democracy, diversity and gender.

Teaching Practices Related to Democracy

We observed only a minimal level of teaching procedures that supported democracy either as curriculum content or as a value guiding teacher-student interactions. The first grade teacher who allowed two boys who were at odds with each other to try to solve their problem independently was impressive. Usually, teachers step in right away to minimize conflict. In this case when these boys started using foul language, the teacher did intervene. However, we found it commendable that she allowed them as much room as she felt she could to solve their own problems. Such practices can build self-reliance rather than encouraging dependence on an authority figure. All of these teachers, as we observed them, reflected values of fairness and respect for others and related to these children guided by those values. Such values, of course, are central to democracy. However, the content they selected for study did not focus on the concept of democracy except in the case
of the study of the Civil War in the fifth grade where values such as freedom and emancipation were emphasized.

For the most part these teachers did not engage in many teaching practices that focused an open, democratic classroom climate. Like most seasoned teachers, they had mastered the management of their classrooms and at this point each of them were in control of their children. As stated previously, the fifth grade teacher did give his class some latitude to make their own decisions about where they sat and their movements around the classroom as long as they did not disturb others. Nonetheless, he was still clearly in charge. He shared power carefully and selectively. How such procedures impact classroom climate as perceived by children is not known and deserves investigation.

**Teaching Practices Related to Diversity**

Our preference would be to see more emphasis on diversity among these teachers. At the same time, we observed that each of them were mindful of this value and were responsive to it. First of all, respect for the idea of emancipating slaves was very strong in the study of the Civil War. This teacher also treated the three black students (all girls) in his class with respect. He especially supported one of them who was an assertive and an able student. The other two sat together, which he allowed, and during our observations they were quiet but on task. The third grade teacher had developed teaching units on her own regarding African Americans and Native Americans. She was not teaching these units at the time of our observations, but then independent effort is commendable. Furthermore, the action of the first grade teacher in denying a parent who wanted her to dissolve a cross-racial friendship between two girls in her class, was especially commendable. However, her teaching procedures did not address diversity as content during our observation period.

**Teaching Practices Related to Gender**

Gender was nearly a neglected area. The greatest emphasis was given by the fifth grade teacher as he introduced his class to Clara Burton and her role in the Civil War. He also invited the girls in his class to think of ways they might have helped had they lived at the time of the Civil War. Their answers were quite conventional (nursing, cooking, sewing) and he did not press them to consider less conventional roles. However, it was especially significant that he called on the children to participate using a boy-girl rotation protocol and that he used this procedure on an on-going basis. At the first and third grade levels gender was not addressed as a curriculum topic and the third grade teacher used boy lines and girl lines and when a girl was asked to hand out papers she could only give them to the girls and the
boys were instructed likewise. The first grade teacher had a majority of boys in her class and recognized that the boys dominated class participation while the girls were quiet. In our view some inservice training efforts in this area are in order so that teachers do not, however inadvertently, reduce the opportunities available for girls in their classes. Importantly, it was the teacher who received his teacher preparation four years earlier who gave gender the most attention. The other teachers had received their teacher preparation much earlier when gender had not been identified as an educational concern. It would not take much effort to make them aware of some effective classroom procedures to expand their attention to gender.

(Note: While teachers would have to use simpler language at early grade levels, we suggest that elementary children can grasp the idea of differences and similarities, prejudice, and such values as respect for others, freedom and fairness.)

Lastly, we identified six aspects of their overall teaching style that they appeared to hold in common. These were teacher affirmation of children, the use of procedural values, teacher control and classroom management, teacher enthusiasm, procedural values, teacher planning and organization and optimal use of classroom time. In the last section on findings we presented a set of conclusions on the connection between these broader teaching procedures and ones that are specifically related to this Decision Making Model. Only further research can help educators understand how these relationships play out, if they do. For this study we felt that the common teaching procedures, which should not be seen as comprehensive, established a context that influenced the way procedures related to the model took shape. At this point, it seems clear that future researchers will benefit by examining the broader repertoire of teaching practices, not only the specific teaching procedures of interest to a Decision Making Curriculum.

In this study we were primarily interested in examining whether elementary teachers with good reputations would demonstrate teaching practices consistent with the Engle-Ochoa Decision Making Model in terms of both content and process. Secondly, we also observed their teaching in terms of democracy, diversity and gender. Furthermore, as a result of our observations, we also identified, in a preliminary way, teaching practices that were common among these teachers and were a part of their overall teaching style. Since elementary school teachers teach virtually all school subjects and have the same children all day long, we found it fitting to look at their teaching from a more comprehensive standpoint.

Each of these teachers demonstrated a number of teaching practices that were consistent with the model. While none had been exposed to the model prior to or during the study, their experience and
competence as teachers had seemingly guided their teaching prac-
tices in a direction that supported intellectual dimensions of the model. Especially impressive was their attention to the higher level thinking.

This study took an initial step into a relatively uncharted area. Specifically, our sample that involved teachers with strong reputations is not commonly seen in research studies. Yet, it is strong teachers that can lead us to a better understanding of the potential that exists in school classrooms. Strong teachers, especially ones who have been affirmed by principals, parents and children are, we believe, more likely to be open to new approaches and probably more willing to participate in expanding their teaching abilities. They may be the most effective route to innovation.

This study affirmed, to some extent, that the foundation for the Decision Making Model and its intellectual dimension in particular, not only could be used at the elementary level but in the case of these teachers, was actually being used to a limited degree in their classrooms. For us, this study offers some optimism that can guide the professional practices of social studies educators. We also hope the study will make a small dent in the negative portrayal of teachers that has resulted in such a pessimistic view of ongoing teaching practices. We hope to see more studies done from this vantage point.

Certain intellectual processes were clearly present in these class-
rooms. Although more could have been done, thinking abilities in the form of higher-level questions, as well as limited attention to demo-
cratic values were consistent with the Model. We wish to emphasize we are not drawing generalizations for all teachers with strong reputa-
tions. Teaching is far too personal and idiosyncratic to do so. How-
ever, we are encouraged that at the elementary level it may be val-
uable to build a foundation for critical thinking and decision making that can be developed further in later grades. We hope to see more research done from this vantage point.

While these teachers did not engage their children in inquiry units or projects, neither did they lecture. They provided a wide range of learning experiences including oral and written reports, letters to authors, group work, as well as a high number of class field trips. While the textbook was the basis for content in the third and fifth grades, the questions that followed oral reading of the text were not confined to the recall level. Some of the teacher-to-student interac-
tions were at the comprehension analysis and evaluation levels. How-
ever, for the most part, content was presented at a factual level and these teachers did not probe the children for evidence supporting the children’s ideas or opinions. However, these teachers treated children respectfully and recognized and rewarded them. To some extent, concern for gender and pluralism was evident. We would have liked to have seen these areas dealt with more vigorously.
The findings of this pilot study stimulated ideas for research questions that we have presented in the previous sections of this study. Clearly, teacher education, both pre-service and in-service, needs to change if the goals associated with democratic decision making models are to be realized. We recommend consideration of the following. Since teachers vary in many ways, we suggest that the workshop model or one-day in-service are not especially effective ways of expanding teaching practices. Teachers, we believe, need more personalized attention. One size does not fit all. The teacher with fourteen years experience needs different assistance than a teacher with four years experience. Perhaps, teacher educators could borrow an approach followed in physical fitness programs. Namely, each teacher may benefit from a trainer who models the desired teaching practice and stays with the trainee until they both agree that a desired level of competence has been reached. This would be expensive, of course, but so are the costs of in-service workshops when teacher time, classroom time and the cost of external consultants is considered. The trainer, preferably called a teacher-specialist, could be any one who had mastery in the area of interest. He or she could be a principal, another teacher or a teacher educator. Videotapes of teachers demonstrating desired teaching practices could enrich this process.

More qualitative research is in order. We hope other researchers will either replicate or elaborate on studies such as this one. The news from this study is that what went on in these elementary classrooms, while far from full implementation, is promising. These competent teachers were themselves thoughtful and wanted their children to be. Certainly, this is a hopeful starting point.

Questions to Consider

1. Can pre-service teacher education at the university use a Decision Making Model in combination with recent efforts in integrated curriculum so that future elementary teachers learn about this approach by example and practice?

2. Are teachers educators capable of teaching novices to use the Model? Do they also need "a specialist" to teach them? When would teachers by most receptive to expanding their competence with the model?

3. Given the maturity of children at the elementary level, how feasible is this model? Does it need modification for elementary grades?
While we have our tentative answers to the questions alone, we have raised them for the reader to consider. This model is not for the timid. Its use requires a deep commitment to democratic values and it needs to be done by teachers who are intellectually prepared and have well-developed rationales to support it. However, not to use it or a similar one, is to contribute to the increasing erosion of democratic values and practices among our citizens and in our society as a whole.

While this study cannot be used as a basis for generalization, it does permit us to consider the implications of our observations for theory and research and for teacher education at the pre-service and in-service levels.

Attention to the intellectual processes of critical thinking and decision making is possible to a limited extent, however, even without invoking controversy. Asking children to give reasons, to explain why a specific event took place or to speculate or express themselves orally or in writing can be confined to matters that have little potential for volatility. However, it must also be remembered that when principals and teachers play it safe and deliberately avoid controversy they are denying opportunities for children to learn how they can effectively participate and contribute to strengthening a democratic society. In short, when this course of action is taken, democracy itself is placed at peril.

Acknowledgments

A Dedication: Researchers ask a lot of cooperating teachers. In addition to their already busy and intense schedules, we ask them to accept us into their classrooms when they are not fully aware of how we will portray their teaching. This study was no different. Fortunately, the director of the study had worked in this school as a university supervisor for the field experiences of prospective teachers for about five years and knew that these teachers were competent and caring professionals. While they remain confidential in the report of this study, I want to dedicate this research to all three of them who cooperated so easily and who trusted us with their professional reputations. Hopefully this study makes a contribution, and if it does, it is because of their depth of dedication to what they do. These teachers deserve our highest respect and tribute. If, at any point, this report suggests that we are being critical of these teachers, we wish to emphasize that we are not. We fully recognize that we applied a framework that was ours, not theirs. Further, they were not familiar with it nor were they prepared to teach it. We believe the fields of social studies education have been enhanced because of these teachers and other like them. We also express thanks to the building principal and to the administration of the school district for their permission and support.

We especially appreciate the support given to this project by Chris Huber, a former doctoral student in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Indiana University. Chris made most of the arrangements for this study. He obtained permission from the cooperating school district and approval from the Human Subjects Committee at Indiana University. Subsequently, he accepted a teaching position in Texas. In addition, we express our very sincere thanks to the participating teachers and their principal who allowed us to observe their teaching and participated in the interviews and member checks. These individuals were, in so many ways, partners in educational research. Confidentiality prevents us from identifying them by name. Additionally, thanks got to Professor Carole Hahn, Professor at Emory University, for her helpful critique of this report.

Appendix A

Education for Democratic Citizenship: Decision Making in the Social Studies
by
Shirley H. Engle and Anna S. Ochoa

Based on the work of John Dewey and other scholars, Engle and Ochoa proposed an interdisciplinary curriculum that emphasizes the study of controversial public issues and the development of critical thinking and decision making abilities. These dimensions are emphasized because they are necessary for maintaining and strengthening democracy. This curriculum draws on the social sci-
ences and humanities and any other sources of knowledge that will support a stronger understanding of issues that confront society and impact the lives of citizens. Such a curriculum is often labeled issue-centered education.

In every society young children are socialized into norms and values of society. However, Engle and Ochoa argue that in a democracy, self-governance requires that young people must also experience counter-socialization which entails the development of a critical mindset and the ability to analyze public issues and make decisions that might resolve or ameliorate them. In the process, they should examine the value assumptions they learned earlier in their lives and reflect on the values they hold as a result of early socialization. This does not mean to suggest that they should necessarily reject those values. Rather, they need to openly and thoughtfully give them intelligent consideration so that their values are not based on indoctrination, authority or impulse.

Decision making abilities in this curriculum involve two kinds of intellectual challenges: (1) the testing of truth claims and making decisions about their veracity using logic and evidence and (2) making decisions about public policy that consider alternatives, consequences and values. Such decisions apply knowledge from a myriad of sources. It is these skills that will protect citizens of a democracy from being manipulated, duped or mindlessly controlled. The obvious extension of decision making is action. The democratic citizen needs to ask: “Now that I know about it, what should I do about it?” Therefore, programs in community action and service learning are particularly desirable and the logical outcome of this Decision Making Curriculum.

The framework of this curriculum, focusing as it does on controversial issues, needs to give attention to issues in the following areas: environmental studies, culture studies, the study of institutions and needs to be buttressed by a democratic school and classroom climate. With respect to assessment of learning, this curriculum leans on the principles associated with authentic assessment where students prepare projects not only as class assignments, but for submission to relevant agencies and organizations in their community. Self-assessment is encouraged along project standards set by students and teacher collectively. Engle and Ochoa also recommend long term research to gain an understanding of the impact of such a curriculum in their after school years, as democracy’s citizens who facilitate community action and/or service learning are very desirable.


APPENDIX B

Questions That Guided Observations

The Decision Making Model

What content (subject matter) is emphasized by this teacher when teaching social studies?

Are social issues given attention?

Does the teacher foster critical thinking or decision making?

What learning experiences does the teacher provide?

Describe how teachers relate to students.

Describe what the teacher does while teaching social studies.

Describe what the children are doing when social studies is taught.

Democracy

Is the idea of democracy or ideas related to democracy evident in this teacher’s practices?

Does the teacher employ democratic practices in the operation of the classroom?

Diversity

Is the teacher sensitive to diversity?

Are topics or questions related to diversity integrated into the content taught in social studies?

How does the teacher relate to children who represent other cultures and children who represent marginal groups?

Gender

Is the teacher gender-sensitive?

Is gender integrated into the curriculum?

How does the teacher relate to girls and to boys?

Note: Research assistants and the director discussed the key terms until there was a common agreement.

Questions Guiding Teacher Interviews

Where and when did the teacher receive his or her teacher preparation (both Bachelor and Masters Degrees)?

What social studies content is taught across the school year?

How many years of teaching experience does your teacher have?

Ask your teacher about his or her approach to classroom management.

Ask your teacher to tell you about his or her goals for social studies.

How many field trips take place per year?
Notes

1 These three teachers, in our judgment, deserved their strong reputations. They worked hard and took pride in what they did. We respected them and would have been pleased to have children of our own in their classrooms. If, at times in this report we sound critical, those statements are not intended to belittle these teachers in any way. All three of them were dedicated, hard-working and caring. The conclusions we reached were made on the basis of a framework that was ours, not theirs, and it was not familiar to them. The reader needs to remember that they were not aware of the Decision Making Model.

2 Controversial issues can be historic, contemporary, or future oriented.

3 Attention to cultural and racial minorities is only one part of diversity. Handicapped children and children from lower class backgrounds are also included.

References


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Does It Really Matter How We Teach? The Socializing Effects of a Globalized U.S. History Curriculum

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Abstract
Since Robert Hanvey wrote his seminal article, "An Attainable Global Perspective," (1976), social studies educators have attempted to devise strategies to implement his five themes or further define global education. While the process has not been without controversy, a further area of difficulty relates to the research on global education. Specifically, most of the research is comprised of studies of preservice or active service teachers and how they implement global education, rather than the effects of a globalized curriculum on student attitudes, behaviors or cognitions. The following article presents the results of a study comparing the socializing effects of a global versus a traditional curriculum and elaborates a theoretical approach premised upon cognitive dissonance theory. The author uses a pre-post test format to measure attitudinal change in students, and uses observational data to interpret test results.

Introduction
Since the 1970s, many teachers and college faculty have called for the globalization of the social studies curriculum across every discipline. Robert Hanvey’s brief but seminal work encouraged educators to adopt five themes that are familiar to most social studies educators today: perspective consciousness, cross-cultural awareness, state-of-the-planet awareness, awareness of human choice and global trends (Hanvey, 1976). Many have contributed to the development of global education as an approach by further defining global education as a curriculum, delineating ways in which to integrate historical content, and discussing appropriate pedagogy and teaching methods. (Benitez, 1994; Case, 1993; Collins, Czarra & Smith, 1998; Hendrix, 1998; Kniep, 1986, 1989; Tucker, 1990; Vocke, 1988) In addition, researchers have compiled and analyzed data on how teachers implement global education and the quality of teacher education programs (Begler, 1991; Cruz, 1990; Gilliom, 1991; Johnston & Ochoa, 1991; Kirkwood, 1995; Merryfield, 1991, 1993, 1998; Schukar, 1991; Tucker, 1983; Tye & Tye, 1991). However, little research has been completed on how glo-
bal education affects student attitudes. In other words, does it really matter how or what we teach about the world to high school students, or are their attitudes largely controlled by socializing factors outside of the social studies classroom?

This paper offers evidence that students exposed to a globalized U.S. history curriculum become less nationalistic, whereas students exposed to a traditional curriculum become more nationalistic. Therefore, this paper tends to support the view that the high school social studies curriculum is an important socializing agent.

**Review of Literature**

The literature most relevant to this study is the corpus of work on political socialization written before 1980, and a group of more recent studies involving the effects of curriculum and pedagogy on student attitudes.

Ehman (1980) provides a good review of the early political socialization literature. The early studies cited here will therefore be limited to those studies that directly examine the relationship between curriculum, pedagogy, and student attitudes. The most important early study dealing with the effects of an important area of the social science curriculum is Torney, Oppenheim and Farnen’s 10-nation study of the civics curriculum and its efficacy as a socializing agent. In 1971, the authors tested 30,000 students of various ages and concluded that in countries in which the primary focus of the civics curriculum is to instill patriotism, students scored significantly lower in terms of respect for democratic values such as freedom of speech, equal rights and tolerance of diversity in opinions and culture, than did students from countries where the social studies curriculum emphasized critical thinking about social issues (Torney, Oppenheim & Farnen, 1975).

These results would tend to confirm the contentions of Stacey (1977) and Tapper (1976) that the social studies curriculum can be used as a tool for indoctrination rather than critical analysis. The attitudinal findings are supported by the additional correlation between memorization and both knowledge and democratic attitudes. Students in classrooms using memorization were found to be both less knowledgeable and have lower political tolerance and efficacy than those in classes emphasizing critical inquiry. Hence, it would appear that ritualistic practices and memorization, because of their rote character, suppress reflective inquiry and reinforce the status quo by punishing through lower grades and reprimands those who do not march in step.

On the other hand, curricula which expose individuals to alternative perspectives and place events and actors within a broader context lead to greater political tolerance and efficacy. Torney, Oppenheim, and Farnen’s results have been corroborated by smaller studies such
as Avery and others (1992) in which students encouraged to understand civil rights develop increased tolerance for their least-liked group. In addition, students of teachers who encourage diverse viewpoints also become more globally sensitive (Blankenship, 1990; Duggan, Grossman & Thorpe, 1986). Finally, students who are exposed to different cultures, either through travel or "conversation partners," become less ethnocentric and less likely to stereotype (Case, 1993; Hutchins & Hill, 1999; Wilson, 1993).

The most potent evidence of the socializing effects of the schools comes not from the curriculum but from classroom climate. Yocum (1989) attempts to ascertain the effects of a global curriculum on students' attitudes. He fails to find a significant effect related to curriculum, but instead finds that an open classroom in which students feel free to express their opinions has an effect on student global-mindedness. Several researchers have found that students in classrooms with an environment which encourages open discussion of controversial issues generates more interest in politics and less political apathy (Angell, 1991; Brody, 1994; Hahn, 1996a, 1996b, 1998; Parker, 1996). Parker and Hahn both find that Danish students were more politically interested, efficacious and tolerant than were students in countries whose curriculum did not as often encourage adolescents to critically assess issues and engage in problem-solving. (Hahn, 1998; Parker, 1996) These cross-national, quantitative and qualitative studies provide insight into the salience of the social studies curriculum as a socializing agent. Their results tend to support the conclusions of Torney, Oppenheim and Farnen's 1975 study. These authors use qualitative data to help them interpret their empirical findings, which remain unexplained in studies relying on purely empirical data. For example, in their study of why Argentine students exposed to newspapers tend to develop greater respect for democratic values, Morduchowicz and others (1996) write, "we have no direct measures to tell us precisely what it was about the program that altered students' perspectives" (p. 474). Clearly, both quantitative and qualitative data are important in attempting to discover the potency of various socializing agents.

Hahn (1996b) attempts to disaggregate the effects of controversial content, which is content that focuses on differing viewpoints on an issue; conflictual pedagogy, which leads students to critically assess an issue; and classroom climate, which is the degree of openness to alternative perspectives being expressed by students. In practice, however, I believe that these distinctions probably do not exist in a global classroom. It is difficult to imagine how one would critically assess an issue and share diverse viewpoints, for example, if one were not encouraged or even permitted to express diverse viewpoints. Here, the admonitions of the Ad Hoc Committee of the National Council for
the Social Studies ring true: a global classroom cannot simply mandate a "left-wing" viewpoint, but must offer information from various perspectives, in addition to providing ample room for student input. Hahn's 1998 study supports the idea that an issues-centered curriculum that encourages diverse viewpoints in an environment of trust, whether we call such a curriculum global or not, does tend to promote higher levels of political efficacy and tolerance.

On a smaller scale, the present study attempts to examine some of the mechanisms that lead to political socialization in a global classroom.

Theoretical Model: Political Socialization through Cognitive Dissonance

Clearly, it would be useful to have both empirical and impressionistic data to attempt to ascertain how political socialization takes place. At the very least, these studies demonstrate that curriculum and pedagogy can have an impact on political attitudes and values. However, the actual processes that relate to socialization via curriculum and pedagogy remain a mystery. In order to understand the process of political socialization, it is necessary to ascertain the nature of learning.

Sociologists and anthropologists view learning as a form of cultural transmission:

...education...is the major mechanism of cultural survival. Cultural survival requires replication to the extent possible. Education, seen from this point of view, functions to recruit new members into society and maintain the cultural system. (Spindler & Spindler, p. 7)

Hence, learning is necessary for society to maintain its cultural values and norms. Interestingly, it is not seen as a vehicle for change, but as a mechanism for stasis. Even the skills that are learned help the individual to fit into society and are therefore culturally-based. To not properly assimilate culture means social death.

From sociology and anthropology, it is possible to accept the premise that learning is culturally-based, and it generally functions to transmit acceptable cultural norms. However, because learning is a cross-cultural phenomenon, it must have certain elements which are culture-neutral. According to Wittrock,

"Learning" is the term we use to describe the processes involved in changing through experience. It is the process of acquiring relatively permanent change in under-
standing, attitude, knowledge, information, ability and skill through experience. (1977, p. ix, emphasis mine)

Notice that attitudes, ability, etc. change through experience, and that this experience could include exposure to parent or peer behavior, classroom instruction or discovery. According to this definition, political socialization—the acquisition of political attitudes—is a type of learning.

