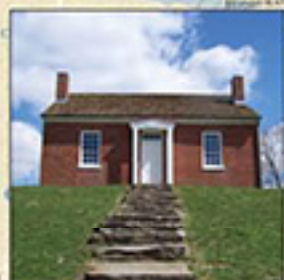
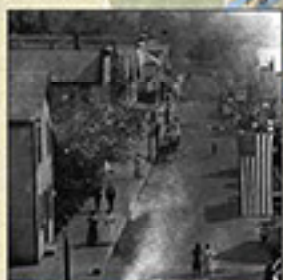
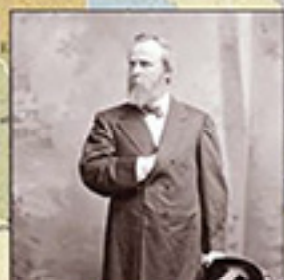
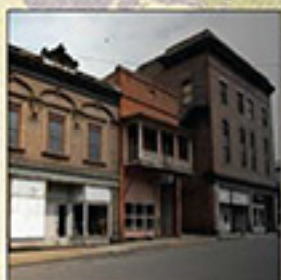


# Ohio SOCIAL STUDIES Review

Spring 2015, Volume 52, Issue No. 1



<p>Eleanor Walker Craig, first female African-American mayor in U.S., 1975</p> <p><i>Courtesy of Ohio Historical Society</i></p>	<p>The Great Serpent Mound of Southern Ohio, 2007</p> <p><i>Courtesy of Frans Doppen</i></p>	<p>Ohio Coal Miners</p> <p><i>Courtesy of Ohio Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Mines</i></p>	<p>Perry's Memorial Monument at Put-in-Bay, ca. 1935-1945</p> <p><i>Courtesy of Ohio Historical Society</i></p>
<p>William Henry Harrison, date unknown</p> <p><i>Courtesy of Ohio Historical Society</i></p>	<p>Ohio Gate Entrance to the Ohio State Fair, ca. 1960</p> <p><i>Courtesy of Ohio Historical Society</i></p>	<p>John Glenn and the Friendship 7 Space Capsule, 1962</p> <p><i>Courtesy of Ohio Historical Society</i></p>	<p>Cedar Point, date unknown</p> <p><i>Courtesy of the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library</i></p>
<p>Robinson's lunch, Monroe County, Ohio, data unknown</p> <p><i>Courtesy of Little Cities of Black Diamonds website</i></p>	<p>Adelaine Sterling Ott, Ohio General Assembly, ca. 1923-1924</p> <p><i>Courtesy of Ohio Historical Society</i></p>	<p>Downtown Shawnee, Ohio, 2007</p> <p><i>Courtesy of Frans Doppen</i></p>	<p>President Rutherford B. Hayes, date unknown</p> <p><i>Courtesy of the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library</i></p>
<p>Let Ohio Women Vote, 1915</p> <p><i>Courtesy of Ohio Historical Society</i></p>	<p>Main Street Rendville, Ohio, 1906</p> <p><i>Courtesy of Little Cities of Black Diamonds website</i></p>	<p>Annie Oakley, ca. 1880-1889</p> <p><i>Courtesy of Ohio Historical Society</i></p>	<p>Rankin House State Memorial, Ripley, Ohio</p> <p><i>Courtesy of Richard Cooper</i></p>



# Table of Contents

<b>Editors' Comments</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Special Feature</b>	
Prentice T. Chandler, <i>Knowing Where We Started: Race and Controversy in Social Studies</i>	<b>4</b>
<b>Forum</b>	
Adam Motter and Johnny Merry, <i>What Does "Increasing Rigor and Engagement for ALL" mean to you?</i>	<b>8</b>
<b>Social Studies in Practice</b>	
Alicia Crowe and Evan Mooney, <i>Come Together, Right Now, Over Science Socio-Scientific Issues and Citizenship in Social Studies Education</i>	<b>14</b>
Adam Steinmetz, <i>Stewards of Truth: Holocaust Denial in the Classroom</i>	<b>21</b>
Lisa Brown Buchanan and Christina M. Tschida, <i>Exploring the Five Themes of Geography Using Technology</i>	<b>29</b>
Mark Pearcy, <i>"Playing the President": The Value of Simulations in Promoting Civic Literacy</i>	<b>40</b>
Bruce Wendt, <i>Modeling the C3 Curriculum in Billings, Montana</i>	<b>50</b>
<b>Social Studies in Research</b>	
Frans H. Doppen, <i>Student Teaching in South Africa: An Intercultural Experience</i>	<b>55</b>
Gayle Y. Thieman, <i>Taking Informed Action Through Civic Literacy: One District's Experience</i>	<b>66</b>
<b>Special Feature</b>	
Corbin Moore, <i>The Vital Role of Social Studies Education in Ohio</i>	<b>77</b>

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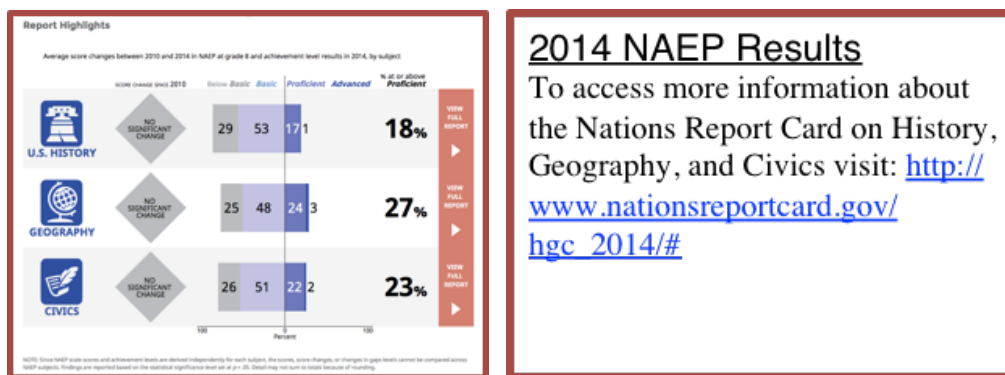
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## EDITORS' COMMENTS

This spring 2015 issue of the *Ohio Social Studies Review* addresses the theme of “Civic Literacy: Taking Informed Action,” with attention to the knowledge and skills expected of students in the classroom. The call for this issue allowed for and encouraged diverse expressions of civic literacy that included traditional in-class methods, addressing development of knowledge and foundational skills such as informational text analysis and evidenced-based writing, and action-oriented advocacy and service learning examples. Defining civic literacy in this way provided opportunities for social studies stakeholders to illustrate how they are promoting “*civic competence*—the knowledge, intellectual processes, and democratic dispositions required of students to be *active and engaged participants in public life* (emphasis added)” (NCSS, 2010).

Given the recent focus on the 2014 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), it is important to understand and appreciate that civic competence extends beyond what can be measured using a paper test. According to the 2014 NAEP civics assessment as reported on the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) website, only 23% of 8th grade test-takers scored at a level considered proficient (or above), while over half (51%) scored at basic level (or above).



It is important to remember when examining the results that the “NAEP cannot directly assess civic participation;” rather, “the framework specifies that assessment questions be designed to measure whether students can identify participatory skills, recognize their purpose, explain how to use them, or specify how best to achieve diverse results by using particular skills” (NCES, 2015). The difference between identifying, recognizing, explaining, or specifying and actually “doing” is vast. This is the difference between the “decontextualized, one-time measurement done by outsiders and the ongoing, contextualized measurement done with a teacher” (Brookhart, 2003, p. 7). It is this difference with a focus on the “doing” that makes this OSSR issue particularly relevant.

We understand that the NAEP results are but one measure of student performance; nevertheless, we hope to use this moment to illuminate the fact that assessment results should be considered with caution, and as a limited snapshot of performance. In the context of this issue of the OSSR, we highlight the work teachers are doing to engage students with and assess civic literacy in ways that cannot be tested, are meaningful, and support active civic participation.

The authors featured in this issue of the OSSR provide examples of their work to promote civic literacy, offering evidence of students “doing.” Through their contributions, we focus on the great work that social studies teachers, teacher educators, and other stakeholders are conducting to promote the development of civic participation beyond the classroom. There are examples of class methods, including *Alicia Crowe and Eric Mooney’s* discussion of use of the Structured Academic Controversy (SAC) to unpack a socio-scientific issue and *Mark Percy’s* explanation of how using a simulation in the classroom engages students with civic issues related to the presidency. *Adam Steinmetz* promotes awareness of Holocaust denial as a method to address critical thinking while also providing suggestions for addressing controversial issues. *Lisa Brown Buchanan and Christina Tschida* describe uses of technology to teach geography, addressing themes supporting civic literacy such as culture, economy, and population density.

Other authors address community resources and student engagement beyond the classroom. *Bruce Wendt* shares his students’ experience with a variety of community stakeholders including a local historical center and the Public Broadcasting Service in Billings, Montana. *Gayle Thieman* shares her investigation of how teachers and schools are engaging their students with civic action, providing recommendations to expand opportunities for civic engagement. *Frans Doppen’s* piece offers a global perspective on civic literacy, providing a thoughtful description of one student’s experience teaching in South Africa and the impact of this experience on her intercultural sensitivity and global awareness.

This issue also offers three special features. First, we look back as a means to look forward. *Prentice Chandler*, who will be a guest editor for the spring 2016 issue, considers the repercussions social studies teachers encounter when teaching controversial issues through his reflections on an interview with Alan Barron—a Michigan teacher suspended as a result of his teaching. Next, through the forum, *Adam Motter* (incoming OCSS President) and *Johnny Merry*, (a Fort Hayes social studies teacher) provide their perspectives on the OCSS fall conference theme, “The College and Career Ready Citizen: Increasing Rigor and Engagement for ALL.” Finally, *Corbin Moore* (outgoing OCSS President) provides a review of the history of social studies education in the state of Ohio, highlighting the positive change making this the time for social studies. As Corbin departs, we extend our appreciation to his contributions to the organization and ongoing support of the *Ohio Social Studies Review*.

Thoughtful review of the articles in this issue may provide hope and inspiration to teachers seeking to address civic literacy in the classroom. We are optimistic that this issue supports civic literacy, providing readers ideas for addressing civics in and out of the classroom. Reader’s comments and reactions to this spring 2015 edition are encouraged, as we continue the discussion surrounding civic literacy in schools. In addition, we urge you to share classroom



teaching, research, and collaborations with others by submitting a manuscript for the fall 2015 issue of *OSSR*. Submit your full-length manuscript or special feature article to:

<http://edhd.bgsu.edu/ossr/journal/index.php/ossr/index>.