Torney-Purta (1992) defines political socialization as the process by which individuals internalize public knowledge about political institutions and processes and create private meanings. She finds that political socialization is a gradual process that actively involves schemata already internalized by the student, and the juxtaposition of new information. In this sense, she is in agreement with Hahn and others who do not characterize the socialization process in strictly behavioral terms. (Hahn, 1998) In other words, the adolescent is not a blank slate to be written upon, and the socialization process is an admixture of new ideas and information and previously held beliefs (Hahn, 1998; Van Hoorn & LeVeck, 1992). However, new information can change previous attitudes, particularly if the stimulus is the countervailing opinion of a peer (Torney-Purta, 1989).

If we accept the premise that the acquisition of political cognitions is a type of learning, we can also accept that changes in political attitudes may take place as a result of cognitive dissonance. Cognitive dissonance theory was first proposed by psychologist Leon Festinger (1957) as an explanation for how individuals can hold apparently contradictory cognitions and behaviors. For example, a smoker continues to smoke in contravention to the information that smoking causes lung cancer. Such a condition causes the individual to experience cognitive dissonance. When dissonance exists, the person must (A) suppress information which contradicts his attitudes and behaviors, or (B) change her attitudes and/or behaviors. According to Festinger (1957), beliefs are more important than facts, which can be construed to support various beliefs. However, the process can also work in reverse: “behavior and feelings are frequently modified in accordance with new information” (p. 19). Alternative information and teaching methods may call into question beliefs passed on by parents or absorbed from the media, particularly if these beliefs are not central to one’s own identity.

For example, it is my impression that most students do not have strong opinions about Christopher Columbus other than a somewhat benignly positive view of him as the man who “discovered” America. Many students may not know that Columbus tortured Native Americans for payment of taxes in gold. However, when students read an advertisement written by Native Americans in protest of the Colum-
bus Day holiday, and themselves write a critical essay about Columbus, the new information may cause students to become more critical of the treatment of indigenous peoples by European colonizers and more favorable toward the rights of minority groups. Both the content and the pedagogy of the curriculum in this example of a global approach cause the student to question long-held beliefs about Columbus. The content offers dissonant information on Columbus. The essay writing compels students to actively process the new information rather than simply copying soon-forgotten facts into a worksheet. New information in a sense “attacks” the political attitude, changing it into something different: a new attitude, based on new information.

A global approach to United States history uses teaching strategies at the higher levels of Bloom’s taxonomy which cause students to critically analyze and evaluate the alternative content. The effects of these mental manipulations on political cognitions should therefore be greater than those of a traditional curriculum utilizing fact recall and comprehension. Learning in the global classroom takes the form of political socialization, or a change in or acquisition of political cognitions, as students are encouraged to re-examine the American condition, including, among others, a one-way view of the world based on U.S. hegemony. The traditional approach to American history, on the other hand, may cause few instances of cognitive dissonance and therefore merely reinforces time-held beliefs, particularly those related to superiority and nationalism. This may explain why some studies involving traditional curricula fail to show socializing effects in the form of attitudinal change (Langton & Jennings, 1973).

I hypothesize that students exposed to an experimental, critical approach to U.S. history, one which combines a curriculum shaped by Hanvey’s model of global education and pedagogy aimed at the higher levels of Bloom’s taxonomy will become more globally sensitive or internationalistic, whereas the traditional curriculum emphasizing fact recall and glorifying past patriots will have the opposite effect, rendering students more nationalistic.

**Methodology and Description of Study**

In order to test this hypothesis, the author taught the experimental curriculum to two regular and one honors sections of eleventh-grade United States history at a High School in Miami, Florida during the 1993-4 school year. One Honors and two regular sections of U.S. history at another Miami high school comprised the control group. The control group teacher had over 15 years of teaching experience. After observing him and several other teachers extensively during the 1992-93 school year, the author chose him because his classroom most closely reflects that of the traditional model: students sit quietly in rows with little interaction or discussion, copy notes from
the blackboard, listen to brief comments on the notes, and complete worksheets and written assignments. It was the author's impression that the students respect the teacher, and that the teacher's classroom was generally orderly and well-managed.

The experimental group teacher was independently determined to teach according to Hanvey's model of global education (Kirkwood, 1995). In other words, instead of teaching the standard, fact-laden curriculum which relied almost exclusively on the textbook, the experimental group teacher sought to globalize both the content and the pedagogy of her U.S. history classes (see Appendix A for Curriculum). The following chart summarizes the differences between a global and a traditional curriculum:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Two Views of the U.S. History Curriculum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Traditional Curriculum</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Global Curriculum</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organizing Premise</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thematic &amp; issues-centered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pedagogy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-centered;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students passive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>absorbers of facts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-centered;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students active learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thinking Skills Used</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fact recall,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application, analysis,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>synthesis, evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phenomena are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>isolated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkages across time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and place emphasized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Classroom Climate</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Orientation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present and future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instill patriotism and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transmit culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical analysis and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>problem solving</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This study has some important limitations. There was no random assignment of students as the author had to use prescheduled classes. However, the pre-post-test format of the survey mitigates this shortcoming to some extent. In addition, Miami is not typical of the nation as a whole in terms of ethnicity or income. Moreover, the control group had 25 percent more Hispanics than did the experimental group, which had roughly equal numbers of students of African, Hispanic, and European descent. These differences were somewhat miti-
gated by the application of a pretest which revealed no significant intergroup differences and multi-variate analysis which revealed that group accounted for 89 percent of variance in the posttest. Nevertheless, the ability to observe how students interacted with new information and strategies in the classroom provides salient information about the process of political learning through cognitive dissonance.

In order to test this hypothesis, the patriotism levels of both the experimental class and the control class were pre- and post-tested using a fourteen-item test with a four point scale representing the continuum from internationalism to nationalism. Students could strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the items. Half of the items were structured so that the nationalistic answer was "strongly agree," and half "strongly disagree." The more nationalistic the response, the higher the point value assigned, with four being the highest and one the lowest. These items are listed in Appendix II. Pre- and post-test items were identical as the author felt it unlikely that pretest interference would occur due to the long duration (ten months) between test administrations.

Analysis of Results

Stepwise, discriminant analysis of pre-test data revealed no significant pre-treatment differences between control and experimental groups on any of the items. However, comparison of pre- and post-test data presents significant changes in control and experimental group scores. A t-test was performed on the change in the total average scores to determine whether or not the experimental group's scores had become significantly more internationalistic than the control group's scores. The data did in fact reveal that this was the case: not only did students in the experimental group become more internationalistic after exposure to the global curriculum, but control group students became more nationalistic after completing the traditional curriculum (t=9.4569, p < .01).

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Average Point Change Pre-to-Post-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>3.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>-4.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Multivariate analysis of the effects of ethnicity, age, gender, intelligence, class, absences, affect for teacher, and perceived utility of the course, revealed that group explained 89 percent of post-test variance.
In addition, stepwise discriminant analysis was used to discover which post-test items best predicted group membership and to determine which responses had undergone significant changes, thus accounting for the change in aggregate scores indicated by the t-test. Items 11, 13, 7, 2 and 6 were good predictors of group membership, with 11 and 13 especially highly loaded on nationalism (p < .01); see Table 3 below).

### Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item #</th>
<th>Partial $R^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.6283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.2980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.1221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.1004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Control $n = 55$
Experimental $n = 74$

T-tests were performed on each of these items to determine the significance of the average change in score between the two groups on each item and to ascertain that scores had in fact changed in the postulated direction in the post-test (see Table 4). The t-tests indicate that the experimental group became more internationalistic on these items, while the control groups’ responses were more nationalistic in the post-test (p < .01).

### Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Change in Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>0.273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>-1.054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>0.836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>-0.703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>0.545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>-1.027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>0.236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>-0.649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>0.909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>-0.216</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although these results indicate that the traditional curriculum socializes, the global curriculum is twice as potent: the average increase in score on these five items was five points for the control group,
but the average decrease for the experimental group was almost nine
points.

If cognitive dissonance explains how the attitudes of the ex-
perimental group changed, then what can be termed “cognitive rein-
forcement, may instead explain why the control group became more
nationalistic. Instead of questioning old beliefs, the curriculum pre-
sents information which corroborates already-held attitudes. These
attitudes are then strengthened and given renewed impetus.

The following section attempts to relate the empirical evidence
gathered to the experimental treatment while identifying various di-
mensions of internationalism.

The Impact of the Global Curriculum on Nationalism

The experimental group student became significantly more
internationalistic than the control group students on three dimensions:
1) anticommunism and the role of the United States in defending de-
mocracy throughout the world; 2) ethnocentrism; and 3) the relative
importance of domestic versus international problems.

The salience of the first dimension, perceptions of anticommu-
nism and the appropriate role of the U.S. in defending democracy
worldwide, is indicated by student responses to items 11 (“the United
States should always oppose communism wherever it arises”) and 2
(“the United States usually gets involved in foreign conflicts to de-
fend democracy”). Very significant numbers of students from the ex-
perimental group disagreed with item 11, while item 2 predicted 12
percent of group membership in the post-test. What accounts for the
appearance of significant differences in group response between the
control and experimental groups in the post-test? While the traditional
U.S. history curriculum reinforces the anti-communist signals students
receive from other socializing agents, the global curriculum exposed
students to the possibility that communist countries might offer real
benefits such as universal health care for the poor. Specifically, stu-
dents learned that electoral democracy and capitalism seem to work
best when the country in question has a large middle class. In addi-
tion, students analyzed the United Nations Declaration on Human
Rights and found that the political rights favored by the United States
coexist with economic and social rights such as the right to work cher-
ished by socialist and some third-world countries. Students compared
and analyzed liberal/democratic and communist ideals, and the so-
cial and economic makeup of the United States versus Vietnam, Nica-
ragua, pre-Castro Cuba, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic,
among other countries. This led students in the experimental group
to change their attitudes regarding the U.S.’ world goal of eliminating
communism.
Furthermore, students in the experimental classes underwent a unit on the causes of war, in which they learned that countries generally justify their aggressions on the basis of some principle, but that there are generally other strategic and political interests involved. In the case of the United States, at least in this century, the justifying principle has been anti-communism or the defense of democracy. Rather than simply recalling facts about wars, the lessons centered on the higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy. For example, students participated in a simulation on World War I that demonstrated the dangers of nationalism, lack of communication, and secret alliances. Moreover, students wrote essays generalizing about the causes of war. The control group students were reinforced in their belief that the defense of democracy underlies U.S. actions abroad, whereas the experimental group questioned this belief.

It appears that in terms of communism and the appropriate role of the United States, the global curriculum caused cognitive dissonance in the experimental group by compelling students to reexamine previous information on the role of the U.S. as the legitimate defender of democracy world-wide. Individuals resolved the dissonance by rejecting old beliefs in favor of a new orientation which allowed them to integrate this knowledge regarding both the socio-economic conditions leading to liberal democracy and socialism and a country’s motivation to fight wars. Once altruism was no longer the basis for anti-communism, and the application of electoral democracy and capitalism in all countries could not be justified, students in the experimental group were socialized into new, more internationalist, patterns of political thought.

A second dimension which separates the experimental from the control group appears to be multiculturalism. Control group students exposed to the traditional curriculum tend to feel more comfortable with people from their own ethnic group (item 13) and believe that immigration practices which discriminate among immigrants based on their country of origin are acceptable (item 6). Students experiencing the global curriculum appear equally comfortable with people from other ethnic groups and believe that country of origin should not be used to discriminate among petitions for immigration.

During the school year, members of the experimental class were often required to discuss very sensitive issues ranging from the causes of inner city violence, to the death penalty, to racism with students from another culture. Students participated in face-to-face discussions in what is known as a “fishbowl.” In a fishbowl, the four participants face each other in a small group, offering facts and opinions on the issue at hand. Only those class members seated in the fishbowl are allowed to speak to render the discussion easier to manage. If an indi-
Individual wishes to be part of the discussion, s/he must tap a fishbowl participant on the shoulder and take his/her seat.

The pedagogical rationale behind the fishbowl is to enhance intercultural appreciation by relaying personal feelings and experiences that often touch on issues of prejudice and ethnic pride. Because the experimental group students were diverse in terms of ethnicity and social class, discussions were very lively and at times heated. At the same time, however, impressionistic evidence gathered by the author in the classroom seemed to suggest that students generally understood the position of different groups better after the discussions. This was particularly so when the teacher assigned activities in which students went back to their groups after the fishbowl and tried to formulate suggestions for better understanding among diverse groups. Perhaps ethnically diverse students who had been together since freshman year were able to take advantage of these class discussions both to discover how others felt on sensitive topics and to express their own opinions. In a traditional classroom where students have fewer opportunities for face-to-face discussions in which to explore and expose their feelings, such opportunities for better understanding are limited. Hence, it appears that the global curriculum was effective in socializing students into a more relaxed posture toward people of other cultures.

In terms of the item on discriminatory approaches to immigration policy, the experimental curriculum was rife with lessons on the common motivations of immigrants, from the time the ancestors of Native Americans crossed the Bering Straits to the present. It is therefore possible that the more internationalist students agree with this statement more often because they see that the line between economic and political motives for immigrants is a fine one, whereas the nationalist is more inclined to accept the United States government's distinction between economic and political refugees.

Dade County is a particularly interesting case study in the motivations of immigrants with its large Cuban and Haitian communities. Students in the experimental group spent several class sessions studying U.S. policy on Cuban and Haitian immigration. In addition, there were several Cuban and Haitian students in each of the three experimental classes. Students discussed at length how people in both countries were subject to intolerable political and economic conditions and asked to analyze differential U.S. treatment of Cuban immigrants, who are accepted as political refugees, and Haitian migrants, who are termed economic refugees and therefore returned to Haiti. Impressionistic evidence suggests that a number of students began to reject the U.S. categorization of all Cubans as political refugees, as compared to the economic refugee status of most Haitians. In addition, students examined photographs of different immigrant groups, speculating as
to the living conditions and reasons for leaving their country. These two activities, I propose, caused the experimental group to adopt a more internationalist perspective on immigration than the control group because they caused students to experience dissonance on this issue—whereas before the experimental curriculum, students may have felt that differential treatment of immigrants was acceptable, after analyzing the causes of immigration, they were socialized into new patterns of thinking on immigration.

The traditional, U.S. history curriculum, on the other hand, portrays the anti-communist thrust of U.S. foreign policy since World War II and until recently as acceptable, even desirable. Immigrants from communist countries have been accepted as political refugees and therefore have often enjoyed an open door policy with respect to U.S. immigration. Meanwhile, the U.S. has generally accepted friendly dictators as a necessary evil, and immigrants from their countries have been dubbed economic refugees, unworthy of equal treatment. To maintain living standards, the U.S. cannot open the door wide to all of these economic refugees, the traditional curriculum teaches. Moreover, the traditional curriculum would most likely focus on immigration in the mid-to-late 1800s and still refers to the wave of southern and eastern European immigrants as “the new immigration.” It is doubtful that a teacher using the textbook as the only classroom resource would even cover Cuban and Haitian immigration. Hence, it is not unusual that the control group students, when exposed to the traditional curriculum, became more nationalistic with respect to item 6.

A final dimension separating the experimental group from the control group in the post-test is the perception of the relative importance of international versus domestic problems. For the control group, domestic problems like crime and hunger in the inner cities are more important to solve than international problems like world hunger (item 7). The experimental group, on the other hand, is more able to see hunger in United States’ cities as part of a global phenomenon which occurs to some extent in every country.

Throughout the school year, the teacher planned lessons in which the experimental classroom discovered linkages between international problems and the concerns of the U.S. citizen on issues ranging from pollution to war. One lesson on multinational corporations, for example, provided students with a list of the 100 largest multinationals worldwide. The experimental classes attempted to ascertain the products and national origin of each of the companies. Many students were surprised at the number of non-U.S. corporations and their dependence on these MNCs for their products. Groups then made a list of what they considered essential and non-essential companies and why. The experimental classes had a number of such lessons stressing glo-
bal linkages using higher-order thinking skills. In addition, the teacher presented several interactive lessons on the changing world economy and the movement of manufacturing away from developed countries like the U.S. to developing countries.

After completing the experimental curriculum, students realized that often a country cannot afford to be insular because international problems can have important local and national ramifications, causing students to adopt a distinctly more internationalist posture. The traditional curriculum, on the other hand, stresses the uniqueness of the U.S. condition, past and present, with little attention to comparison or international cause and effect. The traditional curriculum, therefore, caused the control group students to become more nationalistic with respect to the relative importance of domestic problems as compared to international problems.

Thus, students experiencing the global curriculum become more accepting of alternative forms of government, appear multicultural and better able to see the relationship between domestic and international problems than students in the traditional, U.S. history classroom. The traditional curriculum, on the other hand, renders individuals more anticommunist, ethnocentric, and less aware of the connections among domestic and international problems than the global curriculum.

**Conclusions and Possible Implications for the Political System**

If the global curriculum engenders a more internationalist perspective on the United States, what would result from the use of global education on a large scale? The internationalist, I propose, has a more realistic and hence more useful basis from which to interact with other countries and cultures. A globally-minded citizen would seem better equipped to help the United States adjust to long-term changes in the global political-economy and cooperate with other countries to solve global problems than the nationalist. Thus, in the long run, I would argue, a political system whose constituents are internationalists rather than nationalists is inherently more stable at the international level.

These findings reveal the impact that the state has on patriotism through its power to mandate curriculum. The state certifies administrators and teachers who convey acceptable attitudes to the students via state-adopted textbooks, supplementary materials, and allegiance for state symbols such as the flag. It seems undeniable that its classroom mandate provides the state with a powerful vehicle for transmitting information on the types of political attitudes that are acceptable. Hence, in general, the traditional social science curriculum would appear to help perpetuate system stability by encouraging students
to view alternative political and economic systems as inferior or unacceptable; the mainstream, U.S. culture as superior to other cultures; and domestic problems as separate from and more important than international problems. Thus, the political system helps to create the nationalist.

However, the state is not all-powerful: this study demonstrates that teachers using alternative approaches can have an effect on student attitudes. The teacher is relatively autonomous from the state and can use materials and strategies designed to evoke cognitive dissonance which can result in a change in political cognitions. Hence, through the secondary school curriculum, the student can in effect learn new political attitudes.

There are normative implications to such findings as well. First, there is the charge that issues-centered education, especially global education, can lead to moral relativism. Clearly, political efficacy and participation are desired goals for the civics curriculum, as is the ability to understand and accept the validity of alternative viewpoints. However, many school districts, including my own, are adopting character education programs. There is an increasing sense that students must cultivate their ability to evaluate and apply certain moral standards such as respect and integrity.

A final consideration in the normative arena is whether a country peopled with nationalists would be more capable of managing the international and domestic needs of the U.S in a changing global economy. A globally-educated constituency might better help the United States adapt to a changing world, a scenario which would be inherently more stable than one in which Washington assumes a more isolationist posture.

**Appendix A**

The following section provides examples of topics congruent with Robert Hanvey's model of global education which the candidate used in lessons in the experimental classroom.

**Perspective Consciousness**—an awareness of and appreciation for alternative perspectives on the world.

Topics would include:

1. What is "American" history? - emphasizes that the U.S. is not the only part of America.
2. Who "discovered" America? - debunks the "discovery," focusing on Native American groups.
3. Is Columbus the hero he's made out to be? - presents students with the viewpoint of groups of Native and African Americans on Columbus.
4. An Indian's perspective on the westward expansion: "The Invasion from the East."
5. Were African-Americans only slaves? What other roles have they played in U.S. history?
6. Were women only homemakers until recently? What other roles have they played in U.S. history?
7. How are the foreign policy objectives of other countries? Do other countries have legitimate interests which might clash with ours?
8. How did our opponents perceive different wars in U.S. history? For example, the loyalists and the Revolution? The Mexicans and the Mexican War? The Confederates and the Civil War?
9. Was the American Revolution really revolutionary?
10. Can our constitution be applied to other countries?
11. Was Lincoln really "the Great Liberator?"
12. How progressive was the Progressive era?
13. Has political reform gone far enough (is the political machine really dead)?
14. Was the Depression an isolated incident?
15. Geopolitical realism versus morality: why does the U.S. fight abroad?
State of the Planet Awareness—a profound understanding of global events.
1. How did the Industrial Revolution affect the environment?
2. How does consumerism affect the environment?
3. Pollution is international: it knows no bounds.
4. The World Court at the Hague and international relations.
5. Global warming and the ozone
6. Toxic waste
7. The rain forest

Cross-cultural Awareness—an appreciation of the similarities and differences among different cultures.
1. What cultures make up the social fabric of the U.S.
2. How has immigration changed since Jamestown? How has immigration been perceived throughout our history? What are the primary immigrant groups today and what are our stereotypes of them?
3. What cultures predominate in Miami? What qualities of your culture that you are proud of, and how would you explain aspects of your culture to others?
4. Do women have their own culture?
5. Should we help starving people outside of our country? Are we people or Americans first?
6. What is Native American culture today?

Systemic Awareness—an understanding of the international mechanisms and processes which create interdependence among all countries.
1. What makes a great power? Why have nations fallen from great power status? What great powers can we identify today? Will they always be "great?"
2. What is the U.S. trade relationship with the rest of the world? What regulates international trade?
4. Somalia and its impact on the U.S.
5. Oil, the Middle East and their impact on the U.S.
6. Haiti, Cuba, and the U.S.
7. Foreign aid and the U.S.
8. Russia and the U.S.
9. The United Nations and the U.S.
10. Is the United States an imperialistic country?
11. What are the causes of war?

Options for Participation—an ability to participate in the shaping of policy through knowledge of the avenues to participation.
1. The school board and students—how can students have an impact on educational policy?
2. Local politics: the Metro-Dade Council, State Legislature and Governor. How can you keep informed? What issues affect you? How can you contact council members, legislators, and the governor?
3. National politics: the Congress and the President. How can you keep informed? What issues affect you? How can you contact legislators and the President?
4. What are petitions? How do they work?
5. What is the law-making process at local, state and national levels?
6. How can I contact and become involved in local political parties?
These topics are a basic outline of the lessons the candidate covered in the experimental classroom.

Appendix B
Test on Patriotism

1. The United States should defend its national interest through military force if necessary.
2. The United States usually gets involved in foreign conflicts to defend democracy.
3. Every country has something positive to contribute to the international community.
4. The United States government makes its share of mistakes in foreign policy.
5. The United States should never use force to establish governments like ours in other countries.
6. The United States should treat all immigrants who wish to enter this country the same, regardless of which country they come from.
7. Domestic problems (like poverty in this country) are more important to solve than international problems (like world hunger).
8. The United States should use nuclear bombs to kill leaders which our leaders feel are dangerous like Saddam Hussein in Iraq.
9. A strong group in Country X rapes and kills the women of a weaker group. Even though some American soldiers would lose their lives, the U.S. government should send troops to help the weaker group.
10. Regardless of the circumstances, the U.S. should never use nuclear weapons.
11. The United States should always oppose communism wherever it arises.
12. Every culture has something positive to contribute to this country.
13. I feel more comfortable with people from my own ethnic group as opposed to people from other ethnic groups.
14. Some countries need to be blocked from participating in the international community.

Note
I would like to thank the students at Florida International University for their research assistance. I would also like to express my gratitude to the late Jan Tucker, without whom the dissertation from which this article is drawn would never have been completed.

References


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Outfoxing the Destruction of Wisdom

Rich Gibson
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Abstract
High-stakes standardized examinations now propel much of public education. States spend billions of dollars on the exams. Teachers, students, and parents are compelled to spend their most precious commodity, time with one another, in pursuit of, or opposition to, the tests. The historical context of the examinations, rising inequality and deepening segregation, seems to contradict their guiding premise: regulating what people know and how they come to know it will serve a common national good. The notion of a common good is also overcome by the test results which divide people through scientific quantification. The debate about the exams is now nearly a decade old. At issue now is: How can educators and researcher find hope within the tests, or without them, and what is it that needs to be done?

Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning acts of initiative (and creation) there is one elementary truth the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: That the moment one definitely commits oneself then Providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one’s favor all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance which no man could have dreamt would come his way. Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it. Begin it now.

[Goethe]
At the dawn of the millennium, I got an email from a parent in California inquiring how her middle school child should respond to this question on her state test: "Trace the evolution of human rights from a classical philosophical debate about the 'state of nature' to a matter of international relations, encompassing politics, economics, history, and tradition and change." Her daughter would have a timed 40 minutes to respond. In Michigan, we call these stories, "MEAP Shrieks" to dishonor the state test.

I receive a lot of inquiries like this. My web page seems to draw people in a quandary, teachers wondering how they can be both good educators and good employees, parents wondering how they can balance their limited power and options with the levels of abuse they will allow to be heaped on their children. Students write less frequently. Those who do usually ask about their rights in school. Formally, they have nearly none (Raskin, 2000). Actually, they have those rights they organize the power to take, not unlike their adult citizen counterparts. How people can come to understand their powers is at issue in the debate about standards and high-stakes tests in education.

Later in January 2000, I attended a press conference held by Michigan Governor John Engler who, as a top leader in Achieve and the National Governor's Conference, has forced standards upon my home state in ways that typify the U.S. standards and high-stakes test movement. In the press conference, the Governor announced that the state had hired a Ford Motor Vice President for Marketing to lead a promotional campaign to convince students and their parents to take the state test, the MEAP, which has been the subject of a powerful boycott in rich and poor districts alike, with some districts reporting only 5% participation. The Governor announced state college tuition credits of $2500 to students who passed the test, money drawn from the billion-dollar tobacco settlement the state received in 1999. Things were going smoothly until a middle school student, Jeremy Troisi, spoiled things when he asked Governor Engler if character qualities should not count as much in a student's evaluation as academic performance. Jeremy got a glare, and no answer. Later, Governor Engler moved administration of the MEAP to the state Department of Treasury, and awarded Standard and Poors, the stock agency, a multi-million dollar grant to rate the test results.

Engler, according to witnesses within his own party, is suffering of being a lame duck, hung on his own petard. His work ushered in the term limits that will usher him out of office at the end of this term. He insulted many of his more rigidly Christian followers by refusing to support their Amway-funded drive to place the question of tuition vouchers for religious private schools on the Michigan ballot in November, 2000. One suggestion the voucher proponents have made: close and voucher schools that do poorly on standardized exams.
Voucher supporters' cuts at the governor have turned cruel. Led by Republican women, the petition drive succeeded; then failed in the public vote. But the women have ripped at Engler for what they see as his betrayal. At a recent fund-raising dinner, according to two witnesses, a small squad of the women confronted the portly Engler as he dug a spoon into a tower of ice cream. “You are a disgrace, Governor. You are fat, bulbous, not at all a model of a Republican governor. You ooze,” one said, in a loud whisper. The war of all on all is sometimes nasty.

These stories are a pathway into a thicket of questions for educators who want to keep their ideals and still teach. I will try to explore five related issues here. First, I place the question of standardized tests within their social context. Second, I briefly address the matter of standardized testing in theory and practice—in relation to teaching. Since so many people have done parts one and two in such depth, this will be a summary. Next, I explore the substance of the exams; what is in them, another topic more than well-mined, and what is not in them, what is occluded, obscured. This study of absence seeks clues to discover ways out of the high-stakes exams, and out of injustice. Then I will take up the relationship of good teaching and the science of history, suggesting that there is a corollary of scientific and historical research and the kinds of teaching that work to defeat irrationalism. What people know works reciprocally with how they came to know it. Finally, I will try to answer the question that the parent posed above, and similar questions put to me by students and teachers which ask: What to do?

The Social Context of the Exams

There is no place in the world that is growing more equitable and more democratic. To the contrary, commonly color-coded gaps of wealth and income expand between continents and within national populations. Ferocious carrot and stick, divide and conquer politics prevail behind a mask of globalization and prosperity. Total quality management, worker-to-worker campaigns, cooperative learning in schools, provide a Potemkin Village for the realities of exploitation and alienation. Talk of community is silenced by institutionalized pure selfishness, the hubris of power and privilege: arrogant warfare for markets, cheap labor, and raw materials. Freedom of choice becomes a pretense for a declining number of meaningful options. There is no place where elites want their citizens to understand how to unravel the roots of power. More, elites do not want power, a corollary of fear, noticed. Instead, privilege needs to rule under flags of democracy, tradition, patriotism, respectability, reasonableness, and perhaps above all, habit. This sums up to a numbing assault on human creativity on
one hand, and a razor-sharp hierarchical ordering, made possible by largesse and a fierce willingness to use terror and violence, on another. The capital system, grown by the war of all on all, requires profits, but is as deeply concerned with ideas, the consciousness necessary to make people instruments of their own oppression. No society reliant solely on technological might and the lures of covetousness—a society that cannot trust its citizens—can last long. The next oil war will require very patriotic troops—unconcerned about the social relations of oil (Shannon, 1999; Sklar, 1995).

Let me turn to myth to consider the processes at work here, the potential within the actual. Myths can be encapsulating, a cultural truth set up as essential, despite being bizarre and beyond rationality. Or, at the same time, they can hint at an underlying notion of liberation. Myths and stories are good pedagogical pathways. Here is one of those: Nemesis, daughter of Night, goddess of retribution and harmony who aimed at the arrogant Narcissus, worked almost imperceptibly. Once she had gathered her powers, rather than a frontal assault, Nemesis tricked Narcissus, who, unable to love others and enthralled with his own reflection, wasted and died, his blood forming the fertilizer for the beautiful flower that steals his name today. The mythic interrelated processes of growth and decay are a metaphor for the movement that underlies the photographic report of circumstances in the paragraph above. The situation I outlined is temporal, surmountable. The process of change is both incremental and sudden: a long look in the pond eventually becomes the flower. It is possible to build loving communities within mean circumstances; harmony can dislocate disharmony. How one makes fertilizer of injustice and privilege is as much the issue as how their workings can be understood, overcome. Nemesis, incidentally, was the name of one of many operations the Allies launched in World War II against Hitler who they defined as: Hubris.

Schools are a centripetal battlefield in the struggle for community, for rational knowledge, for the intersection of theory and practice, for creativity; their rhetorical democratic purposes at odds with the tangled reality of organizing decay: reproducing authoritarianism and deepening disparity. The impetus for the next series of changes in North America will, I think, pour out of the schools and into society. The youth in school have a stake in social change that rises above the claims represented by organized industrial labor (once the key civilizing influence which won child labor laws, social security, the 40-hour week, the rights to organize, bargain and strike; an influence both corrupted and made impotent by North American industrial shifts) or other sectors, which I think will trail behind the youth. The injustice requisite within the birth-rights of the capital system is permanent. Standardized high-stakes are not, and the reasoned struggle
against them offers ways to come to better understand routes to challenge injustice. Hence, what teachers do counts.

**Teachers, Standards, and High-Stakes Tests**

This is my hurried email response to the concerned parent in California whose child was being asked to sum up the essence of the universe in 40 minutes:

First, I think this kind of teaching/testing is a form of child abuse. If you have the chance and the power or resources, I suggest you tell the district your child will not be subjected to this maltreatment—which will create its own cycle.

Second, if you feel you must, for the time being, submit to the test, I suggest that you help your child learn the buzzwords that propel it, and have her or him write them furiously at exam time.

I don’t know your area or test, so I am not certain what these buzzwords might be. In Michigan, we have a list called the “Core Democratic Values” which are really the values undemocratically enacted by a handful of demagogues posing as teachers. Even so, it is pretty easy to commit their litany to memory, and repeat it.

If you take the second course, I urge you to explain to your child what is going on, perhaps in terms of how Brer Rabbit finally got to the briar patch. Sometimes those who do not have a lot of power must smile at the powerful, while they gather the wisdom to make the relations of power shift. All the best, r

This is what I wish I had said:

Good teaching, the struggle to collectively gain and test knowledge, involves a meeting of a unique and special student with an equally particular teacher, each with his or her own backgrounds, expertise, and passions. The meeting takes place in a discrete community, with an exceptional history and specific resources. Each of these three foundational well-springs is wrapped with a way it is understood and presented, a paradigm of curriculum and instruction. When an educator is able to create a zone of enlightenment, a relatively free and respectful spot where egos can be transformed and rigorous critique is possible, some change and learning might go on, especially if our educator understands and offers her philosophy for ongoing criticism.

The people involved in this process, as unique as they are, have a great deal in common, wherever they are. Should they chose to try to understand and change their community, their world, to create and test meaning, they will conduct their work within historical, scientific, and political contexts that offer a base of operations, a standard, that is whole, ever-interesting, incomplete, yet comprehensible.

For example, if I map the surroundings of my school, and wonder about the substantive implications of my map, I will have a geography that is not a series of carefully colored appearances, but a map...
that allowed me to actualize, measure, and critique my grasp of a map. My map has meaning, substance that I helped create. If I go further, say if I join my students in mapping the political geography of playgrounds in downtown Detroit, and a suburb just east of the Detroit border, I will find my Detroit playground map will be relatively tiny, covered with gravel, weeds, or concrete. It will have broken syringes, bottles, a couple of rusted play structures, and it will be surrounded by the skeletal structures of burned-out homes. My suburban playground will be bigger, full of green life in the summer. The play structures will be ergonomic, made safe by softened ground underneath. If I see a skeleton of a home nearby, it is because that home is being remodeled, enlarged, big-footed. My two maps will have substance, and form the basis of mapping, which is also questioning, say, the U.S. and Grenada. My process works anywhere. But my unique entry-point maps will be hard to standardize—as will the psyches of each student and teacher in the school system.

In the schools I visit with the Whole Schooling Research Project, I am regularly confronted by educators, in schools designed along holistic lines, who ask me in varying ways, “How do I keep my ideals and still teach?” Once-utopian schools that I know well are assaulted by high-stakes tests, by demands to commodify children for Coca Cola, or the arrant selfishness that drives the careerism of many union leaders and principals, willing to sacrifice the membership and kids for a chance to golf with the local bankers. In one school we are working with teachers involved in a Glasser-based paradigm, a school that was formed only four years ago by teachers and parents who wanted a democratic community school teaching along whole language lines. In just four years, the focus of the entire school, except one courageous young untenured teacher, has shifted toward attaining MEAP scores; teaching to the test. One teacher alone in the building now sets aside a daily reading-storytelling time for kids. The rest have abandoned the practice altogether, in favor of teaching test-taking skills, following MEAP guides, and the Chicago-math program. There is nothing at all unusual about this school.

In a Detroit cluster of three elementary schools, which, because of the assistance of local professors, received a sizeable Annenberg grant, the principals directed their staffs to hold a celebration party at the Detroit Yacht Club. There the principals gifted one another with squirting water fountains for their offices. This in schools where there are no books, no heat, in some cases, few unbroken windows. From one professor, “I attended every one of the Annenberg meetings. There was never a discussion of good teaching, never a thought of the kids’ problems or the community. There was only talk about how to compete for the grant. That was always related to MEAP scores. And it
results in this: water-fountains. The teaching staff went along, maybe out of fear, but maybe they want a piece too."

Standardized tests, all of them, help shatter the vital relationship of educators, students, and their community. The gateway to the exams is first affective, then literary. Those who feel good about their examiners and surroundings do better. Those who read and speak in the world of the examiners excel. No standardized exam understands the emotions and literacy of any of its prey. But the tests measure it—and punish bad feelings and wrong literacies. Moreover, behind the affective and the literacy issue is the material basis of the question: how will the child who arrives to take the test hungry, after spending a sleepless night in an unheated Detroit home do in comparison to a child arriving in a Navigator, warm full tummy, rested from a night under suburban down?

The exams disjoint the rational progress of an exploratory curriculum, breaking down the door of the classroom, stealing a teacher’s most precious commodity, time with kids. In Michigan, our research with the Whole Schooling Project indicates that between 30 and 40% of teacher time is now exhausted teaching to one standardized exam or another.

Alien to the classroom, the exams seek to regulate what is known, and how it is to come to be known—on the behalf of elites who have a desperate stake in this kind of rule. Teachers lose more control over the processes and products of their work, as do the kids. The mind in the classroom becomes a regulated body, the mind in the classroom replaced by the mind of a testing agency. Every author of standards has clearly said that a key reason for their work is to replace the teacher with the textbook. Everyone involved in writing the tests I have interviewed has reiterated that contempt. The more kids and teachers engage in the standardization process, the less powerful and creative they become. The deskilled teachers become imperial clerks, missionaries for the privileged, the students’ futures fixed and tamped down by utterly predictable test results. The tests drop horizons of expectations for the future and analyses of the present. This is a qualitative ratcheting up of past classroom practices, a dramatic intensification of Taylorist efforts, like textbooks, which have been in place since the McGuffey readers. A new, more complex hierarchy of the split of mental and manual labor deepens alienation and exploitation in the classroom.

The exams are meant to divide people, to quantify, exclude, and segment children. For the most part, the standardized exams demonstrate power relations in their results: parental income, race, and sex. The division of children quickly becomes division of adults, as teacher wages are tied to exam scores: an injury to one really does precede an injury to all. Pointedly, the children first hurt are often children la-
beled with disabilities who are quickly set apart as soon as test preparation begins. In Michigan, in January 2000, a Pontiac principal went so far as to write a letter to every parent of a labeled kid, urging that the parents opt the kids out of the exams, as the district and her school were under pressure to post high scores. Caught, she was mildly disciplined.

The exams require that some kids fail. In gotch-ya fashion, the tests are designed to steadily raise a bar that is already inappropriate for about 30% of the people eligible to take them. Proper assessment is the steady evaluation of meaningful work over time, conducted by a practitioner familiar with the test-taker and the subject, a costly prospect unless it occurs to someone that this is a teacher’s daily job.

Not surprisingly, many people who must confront the exams cheat. Facing a monstrous scam, they find ways to resist—that don’t necessarily confront or unveil the respectable cheaters who wrote the exams and who so often profit from them. From New York to Michigan to California, hundreds of teachers, students, and administrators have been wrongfully exposed as cheaters, while the test authors promote exam-aids that their special, tax-funded, insider knowledge allowed them alone to create. The honest graft offered to the upper-middle class goes unnoticed. This repositioning of integrity sets up a class of people who must bear the fear and guilt of cheating, when they are not the cheats.

The other side of cheating is incompetent and inconsistent scoring. For years, the Michigan exams were scored by temps, paid slightly above the minimum wage, in the Carolinas. But even tenured teachers could not agree on the exam scores in Michigan. In a series of workshops in 1999, more than 150 Michigan educators concluded that they could reach no consensus for scoring when they used the templates designed to score the state exam, the MEAP. In 1999 the state office responsible for scoring the MEAP re-set the benchmarks for passage in order to manipulate the number of failed students.

**What is in the Tests?**

*Intellectual Bias.* Philosophically, these are partisan exams—truth is determined by the political leanings of the people who wrote it. Truth, moreover, is located inside the exams, and inside the minds of the people who score it, not as it is rightfully understood as a struggle in the classroom where people can gain and test knowledge in a reasonably free and rigorous atmosphere. The purpose of the tests is the regulation of knowledge: both what is known and, importantly, how people come to know it—cognitively and affectively.

*Irrationalism,* as the opening question from California demonstrates. An upper-middle class and typically white standpoint (stu-
Racism. In February 2000, the racists who wrote the Michigan exam, for example, were forced to withdraw a question that required the answer: Islam and Judaism, in response to a prompt for the underlying religious causes in the Middle East. The authors seem unable to reveal the underlying interests at work here: oil and capital—propelled by a nation about to elect a fanatic Christian of some party as president. The withdrawn question, however, is a mere particle of the racism that can be measured by the design of the exam, at the beginning, and the results, at the conclusion. The analysis of appearances, avoidance of going to the root, is a key pillar of standardized exams. In this sense, as in the others, the tests obstruct reason at a critical juncture in youthful development.

Fatuous anti-communism. U.S. capital is dressed as a free market, former “Soviet” capital is presented as a command economy. The bases of supply, demand, and market choices—in productive exploitation, alienation, and fetishism—are censored. Mystical forces, the invisible economic hand, are set upon the land and pounded into young minds. Not people, but mists of superstition, are the guides of work and knowledge.

Witless patriotism. Social agency is trivialized. For example, to demonstrate the workings of a democratic society, the Michigan MEAP test asks what people should do when confronting noise in a park; this in a state where the largest school system, Detroit, has few school libraries; the school board was abolished, and seized by the rich. Students, who have no formal rights, relearn their impotence by being offered inconsequential questions to consider. A Michigan MEAP “core democratic value,” in a society founded in revolution, is to “obey the law.”

Worship of the prime value of capital and its ideology of greed and fear: beyond individualism (me first, my reward, my future) to what Conrad in Heart of Darkness suggested was the origin of the Horror: pure selfishness. Competition for ideas, as if ideas were property.

An abiding fear of sexuality as a matter of pleasure. Sexuality as a matter of anything at all is censored. In classrooms where a foremost question underlying most activity is the sexuality of the people involved, the absence of sexually related questions tightens strictures that go mostly unnoticed.

A justification of the way things are; as if the way things are did not exist.
What is the Greater Impact of the Tests?

Subservience. Kids and teachers learn to be the sullen objects of others’ designs. Occasionally there is resistance, most often superficial resistance: students cheat, play hooky, etc. It is fairly rare, now, that students and teachers take the time to radically trace the sources of the tests, the reasons for them, or refuse outright to take them.

Intensified surveillance of children who have nearly no unsupervised freedom as it is. The educational panopticon of Foucault’s shuddering prophecy, the exams move discipline from mind to body, making external discipline internal, invisible, absent in its omniscience. Fear of freedom is constituted by the nearly invisible eradication of freedom. Children become fearful of guessing, playing with knowledge, risking.

The creation of a spectacle of farcical appearances which generates its own life. The MEAP test, which measures nothing but income and race, is reified, author-less, growing into the arbiter of housing values and human worth, career maker and breaker, seductress and torturer, dominatrix of reason. The uttermost expression of alienation in education, the tests become both the outcome and goal of work in schools.

Powerlessness, incoherence. The message of the tests is: what you do does not matter, your world is incomprehensible, disjointed, random, chaotic, and dangerous. You are better than, worse than, never enough, always anxious for a more that you cannot determine.

Alienated indifference to the importance of the struggle to comprehend and change the world: counter-agency. All concerned, other than those at the top of the pyramid, are denied a picture of the pyramid. Deskilled teachers and students, creatively dulled, resigned to doing what is directed, gulled by promises of rewards or fearful of government consequences, the authenticity of the academic and practical work made a spectacle; discover themselves partitioned and propertyless, the value of their labor diminished and interchangeable. Diminution, submission, is anchored in their personalities. Repressed creativity and freedom in the arena where invention and discovery do not necessarily lead to upheaval, but it is reasonable to suspect that, with some leadership and organization, it could. Most teachers will go along. Many will not.

What is Not on the Tests

Honest Human Relationships

There are no honest stories on standardized curricula and exams, no beauty, no play, no sensuality, no aesthetics, no real scoundrels (even Uriah Heep would be sanitized), and no joy. Every relationship between all involved in the testing, from the test-makers to
the takers, is a relationship built on distrust, sequestration: each examiner split from the student, each question separated from the next, the only internal logic holding them together being the scamming logic of the professional test-taker. What is not on the test is an honest human relationship struggling for a significant truth that counts. The exams create a shadow universe where actions and ideas really do not matter, but the sham of the exam does, a casino-consciousness that looks at others and thinks: Sucker. Hence, the exams create a false, deceitful, consciousness that knows it must appear to be what it is not. Within this universe, even to resist can be to succumb.

**Critique of Tyranny, Hope for Democracy**

What is not in the standards or on the tests, and which progressive educators rarely address, is what people need to know to live in and create a more democratic, egalitarian, humane, and creative world. How do we create joyous loving communities while at the same time we seek to transform an opposition that is often ruthless? How do people confront tyranny and hierarchy with democracy and equality? I will briefly trace the path I have followed, moving from the geneses of oppression to the ways out.

**Market Analyses**

David Harvey locates the origins of alienated life, the recreation of relations of domination by those who suffer from them, in capital’s relationships between workers and owners which require that labor be paid less than its full value, creating a surplus value that is silently seized by capitalists. Those who become instruments of their own oppression, like those who volunteered to spray Agent Orange in Vietnam, do so because their social relationships, beginning with their relationship to production, are pre-arranged to make them lifelong dupes, to blind them to the totality of the relationship. Marx, per Harvey, says that the only way out is to break the iron discipline of capital, to abolish wage labor. Harvey suggests that the relationships requisite to capital are rather easily cloaked in analyses of distribution and exchange, where the pretense of freedom can be at least artificially upheld. However, at the level of production, where neither freedom nor democracy can be allowed relevance, the realities of exploitation and greed become crystalline.