We hope that you find this issue to be useful, thought provoking, and supportive of informed action in your classrooms.

**Victoria Stewart**, Executive Editor, University of Toledo

**Nancy Patterson**, Associate Editor, Bowling Green State University

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# KNOWING WHERE WE STARTED: RACE AND CONTROVERSY IN SOCIAL STUDIES

**Prentice T. Chandler**, University of Cincinnati



Amid all the fuss and feathers, there is substance, there is reality, in social studies...it will be said that the growth of social studies places on teachers an impossible burden, it compels them to deal with controversial questions...They are in a different position from that of a teacher of Latin or mathematics. They cannot master their subject reasonably well and settle back to a ripe old age early in life. The subject matter of their instruction is infinitely difficult and it is continually changing. If American democracy is to fulfill its high mission, those who train its youth must be among the wisest, most fearless, and most highly trained men and women this broad land can furnish (Beard, 1929, p. 371).

Academic freedom for social studies teachers includes the right and responsibility to study, investigate, present, interpret, discuss, and debate relevant facts, issues, and ideas in fields of the teacher's professional competence. Academic freedom for students in social studies courses provides the right to study, question, interpret, and discuss relevant facts, ideas, and issues under consideration in those courses (NCSS, 2007, para. 1).

Social studies teachers are always so close to being in hot water. A concept taught in one class with no challenge can be taught in the same school to another class during the same school day and be challenged by parents (Chandler, 2006) or school administrators. One simply cannot predict when and why social studies content will be challenged (Simpson, 2010). The principles of academic freedom lie at the heart of what social studies teachers do. In their quest to educate students for participation in a pluralist democracy, social studies teachers inevitably must deal with material that is potentially offensive to some members of the community.

In this special feature, I present reflections on an interview with a veteran social studies teacher who encountered just such a challenge to his lesson on racial stereotypes. During spring 2014, three weeks before retiring from Monroe Middle School in Michigan, Alan Barron—a social studies teacher with 36 years of experience—was placed on administrative leave for showing a short film on blackface minstrelsy as part of his instruction on stereotyping and race relations in America. His objective for showing excerpts from *Jumpin' Jim Crow* to his classes was to highlight how entertainment in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries stereotyped African Americans through the use of blackface actors. As part of the lesson, Mr. Barron used this video as the catalyst for a guided discussion on stereotypes in the film, instructing students to notify him when they saw

something in the film that constituted a “stereotype.” In this exercise, the students and Mr. Barron discussed the stereotype and what it meant as situated in the historical time and place.

During this lesson, Mr. Barron was observed by one of the school’s assistant principals. The administrator arrived approximately 20 minutes late, stayed for approximately 20 minutes, and then left. As a result of the abbreviated observation, the administrator missed the introduction to the lesson, including the rationale for using the film as well as the concluding comments about how stereotypes are used to portray racial minorities in inaccurate ways. Later in the day, Mr. Barron had a conference about the lesson with this administrator. This conference foreshadowed the beginning of problems with his lesson and the school system. Barron recalls that this assistant principal had only one thing to say to him regarding his lesson: “That was the most offensive thing I have ever seen in my life.” On this point, Mr. Barron and the assistant administrator were in agreement—stereotyping is offensive. For Mr. Barron, that was the point of the lesson. In his view, the power of stereotypes is that they go unchallenged and thus become entrenched in our thinking, rendering them “natural” and invisible. The intent of his lesson was to help students see through stereotypes for what they truly represent.

I interviewed Mr. Barron on the phone in late summer of 2014. When I spoke to him about his curricular choices that day, his rationale was simple. It was based on how the U.S., as a racial state, has changed over time. Although he was quick to point out that the U.S. has more work to do in race relations, he stated that things are, in some respects, better than they were in the past. He stated, “In order to know how far we’ve come, we need to know where we started” (A. Barron, personal communication, August 6, 2014). Barron stated that he didn’t attend school with African Americans until he was in college and was intentionally drawing attention to the fact that if one’s access to racial minorities is limited, stereotypes—particularly from media sources—become one’s only frame of reference. In this way, he was speaking to what scholars in race and media studies tell us: that absent contact with people different from ourselves, our understandings are shaped and formed by “common sense” images from media (Alexander, 2011; Markus & Moya, 2010).

One day after the abbreviated observation, Mr. Barron was placed on administrative leave for “allegations of misconduct.” The formal letter notifying him of this decision stated (in its entirety),

At no other time should you be on school property unless otherwise directed by school administration. There should be no contact with anyone outside of your union representative or legal counsel regarding the circumstances of this investigation, including students, staff, parents, or community members.

Nevertheless, after his suspension, according to Mr. Barron, he was contacted by the school principal and asked to supply the school with lesson plans for a few days. However, he was unable to provide these since he was banned from school property. At the beginning of his suspension from the district, a parent of one of Barron’s students saw him at the park and asked why he hadn’t been returning her emails of support. At this point Barron realized that the district had also frozen his email account. During his two-week suspension, the news of Mr. Barron’s story appeared in local, state, and national news outlets. Local news stations wanted to interview him. Students at the school planned protests via Facebook to have Mr. Barron reinstated, and

T-shirts bearing “#FreeMrBarron” appeared on campus. During his suspension, Mr. Barron did not respond to any media reports or requests for interviews.

After being suspended for two weeks with no communication from the district, Mr. Barron was reinstated. At his post-investigation meeting he was accused of “insubordination,” for allegedly failing to follow a district mandated gag order. An unfortunate consequence of Mr. Barron’s two-week suspension was that he was unable to attend his own retirement luncheon because he dared to teach history without, to use his words, “sugarcoating” the offensive parts.

This story is not only about the unfair treatment of a veteran social studies teacher simply doing his job; it is also about the power of administration (at least in this school) to create a climate of fear (Cornbleth, 2002) in which teaching and learning meaningful social studies is impossible. In fact, in Barron’s opinion, “Teachers are afraid to death” (A. Barron, personal communication, August 6, 2014). The rationale is simple—if the administration of this school can treat Mr. Barron in this way, what chance do new social studies teachers have to engage in truthful, authentic, and powerful pedagogy? To teach social studies without allowing students access to the unpleasant, hurtful, and awful parts not only creates within students a false sense of how history, geography, economics, government, etc. work “in real life.” It also prevents them from being able to make sense of a world that operates in ways that are diametrically opposed to the “freedom-quest” narrative (VanSledright & Afflerbach, 2000) so prevalent in social studies textbooks and classrooms. Mr. Barron sums up his views this way, “We could do all history students a favor and talk, from the beginning, about all of the offensive parts in our story” (A. Barron, personal communication, August 6, 2014). I agree with Mr. Barron’s assessment. If we are to use history to learn *from* history, we must be willing to include those chapters that have the most important lessons to teach.

And, herein lies perhaps the most important part of Mr. Barron’s story. If social studies teachers are to help students understand the worlds in which they live, they must be allowed to show how society changes, for good and ill. Yes inequities have been addressed over the course of history, as Mr. Barron points out, but he also notes that we should allow students in our social studies classes to grapple with *past and present* social problems to meet the mission of the social studies. In this case, it seems that an administrator’s knee jerk response to a lesson on race thwarted just this type of teaching. From an administrative perspective, one can understand the fear that comes with teaching and talking about race. Race is controversial and emotional—it has been this way for our entire history as a nation. In recent years, this has become abundantly clear. As the years of 2014 and 2015 unfolded, with the police killings of Eric Garner in New York, Michael Brown in Ferguson, Ezell Ford in Los Angeles, Tamir Rice in Cleveland, Walter Scott in North Charleston, and Freddy Gray in Baltimore, social studies teachers are put, again, in a position of trying to help students understand the (racial) world in which we live.

Refusing to allow students to learn about controversial and emotional topics in their social studies classes only serves to shield students from the complicated social dynamics at play in their lived experiences. If social studies teachers are to help their students understand the present moment, they must be allowed the academic freedom to “study, question, interpret, and discuss relevant facts, ideas, and issues...” (NCSS, 2007, para. 1) germane to the social studies. Addressing social studies in this manner requires that all stakeholders whether administrators, parents, teachers, students and/or the public, understand and support challenging, authentic

social studies in their schools. Social studies teachers cannot stand alone in this endeavor. As Dewey stated, we must “Cease conceiving of education as mere preparation for later life, and make it the full meaning of the present life” (Dewey, 1893, para. 20). Only with this freedom can social studies teachers help their students understand the ebb and flow of humanity, and hopefully help them develop a sense of how things came to be as they are.

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## WHAT DOES “INCREASING RIGOR AND ENGAGEMENT FOR ALL” MEAN TO YOU?

Our spring issue includes the Forum—a special feature that presents paired manuscripts offering divergent viewpoints on a contemporary topic. Our forum typically follows and forecasts the conference theme, which this year is “The College and Career Ready Citizen: Increasing Rigor and Engagement for All.” We welcome these divergent perspectives on the topic—one from an administrator and one from a practicing teacher.



### Ongoing Work of Promoting Rigor and Engagement

**Adam Motter**, K-12 Curriculum Specialist, Akron Public Schools  
and President of the Ohio Council for the Social Studies

First, let me share with you my bias, so you can see upfront how it relates to my rationale for why this title is appropriate for the fall 2015 Ohio Council for the Social Studies (OCSS) conference. I have been a high school teacher in Akron Public Schools for 13 years and the district’s K-12 Curriculum Specialist for the past nine years. I am a father to a seventh grader who is on the gifted end of the spectrum and a daughter who (more like I was) tolerates schoolwork so she can see all her friends! I have been a coach most of my adult life, and like most social studies teachers, I have a strong love of our country, am fascinated with just about any story, and believe social studies is critical to each person’s human experience and our US democracy. I am also the incoming OCSS President and was instrumental in helping identify this year’s conference theme.

In regard to the part of the conference theme: “The College and Career Ready Citizen,” the introduction to the National C3 Framework (National Council for the Social Studies, 2013) states that

NOW MORE THAN EVER, [emphasis added] students need the intellectual power to recognize societal problems; ask good questions and develop robust investigations into them; consider possible solutions and consequences; separate evidence-based claims from parochial opinions; and communicate and act upon what they learn. And most importantly, they must possess the capability and commitment to repeat that process as long as is necessary. Young people need strong tools for, and methods of, clear and disciplined thinking in order to traverse successfully the worlds of college, career, and civic life (p. 6).

For me, the interesting question to this claim is: *why* is this true? Has our society changed so much in the last 10 or 20 years that “now more than ever” all students need to be college or

career ready? Haven't those in education for many generations been saying "now more than ever" regarding the level of student performance?

On one hand, most fundamental knowledge and values that have guided our students for the last 100 years remain critically important. On the other hand, the challenges we see today in all aspects of our society demand an increased response from our citizenry (and public social studies education plays a significant role in shaping our future citizenry). In politics, for example, there is a depth of knowledge needed to have an informed opinion on issues such as fracking, education reform, or campaign finance reform. Doing research is necessary to see the different perspectives of these issues, but a key difference today is that many times it's a lot easier to find unreliable, biased sources than it is to find credible, unbiased ones. Another great example is financial literacy. Who among us would say that our parents or grandparents needed "more sophisticated" financial literacy when they were our age? It is a brave new world. Consumers and wage earners have so much choice at their fingertips, and with it comes the need for a skill set to successfully manage these choices.

While the testing "rigor" found in the conference theme is emphasized in our standards and new tests, the idea of rigor itself is not. We see modern evidence of this dating back to the Reagan administration and *A Nation at Risk* (Adams & Ginsberg, 2002). It has been clear for decades that the shift in our country from an industrial to a post-industrial society lends itself to workers who will thrive if they are technically skilled, creative problem solvers. Globalization drives this notion further; our Ohio cities have had to re-invent themselves to compete. According to Policy Matters Ohio, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that Ohio was the fourth lowest state in the US in job growth between 2005 and 2013 (Halbert, 2013). The continued decline of jobs in our manufacturing sector played a significant role in this. As educators, we have all been bombarded with statistics reporting how far behind our students are compared to students in other parts of the world. Our millennial generation is fairing no better (Jaschik, 2015) and social studies teachers across the state and the nation often "remind" students that the new jobs require more sophisticated skills, and that education is critical to their future be it in a career or college. Is it such a stretch to consider the actual skills we teach also need to be more rigorous and engaging for the complex world in which our students will work and live?

Consider the rigorous social studies disciplinary skills of putting an event into its historical context, close reading of a document, applying geo-spatial skills to the myriad of conflicts in the Middle-East, maximizing financial literacy skills to survive as a young adult, or presenting an argument as you advocate for or against a law by using social media. Most of us would say these skills are needed for successful citizenship, and more and more classrooms across Ohio are having students engage in the application of these skills. I believe these skills are critical to our country's future, and it is vital that as we advocate for their place in education, and that we are able to discuss their significance with parents, business leaders, political leaders, and others. Our conference is designed to help provide a platform for discussion and to find solutions and ideas to support this kind of learning. Further, I encourage all of us to remember that as we feel the real pressures of an imperfect testing program or we feel trapped by the confines of our Ohio's New Learning Standards, we are still the authors of our future. We can practice what we preach by connecting the application of rigorous skills with teaching standards <sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Our standards do include skill based content statements, and they are a good starting point. However, having students apply complex disciplinary skills for successful citizenship goes well beyond what is listed in our state standards.

What about this notion of “Rigor and Engagement for ALL”? Why is it necessary to include the word “ALL”? I believe this has multiple meanings. First, to reach all students, teachers must begin with the idea that students may need to be taught differently in order to understand. This is difficult in the social studies, especially differentiating the content. For example, if students are asked to know the causes of the Word War I (we traditionally teach the four causes of World War I as Nationalism, Militarism, Imperialism and the entangling alliance system), does differentiating to simplify content mean some students know only two? Or withholding context for students so they have less material to memorize? How do I effectively differentiate without having a different lesson plan for 150 students every day? What about the notion of enriching the students who already have a solid understanding? These are not easy questions to answer. Developing instructional planning that allows for multiple lanes of learning, while allowing students to take increased ownership of their learning takes time and can be difficult. Many of us were not taught this way, and the learning goals we are targeting are increasing in rigor and depth of understanding. The conference will help support strategies to differentiate this shift in social studies education.

Secondly, I believe there is an equity issue at stake with the word “ALL.” In our country, social studies teachers should advocate that ALL students have the opportunity to be successful, productive, critical thinkers. Our democracy depends on it. Democracy needs a citizenry who is not apathetic. Citizens must advocate for issues important to them, such as electing responsible leaders and participating in the democratic process. Teaching and modelling sophisticated skills needed to be productive citizens for *all* students has to be one of the most challenging *and* exciting notions of our discipline.

The OCSS conference will have strands of breakout sessions related to:

- Differentiation strategies and activities.
- Technology solutions such as using Google capabilities, iCivics and the latest apps/sites.
- Literacy connections that support close historical thinking skills.

Our hope is that teachers will find real solutions to continue on their journey toward supporting students learning the skills needed to reach the standards, but more importantly, helping them develop the skills needed to be successful in the future.

I hope you can join us and encourage you to advocate for a team to attend so you can participate in this discussion, helping to build and learn from the shared knowledge and strategies and take something back to your school district to share and perhaps implement in your classrooms.



## Releasing Rigor and Engagement in the Social Studies Classroom

**Johnny Merry**, Fort Hayes Arts and Academic High School

I'd like to address the rigor and engagement questions separately, using examples from my teaching experience. I teach about 150 students a year at Fort Hayes Arts and Academic High School in Columbus, Ohio and have been with Columbus City School district for thirteen years.



What does it mean to increase rigor for all? This question implies that social studies, or citizenship education, have become less rigorous. To paraphrase Sir Ken Robinson from his RSA talk *Changing Education Paradigms*, “of course we want higher standards, why would we lower them?” But, we can’t set the bar higher and expect our students to reach it on their own. We must encourage them, believe in them, support them, teach them to support themselves, empower them, and, most importantly, help them to believe in themselves. Students can do rigorous work, but it needs to be meaningful, connected to their passions, and something they want to do. Inquiry and project-based education can achieve these goals, and I will use an example from my experience as an illustration.

In my classroom, students engage in yearlong social justice research projects. At the beginning of the school year, students choose a broad topic from a list of topics to be addressed over the course of the year. They then identify a broad essential question to focus their research and are responsible for writing their own narrow supporting question that is tied to a region and an issue. Students begin to research their issue by evaluating multiple sources of information for credibility and reliability, followed by collecting relevant information to address their essential questions. Research findings are presented to the class and, through these multiple, public presentations, students learn about a variety of issues from each other. Close to the end of the year, students use their creative talents to make an artistic product—it can be visual art, creative writing, and/or performance art—with the goal of either raising awareness of their issue or inspiring others to take action. The final requirement is a reflective research essay in which students consider their work over the entire year, thinking about new questions they may have, and contemplating their next course of action to address their issue.

Throughout the process, my role as the teacher is to provide support and feedback at each step. Students have to submit research proposals with their initial questions and sources for feedback and approval. The same process is used when students are determining their final creative piece. Additionally, students must locate a mentor—someone considered an expert in their chosen artistic medium—to help them with their final product. This person can be a teacher, peer, family, or member of their community. The experience working with the mentor provides students with a perspective beyond the classroom and feedback from someone other than their teacher. Evaluating students using performance-based assessments and/or creative products requires that they engage with the content, think critically, and work to meet deadlines—very important skills in college and the workplace. Conversely, individual essays and multiple-choice assessments do not require the same level of creativity, independence, or social construction of knowledge as ongoing research projects. These types of yearlong projects also serve to encourage students to become agents for change in their communities.

A goal of social studies education is for students to become engaged citizens, but what does that look like? Is an active citizen one who follows state, national, and local politics and votes in the fall and the spring? Or is the goal of social studies education to inspire students to identify problems in their communities and in their world and provide them the skills and know-how necessary to work to solve those problems? These present conflicting definitions of citizen education. The former question represents a more passive citizen who works within the system and accepts the status quo, while the latter question represents a global citizen who cannot accept the world as it is and strives to make it a better place, starting with her community.

What does it mean to increase engagement for all? First, just as I am concerned that there is a perception that the high school curriculum is not rigorous, I am likewise concerned that there is a need to question why students might be disengaged. Assuming they are, it is my view that the standards based education and its accompanying testing regimes of the last few decades are significant contributing factors. Test preparation has taken the place of teaching students to be independent critical thinkers who question the world and why it is the way it is. There are even some state governments and boards of education that openly object to teaching children how to think critically (2012 Texas OP Party platform, 2015 Oklahoma Lawmakers Challenging AP US History).

Another cause of disengagement may be that high school teachers are supposed to prepare high school students for success at the college level. The basic model of a college course consists of lecture, outside reading, essay exams, and a research paper. This mode of instruction works for a small percentage of the human population and requires a certain skill set to guarantee success: the ability to maintain focus for extended periods of time, the self discipline and independence to complete the reading outside of class, and the basic understanding of formula essay writing. The missing factor is motivation. How do we develop intrinsic motivation in the large majority of high school students to do the hard work necessary for career or college life? How do we accomplish this in a school culture that sends the consistent message that they are not ready? In other words, how do we simultaneously engage students and prepare them to be successful in a career or at college after high school?

First, content in the social studies classroom must be relevant to students' lives. That doesn't mean we ignore national or state social studies standards, but that we approach the standards in a way that connects their lived experience with the historical, political, social, and economic condition of the world. Popular culture, including visual art, music, sports, creative writing, film, TV, and the like can be integrated into the social studies curriculum to introduce and/or reinforce the standards being taught. *Futurama* and *The Smurfs* can do a much better job of teaching the functions of command and traditional economies than any lecture I could give. I'd also like to trouble the word "relevance." Everything is relevant to our students. We are all human beings struggling with the same questions of humanity. That is why we can approach our curriculum through essential questions, as described in the example project above. If we are studying immigration/migration, we can ask the question "Why do people move?" Everyone deals with moving at some point in his or her life, whether it is moving around the block or to the other side of the world. Our students can better develop empathy for others if they consider their own lived experience and see themselves in the curriculum.

Second, students must have a voice in classroom decisions, including rules and regulations, what content is covered, and how their learning will be assessed. Students will be much more engaged in a classroom environment in which they believe they have a voice. Methods like the social justice project de-center the classroom, limiting the teacher's authority, essentially fostering a democratic context. Building a community of learners in a safe space is difficult and messy; it takes a Herculean effort in the beginning of the year. The benefits gained by having a space in which students are supportive of each other are priceless. They can feel safe in sharing their thoughts and ideas and are free to make mistakes.

Third, the classroom needs to be a dynamic place in which students are able to learn through a variety of teaching methods. Lecturing for any extended amount of time, especially beyond twenty minutes, leaves many students bored and disengaged. Integrating multiple methods allows students to interact with content in diverse ways. Active and dramatic approaches can be used to represent complex ideas. Film along with guided notes can be used to bring in multiple perspectives. Reading literature and poetry from a particular group or region can expose students to deep culture. Analyzing primary and secondary sources to formulate arguments provides students experiences in historiography. Finally, as in my class, when students create products together, they learn from each other while gaining experience working in diverse groups.