Bertell Ollman calls one of the key processes which conceal the workings of capital’s discipline, “Market mystification.” This mystification focuses on the arena of buying and selling, where everyone operates, and where the ideology of capital can become fully anchored in personalities which are rarely offered an answer to Ollman’s question, “How else might we behave?” Day to day participation in the market, which promotes and reinforces individualism, self-absorption,
artificial choices which are indeed only narrow options, the objectification of human beings as commodities, fierce competition and indifference to others, deep-seated insecurity and anxiety; leads to a false sense of equality of choice (and guilt). People are split apart by the market—but also by the institutions that provide a gloss for it, like church or school. The contradictory pressures of these institutions, "do unto others," or "share," are verbal mantras which to Ollman seem to have little impact because of the powerful reinforcing structures of the market, alluring every day.

Fredy Perlman and I. I. Rubin (1990) suggest that the crux of understanding Marx is to grasp his notion of commodity fetishism. Their analysis, "Essays on Marx's Theory of Value," assaul ts the shadow of economics featured on most social studies exams, that is, the counterfeit economics of scarcity and choice, by insisting that political economy is the study of relations of people engaged in production—and the social relationships that arise. They trace Marx's progression of gateways into economics:

First Marx, in critiques of Hegel, examines religious estrangement, traces the unhappy consciousness, which per Hegel, was willing to allow its potentially perfect rational unity with god to be ruptured by priests, with interests contrary to spiritualization. The passage to spiritual unity for Hegel was a pathway within consciousness. A classical objective idealist for whom ideas sired reality, Hegel saw the resolution of alienation within the mind as well.

Marx makes Hegel's superficial analysis of alienation and estrangement profound, by placing it within the complex processes of the material world. Marx's "being determines consciousness" was more than the inversion of Hegel; it was a redoubling that at once raises practice into a reciprocal relationship with consciousness. Hegel examined alienation from god. Marx examined alienation within the context of capital—and located the sources in the relations of production: working people who are compelled by birthright to sell their labor do not control the products and processes of their work, and the more they engage in work the more they enrich those whose privileges deepen the miseries of the work force. The key factor of life, work, is stripped of creativity, becomes so alien to the worker that life is seen as an event outside the workplace. In turn, the more commodities, things, one has, the more one is alienated from creativity, from people, from the processes of love, labor, and knowledge. The turn to examining change, not within the mind and its brittle dualities, but within the complexity of the material world has pedagogical implications that we will need to return to at the close.

Next Marx takes up the question of how it is that normalcy (relationships between things concealing relations between people) is established so thoroughly that it is invisible, how human properties are
made to seem out of the reach of humans: how unjust production relations take on the mantle of inevitability, indiscernible, how these relations which are the creation of people seem to work independently of people. Marx calls this an "enchanted and perverted world," and names the process that denies it: reification. It is a process of reification that allows Capital, Power, and Authoritarianism to walk unseen through every standardized exam, and which allows the appearance of freedom in the marketplace to obstruct tyranny at work—and in school.

Finally, Marx turns to the origins of reification and alienation, and reveals commodity fetishism. Marx suggests that an economy producing not for use but for profit, produces commodities for sale that appear to be the impetus of relationships among people. That is, people see the beginning points of their relationships with their world as commodities, things, rather than the primary relation being to one another, to people; the appearance is that the primary relation is to things. And in a society in which labor must be sold as a commodity, people themselves become things. This explains, on one hand, why a thing, capital, can be seen as creating value or surplus value, when the pulse is labor, and on the other hand, how it is that standardized exams can pretend to quantify consciousness—but cannot answer young Mr. Troisi’s question about the human qualities of testing which opened our discussion here.

The illusions that mask the creation of capital are appearances that have an important reality. If you cannot judge a book by its cover, you surely can sell it with a seductive one. The illusions do not vanish, but are eroded by a systematic assault—both on capital and the mirages that disguise it. What is especially helpful in Perlman and Rubin is their linkage of alienation, reification, and commodity fetishism in an analysis that does more than simply tie them together. They demonstrate that the passage from what is to what can be is a process that is not leaped by utopian cries for a better world, but by a careful examination of concrete social and productive relations. A complete transformation of social being is both built into a system which requires evermore social organization and interchange, and necessary within the processes of action of those who hope to develop the consciousness to change it. What can be is imbedded in an analysis of what is. Significantly though, what makes this analysis possible is the standpoint offered in the egalitarian ethics that originate in early religious understandings like the Biblical Acts 4, “distribution was made to each as had any need.”

Sexuality

Now comes Wilhelm Reich. Reich (1970), contrary to what he says is “vulgar” Marxism, insists that ideas, and ideology, are mate-
rial forces—embedded in economy and in the body/mind (p. 14). He asks, what is it in political psychology that can answer what political economy cannot? What is the relation of ideas as a material force and the construction of personality under capitalist conditions? While it may be that every social formation reflects and recreates its economic foundations, it is equally true that the psychological structures of people in an undemocratic and exploitative society are anchored with sexual fear and repression—which reverberates back and deepens the fear of freedom, one reason cultured and literate Germany chose barbarism over socialism in the 1930’s. Why is it that serfdom is replaced by the inner slave? Why are capital’s illusions so compelling, and what must be known about the minds of people anchored in capital for centuries in order to make the sacrifice necessary for the next change worth it?

Reich believed that the reason working people do not strike when denied what is rightfully theirs, the reason the hungry often do not steal, the reason youths still volunteer to fight oil wars, the inhibition of all critical faculties, is embedded in the authoritarian family, commanding obedience and fear of sex at the outset. For Reich, the authoritarian family is to the mind what capitalist production relations are to work. Organized mysticism, religion, etc., finds its foundations in dictatorial fathers.

Reich is especially sharp in his investigation of the interrelation of sexuality and racism in the Nazi lexicon, which treated them (and usually communism) simultaneously: racial/political purity traced by bloodline. Sexual sin is condemned and simultaneously promoted, fetishized, unrepressed sensuality is possessed by alien races, anchoring the repressed and irrational personality. Reich demonstrates that in times of crisis, ruling powers commonly loosen sexual strictures within their class, while at the same time they step up their demands for morality, strong family values, etc. If, Reich says, the working people lost their sexual strictures at the same time they lost their jobs in times of economic collapse, any dictator would be threatened.

Reich sees a direct line between abstinence and irrationalism. Reich is equally sharp on the failures of socialism. The Bolsheviks knew (and cared) only a little about the mass dread of freedom, fear of critical critique, and did little to address it; volunteering to replace one father with another. This would explain how a society instructing its members in Marxism, knew nothing about Marxism, why so few pointed to the naked new emperor and demanded communism, not capitalism. The way out for Reich is a process of analysis (social and psychological), and struggles for freedom (social and sexual). People need to liberate work, knowledge, and love. People must demand real gratification for every key aspect of life—and accept responsibility for it. Escape from the vassal structure’s triangle of patriarchy, monogamy,
and sexual repression, bonds more powerful than coercion, grows from the transformation of everyday life, a positive, constructive, anticipatory project (Brown, 1973). Despite Reich’s late-life turn to his own forms of megalomania, his contributions to understanding why people willingly entrap their own fates form benchmarks for future investigations.

**Negation**

What is not on the high-stakes standardized tests is the form and substance of change—negation, qualitative leaps. This absence freezes the content of the tests, proposing the final triumph of history—as does this suggested statement on citizenship from the National Council of Social Studies:

> Our nation has fought and won many important battles against tyranny around the world. The promise that democracy holds for people of every walk of life is being spread around the globe. It is a time of triumph. The values identified in our founding documents are providing the platform from which people everywhere are asserting their voices as the right of the governed. For Americans, this is a proud moment. (NCSS Web page 2001)

This nonsense, divorcing democracy from capitalism, rising out of what claims to be the protector of the education of citizens in the US, this hubris which refuses to recognize the Stars and Stripes as seen by much of the world as a source of tyranny even in its moment of techno-might; this is the standpoint of the self-satisfied test writers who see the end of history upon us. It is wrong.

Negation, negativity, and contradiction, are the source of movement, self-movement, the originating point of change. In the west, knowledge of negation, matter in motion, traces easily back to Heraclitus, and reaches up to Hegel and Marx; something secret only to those so blinded by the petty privileges of standpoint that they miss the intellectual history of a couple millennia.

Negation is not simply saying, “No,” or hyper-criticism, but the recognition of the process of development of all things, all being imbued with their own opposition: in mathematics plus and minus, in physics ever action an equal and opposite reaction, in life the slow process of death, and in society the growing unity of the mass of people, the working class, within the processes of capital which requires and exploits them. Negation is simply saying that all things are interrelated, carrying their own internal contradictions, and things move, change.
The process of change moves from quality to quantity, and back again, in a growing spiral, each new quantity being entirely new, but carrying forward all of the aspects past at the same time: DNA, the triumph of capitalism over feudalism, the French Revolution, the, “I get it!” moment in a classroom. Water turned into steam is an entirely new quantity, never to be quite the same again, carrying forward all the quantities of the past.

Please let me digress again with another explanatory myth, Plato’s Cave, of which I will use but a part. My hope is that this will be another pathway to describe the relationship of Hegel and Marx, idealism and materialism—and pedagogy. Plato in his masterwork, the Republic, posed an allegory of a cave in which a group of people were held in bondage since childhood. Facing the rear of the cave, chains prevented them from moving their heads and bodies. Behind them a fire burned and between them and the fire characters moved to and fro, sometimes speaking, their sounds echoing off the cave walls at the rear. For them, the shadows were reality, the echoes the discourse of reality.

Now several people indirectly posed solutions to this, ways out, including Plato. In each case, the point was to either be freed by another, an outsider, or to think one’s way out—until Hegel. Hegel deepened the problem, but failed to solve it. Reasoning backward, a posteriori, Hegel assumed the position of the wise man, him, the inheritor of all of history for whom history had finally reached its conclusion, the position of totality. He reviewed events up to his moment, recognizing that at least two factors go unnoticed in Plato, work and struggle. Hegel then traced the process of these key elements of life, with considerable care, believing that the movement he tracked down was directed toward his perfection, his own intellectual development. In Hegel’s system, discourse plays a vital, decisive role, as the source of movement is the mind, and its clearest representation is discourse. Hegel, an objective idealist, believed things do change, within a closed circular system, designed to close with him, the Spirit, the unity of the highest form of humanity, government, and the desires of the people. Still, at the heart of the Hegelian system is negativity, change, tension, opposition within unity, reciprocity; rooted in work, the path out of domination. Work makes the concept possible, and transforms the world. From Plato to Hegel, dialectics, the study of change, was merely a method of understanding, with no linkage to the real. Hegel addressed the real, as history, whose purpose was to amount to him (Kojeve, 1996).

Marx did more than turn this upside down. Like a balloon, he turned it inside out—and anchored it. The brittle idealized dichotomies that Hegel proposed in history to demonstrate the processes of change, become complex as Marx moves to say that the processes of
history are not circular, but a spiral, never closed, but always incomplete, driven by the internal contradictions of peoples' relations to the means of production, reproduction, and the illumination of rational knowledge. For Marx, the way out of Plato's cave is not merely to think, or to think dogmatically in retrospect, but to actively engage the study of what people in the cave must do to survive: work, pro-create, and understand—an unremitting interplay of theory and practice, which can also spell out the optimism embedded in his outlook. The secret is to struggle for what is true by deepening theory and practice.

In creating value, the working class may create its own domination, but it also forges the route out. Only the oppressed have a stake in the totality of the struggle for the truth, of harmony over disharmony, unity over alienation, democracy over domination. The dialectic is at work, negativity reenters, with the birth of every working-class child. Reflections on work investigate tyranny, and point toward liberation. Domination is only interested in supremacy while workers can lay the groundwork for their own freedom. This is the method of analysis, the how-it-came-to-be-known, that is necessarily absent in the tests, which purport to a default, omnipotent method that is never exposed.

**Wisdom**

Ira Gollobin (1986) suggests that a peak in intellectual development, related to but also propelling relations of production, is wisdom, which he suggests is a profound understanding of the relations of people to each other and their universe, the make-up of totality. Wisdom is understanding the whole, its relations to the composite parts, and humbling action—since knowledge is partial, but not so partial it is paralyzing. Anatol Lunacharsky, leader of the revolutionary Soviet education system in a brief period before Stalin acceded to power, suggested that a good Soviet citizen would be one who could "play one instrument very well, but who could hear and understand the whole orchestra too" (Lunacharsky, 1981, p. 47).

Wisdom is the relentless struggle for what is true, a unity of the absolute and relative, with a grasp of the particular and the general. Truth is simultaneously relative and absolute. It is noon, it is not noon. Things change. Matter moves. Our understanding can always be deepened, is always approximate, but at the same time we know enough to act—perhaps humbly and with determination.

In a society rooted in class difference, wisdom, related to prescribed ethics, can become an aristocratic reified and privileged neo-religion. Or wisdom can be a system that understands one becomes, and is, what one does—that wisdom is not only what one grasps but also how one acts in regard to others. Moreover, Gollobin points back
to the question of alienation in Marx, that is, the more one has, the less one is. Wisdom, Gollobin concludes, is directly connected to freedom, each both a means to an end, the pathways to “new vistas for the head, hand and heart, no longer wrenched apart, to attain a mass level of wisdom” (p. 452).

There is no standardized pathway to wisdom—or democracy. Wisdom does not come without risk and pain, leaps of knowledge and practice that succeed—and fail. No democracy has come to being without a revolution.

**Teach Good, Fight Hard, Grow Love**

In this context, in de-industrialized North America, where there is no reason to believe the industrial working class will be a lever for democratic change for some time to come, teachers are centripetally positioned to fashion ideas which can take on an international import, and to assist in practices to challenge injustice.

The beginning point of this is to understand what value teachers create within capitalist societies. This is what Marx had to say:

The only worker who is productive is one who produces surplus value for the capitalist, or in other words contributes to the self-valorization of capital. If we may take an example from outside the sphere of material production, a schoolmaster is a productive worker when, in addition to belaboring the heads of his pupils, he works himself into the ground to enrich the owner of the school. That the latter has laid out his capital in a teaching factory, instead of a sausage factory, makes no difference to the relation. The concept of a productive worker therefore implies, not merely a relation between the activity of work and its useful effect, between the worker and the product of the work, but also a specific social relation of production, a relation with a means of valorization. To be a productive worker is therefore not a piece of luck, but a misfortune. (Marx, 1977, p. 644)

Do teachers create surplus value, or add to the self-valorization of capital? I think they do, in a dialectical sense. Certainly, schools grow out of surplus value created by, at first, the early capitalist and industrial work force (Harvey, 1982). Teachers work in schools which themselves are both commodities and commodifiers. They train skills, promote ideologies, make possible institutional profiteering (consider milk or cola sales, architects, bus makers, etc.) and above all teachers fashion hope, real or false. It follows that teachers create terrific value,
not only in passing along what is known, but how it came to be known. Moreover, given that the crisis of the present age is not a crisis of material scarcity, but a crisis of consciousness (that is, the abundance that is necessary for a democratic and egalitarian society is at hand, what is missing is the decision to gain it), the role of educators in creating critical consciousness is even more vital. This is even more sharply outlined in deindustrialized North America, where schools have replaced industrial work places as the key organizing site of public life, and where, in turn, the struggle for social justice must shift away from industrial unions toward communities and education centers.

The pedagogical side of addressing these latter factors refers back to the earlier discussion of materialism and idealism in regard to Marx and Hegel. There are dialectically materialist and idealist ways to teach, having implications that support or undermine the irrationalism and authoritarianism that underlie standardized curricula and tests—and all of teaching. The way one comes to know is as important as what one knows, each acting reciprocally on the other. For our purposes, knowledge without agency cannot become wisdom. So, pedagogy is pivotal.

Idealist pedagogy assumes the world is constructed in the mind, and in most cases the mind at issue is the mind of the instructor—or a textbook. Given the powerful centrality of the mind, the ego trails not far behind, carrying all the hubris that one might expect from this process. For example, consider the idealist teacher, Dickens' Gradgrind from *Hard Times* who wanted, "Facts alone." Let us say Gradgrind is a historian, with a specialty in the battle at Gettysburg, Pickett's Charge, when thousands of poor, young, white southern men marched in lines across a relatively flat battlefield into cannon fire, grape shot, and were ripped to pieces—by the thousands—at the order of slavers like General Robert E. Lee, who ordered them to go march, and wrung their gentle hands later. For Gradgrind, the issues are quantitative, not openly interpretive: how many troops, wearing what, in lines how long, etc.? For Gradgrind, what is significant is the compilation of indubitable and fixed facts in his mind, *his* facts, and the presentation of the facts to the students, who plagiarize them and score well on his test. This is ego reproducing ego, idealism, and passivity.

E. H. Carr (1977) in *What is History* suggests a method of history that demonstrates, above all, that people can comprehend and change their circumstances. For Carr, history is the relationship of interpretation and facts: history is an analysis of the past from a relative standpoint in the present, embedded with a call to action for the future. History is at the intersection of events, interpretations, and the values and politics of historians, a spiraling stripping away of appearances to, not necessarily superior facts, but to improved questions—always in wonder of the implications for the present. It is easy to imagine an
overlay demonstrating the triangle of creating history: the event, the historian, the social context of the interpretation. The pedagogical triangle offered above is: teacher, student, community. This is a study of relationships, interpenetrations. For the critical educator, the issue is the relationship of the starting points of student consciousness, affective and cognitive, with the material issues at hand, and the needs of the community, and his/her passions and expertise. The historian follows the same path: events, the standpoint of historical progress at the moment, and the historian, always reaching for a higher understanding on the escalating spiral of practice tested with theory.

I think Carr would be happy to dig deep into Pickett’s Charge, even for a semester, rather than to take the traditional route of U.S. social studies from the Big Bang to 1865. He would be at odds with Gradgrind, at the end of the day, about the purpose of doing history: to demonstrate the ego-based collection of facts—or to prove out and test the passions of the historian, to question the paradigm at work, and to investigate the implications of the facts at hand. What, for example, got those poor southern white men to march across that field, when all indications that the unthinkable, shooting Lee and Pickett and going home, would have served them far better? Would historical consciousness, linked to critical forms of pedagogy, get tomorrow’s troops under another Pickett to behave differently? Is not social studies, in method and content, a life and death question?

Carr closes his book with this short assault on idealism: “It moves.” He is moved to this illuminating brevity to counter the idealist position: things are a construction of my mind; things do not change. “It moves,” is equivalent to saying, “Things change.” What we address, in history, pedagogy, and science, is matter in motion; interrelated ideas, interpretations and events, perhaps serendipitously colliding, with a little luck—and some love. Which leads me back to the opening, where we started out wondering how to sum up the essence of the universe in 40 minutes, and what that might have to do with creating citizens who genuinely care about one another.

Good teaching corresponds to good history—because each seeks to struggle to understand and change the world—in its particularities and in its universality. Good teaching is more than the circled triangle I suggested above. Good teaching involves, yes, a unique student, a particular community, and a singular teacher. That triangular meeting needs to be surrounded by a philosophy that the teacher understands and can state, and is open to criticism as well as revelation. But yet another factor surrounds the paradigmatic circle: love.

The idealist take on education is that one changes people by telling them to change, by systems of reward and punish, carrot and stick, divide and conquer; curricular control and standardized high-stakes exams, that is, continuing processes of abuse, the self-hatred that mo-
tivates the Gradgrinds of the profession. What can rupture that pattern of abuse, which must be ruptured if we teach for a better world, is rational resistance on the one hand, but love on the other—a balance within contradictions—which understands that while we must indeed address the ruthlessness of privilege, we must also learn to love one another in caring communities while we do. This is rooted in the commitment Goethe urges at the opening—and which the exams deny.

What to do? Act on a careful study of concrete circumstances as they shift. Boycott the tests. Let the kids deliberately fail them. Organize. Rupture hierarchy and sequestration in school and out. Violate the caste system. Be more kind than clever—particularly in grading. Break that pattern of abuse. Use methods that reflect the intersection of the educator, the student, and an authentic problem (Gibson, 2001)

Always historicize. Criticize everything, demonstrably. The period of Plato’s cave is the period of the monologue of echoes. Let the dialogue enter the class, in the study of real processes in flux. Bare the bureaucrats who wrote the tests, and those who implement them. Discover whose interests are served by the standards. Research. Resist. Build an organization like the Rouge Forum—of people (students, parents, school workers, community people) who care about one another, about their communities and their kids. Study work, and work. This is always the requisite negation of what is.

This is not a utopian call for what ought to be, but an insistence that this is what I see going on inside those courageous classrooms where stories prevail over textbooks and tests, even though those same classrooms are set up in an indubitable yet unjust nation. What ought to be cannot simply be declared, as most utopian schools do. What ought to be needs to be forged out of what is, considering the totality of issues at work. The clues, processes, and material bases for better ways to live already confront us. This is a call for the harmony that is already there to come to dominate, dislocate, the disharmony that now holds power; to take a stand above the standards. This can be achieved with a careful study of concrete circumstances, using a paradigm that calls for its own self-critique (see, for example, Rouge Forum News, available on-line: http://www.pipeline.com/~rgibson/rouge_forum).

The high-stakes standardized tests, while restricting, also open up possibilities that even industrial rebellions do not. As we have seen through history, an industrial rebel is still a worker. But to fight the tests, among youth whose demand is not “More!” but “All!” is to address, as best we can, all of the strictures of capital.

It will not do to set up a great charter school without simultaneously addressing the economic injustice and authoritarian practices that surround it. It is not enough to point at a fat governor, or to read good stories to kids in a test-based school, or to call for character education. Small schools that do not address injustice at its roots are just
bad small schools. Rethinking education and criticizing the standardized tests only as a bad method, or the union officials who back them, is simply recreating, not rethinking. It is no longer possible to close one’s door and teach. Good teaching must now be linked to a sophisticated understanding of what social justice is, the struggle for what is true, and how to get toward it. To say, “It moves,” is also to say, “Things change,” or “We can win.”

I close as we opened, with a poem, unsigned:

Life travels upward in spirals.
Those who take pains to search the shadows
of the past below us, then, can better judge the
tiny arc up which they climb,
more surely guess the dim
curves of the future above them

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Thoughts on Redirecting a Runaway Train
A Critique of the Standards Movement

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The standards movement is a runaway train, a machine in the garden of American schooling, and prospects for re-directing the movement are growing slim. A brief selection from Leo Marx’s *The Machine in the Garden* addressing Hawthorne’s depiction of “sleepy hollow” will illustrate my meaning:

On a fine summer morning the writer enters the woods and sits down to await “such little events as may happen...” He records sights and sounds. He locates himself at the center of an idyllic domain—a land of order, form, and harmony... Suddenly, the harsh whistle of the locomotive fills the air. Then discord replaces harmony and the tranquil mood vanishes. Although he later regains a measure of repose, a sense of loss colors the rest of his notes. His final observation is of some clouds that resemble the “shattered ruins of a dreamer’s Utopia...” (Marx, 1964).