Students cannot sit around waiting for Superman to come and rescue them from standardized testing, nor can they be scared into being ready for the “real world” of college or career through spooky stories from middle-aged folks who went to college eons ago. Students need new skills for the changing world. College is the only place where listening to a lecture and taking notes is a required skill. Creativity, independence, intrinsic motivation, empathy and compassion, the ability to manage and complete projects, the celebration of differences; these are the skills necessary to make our students ready for the challenges of college and/or careers.

We also need to rethink the purpose of public education. Is its purpose to only ready students for college or a career? Or, can the purpose of public education be to prepare students for humanity, and all of the pain, joy, love, sadness, elation, sorrow, and happiness that comes along with being a human being on this planet during our current age and time? I hope it's the second one. If the relevancy of the content is communicated to students, and if the classroom is a democratic space with multiple ways to learn, then rigor and engagement will take care of themselves.

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# COME TOGETHER, RIGHT NOW OVER SCIENCE ISSUES AND CITIZENSHIP IN SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION

Alicia Crowe and Evan Mooney, Kent State University



## Abstract

Using a Structured Academic Controversy (SAC) to unpack a socio-scientific issue is a powerful way for students to learn content and skills needed for active citizenship and participation in a democratic society. We argue for the importance of preparing citizens to think about socio-scientific issues and offer an example of how a SAC can be used to help students think about the complexity of a socio-scientific issue within society and practice skills related to discussion, argument, and judgment of evidence. This method can be a powerful way for social studies teachers to help students make connections between themselves, their environment, and their society.

We, like other social studies educators, want citizens to be active and engaged with societal, political, and cultural issues (Hawley, 2012; Hess, 2002; Hess & Posselt, 2002; Parker, 2003). For a healthy society, citizens should not just passively exist in their communities, but must at times engage with issues and topics that affect themselves and their fellow citizens. This includes issues that are considered controversial for any number of cultural, political, moral, or scientific reasons. Though the science itself may not be controversial, many of our social and political issues and their surrounding controversies that require decision-making skills relate to science.

In our increasingly globalized and complex society, where technology and science play ever-larger roles, citizens need to be able to negotiate and discuss socio-scientific issues. Climate change, cloning, stem cell research, genetic research, medical technology, and the confluence of science and the economy all represent areas that include complex and challenging socio-scientific issues. Research in science education has established the importance of scientifically informed decision making by the public (Kolstø, 2001; Sadler, 2004). Additional research on the importance of scientifically literate citizens suggests that understanding how scientific knowledge is produced, disseminated, and functions in society is central to both egalitarian and socially just societies (Calabrese-Barton, et al., 2003; Ratcliffe & Grace, 2003). As social studies teachers, at first we may think it difficult to rationalize focusing on socio-scientific issues within our classrooms (from pre-K through higher education). However, for our students to function in society as active, decision-making citizens, they need to consider socio-scientific issues, which are often at the heart of social controversy. So, if these socio-scientific issues are important in society, how might we bring them to life in our classrooms?

A structured academic controversy (SAC) is one method that can enable our students to begin to think about the complexity of socio-scientific issues while developing their knowledge about the subject of the discussion (Avery, Levy, & Simmons, 2013). This method aims to enable students to engage in deliberating two sides of often-controversial issues in pursuit of a solution rather than “winning an argument” (Johnson & Johnson, 1979, 1993, 2009). Here, we take the SAC method, combine it with a controversial socio-scientific issue, and present the activity as a way to introduce students to an issue, develop their knowledge of the issue so they can discuss and deliberate, and suggest that the entirety of the activity is a means to help students develop the skills to discuss socio-scientific issues as part of active and democratic citizenship. The following lesson offers one example of how social studies and science can come together as part of citizenship education. This example combines the base structure of SAC with other skills that we want students to develop, namely assessing the quality of sources they encounter and using evidence to develop a position.

### **Structured Academic Controversy with Socio-Scientific Issues Example**

One of the primary goals of a SAC is to consider multiple sides of an issue and come to a nuanced compromise through a deliberative discussion (Avery, Levy, & Simmons, 2013). Therefore, a SAC differs significantly from a debate, in that neither side is attempting to persuade the other of the validity or moral position of their perspective. Unlike a debate, all participants in a SAC are striving to increase their understanding of the subject of discussion, including oppositional viewpoints, listening across the differences, and coming to a solution that is a compromise. These ideas represent some of the fundamental philosophical tenets of a SAC and support many of the goals of democratic citizenship education, specifically, active engagement with and deliberation about political and social issues, toleration of dissent, and teaching for the realization of a robust democracy (Hess, 2002, 2009; Parker, 2003).

#### **Deciding a Focus**

As you start to plan for your socio-scientific-focused SAC, begin with a question that gets to the heart of the controversy. For example, consider the following proposition, surrounding the issue of hydraulic fracturing for natural gas: “Should the state government allow fracking on public and private lands in northeast Ohio?” This question captures a controversial socio-scientific issue while also offering students an opportunity to explore the function and role of government in society in a local context. This question provides an opportunity for discussions of the political process and engaging in democratic practices that align with the NCSS’s C3 Framework (2013).

As you consider the question for your SAC, it is also important to think about your purpose for using the SAC. If this is going to be your first SAC, then planning for a smaller and more focused activity for one to two days may be appropriate. For others, the SAC could be part of a larger inquiry project. For example, the SAC could be designed as a day one springboard to lead to individual or group investigations where students develop robust and well documented action plans related to what policies the state government should enact. Once you know how you want to use the SAC, your decisions about sources will be much easier.

### **Deciding on Sources and Creating a Guide**

Once you have decided on the issue for the SAC, it is time to decide on sources. The selection of sources for a SAC may come from the teacher, the students, or be a joint exercise that involves researching an issue first. If you are planning this for a day or two or if you are using this as a springboard into a larger investigation, you might provide a specific set of sources to explore. We recommend using a variety of source material so students have a chance to compare sources and consider varied levels of quality. Depending on your purpose, you might also use video clips related to the issue, via YouTube or your local news station, as sources.

If this is part of a larger project or later in the year after students have engaged in other SACs, you might have students search for and choose a variety of sources to bring into the SAC. Allowing students to select their own sources on the issue provides an additional opportunity to have conversations about quality and bias of sources. Adding the evaluation of the sources, whether you choose the source or the students do, aligns well with Dimension 3 of the C3 Framework (2013) — evaluating sources and using evidence.

For most students, having a way to record and organize their evidence and thinking will be helpful. There are many ways to do this. Appendix A provides an example of a small organizer for students to use as they pull evidence from each source, assess the source material, and ask questions about each source. We recommend creating something like this that aligns well with your goals for the SAC when you first start using this method. As students develop the skill, they will need less guidance.

### **Setting Up the Activity and the Controversy With Your Students**

Once you know the purpose of your SAC, have created the prompt, made decisions about sources, and have planned the SAC in detail, it is time to work with your students. The process of a SAC may require thorough explanation, particularly if students have never participated in such an activity. We recommend starting with an overview of the process and the purpose of the SAC. You could use a PowerPoint slide projected for each step and a handout for each group with the structure so students can reference the details of the process throughout the activity.

One of the purposes of a SAC is to help students begin to understand the complexity of an issue. When introducing the SAC and periodically throughout the activity, emphasize that this activity is not about coming up with a yes or no answer, but rather that these issues are complex and that they are working to develop a deep understanding of this complexity. Remind students that they need to work hard to suspend their own beliefs and judgments so they can approach the question and the evidence from the perspective they have been assigned. Following a description of purposes of the activity and the process, move students into groups of four. Divide the groups of four into two pairs of two (if you do not have even numbers, pairs can become a triad). All students receive all sources and the guided note sheet.

### **Process in Pairs**

Assign each pair of students in a team a position (A or B). In the earlier example, Position A could be, “The state government should allow fracking on public and private lands in Northeast Ohio” and Position B could be, “The state government should not allow fracking on public and private lands in Northeast Ohio.” In pairs, students review the evidence fully, take notes from the sources, highlight the text, and pose questions about the issue and the sources. During this

time, they work only as a pair to try to understand and develop a sense of this position based on the evidence. During their discussions, listen and ask questions as needed to push their thinking on the quality of the source and to help them focus on what evidence is in the source itself. Once you find that the pairs have developed a strong enough sense of their assigned position, acquired clear evidence from the sources, and considered the quality of sources, it is time to have the small groups of four come together.

### **Presenting to the Other Pair**

When the team is back together, remind them of the process. The Position A pair should share their position and the evidence for it with the other pair at their table. Then the Position B team should summarize what the Position A team has presented. If the first pair feels that their group mates have understood their position, then Position B presents their position and their evidence. As before, the pair that is listening should then summarize what they heard from the B pair. What is often hard at this point in the process is that when the pairs come back together, they want to skip sharing and listening and jump to arguing for an answer to the larger question. You may need to remind them that they are to be listening and trying to understand what evidence there is for the position that is not their assigned position, not arguing.

### **Consensus Building**

After the groups have shared and each pair feels confident that the other pair has understood their position, the group of four should leave behind their assigned positions and work toward a consensus-based answer to the larger question. This phase of a SAC is an essential part of the activity in terms of enabling students to realize the democratic possibilities of the exercise. As all pairs were assigned a position on the issue and were asked to leave behind any preconceived ideas about the issue, this is the time when students can work toward creating a consensus position on the issue in a democratic manner. While asking students to look objectively at an issue does not guarantee they will relinquish their previously held views, the act of asking changes the dynamic of the exercise.

Consensus is not always possible. As the teams work, there are times that they cannot come to one answer. When this occurs, you can suggest that if they cannot come to one answer, then they should develop two and be able to explain why it was difficult to come to a consensus about the issue and discuss how this might influence events in legislative decision-making.

### **Debriefing**

Debriefing of the experience is a crucial aspect of this activity. This can occur in several ways depending on what you want to accomplish. In their small group, students could record key questions and content they want to explore further and reflect on the experience itself. After the small groups, the whole group could consider what they recorded and other larger questions such as: Where is the science in this issue? What are the social or policy concerns in this issue? What science knowledge do we need to understand the issue? Where is there overlap between science and society within this issue? Additionally, students could discuss why scientific topics, such as fracking and global climate change, become controversial social issues in the media and public dialogue in the first place. You could also ask: How does society influence science? If we agree that science is a human endeavor, how does this influence science and society?"

When debriefing about the activity, it is also beneficial for students to explore how the activity enabled them to act democratically. You could ask: How did you feel about the activity? What

was it like to listen and try hard to understand another perspective? What does this mean for your life as a citizen? Were you able to complete each of the parts of the process? This aspect of the debriefing can help students reflect on how to engage in a democratic society.

## Discussion

We perceive an increasingly polarized tone to conversations about social, political, historical, and socio-scientific issues that is dangerous to the survival of rational, reasonable democratic discourse. Asking students to explore controversial issues through SACs can be a counter to the current trend of partisanship in discussions about important social issues. By setting aside their preconceived opinions about the issue and striving to come to a consensus that serves all members of their democratic communities, rather than seeking to triumph over other viewpoints, students are practicing active democratic citizenship rather than passive partisanship. We suggest that a SAC that explores a controversial socio-scientific issue can be an effective way for students to become more knowledgeable about the issue, develop research skills, explore source material, and engage in democratic discussions. All of these skills and exercises facilitate active and democratic citizenship and enable students to begin to think about controversial social issues from more than a position of opinion.

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## Appendix A

### Should the state government allow fracking on public and private lands in Northeast Ohio?

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**Position A:** The state government should allow fracking on public and private lands in Northeast Ohio.

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**Evidence from Source 1:**

**Comments or questions about the quality of the source of this piece of evidence**

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**Evidence from Source 2:**

**Comments or questions about the quality of the source of this piece of evidence**

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**Evidence from Source 3:**

**Comments or questions about the quality of the source of this piece of evidence**

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Questions you have about sources before coming to a consensus:

Developing Consensus – thoughts on the main question as a whole group:

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**Position B:** The state government should not allow fracking on public and private lands in Northeast Ohio.

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**Evidence from Source 1:**

**Comments or questions about the quality of the source of this piece of evidence**

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**Evidence from Source 2:**

**Comments or questions about the quality of the source of this piece of evidence**

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**Evidence from Source 3:**

**Comments or questions about the quality of the source of this piece of evidence**

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Questions you have about sources before coming to a consensus:

Developing Consensus – thoughts on the main question as a whole group:

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# STEWARDS OF TRUTH: HOLOCAUST DENIAL IN THE CLASSROOM

**Adam Steinmetz;** Fremont City Schools, Ohio



## **Abstract**

If teachers are to teach the Holocaust appropriately and empower students to become reasoned, compassionate, and critical citizens in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, they must include Holocaust denial in lessons and units covering that topic. This inclusion is an important but often overlooked component of broad-based Holocaust education units. In this article, I provide teachers with the reasoning behind and importance of including Holocaust denial in their lessons and provide a framework for teaching the Holocaust. This could assist teachers with delivering a more responsible Holocaust unit and better prepare students for the unique characteristics of 21<sup>st</sup>-century research.

Holocaust denial has found a fertile breeding ground in the most unlikely of places: our nation's public schools and universities. Holocaust denial is the belief that the genocide of Jews and others, including socio-ethnic and political groups and the disabled during World War II did not occur in the manner or to the extent described by current academic scholarship or even at all. In reality, those who deny the Holocaust subscribe to the anti-Semitic theory that Jews and Jewish sympathizers invented the story of the Holocaust through the manipulation of governments and various media outlets. These deniers prefer to be called "Holocaust Revisionists" in hopes of lending validity to their otherwise outlandish claims.

In general terms, Holocaust deniers base their arguments around the rejection of three widely accepted truths: (1) the death of six million Jews, (2) the use of gas chambers at extermination camps, and (3) the deliberate targeting of Jews. Deniers wish to undermine these established facts through anti-Semitic polemics and unsubstantiated evidence-based, biased research. Holocaust denial has become increasingly problematic in the classrooms of the 21<sup>st</sup> century because many teachers lack the knowledge, skills, and confidence to respond, let alone initiate a conversation about the issue.

## **Rationale**

The world of education is changing. Gone are the days where teachers lecture and students dutifully write down notes in their notebooks. The Common Core Standards (along with

Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers/American Institutes for Research [PARCC/AIR] assessments) are ushering in an era in which students are required independently to research, write about, and defend their arguments. As our classrooms become more engrained with technology, teachers are faced with the prospect of Holocaust denial derailing their students' work and potentially poisoning their developing minds with racist and discriminatory fabrications. Teachers need a framework with which to approach this delicate issue.

### **History of Holocaust Denial**

Holocaust denial has existed in some form since the end of the World War II (and, one could argue, during the war). Shortly after the war, many of the leading decision makers in the Third Reich began to apply their propaganda skills as a means for defending their actions. Not coincidentally, the first denial publications and pamphlets began to appear across Europe. The American historian Harry Elmer Barnes (1958) assumed a denial stance just after the war, when he bought in to the idea that the Holocaust was simply a classic case of wartime propaganda. Holocaust denial, in its most traditional sense, formally took root when Paul Rassinier (a former concentration camp victim himself) published *The Drama of the European Jews* in 1964. Rassinier declares that there was never a policy of extermination by Nazi Germany. Further, the 1970s saw a period of growth in Holocaust denial with the publication of two landmark texts on the topic, Arthur Butz's *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century* (1976) and David Irving's *Hitler's War* (1977). Each book gives the perception of scholarly works by legitimate historians wishing to prove the nonexistence of the Holocaust.

The height of Holocaust denial occurred in 1978 with the formation of the Institute for Historical Review (IHR) by Willis Castro. The IHR claims to be "an educational research and publishing center that works to promote peace, understanding, and justice through greater public awareness of the past" and says the IHR is "devoted to truth and accuracy in history" all the while organizing conferences and publishing literature to prove the Holocaust never happened.

As the IHR lost steam steadily throughout the 1980s, Bradley Smith took a new approach to Holocaust denial by founding the Committee for Open Debate on the Holocaust (CODOH) in 1987. The CODOH believes at the very least that dialogue and discourse about the potential that the Holocaust never occurred should be open (as recently as February 2010, the CODOH advertised in the University of Wisconsin-Madison's student newspaper, "The Badger Herald").

Although the post-Cold War world represented something of a nadir of Holocaust denial, the Internet boom in the late 1990s led to its resurgence. The vast expanses of the Internet have allowed Holocaust denial the capability of reaching into million of lives, including those who weren't even looking for it (which will be explored more thoroughly in this article). In 2006, denial took a nightmarish turn onto the global political scene when Iran sponsored the International Conference to rewrite the Global Vision of the Holocaust in Tehran, Iran.

## Contemporary Holocaust Denial

Iran's support of the International Conference to rewrite the Global Vision of the Holocaust forces the question: How influential is Holocaust denial today? A close look illuminates a serious problem.

In the spring of 2009, the Southern Poverty Law Center published an Intelligence Report identifying active hate groups in the United States. The findings revealed that seven different Holocaust denial groups were active in the United States during 2008 (Holthouse, 2009). These aren't rogue Internet websites or mysterious P.O. box addresses. The seven groups located across the United States can be found in Washington, DC, New York City, and all the way to Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, have, at the very least, participated in "marches, rallies, speeches, meetings, leafleting, publishing literature, or criminal acts" (p. 19). It should be noted that the seven Holocaust denial groups were not counted among the 196 active neo-Nazi groups in the United States, many who also harbor Holocaust denial tendencies and beliefs. Although the publication efforts of these groups can be vast, the residual effect is admittedly small.

An audience of 113 participants (April 2015) met recently in London to listen to a speech by avowed Holocaust denier Pedro Varela. Award-winning British newspaper, *The Daily Mail*, quoted participants who said they "questioned the Holocaust," that "people should have the freedom to question the accepted view of what happened" and one participant referred to the Holocaust as the "Holofoax," in reference to his belief that the Holocaust "never happened." (Craven, 2015).

The resurgence of Holocaust denial in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is likely a direct effect of the ubiquitous fingerprint of the Internet. In addition to the seven U.S. sites, the aforementioned Intelligence Report also identified 22 websites directly promoting Holocaust denial in 2008. Many of these sites operate under the guise of such benign names as "Holocaust Historiography Project," "The Eagle News Desk," and "The Piper Report." These sites are not only constructed to look like legitimate sources of news but go to great lengths to distance themselves with many of the symbols and words traditionally associated with hate and racism.

## Denial in the Classroom

What is the teacher's role in all of this? The teacher must become the person who challenges the perpetuation of this problem. Three broad approaches to addressing Holocaust denial have arisen along with denial itself. Those wishing to challenge denial can 1) ignore it, 2) criminalize it, or 3) educate against it. The first two approaches have failed.

Seventy years after the end of World War II, Holocaust denial is still alive and the deniers themselves have coalesced around each other to develop their platform. Realizing the dangers in this, many countries have established Holocaust denial provisions in their legal code. There are "currently 14 European countries as well as the State of Israel either explicitly prohibit[ing] the denial of the Holocaust or have enacted laws that can be used to punish Holocaust deniers" (Lechtholtz-Zey, 2012). However, there are serious doubts about the effectiveness of legal ramifications in response to Holocaust denial (Bazyler, 2006, p. 14).

An effective way to combat Holocaust denial is through education. The inclusion of Holocaust denial should be a component of any broad-based Holocaust education unit. Whether it be a social studies lesson on World War II or a literature unit based around any of the young-adult texts such as *Number the Stars*, *The Devil's Arithmetic*, or *Night*, time and thought must be set aside to expose students to the risks associated with Holocaust denial.

Consider for a moment the typical student, surfing the Internet coming across a fairly compelling statement on a website claiming that the killing of six million Jews would have been too expensive for the Nazis or that the ink that Anne Frank used to write her diary wasn't invented until after her death. Now consider Lipstadt (2005), a leading authority on the Holocaust, describing the presentation of claims by Holocaust deniers,

As I did my research, my assessment of the deniers began to slowly evolve. I was struck by the sophisticated camouflage tactics they had developed. The Institute for Historical Review (IHR), the California-based denial group, depicted itself as a scholarly group driven by a 'deep dedication to the cause of truth in history.' Their conferences resembled academic confabs. Their journal had a scholarly veneer. Students at leading academic institutions who encountered it in their university libraries assumed it a product of genuine scholarship. (p. 16)

From Lipstadt's assessment of the situation, students who come across Holocaust denier's claims presented as truths without additional guidance from adults during their formative years could have a lasting impact on the child's development and psyche.

There is a concern voiced by educators and parents alike: Won't teaching Holocaust denial simply legitimize these ideas and plant the seed in students' minds? From my personal experience, I have found the vast majority of my students have a deep interest in lessons around the Holocaust and presenting the issue of Holocaust denial is just another component. In *Best Practice*, Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde (2005) are clear: "Students of social studies need regular opportunities to investigate topics in depth. . . . Students need opportunities to exercise choice and responsibility by choosing their own topics for inquiry. . . . Social studies reading should include engaging real-world documents and not just textbooks" (p. 180 ). Teachers of the Holocaust have an obligation to ensure their students aren't falling for the smoke and mirrors tactics employed by Holocaust deniers.