A runaway train, the standards movement is freezing out the possibility of a broad, reflective, and issues-centered social studies aimed at creating a thoughtful citizenry, in favor of a more narrowly conceived history and social science curriculum. The entire endeavor is predicated on the misguided notion of schooling as a lever for improving the position of the U.S. in international economic competition.

I have no doubt that the nationwide movement for standards and assessment in history and social science is well intended. Everyone wants high levels of student learning, and it is a profound truth that teacher expectations have a great deal to do with student outcomes. However, I have serious doubts about whether standards will

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raise student performance levels, and would not support the standards movement philosophically, even if they could. At this juncture, I have seen little evidence that the creation of standards and assessment measures will raise student performance. In short, I have substantial doubts about the wisdom of the entire enterprise.

Reform Story

The era of national educational reform leading to the standards movement began in earnest during a time of political conservatism and educational retrenchment heralded by publication of the report, A Nation at Risk, in 1983. The origins of the standards movement may be readily traced to the educational agenda during the Reagan and Bush administrations. The reform movement spawned by A Nation at Risk has continued under the America 2000 and Goals 2000 programs with a top down push for standards. These documents specifically call for the teaching of history, geography, and civics and make no mention of social studies.

The standards movement was launched amid a national “crisis” in education based upon the charge that our schools were in dire condition and largely to blame for a decline by the U. S. in international economic competition. Many educators and the public agreed that drastic reform was required to remedy the situation. However, a general lack of meaningful discourse about the mythical crisis resulted in a national obsession with fixing the schools. This obsession was motivated, in part, by fears first raised by A Nation at Risk that our students were not adequately prepared to allow our nation to compete in a global economy. Proposals for fixing schools included returning to basic subjects, history and geography instead of the broader, more inclusive social studies, developing a national curriculum, and using standardized tests to assess student knowledge.

Due to the storm of controversy generated by the National Standards for United States History, state and local standards were developed and now form the basis for state and local assessments, mainly through standardized tests, based on a traditional pattern of subject organization. The major arguments made by advocates of tough standards include the following:

• “Standards can improve achievement by clearly defining what is to be taught and what kind of performance is expected.”
• “Standards are necessary for equality of opportunity,” so that all students have equally high standards regardless of race, class, or gender.
• “National standards provide a valuable coordinating function,” so that families who move will find similar curricula.
• "Standards and assessments serve as an important signaling device to students, parents, teachers, employers, and colleges," by telling everyone in the educational system what is expected of them, and providing information on "how well expectations have been met" (Ravitch, 1996).

Behind these arguments for educational standards is the clear and insistent emphasis of national commission reports on schooling as a lever for improving the position of the U. S. in the international economic sphere.

Social Studies Reform. Before discussing the standards being developed for history and social science, it is important to remember the context of social studies reform. Over the past century, the social studies curriculum has been the site of continuing turf wars among competing camps, each trying to influence the direction of the curriculum, with varying levels of success. As one camp’s philosophy is in ascendance, another’s recedes, yet remains a part of the dialogue. The major camps involved in turf wars over the course of the twentieth century include traditional historians, mandarins (social science advocates), social efficiency educators, meliorists, and social reconstructionists. In the early years of the century, traditional history was dominant. During the 1920s and 1930s, progressives and social reconstructionists were in ascendency. In the 1960s and early 1970s, the mandarins had a good deal of influence. On the whole, however, educators for social efficiency have been the most influential group partly because of the ways in which schooling in America mirrors and reproduces capitalist economic technology.

In the 1980s and 1990s a revival of traditional history was led by Diane Ravitch, William Bennett, Chester Finn, Paul Gagnon, Bill Honig and others and supported by substantial funding from the conservative Bradley Foundation (Stehle, 1997). The revival of history was based on the scapegoating of social studies, and the argument that the field was to blame for the poor performance of U.S. students on standardized tests in history. This move to reassert the dominance of traditional history combined with the human capital emphasis of the national commission reports to form a powerful government line in favor of a history-geography-civics matrix and in opposition to advocates of a broader, more inclusive, progressive social studies curriculum. In fact, Diane Ravitch, chief architect of the California Framework, and former Assistant Secretary of Education during the Bush Administration, commented in 1991 to a national group of state social studies supervisors who were raising questions about the national standards movement and its failure to include social studies, that their protests and questions were to no avail, because "the train has already left the station" (Butler, 1998).
The Case Against Standards

"Manufactured Crisis." The standards movement came to fruition through a "manufactured crisis" in education (Berliner & Biddle, 1994). Contrary to the myths given prominence in national commission reports and in the media's coverage of education, for the most part our schools are doing a good job. As evidence, I cite the in-depth and longitudinal perspective on the performance of U. S. schools provided by the Sandia Report (Huelskamp, 1993). As the authors of the report point out, attention to SAT scores and international comparisons of student performance have been consistently misrepresented to substantiate unfounded charges that our schools are failing. What the reports have not told us is that SAT scores dropped because increasing numbers of students began taking the test, and that international comparisons are risky at best because of the differences between an educational system that attempts to reach the entire population, and those that cater to an elite, siphoning off pupils who do not perform to prescribed standards. For the majority of students, our nation's schools offer a good education. For the top 10-20% of students, it is as good an education as any in the world. Unfortunately, for the lower 20% of students, our schools are failing to provide a quality education.

Curricular Encapsulation. A second major problem with the standards movement is that standards embody a form of curricular encapsulation by which we tend to view our present and future educational needs through the limiting, partial, and distorted lens of our own early educational experiences which emphasized content acquisition (Zais, 1976). Standards focus mainly on content knowledge, on copious and too specific learning objectives. Content knowledge, factual learning, is best seen as a by-product of thinking, of learning that is conceptual, driven by questions and the desire to know. Many people misunderstand this basic truth. The standards movement is, seemingly, built on the opposite assumption, that a full plate of factual learning must take place before concepts and questions can be embraced. In truth, an interplay of concepts, questions, and factual evidence seems to best facilitate student learning. Unfortunately, like the trend toward behavioral objectives a generation ago, the standards movement flies in the face of everything we know about the relationship between student interest, depth of study, and learning. Standards focus instead on the compartmentalized memorization of facts, mental discipline, and rote learning.

The prominent, nearly sacred role of testing and accountability is part of the movement's content oriented curricular encapsulation. Standardized tests are inadequate mechanisms if we are to create a meaningful social studies experience in schools. Thinking and valuing are not easily testable. Omission from tests means exclusion from
the curriculum. In addition, the very nature of content is often changed and narrowed to fit testing requirements. Test construction assumes that knowledge can be decontextualized and decomposed in the process of creating specific questions with fixed responses (Longstreet, 1996). We are in the midst of an exponential expansion of the use and importance of standardized testing, and that expansion embodies several dangers. Standardized testing can trivialize content goals, limit the range of subjects, and narrow the curriculum. It exemplifies educational encapsulation, which can produce a one-dimensional curriculum focused on mere acquisition of knowledge.

Creation and implementation of standards will form the basis for nationally distributed, state administered standardized tests, and will be connected to the nature of knowledge instituted. Such tests tend to limit what is studied to what is observable and measurable, based on traditional subject organization. Moreover, as Foucault writes, the test or “examination” embodies “a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish.” Testing is a highly ritualized ceremony in which power and knowledge relations are superimposed, through which the school becomes an “apparatus of uninterrupted examination... through a constantly repeated ritual of power.” Thus, standardized testing becomes, through its “humble modalities and minor procedures,” a mechanism that coerces and controls by means of observation and examination, arranging students as if they were objects, separating, analyzing, differentiating, and carrying its procedures of decomposition to the point of recognizing individual students for the meting out of reward and punishment (Foucault, 1977).

Social Theory. A third problem, standards represent a modernist approach to reform which is hierarchical, linear, and scientistic. Behind the standards movement is a technocratic rationality which encompasses a technology of servitude, of testing and accountability with totalitarian tendencies that creates new, more effective, and deceptively pleasant forms of social control. Underlying this movement is a social theory which creates a technology for educational efficiency enforcing a human capital conception of schooling and a view of citizens as workers, for the benefit of those in power.

Herbert Marcuse’s theories in One Dimensional Man are helpful in furthering our understanding of the rationality behind standards. Perhaps, as Marcuse might have written, we are seeing the latest, most recent stage in the transformation and organization of nature as the “mere stuff of domination.” In Marcuse’s view, technological society is a system whereby technology, culture, politics, the economy and education “merge into an omnipresent system which swallows up or repulses all alternatives.” Teacher, students, and school become objects of “a comfortable, smoothe, reasonable” domination in which “democratic unfreedom prevails.” Thus, the political and intellectual
coordination of school content appears imminently rational and efficient. Unfortunately, this development limits the range of knowledge and kinds of questions to be considered in schools. The good way of life emerges, a pattern of one-dimensional thought and behavior in which ideas that transcend the established universe of discourse are either repelled or reduced to terms of the established universe. Operationalism, behaviorism, and a total empiricism result (Marcuse, 1964). In the case of standards for history and social science, the consequence will be a focus on discrete and decontextualized facts.

Practical Consequences. Fourth, several practical concerns arise in the application of standards. Equity concerns emerge around how the standards will be applied. Many teachers fear that test results will be used to de-fund “failing” schools. Yet, the standards and resulting test scores do not take into account the complex socioeconomic factors largely responsible for low student performance. The standards movement ignores troubling and persistent issues of poverty and social stratification, the savage inequalities of school finance, and the ethnic and cultural diversity of students. It’s a one-size-fits-all approach that ignores the need to attend individual differences and student interests.

The standards movement, applied to social studies, will lead to even more emphasis on ground covering; to the fact-myth-legend approach to studying history; to emphasis on an inert laundry list of topics and dates, leading to a numbing state of institutional control and creation of a one-dimensional curriculum. This adds a significant layer of institutional surveillance to reinforce a banking approach in which students are treated as receptacles for deposits, dehumanized and stripped of consciousness (Freire, 1970). It will erect yet another obstacle to the creation of classroom thoughtfulness and a problem-posing curriculum.

Another grave danger is that standards will limit the creativity and academic freedom of our best teachers. Many teachers view the standards movement as a “standards monster” which will impede their leeway to create a meaningful curriculum (Jervis & McDonald 1996). The standards will end up forcing teachers to focus on the imposition of factual content void of a deeper framework for understanding. Unfortunately, this will lead to the socialization, but not the counter-socialization of our youth. In a democracy, both are needed if we are to have a responsible and thoughtful citizenry (Engle & Ochoa, 1988). The end result among students will be, most likely, passive acceptance or cynicism, and that will be, ultimately, dangerous for democracy.
History as the core of social studies and a chronological architecture for the curriculum accompanies the development of standards in most states. However, the revival of traditional history is informed by myths about social studies, not realities. The field of social studies is blamed for the low level of knowledge in history as measured by standardized, multiple choice tests, because, it is argued, an ill-defined social studies crowded history out of the curriculum (Ravitch & Finn, 1987). This is an inaccurate assertion. History has always been dominant among social studies courses in schools, and the historical record of the curriculum stands as a testament. Advocates of history as the core of social studies also point to the value of studying history. Historical study can be both illuminating and stimulating for students. However, traditional history as embodied in the standards movement is inadequate as the core of social studies for several important reasons.

A Conservative Discipline. First, history embodies a tacit ideology favoring dissemination of knowledge conducive to maintenance of the status quo. As taught, it is the conservative discipline par excellence (White, 1978). A curriculum with traditional history at its core embraces a structural functionalist model of society in which the teaching of history contributes to a homeostatic societal reproduction. Functionalist approaches to education stress the positive influence of schooling on social development through four main avenues: inculcating necessary knowledge and skills; preparing individuals for their roles in the division of labor; linking education to higher levels of individual economic productivity; and, contributing to political socialization, social integration, and social control (Morrow & Torres, 1995). Combined, these functions of education coincide with a general societal consensus on the purposes of schooling. The development of standards focused on the teaching of traditional history supports this functionalist approach, and serves to contribute to the cultural reproduction of the current social hierarchy, socializing, but not counter-socializing.

Multicultural Content. Second, in content standards, the stories of the powerful are given greater weight than the stories of those historically oppressed. This is an Euro-centric curriculum; an imposition of the cultural hegemony that has shaped our past and is a major part of the institutional framework of inequality with which we live. In California, a state in which persons of color will soon be the majority of the population, this curriculum is an affront to many of the school children who will be forced to study it. The curriculum glorifies the western tradition. George Washington and the founding fathers are portrayed as the patron saints of our nation. The story of the U.S. rise to superpower status, and development of the capitalist economic
system are also sanctified. The curriculum gives too little attention to alternative and critical voices, too little consideration to questions of diversity on matters of race, class, and gender. It leaves out or minimizes the stories of the oppressed struggling for a share of the American dream (Loewen, 1994). Development of curricular standards built around an Euro-centric framework will further institutionalize an inadequate curriculum, applying a technology focused on outcome standards with a new and disturbing ferocity.

*History is Insufficient.* Third, narrative history is insufficient, an inadequate foundation for the social education of our youth. As a discipline, it is too narrow. The emphasis on historical narrative does not do justice to social education, which needs to be much broader, inclusive of the full range of human knowledge, and focused on perennial issues. History is the dominant social studies subject and has enjoyed varying levels of sovereignty over the course of the century. Yet, traditional history is only one of the five camps struggling for influence over the social studies curriculum.

The standards movement ignores the fact that there are long-standing and fundamental disagreements over the nature and proper definition of social studies. History standards give too little attention to the social sciences and other related sources of knowledge; they give too little consideration to decision-making of the past, present, and future; they give to little regard to the thoughtful education of citizens and development of critical social judgment. When carried to their logical conclusion, standards will eliminate the possibility of a broadly defined and interdisciplinary social studies, and freeze out other camps, limiting the continuing experimentation we need to improve instruction in schools.

The standards movement will reify traditional history as the dominant course in social studies. This is especially troublesome given the fact that we really are not doing so well in educating thoughtful, caring, and knowledgeable citizens. Less than half of eligible voters exercised their franchise during the 1996 presidential election, and there is a persuasive and provocative theory afloat that our nation’s social capital is in decline (Putnam, 1995). In the long run, this kind of curriculum will serve to reinforce the status quo and to reproduce the hierarchical and problematic cultural institutions we have inherited and that too often impede social progress.

*Purposes of Social Studies.* Fourth, the purposes of social inquiry and thoughtful decision-making for democratic citizenship, long held as central aims of social studies, require us to go beyond simply telling a story about history. Disciplines sited at universities serve a purpose quite different from that of social studies in schools, aiming toward generation of knowledge, rather than synthesizing knowledge for the purpose of thoughtful decision-making and social action. Trans-
lated into school practice, history usually serves a descriptive end rather than the more hypothetical aims that are necessary.

Standards and frameworks that emphasize history as the core of social studies ignore the interdisciplinary imperative for social education (Wraga, 1993). Students need to be educated in ways that explore knowledge from multiple disciplines, encompassing a great number of concepts and a wide range of stimulating questions and ideas. Such an education, that is problem posing, requires of necessity more sources of knowledge than can possibly be contained in a textbook, than can conceivably be included in a set of standards or an exam. The standards being developed in California, for example, contain far too much focus on details, and not enough emphasis on concepts, issues, problems, and questions. These standards will create yet another obstacle preventing teachers and students from going into the depth needed to evoke classroom thoughtfulness (Newmann, 1991).

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

We can see from the work of the various standards commissions, that the standards movement is now a runaway train. The result will likely be a curriculum that omits many of our most difficult and important perennial questions, problems and issues, and does too little to further students’ understanding of the social world. The California standards, as a representative example, ignore the long tradition of social studies theory, research and practice aimed at making instruction in history and the social sciences more meaningful to citizens.

In both the “manufactured crisis” in education and the revival of history, we have witnessed a rhetorical battle led by interests that benefit from current power relations in society, who are doing little to address issues of unequal school finance or growing poverty and diversity. As we have seen, the standards movement is based on faulty assumptions and misrepresentation of fact. This is a top down and hierarchical reform movement, a machine-like application of a technology of testing and accountability. The standards movement combined with the focus on history, as the core of social studies will, unfortunately, lead to more ground covering and to the deepening institutionalization of a one-dimensional curriculum with an inadequate, functionalist social theory at its root.

Whenever possible, teachers, students, parents, and administrators should resist the standards movement. Unfortunately, standards are one of the prime realities of educational reform in the current era. Perhaps concerned educators can make a difference in the standards implemented by striving to insure that we give greater attention to a wide range of multicultural issues, maintain flexibility in the application of standards using alternative forms of assessment such as au-
thentic and portfolio assessment, and include a profound infusion of thought provoking and reflective probing questions emphasizing questions of power, equity, ideology, economy, war and peace, etc. Issues provide a natural focus for interdisciplinary curricula and can help make social studies instruction more relevant, meaningful, and exciting. They can form the basis for creation of a profoundly innovative curriculum and a broader approach to social studies. Significant resistance to the top down implementation of standards combined with an infusion of reflective and issues-centered teaching practices could transform the runaway train of standardization into a different sort of movement aimed at thoughtful teaching and citizenship guided by a quest to make schooling in social studies more meaningful.

References
The Counterrevolution of Educational Knowledge Goes K-16

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In the widest possible view, many of us have had the privilege in our professional careers to witness a revolution in knowledge; if not a revolution of a Copernican magnitude, then at least a "segment of an arc" of a revolution. It depends on where one wishes to begin, but I think it is safe in pointing to Einstein's theory of relativity as either symptomatic, or itself, unleashing profound implications for our normal premises of knowledge. It is a short jump to the tenets of postmodern thinking. The literature about the implication on education of this transformation in knowledge is slowly growing, so I will not comment further here.

Against this revolutionary backdrop in philosophy and literature, science and mathematics, cybernetics and newer disciplinary and interdisciplinary domains, we are also more immediately experiencing a political counterrevolution in the politics of knowledge, which presents itself as contemporary educational reform. As long ago as 1986, in an article entitled "The Significance and Permanence of Change at the Federal Level," Clark and Astuto forewarned the educational research establishment of the dramatic effect of Reagan administration policies. Using a rhetoric of decentralization, and hitchhiking on politically and economically conservative values, educational policy changes would be tantamount to a reactionary paradigm shift in educational knowledge—a counterrevolution—including how and what knowledge would be filtered through schools. The educational transformations Clark and Astuto predicted have proven to be significant, and, from a pragmatist's point of view, have brought about enduring, if not permanent effects in how knowledge is brokered through our educational system (see Garrison, 1998, for a distinction between enduring and permanent).

Social studies educators have been unable to resist or abrogate this counterrevolution in educational knowledge, nor have other educational organizations. No traditional professional educational group, subject-centered or otherwise, has distinguished itself by publicly offering a critical analysis or informed social action against those politicians, educators, and others whose influence on policies support a strategy of counterrevolution. Teacher Unions, Deans of Education, and professional subject organizations have all been willing partici-
pants in the technical aspects of implementation. The current topic of this essay, that of "standards," is both a manifestation and a tool of this counter-revolutionary strategy.

The purpose of my essay is threefold: First, briefly describe a few points about this strategy for public education; second, focus on the immediate and dangerous affront to higher education; and third, suggest a role for social studies educators in challenging the arrogance of those portrayed by State Education Department officials and policymakers as the "public" i.e., corporate and political leaders.

**Political Strategy for a Counterrevolution**

Clark and Astuto's (1986) observations about the enduring transformation of federal educational policies under Reagan can be generally summarized as follows:

1. "Bypass educators, and change the language." Since the Reagan administration's release of *A Nation at Risk*, public advisory groups calling for educational reforms based on standards and accountability have omitted educators, but included corporate heads as well as local and state politicians. This turns out to be a brilliant strategy on the part of people wary of the liberating effects in schools and society for which educators were thought to have been responsible in the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s (anyone familiar with the conservative nature of educational institutions may think this an undue and unfounded compliment to educators). Without the influence of educators in policy-making groups to protect educational interests, the lexicon in policy statements began to omit words like "equity" and "innovation" and include vocabulary of "excellence" and "standardization"—with subsequent attention to "measurement" and "regulation."

2. "Unleash ideologically conservative values by decentralizing funding." Block grants collapse multiple budget funding lines, previously dedicated to particular goals and programs, into one bundle of money. The concept of block grants was sold as a decentralizing budget technique to make educational funding less restrictive for people on the local level, i.e., money could be more appropriately and effectively applied according to "local need." An immediate ideological change resulted by creating state and local discretion over federal support of particular programs and initiatives. Historically, educational policies promoting equity and innovation are much less likely to be condoned at state and local levels. Traditional "liberal" lobbying networks, which had operated for years to institute widespread educational innovations from the federal level, were now rendered ineffective by block grants because their lobbying efforts now had to be enacted across fifty state governments.

3. "Change the mission of, and attitude towards, public education through de-emphasizing, diminishing and deregulating." An
educational budget cut of twenty percent, the first cut in twenty-five years, was invoked. Where programs and offices still existed, there was no funding for operation. To ease the workload on under funded programs and offices, regulations were removed. Federal offices and bureaus whose previous goals supported educational innovations and programs were effectively transformed into measuring and monitoring student, teacher, and state achievement indicators.

Decentralization of federal educational policies brought state governors directly into the educational policy-game by offering them a political career tool. (This is indicated by the rash of “education” candidates, governors and presidents, since 1983.) Invoking a business model of standards and competition for accountability, new federal education policies placed governor against governor in the political race for standards and achievement. Preaching from the Bully Pulpit, William Bennett as Secretary of Education named and defined the “Three Cs” that would lead educational activity into the twenty-first century: choice, competition, and character. The “trickle-down” theory has been more obviously successful in the knowledge counter-revolution than in economics: the results of the competition match between governors’ leaks onto state education officials, local school superintendents, principals, and teachers. At the bottom of this metaphorical sewer are the students.

It seems apparent that a form of centralized right-influenced, if not right-wing, knowledge has grasped our collective educational psyche. Many of the same people involved in Reagan’s counterrevolution of knowledge remain influential in national policy “think” tanks, in the media, and in publishing houses (see Eric Alterman’s article “The ‘Right’ Books and Big Ideas, "The Nation, November 22, 1999). The return to a fully Republican Education Department at the federal level provides re-newed energy to the ideological aspect of the standards and accountability movement, although it receives support in a “bipartisan” manner.

Despite new and significant developments in our understanding of human growth and development, and against soundly-based academic criticism of the validity and value of standardized achievement examinations, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) has become one of the main tools driving a defacto national curriculum (this transformation was predicted by Ferrara and Thornton in 1988); national and state “report cards” provide an accounting system for governors and real estate agents for marketing purposes; and teachers are sanctioned for achievement levels of students on state examinations. The curriculum in most content areas has itself become intellectually moribund.

For New York State social studies, this is especially true. The recent Regents’ recommendations for the content preparation of teach-
ers in most subject areas is relatively loosely defined, except for the social studies, where specifically 24 credit hours of history and geography are required (this decision was called one Regents' "baby" by a State Education Department voice). There are significant intellectual and ethical reasons to broaden student encounters with the study of the social world, yet the imposition of a specific disciplinary lens by political fiat was portrayed as "just common sense" (Garner, 1999).

An Affront to Higher Education

At the recent unveiling of New York State's long-awaited teacher education regulations, about 150 Deans and directors of teacher education programs listened to an enthusiastic explanation by the State Deputy Commissioner of Education. Among his key points is that teacher preparation programs will now benefit by working to bring the content offered by the Arts and Sciences faculty into "alignment" with the newly established K-12 Learning Standards of New York State. The phrase "K-16 partnership" and "K-16 responsibility" were used to describe the interdependence of knowledge between these institutions.

At a local presentation a few days later, the President of the University of North Carolina relayed a nearly identical set of points about North Carolina's statewide strategy to create a better prepared teaching workforce (Broad, 1999). With a career in higher education policy, and experience in educational policy-making in various state capacities, President Broad's talk resonated with ideas from the earlier one by the Deputy Commissioner of New York State. Technological literacy, competition, raising student expectations and achievement, and professional development goals were all bundled into a package where "alignment" with higher education was needed to respond to what "the public" wants. It was interesting to note that both bureaucratic representatives considered their state's approach as unique and leading the way into the next century. It was troublesome, but not surprising to hear that "the public" in both cases was unabashedly described as important business and political leaders.

The promotion of similar ideas and strategies from representatives of different state educational systems is not coincidental. "K-16 alignment," a phrase which at one time might have reasonably attracted the interest of educators willing to collaborate in teacher preparation activities, is indicative of both the political source and the direction teacher educators, and their arts and sciences counterparts, are to be herded, according to Kati Haycock, director of a Washington based advocacy group called Education Trust. At the 1999 National Education Summit, Haycock's paper on "The Role of Higher Education in the Standards Movement" was used as briefing material for attendees. She argues that higher education has been left "out of the

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"loop" and "off the hook" in the standards movement. Higher education was not needed previously in the standards and accountability movement, according to Haycock, because the work was relatively straightforward. But now it is time to enlist (infer "force"?) their involvement because systematic change in primary and secondary education cannot occur without "also changing the way higher education does business..." The fault with higher education, according to Haycock, lies with the admission and preparation of teachers who do not themselves meet standards.

Haycock lays out an action plan for governors to involve higher education:

1. "Bring higher education to the table." Change K-12 councils into K-16 councils, and make formal agreements about standards with colleges. She notes how important it is to include "representatives from sectors other than education; councils whose members share a uniform background get too cozy and fat." (p.4)

2. "Seize the moment to push big improvements in teacher quality—an incremental approach won't get you anywhere." Haycock insists that policy-makers use rigorous exams to ensure that "increases in academic standards for teachers [are] fully commensurate with increases in standards for students." (p.4)

3. "Hold higher education strictly accountable for the quality of the teachers it produces." She goes on to explain that given a provision in the new Higher Education Act, "wise state leaders will take advantage of this first-ever opportunity for results-oriented accountability in higher education...(with)...clear consequences for the arts and sciences departments..." (p.5)

4. "Ask your K-16 council for an aggressive action plan..." containing deadlines for which school districts can no longer hire out of field teachers, for establishing parent involvement, and with budgets for helping arts and sciences departments to base teacher education in their own programs. (p.5)

5. "Throw your weight behind efforts to develop consistent and coherent standards, for kindergarten through college." Use a single set of exams for high-school graduation and college admissions. (p.6)
6. "Standards make sense in higher education as well." Her words say it best: For too long we have lived with the myth that we have a wonderful, perfect, internationally renowned higher education system and a wretched, horrible K-12 system. The truth...both systems are routinely producing large numbers of graduates who do not have the knowledge and skills that we normally associate with a degree or a diploma (p. 6).

Haycock describes how the dropout rate in college is even higher than in high school, and alarming numbers of college graduates lack the skills we would expect of high school students.

...it may be daunting to think about launching the equivalent of standards-based reform in higher education. But if indeed our national future depends on a highly educated citizenry, then our work cannot end with K-12. (p.6)

All of this sounds like a plan.

Social Educators as Counter-counterrevolutionaries?

Indeed, it is plan. But not one for which educators have been included. The publication of Nation at Risk (1983) was a call-to-arms against public education. Educators have been circumvented in every meaningful way in the process of formulating federal educational policies. In effect, these policies define the boundaries of state and local policies. The Third National Education Summit continued the strident efforts of political and corporate leaders to contain the boundaries of knowledge through the imposition of standards and testing. Perhaps the thirty-three CEOs and twenty-four governors who met to emphasize their determination to make the standards movement successful were not intending to look conspiratorial, but it is difficult to view their meeting with carefully selected educators at IBM headquarters, behind locked gates, with restricted admission, and allowing few reporters in any other way. The message of the Summit leaders to the educators: shape up, or else. Joy Wallace describes the "or else" as a thinly veiled overture to the promotion of vouchers and charter schools. The Summit took place just a year before the election of George W. Bush.

Today, 49 of 50 states have established new "higher academic standards" and have put into place a series of standardized state examinations to ensure that students, teachers, administrators and state
government officials are held accountable for meeting the established standards.

The organizational tools of "standards" and "accountability" have been borrowed from business organizational practices. Despite the reform rhetoric, we find little evidence that either of these ideas work effectively in business. And there is increasing evidence that these ideas are destructive to the goals of providing a public education for democracy.

The values and knowledge gained from the school experience is rapidly narrowing, as the purpose of teaching is increasingly focused on preparing students to pass state sanctioned standardized examinations. Failure and school dropout rates are increasing for students from poorer and minority communities. There is less time in school to involve children in activities that promote higher levels of thinking. And teachers find themselves being "de-skilled"—the classroom decisions they once made about content and curriculum are now determined by standardized examinations. It is a shift of educational purpose and power from the students and teachers to state and corporate interests.

On close examination, it appears that the education reform movement can be understood better as a politically and culturally conservative reaction to the rapidly changing nature of knowledge in philosophy, science, and history—indeed, in culture itself. There is a distrust of teachers. Fearing that the traditional hierarchical organization of knowledge not longer holds, conservative ideologues in academia, business, media and education have undertaken a focused political, economic and cultural strategy over the past 18 years to impose restrictive conceptual boundaries on how the public and its citizens understand themselves and their worlds.

A note should be made of a related interest in this "counter revolution of knowledge." There is money to be made. The schooling effort is huge in terms of public and private financial investments. Its expanding potential and growth performance is inviting. There are over 85,000 public schools in the United States, close to 50 million students, one-fifth of our population. Promotional material for the World Research Group's Second Annual Conference notes:

- In 20 years, 30% of U.S. public schools will be run by "for-profits."
- Backers are sinking millions into the new school companies in the belief that for-profit education is poised for explosive growth.
- In only two-years, the Boston-based Advantage Schools shot up from $4 million in revenue to $60 million;
In the five years that Edison has been running schools, it jumped from $12 million to $217 million;

By 2005, it is predicted that Edison Schools will manage 423 schools with 260,000 students, and revenues of $1.9 billion.

There is no mention in this promotional material of improved mindfulness and thoughtfulness, essential characteristics of a productive, democratic citizenry. Failures of the "for-profit" undertakings in major cities has not deterred the wide-eyed hope that a competitive market system applied to schooling alone can outweigh enormity of non-school variables that fester reform promises. The difference between the two major political parties about this issue is negligible. There are enormous material benefits gained in upholding the consensual illusion that education is non-political, non-partisan and non-ideological.

Social studies classes should be teeming with intellectually exciting social analyses about the assumptions behind the transformation of knowledge in our educational reforms. For example, in the ideas of competition and choice, our common welfare is assumed to result from individuals satisfying their own needs. But the idea that a collective public results from a collection of producer-consumer relationships is patently false. When applied to public institutions such as education, this market model confuses our understanding that citizens have a stake in each other and in shaping the larger culture.

A successful education for democracy ultimately depends on citizens gaining a strong relationship with knowledge and how it can work for them. The education reform movements are doing just the opposite, and it does not appear to be accidental. It is for this reason one can rightfully contend that the current educational reforms have created a true education crisis for democracy.

Note


2 The literature for the World Research Group's Second Annual Conferences says that the sponsor of the Investing in Education conference is the Reason Foundation, whose national lobbying promotes the privatization of governmental functions through a market-based approach.

References


Social Studies Within The Neo-Liberal State  
The Commodification Of Knowledge And The End Of Imagination  

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Over the last two decades teachers have gradually been losing control over what and how they teach. Urban school districts are increasingly relying on scripted lessons provided by programs such as Success for All and America’s Choice. Further, many states, including New York, have taken up the mantra of implementing standards and standardized tests, with a system of rewards and consequences for teachers, students, and schools based on those tests. An outcome is that teachers are perceived less as academics who make curricular and teaching decisions and more as de-skilled technicians who deliver predetermined curriculum to students.

Social studies teachers are also influenced by the emphasis on high-stakes standardized tests. In New York, secondary social studies teachers must focus on preparing students to pass the combined ninth and tenth-grade global studies Regents exam required for graduation. Only teachers who have academically advantaged students can afford to not teach toward the test. Elementary level teachers are increasingly directed to devote less time to teaching social studies and more time to preparing students for statewide tests in math and literacy.

In order to understand this loss of teacher autonomy, I will situate education within the general conservative restoration and the increasing control of workers as part of neo-liberal economics (Apple, 1993). I will claim that the increasing emphasis on knowledge as an economic good—its commodification—and the standardization of teaching practices—the end of imagination—are part of an overall societal shift away from people as creative producers of their own identities, culture and society, to people as producers and consumers of economic goods.

I will begin by showing how teachers’ autonomy has declined by the implementation of state curriculum standards and the evaluation of students’ knowledge through high-stakes standardized tests that link accountability for academic outcomes to districts, teachers and students. Next, I will show that the rise of the testing and accountability movement and the increasing control over teachers’ work parallels the increasing attacks on workers from government and corporations. These, I will show, are part of a larger neo-liberal agenda to
dismantle the public sector (education, health, and social welfare) and reform schools so that education has less to do with developing critical educated citizens and more to do with developing the economically productive individual. I will then explain how neo-liberals, while claiming to limit the intrusion of the state into the life of the individual, in fact increasingly control individuals in the interest of corporations through techniques of auditing, accounting, and management (Barry, Osborne, & Rose, 1996, p.14).

**Standards, Assessment, and Accountability**

The standards-based reform movement and the most recent intrusion of the state into education began with the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (1983). However, while the original focus of the movement was on developing standards, the reforms have “too frequently been reduced to high-stakes testing” (Orfield & Wald, June 5, 2000, p. 38). This shift from standards to high-stakes standardized assessments is based on two assumptions, concludes McNeil in her research on the imposition of high-stakes tests in the Houston, Texas public schools. The first assumption is that the teachers “are the ‘problem’ and have to be managed differently for purposes of quality control” (McNeil, 2000, p.198). The second assumption is that “‘bad’ schools could be mandated to be ‘good’...If the curriculum was the same for everyone...then *Algebra I* at the city’s weakest high school would be ‘the same’ as *Algebra I* at the high school with the most National Merit Scholars” (McNeil, 2000, p. 198). The latter assumption, McNeil notes, ignores the fact that the successful school had the most sought after teachers, had better educational resources, and more highly-educated parents.

To date, Texas and about twenty-five other states, Orfield and Wald note, have adopted some variation of high-stakes testing. The impetus for high-stakes testing comes from governmental and corporate interests who want to control teachers and improve educational efficiency. Corporate America’s influence was evident at last October’s National Education Summit, co-chaired by Louis Gerstner, CEO of IBM, that convened at IBM headquarters to plot the next stage in the reform of U.S. schools. The outcome of the summit was a proposal “to have every state adopt standards backed-up by standardized tests [and] to set up a system of ‘rewards and consequences’ for teachers, students, and schools based on those tests” (Miner, 2000, p. 3). Similarly, the National Alliance of Business, in *Standards Mean Business*, clearly lays out the agenda of standards, assessment, and accountability:

* A standards-driven reform agenda should include content and performance standards, alignment of school processes
with the standards, *assessments* that measure student achievement against world-class levels of excellence, information about student and school performance, and *accountability* for results. (Smith, n.d., p. 4, italics added)

A recent proposal by Richard Mills, New York Commissioner of Education, will assign schools and districts the equivalent of a letter grade based on their standardized test scores and rewards would be showered on those schools with high grades and, conversely, schools and districts with low grades would be punished (State plans grading system, 2000). Mills is also emphatic that the thirty New York public alternative schools that make up the Performance Assessment Committee, such as Harlem's Central Park East and Rochester's School Without Walls, must require their students to take and pass the same Regents exams as traditional schools, effectively eviscerating the schools (Mills, May 12, 2000).

However, the faith that high-stakes tests will improve teaching and learning is contradicted by research. McNeil concludes: "*Standardization reduces the quality and quantity of what is taught and learned in schools.*" Further, "*over the long term, standardization creates inequities, widening the gap between the quality of education for poor and minority youth and that of more privileged students*" (McNeil, 2000, p. 3, italics in original). Her research revealed the emergence of

phony curricula, reluctantly presented by teachers in class to conform to the forms of knowledge their students would encounter on centralized tests. The practice of teaching under these reforms shifted away from intellectual activity towards dispensing packaged fragments of information sent from an upper level of the bureaucracy. And the role of students as contributors to classroom discourse, as thinkers, as people who brought their personal stories and life experiences into the classroom, was silenced or severely circumscribed by the need for the class to "cover" a generic curriculum at a pace established by the district and the state for all the schools. (McNeil, 2000, p. 4)

The effects on social studies teachers were particularly harmful. The Houston school district developed a proficiency system based on the remedial skills taught in one of the district’s poorest and academically weakest schools. The test-based curriculum that was developed was a "*curriculum of reductive skill components that could be tested by a multiple-choice test*" (McNeil, 2000, p. 200). The history curricu-
lum became “dates, events, names of historical figures, arranged chronologically” (McNeil, 2000, p. 202).

Teachers were reduced to following inappropriate practices in order to help students pass the history proficiency test. For example, teachers are given both the curriculum for the semester and the end of the semester test. Unfortunately, the test questions sometimes refer to material that is not to be taught until the subsequent semester. In one case the proficiency exam tested the students on the Emancipation of slaves before the unit on the Civil War was to be taught.

Teachers also devoted time to preparing students to pass the proficiency exam and to unlearn what they were taught. As one teacher stated: “You really have to unteach some things when you get to the proficiencies” (McNeil, 2000, p. 214, italics in original). Another teacher commented that “We are having to be more and more creative—creative to find ways to make sure these things do not ruin our courses and that they don’t keep us from teaching our kids” (McNeil, 2000, p. 215).

From Keynesian to Neo-Liberal Economics: The Rise and Fall of Personal Rights

How is it that a generation ago teachers were thoughtful, knowledgeable practitioners and are now reduced to being deskillied technicians tied to the dictates of the standardized test? This transformation, I contend, parallels the rise and decline in the political power of all workers and the rise of economic policies that focus on consumption rather than general social welfare. Briefly, from the late 1960s and continuing through most of the 1970s, workers gained increasing control over their work and won contracts paying higher wages. At the same time, African Americans fought for the right to vote, students for free speech, and women for equal rights. In response, corporations and governments in the U.S. and other industrialized countries developed policies aimed to reduce personal rights and the power of workers, and to promote economic growth and corporate profits. It is the history of the changing economic and social policies over the last thirty years that helps us understand the present.

The late 1960s and 70s are often portrayed as years in which radical antiwar protesters were pitted against conservative, “Archie Bunker” blue-collar workers. However, a more accurate portrayal of the period would depict an antiwar movement both at home and in Vietnam, and a labor movement engaged in “disobedience, chaos, ‘counterplanning,’ malingering, and huge, militant wildcat labor strikes” (Parenti, 1999, p. 108). It was a time in which many were engaged in economic, environmental, and social reforms.

Between 1964 and 1979 scores of laws were passed to protect workers, consumers, and the environment. The Environmental Pro-
tection Agency and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration were created. It was a time of increasing personal rights at the cost of corporate profits. As workers continued to gain wage concessions through labor activity and strikes, corporate after-tax profits declined from 10 percent in 1965 to 4.5 percent in 1974 (Parenti, 1999). "Throughout the rest of the Seventies," writes Christian Parenti, "inflation and unemployment persisted, labor unrest continued, and profits stagnated. Workers were claiming an unprecedented share of the wealth they produced. It was an unmitigated disaster for those who owned, and they would soon take terrible revenge" (p. 118).

This revenge would be carried out by implementing two strategies. First, a recession would be initiated to deflate wage demands. In 1979 Paul Volcker, Federal Reserve Board Chairman, provided the following rationale for the recession: “The standard of living of the average American has to decline. I don’t think you can escape that” (Parenti, 1999, p. 119). Second, international trade policies would encourage national governments to develop neo-liberal economic policies that emphasize economic growth and property rights over social welfare and personal rights, and corporations to set up factories and sell consumer goods in less-developed countries. It is this strategy that has had the greatest effect on education and which will be the focus of the remainder of this paper.

The Discourses of the Neo-Liberal State

The efforts to impose standards, assessment, and accountability by the State Education Department are part of the larger global movement away from Keynesian and toward the currently dominant neo-liberal economic policies. Neo-liberal policies emphasize “the deregulation of the economy, trade liberalization, the dismantling of the public sector [such as education, health, and social welfare], and the predominance of the financial sector of the economy over production and commerce” (Vilas, 1996).

Under neo-liberal policies promoted by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, education is no longer desired as a means of developing educated citizens but in terms of what education adds to the economy. The purpose of education becomes developing the competitive individual who can compete in the market place (Peters, 1994). Students are no longer valued for their critical thinking in the liberal arts but for what they can contribute to the economy. As one economist affiliated with Argentina’s Ministry of Economics stated: “What we try to measure is how well the training provided by each school fits the needs of production and the labor market” (Puiggros, 1999, p. 84).

The neo-liberal state has transformed the role of government into a site where decisions are made based on what is good for economic

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growth. Further, while the State claims to intrude less in the life of the individual, "getting government off people's backs," it has intervened in individuals' lives through other governmental methods.

Describing the changing role and tactics of governmental organizations such as State Departments of Education, Barry, Osborne and Rose, in *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neo-Liberalism, and Rationalities of Government* (1996), write:

Paradoxically, neo-liberalism, alongside its critique of the deadening consequences of the 'intrusion of the state' into the life of the individual, has none the less provoked the invention and/or deployment of a whole array of organizational forms and technical methods in order to extend the field with which a certain kind of economic freedom might be practiced in the form of personal autonomy, enterprise and choice. (Barry, et al., p. 10)

State Departments of Education increasingly intrude into the lives of teachers. They regulate, write Barry et al., through "technical methods" of "accounting and auditing" and setting standards, testing, and measuring that "tie techniques of conduct into specific relations with the concerns of government" (Barry et al., 1996, p. 11 &13).

Further, the following quote from Barry, Osborne, and Rose (1996) is a fitting critique of the New York State Department of Education.

Public authorities seek to employ forms of expertise in order to govern society at a distance, without recourse to any direct forms of repression or intervention...Neo-liberalism, in these terms, involves less a retreat from governmental 'intervention' than a re-inscription of the techniques and forms of expertise required for the exercise of government. (Barry et al, 1996, p. 14)

Governmental and quasi-governmental organizations seek to govern without specifying exactly what must be done, but by presenting the requirements or standards as rational and non-controversial, and providing a limited range in which they must be implemented. This makes it possible for the social actors, whether they be teachers or teacher educators, to have a false sense of choice and freedom. As Rose writes, the "formal political institutions" govern from a distance and "conceive of these actors as subjects of responsibility, autonomy, and choice, and seek to act upon them through shaping and utilizing their freedom" (Rose, N., 1995, pp. 53-4).

The neo-liberal state, through the use of standards, assessments, and accountability, aims to restrict educators to particular kinds of
thinking, thinking that conceptualizes education in terms of producing individuals whom are economically productive. At the same time other kinds of rationality are excluded. Social studies is no longer valued for its role in developing political, ethical, and aesthetic citizens. Instead, the goal has become promoting knowledge that contributes to individual and societal economic productivity and producing students who are compliant and productive.

These ways of thinking, along with neo-liberalism, need to be critiqued and resisted. Bourdieu, in *Acts of Resistance: Against the Tyranny of the Market* (1998), encourages us to resist the logic of neo-liberalism.

Everywhere we hear it said, all day long—and this is what gives the dominant discourse its strength—that there is nothing to put forward in opposition to the neo-liberal view, that it has succeeded in presenting itself as self-evident, that there is no alternative. If it is taken for granted in this way, this is a result of a whole labor of symbolic inculcation in which journalists and ordinary citizens participate passively and, above all, a certain number of intellectuals participate actively. (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 29)

Bourdieu reminds us that there is an alternative to the discourse on neo-liberalism and the possibility of a world and educational system that focuses on other than economic efficiency. Such a critique requires continually analyzing how the state has come to regulate teachers’ work through standardized tests. Further, social studies teachers need to examine and promote educational alternatives in which teachers and students, as in New York’s thirty alternative schools, work together to develop curriculum and evaluation methods (Rose, M., 1995; Meier, 1995). Such alternatives will suggest how to achieve the social studies goal of educating students to be critically reflective citizens (Hursh & Ross, 2000).

**References**


Standards and High Stakes Testing
The Dark Side of a Generation of Political, Economic and Social Neglect of Public Education

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In the generation that immediately followed World War II, California was widely regarded as both model and magnet for the nation—in its economic opportunities, social outlook, and high quality public services and institutions. With a nearly free and universally accessible system of higher education, a well supported public school system, and a wide array of social services, and human rights guarantees that had no parallel in any other state.

— Peter Schrag,
Paradise Lost, California's Experience, America's Future

We blame teachers for the "failure" of the schools. We blame them on a lot of levels. We blame their professional education; we blame what they teach; we blame how they teach. The simplistic, and punitive reform efforts regarding standards and high stakes testing reflect the fact that teachers have been blamed for all that is wrong with education, and students are being punished for it.