Teachers must take a new approach. Pentlin and Shapiro (1999) wrote, "Holocaust deniers and hate groups have been addressed in many landmark books, papers, studies, and seminars in the United States, Germany, and worldwide. Today, it is time for new strategies. The rational-reasoning response of the past 10 to 20 years was understandable. Rational arguments have not worked. Dredging up more facts is not going to make the haters go away" (p. 1). Teachers, or anybody for that matter, should not lay out a litany of facts in hopes of overwhelming a person into believing the Holocaust happened. Using three subtle reference points, however, can be an effective tool in presenting evidence that the Holocaust occurred.

When teaching about the 2,000-year history of Jewish persecution, teachers should address the Holocaust as one, albeit major, event. Teachers can point to the Old Testament story of Exodus, Emperor Tiberius's expulsion of the Jews from Rome, the violent persecution of Jewish populations during the Crusades, the driving of Jews from Spain during the Inquisition, and the

pogroms of Jewish villages in Russia in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to show the historical record and pattern. The Holocaust was not an isolated event and shouldn't be treated that way.

Secondly, some level of attention should be given to Adolf Hitler's prison manifesto, *Mein Kampf* (*My Struggle*) (1925). This early polemic clearly shows Hitler's stance as racist against the Jewish populations in Europe and is an early warning shot of what was to come once the Third Reich took control of Germany. Examining *Mein Kampf* can go a long way in eliminating any element of treating Hitler as a reasoned world leader during units looking at the Holocaust.

Finally, it is important to note that the Germans weren't the only national group to persecute the Jews. Many groups, most notably the Russians, waged racist warfare against the Jews. Over one million Jews living in the Soviet Union were killed by 1945, and the years just after the war "signaled the start of an intensive period of state-sponsored anti-Semitism that would last until Stalin's death" (Sixsmith, 2011 p. 365).

### **Pedagogical Plan of Action**

Teachers must take a direct and well-thought-out approach when presenting a topic like the Holocaust to their students. A sound, four-point approach to present Holocaust denial within the context of the Holocaust itself gives students the skills necessary to navigate the challenging waters of Holocaust research in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. According to Banks (2003), "An important aim of citizenship education should be to help students develop global identifications and a deep understanding of the need to take action as citizens of the global community" (p. 3).

The first important concept is that teachers provide students with a clear understanding of the Holocaust. Pentlin and Shapiro (1999) suggest that, "Teachers who teach the history of the Holocaust must, first of all, be adequately educated in the history of the Holocaust, the history of anti-Semitism and hate, with adequate time allotted for teaching this complex history" (p. 4). A foundation of the realities associated with the Holocaust is not only an educator's responsibility but gives the teacher a stronger platform from which to answer the questions that quality instruction inspires.

Secondly, it is important to present the facts of the Holocaust using a variety of sources and styles. Nonfiction books, young-adult novels, photographs, eyewitness accounts, diaries, films, and radio broadcasts used together can provide a fuller picture of the Holocaust than can be derived from one source. I suggest teaching the Holocaust as a themed unit across multiple subject areas. Where this is not possible, the inclusion of these sources would be considered "best practice." The use of primary sources is highly encouraged in any Holocaust unit, because "primary sources, in contrast, bring history to life" (Zemelman, 2005, p. 180).

As a third requirement, teachers need to address Holocaust denial formally and without ambiguity. Teachers should present the phenomenon as wrong and historically inaccurate while helping students realize that Holocaust denial is racist and hateful. Holocaust denial "should be clearly presented as anti-Semitism and hate, not as part of the Holocaust" (Pentlin & Shapiro 1999, p. 6). Taking a strong stance will resonate with the students and have lasting impact.

Finally, and most cautiously, teachers cannot, under any circumstances, present Holocaust denial as a "debate" between two sides. Denial does not deserve fairness or equal time, because it

does not present history accurately. When Pentlin and Shapiro (1999) state, “Of course, we are concerned about the deniers. But, like dragons in children’s nightmares, they go away when you put on the lights and defy them” (p. 7). They remind us all that we must take a steadfast stand against the deniers to help others see the light and defy them. While it is fully acceptable to debate issues within the Holocaust, using questions like, What were Hitler’s motivations?, Why did common Polish citizens help the Nazis?, or Why was press coverage in the United States so tepid?, it is not acceptable to debate whether the Holocaust actually occurred.

### **Addendum: The Common Core?**

It is important to note that Holocaust denial does not work against or in contrast to the Common Core Standards that have permeated nearly every aspect of contemporary public school life. Not only is it still considered “best practice” to address the soft skills that help define successful students, but the inclusion of Holocaust denial into lesson and unit plans will directly address the NCSS C3 Framework standards and Ohio’s New Learning Standards.

Social studies teachers need to teach students how to “analyze information and come to a conclusion in an inquiry. These skills focus on gathering and evaluating sources, and then developing claims using evidence to support these claims” (NCSS, 2013, p. 53). Furthermore, the national standards address the need for “rigorous analysis of sources” and the ability to “gather relevant information from multiple sources” (p. 54). Finally, and perhaps most importantly, NCSS establishes a guideline that students must be able to “evaluate the credibility of a source” by looking at the “relevance and intended use” and by “examining how experts value the source” (p. 54). There seems no more efficient or responsible way to address Dimension Three of the NCSS standards, (“Evaluation Sources and Using Evidence”) than by confronting Holocaust denial in the classroom.

Ohio middle school teachers are expected to teach students how to recognize that “different perspectives on a topic can be obtained from a variety of historic and contemporary sources. Sources can be examined for accuracy” and that “informed citizens understand how media and communication technology influence public opinion.” (Ohio Academic Content Standards, 2010, p. 20). To this end, the confrontation of Holocaust denial can be used as a vehicle to address the “Civic Participation and Skills” required by the Ohio Academic Content Standards.

### **My Experience**

Each year in my 6<sup>th</sup>-grade classroom, I have two opportunities to teach material around the Holocaust. In the fall (usually late October to November), I co-teach a Holocaust unit with the language arts teacher on my team. While she teaches the book *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry, I use my social studies time to analyze primary source documents, view video clips, and write first-person narratives of Jewish citizens who have immigrated to the United States. We address the Holocaust and its main themes. During this unit, I present Holocaust denial. I’ve yet, in seven years, encountered a student who has any knowledge of Holocaust denial, but I feel a sense of satisfaction that I’ve provided my students with an opportunity to differentiate authentic Holocaust scholarship with Holocaust denial.



In the spring, my class takes a deep look at various acts of genocide that have occurred throughout history and around the world (such as the Holocaust, Ukrainian Famine, Rwanda, Bosnia, Armenia, Cambodia, US treatment of Native Americans, and so on). The class, using the UN's definition of genocide, writes a position paper and argues for whether or not each of these moments in history should be considered genocide. The activity is thought provoking and rewarding as a teacher. I end the unit by challenging the students with this one question, "Could Holocaust denial itself be considered an act of genocide?" As you can imagine, answers are varied, but in my opinion, real, engaged learning takes place.

## Conclusion

It is essential for teachers to embody the sensitive and compassionate attributes that the students in our schools deserve. Teachers need to have the confidence to include Holocaust denial into their Holocaust education units and, more broadly, must be willing to fight racism and discrimination wherever it manifests itself in the classroom and school.

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# EXPLORING THE FIVE THEMES OF GEOGRAPHY USING TECHNOLOGY

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## Abstract

The five themes of geography (location, place, region, human-environment interaction, and movement) are a cornerstone of social studies education; yet, at times, the best instructional resources for teaching the five themes with elementary children are not widely disseminated among teachers. This article presents five free technology tools with practical applications for elementary (grades 2-5) geography instruction. Positioned within the scholarship of technology integration in the elementary grades and social studies education, this article illustrates new applications for geography instruction in the elementary grades using technology. Opportunities for integration with other content areas are also discussed.

Elementary teachers face an ever-increasing dilemma of fitting the square peg of growing curricular requirements into the round hole of limited time and space in their daily schedule. The rapid expansion of instructional technologies in recent years has created an additional need to develop student knowledge and competence with digital tools (Clark & Zagarell, 2012). This increase of curricular goals stands in juxtaposition to the growing assessment demands that continue to marginalize the teaching of social studies (Fitchett & Heafner, 2010; National Council for the Social Studies, 2007; Rock et al., 2006), creating a dilemma for elementary teachers committed to preparing students for college, career, and civic life. Given the narrowed instructional time allotted to elementary social studies, teachers frequently teach history or cultural topics through integration with children's literature; however, geography is less readily integrated into the curriculum.

Several national organizations recognize the importance of fostering geographic literacy in the early grades (Association of American Geographers, 2014; National Council for the Social Studies, 2014), yet the pressures and demands of the current assessment culture in schools greatly limits the teaching of social studies at the elementary level and subsequently limits the instructional time allotted to teaching geography with children. While the potential for meaningful technology integration in social studies exists, we recognize that barriers such as assessment demands and prioritized instructional time impact whether elementary teachers teach geography and if so, what instructional materials are sourced for social studies. In this article, we illustrate the five themes of geography and show how expanding instruction of geography

through the integration of technology is a powerful way to engage young learners while advancing both geo-literacy and technology skills. We discuss five tools that we have found successful for integrating technology and meaningful geography instruction in the elementary grades.

## **Geography and the Scholarship of Technology in Elementary Grades and Social Studies**

### **The Five Themes of Geography**

The five themes of geography can be found in the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) Standards for elementary grades (NCSS, 2012) and also across state social studies standards for grades K-5 (e.g., North Carolina Department of Public Instruction 2010; Ohio Department of Education, 2010). The themes include location, place, region, human-environment interaction, and movement. While location includes concrete ideas like absolute and relative location, the themes of place and region are defined by shared characteristics. As a result, place and region are sometimes harder for students to identify without concrete points of comparison, photos or videos that illustrate each more succinctly than written text could describe, and various types of maps depicting large areas and places or regions contained within map boundaries. Human-environment interaction involves the direct and indirect effects of human actions on the various earth systems, and movement includes the many different ways in which people, ideas, and materials move (e.g., push and pull factors) locally and globally (NCSS, 2012).

As the five themes are interwoven with one another, they should not be examined in isolation but rather explored in relation to one another. Elementary social studies textbooks generally provide an overview of the themes, and each year, the availability of quality children's literature for teaching the five themes of geography with children expands. We propose that in addition to the use of children's literature, elementary teachers can use technology tools to teach the five themes of geography. While the complexity and depth of classroom investigations builds as children age, the study of the five themes of geography is integral to children's experiences in the social studies.

### **Elementary Technology Integration**

Here, we describe the available literature in light of the potential for technology integration in elementary geography instruction. Such potential is grounded in two bodies of practitioner and research literature: technology integration in the elementary grades and the use of technology to teach social studies. Scholars have described the integration of technology by elementary classroom teachers and offered practical applications for readers. For example, some have described the classroom applications of technology tools to expand literacy instruction, including using technology tools as new literacies for sourcing digital instructional materials (e.g., photos on Flickr and Instagram or digital books from online collections) and to expand student experiences (Kist, Doyle, Hayes, Horwitz, & Kuzior, 2010). For instance, Web 2.0 tools such as Twitter and Wikispaces have served to foster student discussion (Kist, Doyle, Hayes, Horwitz, & Kuzior, 2010). Others have described the use of technology tools for presenting global connections. For example, Lin, Widdall, and Ward (2014) designed a multiday geo-literacy tour using mobile apps (e.g., QR codes) and thematic children's literature to broaden children's experiences with technology and the five themes of geography.

In relation to research examining the use of technology in the elementary grades, studies have included the use of blogging (Luongo, 2012), geospatial tools (Jenny, 2011), educational apps (Kenney, 2011), and interactive whiteboards (Kenney, 2011). The literature also includes research examining iPads in the elementary setting (Berson, Berson, & Manfra, 2012). In grades K-5, technology integration appears to increase student motivation as it expands their opportunities in the classroom beyond traditional instructional methods (Heafner, 2004), such as written responses and teacher-centered lecture style presentations of content.

Others have described the integration of social studies and technology to expand classroom opportunities in K-5 for geography instruction, such as in the case of the widely used Google Lit Trips (GLT Global Ed, 2014) and Google Earth (Jenny, 2011). Jenny (2011) discussed the use of Google Earth, a dynamic web-based geography tool, for elementary classrooms and points to several benefits of using geography-themed technology to teach geography, such as student motivation and geo-visualization opportunities (e.g., 3D imaging, zooming and spanning Earth including specific locations and regions). Also, strategies for implementing GPS systems for geocaching as student-led authentic explorations (Nagel & Palmer, 2014) and using QR codes to examine the geography of people, places, and spaces (Lin, Widdall, & Ward, 2014) have been discussed. Other educators have used technology to create artifact exchanges and videoconference with classrooms across the globe while teaching geography and other social studies content (Barnatt, Winter, Norman, Baker, & Wieczorek, 2014; Cole, Ray, & Zanetis, 2009). Scholars have also described the benefits of using student research and documentary film clips to study geographic themes (Ho & Seow, 2013), such as human-environment interaction (Nagel & Beauboeuf, 2012). Web tools, particularly mobile apps, also appear to foster critical thinking (Lin, Widdall, & Ward, 2014) and collaboration (Clark, Logan, Luckin, Mee, & Oliver, 2009) with young learners, two central outcomes of 21st Century Skills (Blair, 2012; Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2011) and the C3 Framework (NCSS, 2013).

In addition to the many benefits of technology integration in K-5, challenges to integrating technology also exist. For example, in the elementary grades, some very dynamic and useful tools require scaffolding for younger children and professional development for classroom teachers (Clark & Zagarell, 2012). What is more, the abundance of 2.0 tools and websites can be daunting and intimidating for elementary teachers who are interested in infusing technology into their instruction (Blair, 2012). Likewise, teachers must feel comfortable modeling technology use and allowing children to work with one another or independently with technology tools, and administrative support in the effort to increase technology integration is essential for planning and implementing such instruction (Clark & Zagarell, 2012).

Consistent access to the web and ample technology devices (e.g., laptops, desktops, tablets) are both necessary for moving technology past the teacher station and teacher-directed use and into the hands of the students for collaboration or independent use. As teachers are often required to share technology equipment across the school or plan collaboratively with grade-level colleagues for instruction, these challenges must be considered when integrating technology into geography instruction in the elementary grades. In summary, the scholarship surrounding technology integration in the elementary classroom suggests that technology use offers multiple benefits and possibilities for classroom practice across the subject areas yet teachers should recognize the challenges of technology integration when planning for instruction.

### **Technology Integration and the Social Studies**

In social studies, both practitioner and research scholarship are offered to guide classroom practices for integrating social studies and technology. Perhaps the most widely used technology tool for social studies instruction is online digitized sources (e.g., the Library of Congress and National Archives). Archived collections of digitized primary and secondary sources for social studies are available for elementary classroom use through organizations, museums, and virtual tour websites as well as mobile applications.

In addition to digitized sources, scholars have described several tools ideal for joining together social studies and technology to increase students' opportunities in the classroom and thereby, promoting student motivation. Moreover, pedagogical implications for integrating technology into elementary social studies can also be drawn from educational research. Some scholars have examined teachers' instructional decisions related to technology in the social studies classroom (Hammond & Manfra, 2009). Hammond and Manfra (2009) used the TPACK model (Mishra & Koehler, 2006) to understand how social studies teachers' efforts to integrate technology were influenced by their instructional aspirations. Similarly, the tools illustrated in this article can be integrated in a variety of ways depending on teachers' pedagogical goals. While scholarship for teaching geography in middle and secondary grades does exist (e.g., Demirci, Karaburun, & Kilar, 2013; Groce, Heafner, & O'Connor, 2010), less has been written about teaching geography with younger children, and specifically, teaching geography through technology integration. As the literature suggests, some foundational research and practice has been established for integrating technology and social studies in the elementary grades. We build on this foundation by presenting five free geography-themed technology tools and discussing potential classroom applications.

### **Technology Tools for Meaningful Geography Instruction**

With teachers' busy schedules, finding technology tools for meaningful instruction is difficult at best. However, with increasing requirements to incorporate technology instruction into the curriculum, teachers can benefit from identifying and using technology tools in content area instruction. In this section, we provide a comprehensive overview of five powerful tools that allow elementary teachers to integrate technology and geography into their teaching. Organized by the five themes of geography, Table 1 gives teachers a quick reference of which themes can be taught using each tool. A description of the main features and navigation of each tool is then provided, along with concrete examples to demonstrate how the tool can be used to address specific geography themes.

### **GeoStories**

GeoStories is an online resource bank of slideshows with maps, videos, and narratives from places around the world or on specific topics. It is particularly useful for providing a visual approach to the five themes of geography. GeoStories is provided free of charge online by National Geographic, and a login is not required for use. The GeoStories collections can be accessed at <https://www.geostories.org/portal/showcase>. For more information on additional classroom geography resources for children, please visit the National Geographic main site at <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/>.

TABLE 1

## Quick Reference Tool and Five Themes Crosswalk

Tool	Location	Place	Region	Movement	Human-Environment Interaction
GeoStories	X	X	X	X	X
Global Trek	X	X	X	X	X
History Pin	X	X			X
Spotzi-Atlas	X	X	X	X	X
Mapmaker Interactive	X	X	X		X

GeoStories can be used within a multiday unit on geography to explore the five themes through either teacher-led investigations or student-led research with a partner or small group. Paired with print or digital maps (see Spotzi-Atlas and Mapmaker below), students can locate places or regions featured in the stories to explore additional geography themes. Geostories is a useful tool for scaffolded instruction of a specific theme. Once students locate the tour of their choice, they simply click to navigate the photos and videos or text information. Of particular interest in grades 2-5 are four specific collections of GeoStories with applications for the five themes: *Port Cities*, *Earth's Extremes*, *Four Countries in 48 Hours*, and *Crown of the Continent*. Each of these tours can be used with children to teach multiple themes of geography.

For example, the study of location and place using the *Port Cities* tour allows students to see beautiful photographs of 10 different ports around the world. As students travel through the photographs, the map on the left zooms in to that location and a written description appears below the photograph. The informational text provides basic facts about each particular port that help students understand location and place. As each port is unique, students can then compare and contrast the similarities and differences across the 10 port cities. Additionally, human-environment interaction can be explored with the question-provoking information (e.g., why are canals in Venice, Italy, used much like roads for transportation or how does ship congestion in a port affect the environment and what can be done about it?). GeoStories effectively combines text and multimedia to explore all five themes of geography.

### Global Trek

Global Trek is an interactive travel tool designed by Scholastic for elementary children and is found at <http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/globaltrek/index.htm>. This tool offers students a multifaceted virtual trip to 35 locations around the globe. Of particular interest for children are two features: travel journaling and location-specific tour content. Each tour offers at least three categories of information for each destination: Background Information, Guided Tours, and Meet the People. The Background Information section is written as informational text and gives students an important overview of the location, while the Meet the People section provides a glimpse into the local experience. Simple maps are also provided for each destination, allowing opportunities for map manipulation as part of the tours.

For classroom use, we suggest pairing Global Trek tours with additional local photographs and other printed sources like maps, related infographics, or video resources, when possible, to expand the information presented in the tours. As the tours are all self-guided, teachers should structure the Global Trek tours within a larger unit of study and implement specific goals for use and completion in order to better facilitate student use. For instance, a comprehensive unit on human-environment interaction and movement might include exploring multiple countries through Global Trek's Meet the People feature where country-specific human-environment interaction and movement information are available.

Using Global Trek, social studies standards for global connections and culture (NCSS, 2012) can also be taught alongside instruction of the five themes. We suggest pairing such investigations with additional photos featuring the selected countries and the United States. Students can also compare and contrast daily life and cultures in various regions using the Meet the People feature. Furthermore, teachers can use Global Trek in conjunction with Spotzi or Mapmaker to conceptualize their own location in regards to the countries they are researching. Global Trek is also a potential independent work application of the five themes as it provides multiple opportunities for student choice. Teachers can assign countries or allow students to choose destinations, or students can form groups to research countries within regions of the globe. By creating a simple checklist of outcomes, teachers can assess students' knowledge of the five themes by using Global Trek in independent literacy centers. For example, using the tour of China, students can view photo slideshows and read short informational text excerpts or complete a webquest of China; with either a laptop or tablet, the Global Trek tours are accessible with a few simple clicks. Additionally, Global Trek provides a fantastic family-school connection for extending the five themes to students' homes. For grades 2-3, we recommend launching the tool with teacher or family scaffolding; in grades 4-5 students can use the tool independently.

### **History Pin**

History Pin provides an authentic classroom application for children to demonstrate their knowledge of location and place. Using the website at <https://www.historypin.org/> or the free mobile app, children can research location and place using the collections and tours, create their own tour, or manipulate the map by searching addresses or city names. Multiple pins are generally located in regions where major attractions are found (e.g., Washington, DC, the Grand Canyon, or Boston). Additionally, with a few simple clicks, students can upload their own photos and describe them, then pin them to the interactive History Pin map. This tool is ideal for researching and pinning local history and field trip experiences as well as investigating relative location and place.