The passage of Proposition 13 (Jarvis-Gann) is a germane way of dividing the post World War II California, between that postwar exhilaration—with its huge investment in the public infrastructure era and its strong commitment to the development of quality education systems and other services—and a generation of declining confidence and shrinking public services (Schrag, pp. 10-11). The squeeze on public services that Proposition 13 brought about came at the time California was experiencing significant demographic change—moving from a society that thought of itself (albeit incorrectly) mostly as white, middle class, to one in which whites would become another minority. Latinos, Asians, and African Americans now constitute a sizable majority of school enrollment and the use of public services.

Because of the revolt against government taxation that Proposition 13 set in motion, which resulted in the increased use of the initiative process, initiatives—once a bastion of "the people" and their power to influence public policy—is now most often used by well organized political and economic entities, on the left and the right, and by incumbent politicians, from the government on down. But, it is still the people of California—in all their diversity—that vote on the initiatives that appear on the ballot. However, it is those interest
groups backed by media consultants, direct mail specialists, pollsters and others, that usually finance the costly signature drives, running into the millions of dollars, to get measures on the ballot, and the advertising campaigns that drive the support for the initiative, or block the measures of its opponents (Schrag, 1998, p. 11). It is interesting to note that the further the initiative process proceeds, the more problematic effective citizenship becomes. Each initiative moves control further from the public - from the legislature to special interests. The non-deliberative quality of the California style initiative is problematic — no public hearings, no rules of procedure, no formal debates, no informed voice — and fails to present downside arguments, to outline implications, to ask the cost, and to speak for minorities. Currently, some twenty four states have some form of initiative or referendum in their constitutions. And, there is increasing pressure to use it as an agent of political reform.

During the period of time since Proposition 13, initiatives have been passed that imposed specific spending formulas on schools, abolished affirmative action in public education, denied public schooling and public services to illegal immigrants, and eliminated bilingual education. California's schools, which thirty years ago had been among the best funded on the planet, are now in the bottom quarter among states in virtually every major indicator. California has an average class size of over 32, and in many cases, over 40 students in classrooms designed for 25. A vast majority of California's educational facilities are at least 20 years old, and many are over 40 years of age, and in various and dangerous states of disrepair. In California, we have chosen to spend less on education and more on prisons, and we are currently 41st out of 50 states in per capita educational spending. During the past twenty-five years, the best educational system in the world has been fundamentally and systematically dismantled.

Lost in this reality of initiatives, budget cuts and decline of funding, is the fact that despite what politicians and the popular press would like us to believe, during the last decade standardized scores have been holding relatively steady; with modest increases in both math and reading scores (Berliner & Biddle, 1995). The most recent reading report on the National Assessment of Education Progress for tests administered in 1992, 1994, and 1998, reflect the steady state of reading scores. Scores from 1998 are equal to, or slightly above, 1992 scores for all tested grades (Berliner & Biddle, 1995).

In the most recent international comparison, United States' nine-year-olds were second only to Finland's nine-year-olds, and United States' fourteen-year-olds finished ninth, well above average and a few points from the top (Bracy, 1992). This despite the fact that more students are taking the tests than ever before whose first language is not English. Berliner and Biddle conclude that there is no support for
the myth that American students fail in reading achievement, or any other subject. Simply put, schools are in better shape than we are led to believe. Teachers have done incredible work despite that fact that the educational system in California, and some other states, has been crumbling around them.

Since teachers have become convenient scapegoats for all that is wrong with education, we also have turned our attention to students and punished them through the introduction of a plethora of standards and high stakes testing proposals: a racist, one-size-fits-all approach that is designed to present a singular and simplistic view of knowledge, truth and learning which ignores the diverse needs of our children of color and those who live in poverty. These so called “reform” efforts in education are intended to blame teachers and punish students for the problems of education by mandating a focus on drill and practice, and “teaching to the test,” instead of fostering students’ critical thinking skills. With these efforts to blame teachers and punish students, we are relinquishing control of the classroom and curriculum solely to those who construct the tests. Martha Ruddell (in press) quotes Elliot Eisner who “reminds us that standards in education are not new; they are in fact a ‘recapitulation’ of behavioral objectives that so preoccupied us in the 1960s, and actually grew from the ‘efficiency’ movement in education of 1913-1930 that was based on an industrial model of high productivity.” Ruddell goes on to further quote Eisner:

Uniformity in curriculum content is a virtue if one’s aim is to be able to compare students in one part of the country with students in others. Uniformity is a virtue when the aspiration is to compare the performance of American Students with students in Korea, Japan, and Germany. But why should we wish to make such comparisons? (p. 11)

Susan Ohanian (in Ruddell, in press) notes that framers of standards regularly ignore the developmental reality of adolescence. She says:

Now you and I know that anyone who says high schoolers should read *Moby Dick* 1) doesn’t know any fifteen year olds; 2) has never read *Moby Dick* or 3) has read Moby Dick, has a fifteen year old in the house, and wants to get even. (p. 12)

Perhaps the most astounding thing about standards and high stakes tests is the there is no research evidence whatsoever that their
use enhances student achievement and learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Still, tests have become so all consuming that more than 20 million school days were devoted to them in one year. The case for high stakes testing and standards is based on simplistic solutions designed to raise the self esteem of politicians and policy makers, and maintain a classist system of education where a small and select number of schools receive an embarrassment of riches.

Our fixation on standards and high stakes testing was recently demonstrated when, the day after the tragic killings in Littleton, Colorado, high schools continued their scheduled standardized tests, rather than postpone them and discuss the incomprehensible events that shocked students and adults alike. I wonder how high the scores will be on that day of testing? Will teachers be blamed, yet again?

Things are bound to only get worse with standards and high stakes testing. Schools will be compared to one another regarding how well they do on the tests. Teachers may be subjected to disciplinary pressures, even firing, if their students do not score well on one test. Schools will lose funding or may even be closed. More importantly, students of color and children in poverty will get an education that does not even begin to compare to that received with wealthier, white students. And, this does not even consider the little mentioned fact that these tests cost big money. The National Commission on Testing and Public Policy (1990) says that as early as 1990, standardized testing in America consumed more than $900 million in one year. No doubt the price tag is currently much, much higher.

The current wave of high stakes, standardized tests are punitive and neglect the notion that assessment should serve the primary purpose of improving student learning. We need to be working with teachers to expand the idea of assessment; to provide different, yet rigorous, ways for students to demonstrate what they know. We can develop demanding and yet inclusive proficiency exit standards that combine student portfolios, and performance exams—not just one high stakes standardized test—to graduate.

Assessments should serve to determine the success of a program, provide information to parents on their child’s achievement, and hold schools accountable for how well taxpayers’ money is being spent. It is time to demand that our school boards stop relying on a single, standardized, measure of student achievement and adopt a variety of student assessments that:

- are designed to provide feedback that improves student learning;

- involve parents, teachers and the community collaborating for improved student learning and better schools;
• allow a variety of measures that focus on individual student learning;

• do not limit the curriculum to a singular, standardized, assessment based on a high stakes approach.

We need to stop blaming teachers and punishing students for the educational politics of neglect during the last two decades in California, and across the nation. If the last twenty five years are any indicator, politicians do not have the solutions to the education reform. Let's demand that those who are most invested in education—families and teachers—have a voice in determining the course of educational reform. Isn't the education of our children far too important to reduce it to a high stakes game of testing roulette?

California has been described as the nation's bellwether. The place where the future is on display. California and the nation faces the ultimate test of whether an increasingly diverse nation—currently being transformed through the diversity that immigration brings with it—can use diversity as a positive effect, or whether under such conditions, it can successfully remain, and govern itself, as a democratic republic.

Whether or not it is agreed that any state or region is or should be a symbol of the future it is certain that—if the last twenty five years are an indication—California has so far failed to combine assurances of economic and educational opportunity, and the “good life” for all of its diverse citizenry. The so called “reform” efforts of standards and high stakes testing in education is an example of California’s and the nation’s failure, while tending to blame teachers and punish students for the short-sighted economic policies of the last two decades. It is the failure of the California leadership to invest in generation after generation of school children for over twenty five years that has brought us to the brink, not a failure of our teachers or students.

Notes

1 In the face of soaring property taxes, Proposition 13, passed in 1978, rolled back property values to 1975 levels and could be raised no more than 2 percent a year for inflation until the property was sold and transferred, at which point it could be reassessed at the purchase price. The tax rate was limited to 1 percent on the value of each parcel, with the legislature determining how that 1 percent apportioned among the various local agencies that had previously set their own tax rates. Henceforth, local agencies, including schools, would be effectively prohibited from issuing any new bonds. (This was mended in 1986 when school districts were given authority to issue construction bonds if they were approved by a two thirds vote of the electorate). Howard Jarvis and Paul Gann, sponsors of Proposition 13, believed that schools should not be funded by property taxes.

2 The California Department of Public Finance projects that the population of California in the year 2000 will be 49% white, 35% Latino, 12% African American.
This comes as a direct result of the three strikes initiative, Proposition 184. The California Legislative Analyst predicts that prison costs will be $3 billion by 2003 and $6 billion by 2020.

References


The contemporary drive toward “high standards” as a medium through which to “reform” or “better” US public schools has become, or so it might seem, rather cult-like, at least in terms of many of its most significant yet dangerous elements, including: (1) its apparent and claimed omnipotence vis-à-vis school “improvement”; (2) its (usually) unclaimed and (usually) covert commitment to pedagogical, social, cultural, economic, and political control and conformity—most notably by means of its narrow and narrowing approach to dictating in some way or another the connected conditions of educational purpose, content selection, instructional methodology, and testing; (3) its fundamental and ultimately homogenous (yet frequently paradoxical) ideological compact, one couched within the (contradictory) rhetoric of democracy, corporate capitalism, hyperindividualism, and equality of economic opportunity; (4) the power-laden and unquestioning attitude of many of its most ardent and supportive followers; and (5) its zealous (if ostensibly sincere) efforts at “self-defense” against a marginalizable opposition (those persons who, as doubting and threatening “heretics,” must not then be truly and deeply concerned with making a real and positive, significant and lasting difference in “our” public schools or in the lives and welfare of children and their communities.)

This pro-standards movement represents the complex and dynamic consequences of a somewhat unusual, dominant/dominating, state of affairs, one grounded in an ever-solidifying, self-perpetuating “liberal-conservative” consensus—an alliance or partnership—formed within its own odd admixture of economic neo-liberalism, cultural neo-conservatism, and (professedly) pedagogical “progressivism” (e.g., Apple, 1996; Vinson, 1999a). It manifests a number of strange bedfellows, for instance E. D. Hirsch, Jr. (e.g., 1987, 1996), the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS; e.g., NCSS Curriculum Standards Task Force, 1994)\(^2\), the National Center for History in the Schools (NCHS; e.g., 1994a, 1994b; Nash, Crabtree, & Dunn, 1997), the American Federation of Teachers, a vast majority of US governors (i.e., via the National Education Summits), an array of national educational “leaders” representing both Democratic (e.g., President Clinton) and Republican (e.g., President Bush) politics (e.g., Tucker & Codding,
1998), and even to some measure the "general public" (e.g., Johnson & [with] Duffett, 1999).

As I have previously argued (Vinson, 1999a), the consensus and its viewpoints, policies, and policy recommendations—especially in terms of curriculum development and testing—warrant a forceful critique, one rooted in the perhaps minority, critical if not in fact radical, position that education generally and social studies education in particular (given, for example, its historical role in "citizenship education," its commitment to diversity, and its progressive roots) should advocate for a school-society complex established according to key principles of democracy, justice, and anti-disciplinarity. Moreover, as I have also suggested (e.g., Vinson, 2001; Vinson, Gibson, & Ross, 2001), we as social studies professionals should pay earnest and explicit attention to (1) our own work, for example that manifested in the proliferation of standards documents (e.g., Center for Civic Education, 1994; Geography Education Standards Project, 1994; National Council on Economic Education, 1997; NCHS, 1994a, 1994b; NCSS Task Force on Curriculum Standards, 1994; see also Vinson, 2001), and (2) the growing and influential, if not indeed dangerous, contexts of high-stakes mandated testing (e.g., Kohn, 1999; Vinson, Gibson, & Ross, 2001). In sum, we must on a number of philosophical and practical levels be wary, cautious, and critical, and thus take seriously the "will-to-standardize" inherent not only in current standards-based reform frameworks and programs, but within the contemporary "pro-standards alliance" as well. We must consider and take seriously their myriad and challenging, potential and practical, consequences.

In this paper I seek to redirect and refocus our field's attention toward certain, too often underappreciated, aspects of standards-based reform—while, simultaneously, re-emphasizing the imperatives of democracy, justice, and anti-disciplinarity—and toward those contexts within which standards/standardization regimes are produced and within which their potentially ominous consequences take effect. Simply, I contend that existing standards-based reforms work to (1) privilege "image" over "authenticity" and (2) ultimately undermine the socio-pedagogical "collective" good, favoring instead what I call the "individual" and "common" goods. It is, I believe, the collective good that should define the very heart of contemporary and progressive social studies education.

Toward this critical end, I first lay out the position (as I see it) of the dominant pro-standards/standardization consensus. Next I reiterate my concerns vis-à-vis standards/standardization and democracy, oppression, and disciplinarity. Third, I consider broadly the means by and extent to which standards-based reforms do in fact actualize the privileging of image over authenticity and what this might mean—its consequences—for contemporary reform. Lastly, I explore how this
entire state of affairs might lead to the establishment and promotion of a socio-pedagogical (thus also political, cultural, and economic) status quo, one implicating certain conditions favoring the individual and common goods to the detriment of the (perhaps more significant and desirable) collective good.

The Consensus Revisited

The contemporary scene involves a curious coalition among both pedagogical and political “conservatives” (both “neo-liberals” or economic conservatives and “neo-conservatives” or sociocultural conservatives) and pedagogical and political “liberals” (Vinson, 1999a). Its perspectives rest on a merging of conservative economic principles such as (neo-liberal) free market capitalism, profit, and global corporate competition and (neo-conservative) cultural traditionalism—manifested in, for example, an orientation toward Eurocentrism, a hierarchical social structure, Protestantism, heterosexuality, patriarchy, assimilation, anti-immigration, and cultural homogeneity (etc.)—with the so-called liberal notions of equal opportunity, individualism, social justice, diversity, and democracy. This shaky calculus asserts that standardizing school knowledge—settling purpose, content, method, and assessment—offers the best framework from within which to assure equality, “achievement,” democracy, and US global economic hegemony (good, in this view, for producers and therefore for consumers and workers as well). It presumes (strikingly) that such goals can be acquired while maintaining, if not strengthening, an asymmetric and traditionalist, dominant/dominating status quo. Paradoxically, it suggests that standardization is the way to ensure diversity—that concentrating economic, social, and political power is the way to create equality, democracy, and justice; therefore, it is imperative—for “us.”

For schooling, the pro-standards alliance means that

Both liberals and conservatives see national [and state] curriculum [and testing] standards (in general as well as specifically for the social studies) as necessary for productive school reform. They agree that today’s students do not “know enough,” that they possess too little knowledge (whether defined as facts, skills, understandings, or something else), and that curriculum [and testing] standards can promote wider and deeper levels of achievement and performance. Further, they concur that without such a system of standards American students and their schools will continue to “lag behind” those of other industrialized countries. Liberals and conservatives each envision a (potentially voluntary) structure built upon pro-active federal leadership and guidance (and perhaps fund-
ing) but under the ultimate control of states and communities. Lastly, both champion...standards as conducive to and consistent with the advancement of equal educational [thus economic if not political] opportunity. (Vinson, 1999a, pp. 304-305)

And yet, this understanding has not come without some degree of both internal and external criticism (e.g., Vinson & Ross, in press). Internally, that is from within the context of the consensus itself, various sides have disagreed—and continue to disagree—over the specifics of selection and implementation. Generally, liberal supporters advocate a pedagogy based on “content integration,” cooperative/hands-on/problem solving teaching methods, and “performance-based” (sometimes incorrectly assumed to be synonymous with “authentic”; e.g., Mathison, 1997) assessment. (Consider here the implications of “standardized authenticity.”) Conservatives, on the other hand, promote a schooling defined according to “basic” or “functional” facts and skills, “direct”/“teacher-centered” modes of instruction, and high-stakes, “objective,” and standardized systems of testing (e.g., Hirsch, 1996).

Externally, criticism of educational standards/standardization has come from across the political spectrum. As both Ravitch (1995), a conservative proponent of standards, and Gittell (1998), a cautious and liberal supporter, have indicated, the political/pedagogical right-wing (both conservative and reactionary critics) has been hesitant to endorse (at least national) standards for fear that local educational autonomy might be usurped; the pedagogical and political left-wing (both liberal and radical), as both authors note, has doubted the utility of standards-based systems to ensure diversity and equal educational opportunity. (Certainly more radical critics have argued the possibility that standards might expose an underlying threat grounded in the conditions of anti-democracy, oppression, and disciplinarity.) What uniquely distinguishes the consensus view, however, is (1) its ability and willingness to accept such criticism as at least somewhat warranted and (2) its presumption that any reasonable criticism can be addressed sufficiently within the pro-standards framework. In other words, although specific aspects of standards-based reform may appropriately be challenged, the idea itself cannot, and any objection to its establishment or continuance is necessarily off the table.

**Democracy, Oppression, and Disciplinarity**

My emphasis here on “image vs. authenticity” and the “collective good” should in no way imply any inconsistency with my earlier critiques of standards (Vinson, 1999a, 2001). Accordingly, I still see standards-based reforms as problematic based on certain understand-
ings of democracy, oppression, and disciplinarity. Drawing on Dewey (1916/1966), I suggest that such reforms are incompatible with democracy, especially in view of Dewey’s well-known democratic criteria—namely, “more numerous and more varied points of shared common interest...” and “freer interaction between social groups [and] change in social habit—its continuous readjustment through meeting the new situations produced by varied intercourse” (pp. 86-87). Further, their construction and use insinuate Freire’s (1970) notion of oppression to the extent that they necessarily involve “prescription.” They threaten what Young (1992) has identified as the “five faces of oppression”: “exploitation,” “marginalization,” “powerlessness,” “cultural imperialism,” and “violence.” Lastly, standards suggest a Foucauldian (1975/1979) situation of disciplinarity grounded in the control and subsequent self-regulation of behavior by such “technologies” or “mechanisms” as “surveillance,” “normalization,” and “the examination,” as well as the establishment of multiple “regimes of truth.”

Image, Authenticity, and Consequences

There are of course several “classical” and useful theoretical perspectives from which to pursue and interrogate the concept of “image.” Among these are the frameworks created by Bakhtin (1981; i.e., “chronotope”), Barthes (1978; i.e., “the rhetoric of the image”), Baudrillard (1994; i.e., “the simulacrum”), Boorstin (1961/1992; i.e., “the pseudo-event”), Debord (1967/1995; i.e., “the spectacle”), and McLuhan (1964/1998; i.e., “the medium is the message”). Although space considerations preclude any in-depth treatment of such works, they do provide a range of interesting, challenging, and comprehensive critical insights.

Although a perplexing term, by image I mean a picture or representation of some thing, event, or situation that exists materially and/or spiritually in reality; it is that which, regardless of its creator’s objectives, does not—cannot—reflect, depict, or indicate accurately, precisely, and/or completely any ultimate reality vis-à-vis its intended “subject-object.”

However well-intentioned, the contemporary movement toward standards-based educational reform presents at least one key challenge to pedagogical authenticity. Most critically, it represents an effort to create, implement, and evaluate school policy—including decisions about purpose, curriculum, instruction, assessment, and teacher education—based on little more than pedagogical images. In fact, its most direct problematic resides in the extent to which it privileges and maintains certain dominant/dominating images over the conditions and characteristics of classroom authenticity. But, how does it work?
At the heart of standards-based reform is the establishment of a normalizing mode of pedagogy—that is, the institution of a universal and prescriptive set of educational elements and/or practices that literally are the “same” for everyone. Here, procedurally, a relatively small group of powerful policy makers first sets pedagogical purpose (sometimes with at least minimal, though often coerced, participation on the part of others). They do so based upon some image of education that implies (a) schools are failing, (b) the reasons for this failure and the necessary prescriptions to counteract it are identical across the board, and (c) the problems inherent in contemporary schooling are solely inner-school (teachers, curriculum, students) problems having nothing to do with the broader or “macro” contexts of the surrounding society. With the standardization of purpose (e.g., mission statements, etc.)—the outcome of which frequently is unremembered by teachers, students, and parents—comes the eventual standardization of curriculum, instructional method, and assessment. In fact, standards-based reform rests principally upon the hegemony of assessment, and yields in the end an assessment-driven system of consolidation (i.e., via purpose, curriculum, and instruction).

Standardized assessment serves several image-based functions. First, it allows policy makers to portray themselves as activists and reformers. Second, it provides a relatively easy means by which to “measure” academic “success” and “failure.” Third, it implies via its results a certain test-guided mode of school improvement—that is, it begs an approach grounded in increasing assessment scores. And, by connection, it enables educational managers to displace any responsibility for authentically improving education—they design the assessment, which subsequently becomes schools’ purpose, suggesting “clear guidelines” for curriculum and instruction, and leave it to others to follow directions. If test scores decrease, principals and teachers “must” be utilizing an inappropriate curriculum or practicing “poor” methodologies (witness, for example, the ongoing whole language-phonics debate). If things really decline, the powerful—in the name of accountability—can influence and/or mandate (even legislate) different and/or more (and “better”) teacher education. In effect, everything can be challenged or criticized except the assessment model itself, that aspect of classroom life which is most directly under the control of external elites—whose interests encourage the success of the system.

But perhaps what is most questionable is the extent to which standardized assessment outcomes work as a device for evaluating and setting policy with respect to practice. In partnership with various media, educational policy makers work to impose their images of schooling on the general public—and to do so as if no other images were possible. These are reflected and reinforced according to test scores. When test scores rise, educational leaders claim success; when
they fall, these same leaders criticize schools for failing, and argue that this lack of success—again, as represented by test scores—indicates the (1) need for specific curricular reforms (e.g., an emphasis on “the basics”), (2) ineffectiveness of teachers (e.g., the “mistaken” use of whole language at the expense of phonics), (3) shortcomings of teacher education programs (e.g., too little content, too many “methods courses”), and (4) superiority of corporate or business models (those grounded in performance conformity) to government sanctioned school systems (as reflected in various calls for privatization and vouchers). Most amazingly, assessment-based policy-practice decisions are made irrespective of any conceptual or experiential understandings of the multiplicities of authentic classroom realities.

For test scores do not reflect what goes on in classrooms. Nor do any components of most standards-based systems. Yet policy makers (continue to) decide what to do, and how well schools are doing it, based on standardized assessments. What such assessments cannot do, however, is indicate classroom life. Standardized assessment scores do not establish what students learn, nor do they mirror what teachers teach (no matter how hard they try). Based on such outcomes, politicians and the media claim to know something about schools and classrooms regardless of whether they have actually been in them. Scores go down, school is failing; scores go up, school is succeeding—no matter what’s going on. But do decision-makers really know what’s actually happening? If not, then test scores cannot enlighten them. What matters most in the professional and academic lives of teachers and students then is the standardized image and not the complexities and the dynamic and interactive meanings of life in classrooms.

Authentic reforms, though, would recognize and value diversity and difference (as opposed to mouthing its virtues and then creating a standardized pedagogy that in fact denies or rejects them). It would not set policy or dictate practices without understanding the processes specific to particular settings. It would accept that democracy should matter, and that all stakeholders—not just the powerful—should play a real and meaningful role, one conducive to the voicing of a number of educational, social, economic, and cultural interests. Lastly, it would legitimate the existence of multiple images as well as the possibility of multiple truths, and it would not sanction the imposition of one image by some powerful few (on the elitist claim that they know best) on the lives of the less powerful many, especially when they are children.

Standards-based reform movements and their privileging of image over authenticity yield several potentially problematic consequences relative to contemporary schooling. First, they limit the possibilities of reform alternatives. Through the use of the irrational and dominant image, along with a mutually beneficial yet manipulative
and immediate relationship with the media, policymakers are able to create and enforce a framework that develops a life of its own. That piece, which is most consistent with the desires of the pedagogically powerful—namely, the assessment component over which they exert supreme control—evolves into a reified object that exists beyond the realm of critique. And, moreover, it increasingly leads to the subsequent standardization of purpose, curriculum, method, and teacher education. Again, as per the media, if test scores increase, the standards-based scheme is “good”; if test scores decrease, teachers, curriculum, principals, students, teacher educators, and/or anyone else other than the powers that be are “failing.” In neither case must policymakers admit that the assessment itself even might be the ultimate problem. This understanding leads to a pedagogy of inflexibility and rigidity. Experimentation is discouraged as that which could—no matter its plausible educational benefits—threaten the status and growth of “positive” and media-publishable (image-oriented) results.

Second, and more important, standards-based reforms and their reliance on the image enables members of the policy establishment to ignore the societal contexts of (among others) class, language, gender, ethnicity, and race. To the extent that in many cases state mandated standards-based test scores most clearly indicate economics and race—with “higher” scores associated with Whiteness and Wealth (as opposed to either “quantity” or “quality” of personally or culturally meaningful learning)—educational and political leaders can somehow counter with statements such as “all children can learn” and “educators must be held accountable.” (Even more astonishing is the growing trend among states to punish schools and districts financially for decreasing test scores.) From this exclusionary view the extent to which the conditions and characteristics of society influence the conditions and characteristics of schooling at least as much as do the conditions and characteristics of schooling influence the conditions and characteristics of society, is dismissed, such that the assumption is that the playing field is equal, and that poorer performing schools ought to be more like the “better” (i.e., wealthier) schools (an image “reported” and produced jointly with the media) with their “better” teachers and curriculum. To further demonstrate their lack of concern with economics, the tendency (again) is increasingly to reduce or cut-off funding (or to invoke the trend of “state takeover” or “reconstitution”).

Summary and Conclusions: The Collective Good

Given the overdependence on the dominant and irrational image, standards-based reform movements suggest an important threat to what might be called the “collective good” (Vinson, 1999b). As opposed to the “individual (or “private” or “personal”) good,” in which what is “good” is that which is perceived by any given individual as
what is in his or her own best interests regardless of any consideration of anyone else’s best interests (e.g., the unbridled accumulation of wealth), and the “common good,” in which good is what is perceived by a majority of individuals to be in the best interests of a majority of individuals, or what is perceived by a powerful minority of individuals to be in their best interests and then imposed on others as “therefore” in their best interests as well (ala “false consciousness”; see also, e.g., former GM president Charles Wilson’s famous statement that “what’s good for General Motors is good for the country”), the “collective good” is that which is authentically perceived by everyone to be in the best (and diverse and authentic) interests of everyone. It represents an intentionally maximized coalition of similar interests, and demands in turn a maximized setting of democracy, a maximized context of equity in the distribution of power, maximized equality of opportunity, a maximized commitment to diversity, and maximized conditions of social justice. It reflects a mutual relationship between environment and educational standards and demands an understanding of both how standards affect society and how society affects standards. It is, further, most likely a relationship that is both productive and reproductive, one in which the conditions and characteristics of society—those within which standards-based reforms are produced—influence the production of standards, while (simultaneously) standards themselves influence the conditions and characteristics of society. Arguably, a society defined by and committed to the individual and/or common good creates standards that are appropriately reflective and subsequently reproductive, those that reinforce such socioeconomic and political commitments. Perhaps the ultimate threat of standards-based reform vis-à-vis the collective good, therefore, rests on the extent to which the economic, social, cultural, and political environments in which they are constructed (and which they subsequently help reproduce) can be described as democratic, just, equitable, free, and emancipatory.

Faced with the drive toward standards-based reform, social educators then must ask themselves many questions, including those most foundational to the profession (e.g., What is social studies? What should be its purposes? How should its contents be selected? and What is effective citizenship, and how should it be developed?). We must, moreover, take seriously and de/reconstruct the conditions, contexts, and perspectives within and from which standards-based reforms are produced and against which they must be understood and interpreted in terms of social studies education: What are the intentions of those who construct standards? How do standards function, and what is their underlying utility? How do their variously identified and engaged audiences treat them? We must (re)consider standards-based reforms as a possible setting for the creation of classroom practice (and
vice versa). Here, accordingly, we must problematize pedagogical standards themselves by opening them up to challenge and by placing them on the table (as opposed simply to viewing them as inevitable and/or as inherently right and good). We must in the end (following Richard Rorty) continue and advance the conversation—especially given potentially incommensurable viewpoints, consequences, and statuses (e.g., what are the implications of supporting both “diversity” and “standardization”—diversity standards? standardized diversity?). We must revisit our historical and current commitments as a field and consider their potential (in)compatibility with the contemporary pro-standards consensus. Lastly and most directly we need to pursue both (a) dialogue and (b) a variety of reform alternatives. For by engaging in open, honest, and inclusive communication as well as by interacting creatively across our theoretical and practice-based differences, only then can we work to disrupt that which is most dangerous, that which is cultishly and inflexibly assumed and affirmed as what inevitably, for good or bad, must be.

Notes

1 This article grew out of two papers originally presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Council for the Social Studies, Orlando, FL, 1999 (Vinson, 1999b, 1999c). I wish to acknowledge Wayne Ross, Rich Gibson, Steve Fleury, David Hursh, Perry Marker, and several blind reviewers for both NCSS and TRSE for their contributions.


3 I use the terms “conservative” and “liberal” in their contemporary US forms, such that conservative typically means center-to-right and liberal typically means center-to-left along a spectrum of political ideology. Apple (1996), in describing a similar neo-conservative/neo-liberal connection, perhaps uses these terms more historically precisely.

4 See, for example, Bowler (1999) in which Hirsch and Diane Ravitch quarrel with the state of Maryland over whether it is more appropriate to standardize “knowledge” or “skills.”

5 Space limitations preclude an exhaustive presentation. For a more detailed treatment see the primary sources, as well as Vinson (1999a, 2001).

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Talking Across the Divide: Social Justice for Language Arts and Social Studies Education


Review by MARTHA RAPP RUDDELL, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, CA, 94928.

Who would think that a group of whole language educators would put together a book in which social justice, liberatory education, and critical pedagogy (rather than the language arts) emerged as the straight-on focus of the book? Why would they even want to create such a bold statement at a time when the forces against whole language - fueled by misunderstandings promoted by conservative educators, policymakers, and the media—are so deeply felt and so pervasive? And what possible reason would social studies educators have for attending to discussions of social justice initiated by those who have been so ignominiously dismissed by a large percentage of the educational establishment and the public as a whole? The best answer I can find for these questions is Carole Edelsky’s edited text, Making Justice Our Project (1999), in which she and other whole language educators reach across the divide between literacy education and social studies education, extending the boundaries of each, to forge new definitions of critical pedagogy and liberatory, transformative education. Bess Altwerger and Elizabeth Saavedra set the stage in their Forward:

The crisis in whole language is due in large part to the whole language movement itself—for its failure to assert its own political identity, anticipate and prepare for the inevitable conservative backlash, and openly ally itself with the larger progressive struggle for social and cultural justice. Had the whole language movement taken a different road, it might now be in a much stronger position to use the current attacks as opportunities for exposing the reactionary politics of the opposition and for raising the demand for equitable and democratic education for all students...(p. vii)
Particularly in poor and oppressed communities, the battle for whole language led to a clearer understanding of the role of the traditional schools in maintaining race and class inequities. In short, an education in whole language was an education in the politics of schooling in America. And it was at this early point in the movement that whole language had the greatest potential for identifying itself as a critical and liberatory pedagogy—a movement for educational and social justice.

Ironically, “whole language” became too popular...(viii) And everyone—including whole language’s natural adversaries, such as state school systems and basal publishers—began to jump on the bandwagon, finding some set of associated methodological practices palatable, pliable, or profitable enough to swallow. In this way, they could maintain their control over the reproductive function of schools in our society and diffuse whole language as a pedagogy of resistance and transformation. By the early 1990s, whole language as it was presented in district inservice workshops and basal texts, had become so diluted, so tame, that it became hard to distinguish it from previous traditional paradigms...(p. ix)

Such was the state of the whole language movement when the inevitable conservative backlash erupted. Having failed to build strong alliances with progressive and activist educational communities, and having cowered away from a strong social and political agenda, the whole language movement had only the educational establishment to protect it. [Italics added] Predictably, state and local school systems abandoned whole language with record speed, citing poor test scores as justification. They immediately offered whole language as the sacrificial lamb, diverting the blame for its failures away from the criminal inequities of the American educational system. (p. xi)

**Building Alliances**

The remaining text of *Making Justice Our Project*—16 chapter—is a clear effort by whole language educators to begin to “build strong alliances with progressive and activist educational communities” toward the end of strengthening the bonds between all who believe deeply in education for social justice. And certainly, in the minds of most, social studies educators are high on the list of those likely to share such a commitment. *Making Justice Our Project* establishes a foundation that brings together the ideas embodied by both whole lan-
guage and critical pedagogy (Edelsky, p. 1), a combination that most social studies and literacy educators have probably not previously contemplated and some would question. Thus, for social studies educators and whole language educators to join together in a concerted effort to promote and extend liberatory pedagogy requires a leap of faith on both their parts. Edelsky even suggests that this may be a bad time "...to be urging already whole language teachers and already critical teachers to take on yet one more (i.e., each other's) 'stigma'" (p. 3). But I can't think of a better time. Herbert Kohl (2000/2001) argues that it is a sorry statement about the morals of our schools and our society that we continue to have to advocate for education for social justice (p. 14). I agree. Further, I believe that the recent demonization of whole language is yet one more blow to the cause of social justice.

The lesson learned by whole language educators is a hard one, and should serve to remind all of us that the educational establishment will never protect liberatory pedagogy, because such pedagogy threatens the hegemony upon which the establishment is built; i.e., the tacit consent by a great majority of the public and the education profession itself for the inequalities and inequities of the current system, inequalities and inequities that are defined by race, class, privilege, and power. Thus, the need for strong alliances among educators who refuse to consent. Thus, also, the reason why social studies educators interested in social justice will find Making Justice Our Project an important read, even though it is, indeed, written by language, literacy, and English educators who, without apology, base their teaching on principles of whole language instruction. But the book is not about whole language educators telling others how to "do" social justice. It is, instead, whole language educators' open declaration that they share the social justice agenda of instruction for transformation and liberation. The writing is not, directed solely toward the whole language-initiated, nor is the book focused on a language arts curriculum (absolutely NO discussion of any of the stuff you've ever heard or read about whole language!); it is, instead, fully situated in a social studies curriculum that teaches and promotes social justice—critical pedagogy (called "critical literacy" in some chapters), opposition to the status quo, disruption of hegemony, talking back, transformation, and interrogation of positions and practice.

**Edges and Tensions**

Making Justice Our Project illuminates in various ways the many edges and tensions of a liberatory pedagogy. These edges (verges, or brinks, or parts farthest from the middle) and tensions (stresses caused by opposing forces) exist in classrooms where students and teachers, alike, take action to promote social justice. Described in the book are
actions that include Junior Kindergarten children of 3-, 4-, and 5-years-old in Manitoba, Canada sending letters to lumber yards and their own parents protesting the sale, and urging against purchase, of wood from endangered Rain Forests. These same children circulated a petition in the school asking for inclusion of Kindergarten in all-school events such as teas and assemblies (Chapter 7, “A Conversation about Critical Literacy,” James Albright, Susan M. Church, Sue Settle, Vivian Vasquez). Included also are 4th grade students writing position papers and ultimately boycotting an all-school “Super Stars” program, promoted by the School Advisory Board and the administration, in which five students from each classroom were chosen monthly by their teachers for public recognition and reward; the children did this after concluding that the system for choosing Super Stars was one of favoritism, subjectivity, and status differential in classrooms, and in the face of pointed displeasure from the principal and other teachers (Chapter 3, “Exchanging Ideas and Changing Positions: The Importance of Conversation to Holistic, Critical Endeavors,” Marie Elaine Boozer, Lisa Burley Maras, and Bill Brummett). It includes also high school juniors using “talk back” journals and class conversations to address issues of inequality and power in schools and in the larger community, and to respond to the revelation by their teacher that the father of the original SAT exam was, “...a passionate racist who worried about an ‘alarming’ increase of people of mixed race, and called for an end to ‘infiltration of white blood into the Negro.’” (pp. 247-248) in their exploration of the politics of power in assessment practices in schools (Chapter 12, “Probing the Invisible Life of Schools,” Bill Bigelow).

The edges and tensions explored in Making Justice Our Project are thorny ones; they make our jobs infinitely more complex and difficult; they make waves in schools and communities; and they have unintended (and sometimes negative) consequences. Carole Edelsky discusses the tensions of creating a classroom that has as its center a curriculum of social justice:

A curriculum that provides safety is also a curriculum in which students are encouraged to voice genuine (not merely acceptable) deeply felt interpretations, some of which may promote injustice and inequality—like children saying that boys shouldn’t play with dolls or girls with trucks because God doesn’t like that. In a critical classroom, the teacher has to protect all interpretations, has to work mightily not to dislike the child of a Ku Klux Klan member, must never punish students for their positions (which usually reflect what the parents think). At the same time, the teacher has to make sure that any position can be interrogated even as it is protected. (pp. 26-27)
Teaching from the vantage point of a liberatory, critical pedagogy is clearly not the job for the timid or the meek, nor are the kinds of safe classrooms Edelsky describes easy for anyone to establish and maintain. And there is no one, clear way to do any of this. Echoing throughout the book are statements affirming the need for each social justice curriculum to be its own and the importance of teachers not trying to carbon copy successful models that other teachers have used. The focus is always on the much bigger picture:

My intention is not for other teachers to re-create Sweet Cakes Town—to “assign” Sweet Cakes Town to a class would surely kill the magic. Rather my intention is to pass on lessons about how to involve students in creating their own understandings of the world... (p. 116) (Chapter 6, “Teaching Without Charisma: Involving Third Graders as Co-investigators of Their Inner-City Neighborhood,” Paul Skilton-Sylvester).

My attempt here is not to sketch out a curriculum on the politics of schooling and to say, “Here, teach it like Linda and I taught it.” My aim is more limited. I want to suggest that it is a “basic skill” for students to reflect critically on issues of schools, equity, and social justice. When we neglect to invite students to critique their own school lives, we necessarily teach them habits of not-thinking and not-questioning—we teach them to be morally numb to their immediate surroundings. (p. 256) (Chapter 12, “Probing the Invisible Life of Schools,” Bill Bigelow)

Teaching for social justice, indeed, makes our job more complex and difficult. I like the irony captured by Paul Skilton-Sylvester in his heading (and discussion of), “Planning for the Spontaneous Curriculum.” It is only for the scripted curriculum that teachers do not have to plan; the well-crafted “spontaneous curriculum” is the result of much planning, foresight, and monitoring, as these chapters demonstrate.

Teaching for social justice does make waves in schools and communities. Already discussed are Lisa Maras’ 4th graders who mobilized an entire class to reject the Super Star process that they saw as an unfair system; both Lisa and her students suffered strong tensions during the decision-making process, and reproof and censure for their action from other teachers and the principal in the school. Rebecca
García-González, Pilar Mejía, and Winnie Porter describe the struggle and triumphs of changing an elementary school name to César Chávez to reflect the community in which it was situated, initiating action to resolve community and school conflicts, and spearheading a day-long teach-in involving all the students in that school (and others) and their families about Latino cultural contributions. It is the poignant note at the end of the article that tells of the price that making waves can exert:

"Not easy" is an understatement when it comes to educating for a participatory, public democracy...Three years after this chapter was written, Bill Rojas, the San Francisco Unified School District superintendent, reassigned the principal [one of the authors, Pilar Mejía] despite parent and teacher protests. Although private assurances were given to the community that it would have a voice in selecting the next administrator, the new principal was not among the candidates interviewed by the search committee. By June of 1999, fifteen out of thirty-three teachers had left César Chávez—a disheartening development. But the story isn’t over yet. Pilar and the teachers committed to struggling for justice are continuing that work in professional organizations, graduate schools, and as new administrators. And many parents and new teachers in the community, taught by the activism at César Chávez School, have become increasingly skilled at organizing for their rights. (p. 95). (Chapter 4, "¡Sí Se Puede! Teaching for Transformation,“)

And oh, the unintended consequences when teaching for social justice. They can be myriad and difficult to navigate. Barbara Comber and Helen Nixon describe the experience of Barbara Fox, a young aboriginal woman teaching in a low-income school just north of Adelaide, South Australia:

In her first year as a registered teacher at the Paralowie R-12 School, Barbara continued to put critique at the centre of her curriculum. The outcomes were not entirely what she had predicted. She found, for example, that putting racism on the agenda in social science classes did not necessarily make the students more tolerant or rational about the issues. This was true even when she put her own and her students’ experiences at the centre of classroom learning...
Despite repeated placements of antiracist work at the centre of her curriculum, Barbara found that her students did not easily see a contradiction between their positive personal experiences of "the other" and their unquestioning alliance with institutionalized racist values..." (pp. 328-29) (Chapter 16, "Literacy as a Site for Social Justice: What Do Our Practices Do?")

In "A Conversation about Critical Literacy (Chapter 7, James Albright, Susan M. Church, Sue Settle, & Vivian Vasquez), Sue Settle sums up the many unintended consequences of education for social justice and critical classrooms for both students and teachers:

I struggle with moving toward a more democratic classroom. I have concerns about what happens when the children move on to other classrooms which do not follow the same philosophies. I know that children have been seen as saucy or disrespectful when they question the status quo. Even if they’re told up front that some people will object to their questioning, I still remain concerned for them. I struggle in my own mind with issues of power in the school setting.

I seem to be working longer hours, yet still can’t accomplish all that I know I would like to. I am frustrated at times with the slow progress it seems I’m making. I continue to struggle with the tensions that continually exist for me as a teacher in terms of time in the classrooms, external expectations of what should be going on in classrooms, the conflicts and the politics that exist within a school setting, as they exist in society. I am discouraged when I hear parents admiring the "sameness" of classrooms and what happens in them. Is that what we really want? As the conservative climate increases, I do find it more wearing, more isolating, more demanding. It is not an easy path, but it is the road I—we—are traveling. (pp. 156-57).

For all the unknowns of unintended consequences, and for all the questioning teachers do to examine their work and accomplishments, Paul Skilton-Sylvestor reminds us of the consequence of not teaching for social justice:

Our students face the stark realities of inequality every day. Whether or not we find ways to talk about them, as our students ride from the dilapidated inner city to the
immaculate suburbs, they will find some way to make sense of it, just as you and I did—and do. For my African American students, this might mean deciding that their neighborhood is a mess because their people are lazy (as some have told me); or it might mean deciding that all white people are just selfish (as others have told me); or it might mean deciding that the system is unfair so there is no use in trying (as still others have told me).

The point is that in our silence, students are left to understand the world using only their wits and the warped fun-house mirror which is popular culture. (p. 139)

Power and Transformation

And so what is the power of this book? How does it transform us, as educators, and how does it transform what we think about teaching, learning, classrooms, and schools? I think its greatest power, upon initial reading, lies in the sheer volume of stories it tells about teachers and students acting on their beliefs about social justice. Power also lies in the range of actions and political stances taken: some students resisted the status quo, others talked back, and still others interrogated both theirs and others’ beliefs. And, more astonishing to me, was the range of ages and grades included in these stories. When I first opened Making Justice Our Project, I was sure this would be a book focused wholly on secondary classrooms, with perhaps some middle school stories included. Instead, I read about preschoolers writing letters and petitions of protest, primary grade children researching and writing about the issues faced by migrant and immigrant farmworkers and by all who live in inner cities, intermediate grade children protesting and probing issues of war and culture, and then also are the stories of secondary students, community college students, and school administrators investigating issues of race, politics, privilege, and liberation.

The effect is stunning. It reinforces my belief that opportunity for deep, abstract thinking should never be reserved only for only the most privileged learners (Ruddell, 2001); nor should those opportunities be denied to very young children. It also reminds me of how bold teachers and students of all ages can be, daring to speak out, take action, and change their corner of the world in the name of social justice. And it convinces me that we literacy and social studies educators have long been missing the boat by not coalescing and by not using the strength that such an alliance can bring. Any of us who spend time in the public school arena today know the nature of the opposition—the focus in schools for students to know the facts and the rules and the literal content of disciplines rather than to think deeply in any area. Further, we know the stultifying educational environment that
such a focus creates, where teaching to the test reigns supreme; where
decontextualized, rote learning is the norm; and where a critical,
liberatory pedagogy is not only discouraged, but disavowed.

Our only hope, whether we are social studies educators or whole
language/literacy educators, is to transform our own way of doing
business, to talk across the divide of our self-imposed borders and
take action together toward the end of promoting widespread
liberatory education. Reading Making Justice Our Project seems a pretty
good place to start.

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**Statement of Purpose**

*Theory and Research in Social Education* is designed to stimulate and communicate systematic research and thinking in social education. Its purpose is to foster the creation and exchange of ideas and research findings that will expand knowledge and understanding of the purposes, conditions, and effects of schooling and education about society and social relations. Manuscripts reporting conceptual or empirical studies of social education are welcomed.

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