Teachers can use History Pin to guide whole class browsing of landmarks in their community or state and to identify unmarked attractions to be pinned and narrated. In conjunction with other online tourism materials or photo archives, History Pin can provide a more comprehensive virtual tour of major attractions. With a little teacher research beforehand, students can take a virtual trip to areas where pins are plentiful and even compare those pins and information to photos on sites such as Panoramio (<http://www.panoramio.com/>) or information available from related tourism sites. One example would be Washington, DC. Lauded as a popular tourism and elementary field trip destination, the Washington, DC area is well documented on History Pin,



including a variety of pinned and labeled historical photographs. Using History Pin, students could compare the pinned photographs to their own from a field trip. Also, if distance does not allow for a field trip, students can compare the pinned photos to DC area tourism resources, brochures collected by the teacher, or photos on landmark websites.

In grades 2-3 with teacher scaffolding, students can create and narrate a class photo collection from a community field trip or map out the government buildings at the local and state level (e.g., city hall or state legislature) where decisions are made by elected officials. In grades 4-5, students can upload photos to create a virtual collection or tour of their state or country. Across grades 2-5, students can explore a variety of pins for places, chart characteristics associated with those places, and compare and contrast landmarks in various regions. History Pin offers many opportunities to learn about and apply the themes of location, place, and human-environment interaction.

### **Spotzi-Atlas**

As the first free online world atlas, Spotzi offers more than 500 maps within nine main themes, information compiled from governments and research institutions around the world, and a “zoom in” feature to focus in on specific locations. Spotzi is available both online at <http://spotzi.com/en/> and as an app for iPhone, iPad, or Android devices. Information is updated daily for accuracy. Navigating the site comfortably takes some practice but older students (grades 4-5) will be able to do so independently following some teacher-guided instruction. Younger students (2-3) will need assistance in navigating this site and developing maps. Along the top of the main page, there are three drop-down boxes where users are able to either search for any location worldwide or examine a variety of informational maps based on themes such as weather and climate, culture, economy, and environment. Once a base map (i.e., street map or satellite) and theme are selected, Spotzi offers several options for the type of informational map that can be generated.

For example, one might select the category of Culture from the home page. Then in the second box, one might choose the Population Density map. Information from this map, which shows a larger concentration of red dots the higher the population, can be used by students to examine how location and physical features impact population in a region or country. Additionally, students can take what they learn about the impact of humans on the environment and make predictions of where the highest and lowest ecological footprints occur. Selecting the environment category and the ecological footprint map will allow students to check their predictions.

With multiple combinations of categories and maps, Spotzi allows for meaningful connections between geography and other social studies concepts identified by NCSS. For instance, the “zoom in” feature and cultural or environmental category maps allows for examination of global connections. Additionally, production, distribution, and consumption can be explored through the import and export maps under the economy category and the arable land map under the environment category. With Spotzi, elementary students can create and even contrast multiple maps of the same area that illustrate various themes.

### **Mapmaker Interactive**

From National Geography, the free web-based tool Mapmaker Interactive, accessed at <http://mapmaker.education.nationalgeographic.com/>, puts the power to create maps in the teacher's or student's hands. With a fairly short learning curve, Mapmaker allows teachers and students to select a base map (i.e., topographic, satellite, terrain, and street) and layer it with specific information from more than 80 different categories (e.g., Earth systems, human populations, culture, economy, and climate). With guided instruction to learn navigation of the site, students in upper grades quickly learn to independently design and create, manipulate, and explore maps. Maps may also be created by the teacher for whole or small collaborative group use with younger students. The drawing tools are an added feature that allows students to add location markers, draw on the map, measure distances, and add notes. With the ability to save or bookmark maps and print for tangible use, Mapmaker offers many uses in the classroom. In conjunction with Spotzi-Atlas, elementary students can research and learn about a number of geography concepts and then use that information to design and create their own maps with Mapmaker.

Mapmaker can be especially useful by placing multiple layers over one another to explore the relationship between them. For instance, selecting the layer category of Land Cover shows students such things as urban areas, open shrubland, and cropland across the world. With a legend feature, Mapmaker makes identifying different land covers easy. Layering land cover over a topographic base map can assist students in learning land features. Then adding the layer category of Population Density allows students to examine how the earth's land cover impacts population across the world or within a specific country or region. With a transparency bar, students can toggle between layers and adjust which layer is seen more dominantly. Examining the darkest population density areas in comparison to land cover will help students think more concretely about such themes as human-environment interaction and movement. Adding the Lights at Night layer is an interesting way for students to further explore the theme of human-environment interaction. Again, the layers can be reordered and transparency can be manipulated to show specific layers more predominantly, allowing for deeper understanding of how the different themes of geography are interconnected. Mapmaker, whether used in conjunction with other tools or alone, provides many opportunities for manipulating maps in the elementary classroom.

These tools offer many different approaches for teaching the five themes of geography Table 2 gives an overview of each tool, including notable features and other NCSS standards that can be incorporated with use of each tool.

### **Opportunities for Integration With Other Content Areas**

In grades 2-5, instructional planning that includes these five tools can create a space for students to learn and apply their knowledge of geography in a variety of ways. In addition to connections to other social studies themes, the tools provide opportunities to integrate math, science, and English language arts into social studies instruction. For instance, as Common Core State Standards (CCSS) has placed more importance on reading of informational text, GeoStories, Global Trek, and History Pin offer opportunities within geography instruction to incorporate practice in reading informational texts. Additionally, the Travel Journal feature in Global Trek makes integration of writing standards possible. Using the pinning or tour feature in History Pin, students can write descriptions of the photos being used, authentically bridging expository writing, social studies, and technology.

TABLE 2

## Tools at a Glance

Tool Name	Grades	Notable Features	Format	Possible Integration with Other NCSS Standards
GeoStories	2-5	Searchable collections Stories can be embedded High-quality photos	Web-based	global connections culture production, distribution, and consumption
Global Trek	2-5	Login feature for saving journals Outlines features of daily life for each destination	Web-based	culture global connections
History Pin	2-5	Create a tour Pin of the day Collections to browse	Web-based, Mobile App	historical thinking culture time, continuity, and change
Spotzi-Atlas	4-5	1,000+ maps Mapbuilder Themed map creator Navigation tool	Web-based or Mobile App with Twitter feature	global connections production, distribution, and consumption (particular focus on economics)
Mapmaker Interactive	4-5	Choice of 7 base maps Over 80 categories of overlays Drawing tools to Options to save and print maps	Web-based or Mobile App	historical thinking, global connections economics

One of the math domains in the elementary CCSS that lends itself to integration with geography is Measurement and Data. This standard includes solving problems involving measurement and conversions of measurements. Within a math unit, the teacher might make use of the drawing tools in Mapmaker by having students measure distances between multiple locations in both miles and kilometers. There are even more opportunities to integrate science with

social studies instruction using these tools. For example, in designing a science unit on Earth systems, structures, or processes, a teacher might incorporate these tools to help students see the impact of plate tectonics, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions on the Earth's land features. Specifically, the Earth Systems category in Mapmaker contains several map layers to explore these topics. A science unit on weather patterns and connections between weather and specific geographic locations can be enhanced by using Spotzi-Atlas. In particular, the Weather and Climate category has various maps showing temperature, precipitation, snow depth, and more. The colored maps allow students to click on and compare different locations or regions easily. In summary, while the opportunities for integrating technology and geography in grades 2-5 are plentiful, these five tools also illustrate the potential for math, science, and ELA integration.

### Conclusion

The five tools featured here—GeoStories, Global Trek, History Pin, Spotzi-Atlas, and Mapmaker—demonstrate the potential for meaningful technology integration when teaching geography in grades 2-5. Students and teachers alike can create maps that illustrate movement and human interaction, travel virtually to locations across the globe, and research endless places and regions using these five tools. As instructional technologies continue to grow and expand, teachers' opportunities to integrate technology in social studies mirror this development. Furthermore, extension activities and explorations possible with these tools also mirror the opportunities for integration in the elementary grades. As this article illustrates, given the variety of technology tools (Lin, Widdall, & Ward, 2014) and benefits of using technology in the elementary classroom (Berson, Berson, & Manfra, 2012), specifically for teaching social studies (Hammond & Manfra, 2009; Heafner, 2004), teachers can continue to expand their instructional practice alongside the expanding availability of technology suitable for children.

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# “PLAYING THE PRESIDENT”: THE VALUE OF SIMULATIONS IN PROMOTING CIVIL LITERACY

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## Abstract

The concept of civic literacy is deeply connected to an individual’s sense of political efficacy—the belief that the system is responsive to our needs and that we can make a difference. Students’ efficacy can be impacted by an inadequate understanding of the political process. This article describes a simulation activity—*Playing the President*—which allows students to explore the legislative process from the perspective of the executive branch. In doing so, students can develop their own civic literacy while participating in a pedagogical strategy that has significant advantages over traditional, teacher-centered instruction.

In an episode of the TV series *The West Wing*, the fictional president, Josiah Bartlet, confronts a religiously conservative radio host at a White House function. He coolly upbraids her, using biblical quotes to devastate her position (in this case, on homosexuality). At the end of the diatribe (during which time the radio show host has sat stonily enduring the dressing-down), the president informs her icily that, “in this house, when the president stands, *nobody* sits” (Sorkin & Graves, 2000). Under the baleful gaze of the leader of the free world, the subdued antagonist rises uncomfortably to her feet.

It is a deeply satisfying scene, and not because of the moral or political sentiments involved. Instead, it powerfully validates a view many Americans have of the presidency—that it is the most dominant branch of the U.S. government. Of course, the executive branch was never intended to be central to the functioning of the government—the Founding Fathers saw the presidency as practically a supporting mechanism for Congress, itself seen as the source of all legislative authority. According to a 2008 Indiana University poll, 59% of Americans understand the framers’ intention, but in the same poll, 4 out of 10 respondents believe that the power to declare war belongs to the president (Carmines, 2008). These gaps in knowledge are not restricted to adults. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2011), only 27% of fourth graders, 22% of eighth graders, and 24% of 12th graders in the United States can be termed “proficient” in civics knowledge (p. 2). As teachers, we often face what McCabe and Kennedy (2014) term a “civic deficit”—one that impacts our students’ civic literacy and their willingness to engage in civic action. But the belief that the system is broken and thus, that there is little reason to engage with it can be mitigated by helping students understand that the system, even when working efficiently, is characterized by a steady stream of compromise and

concessions. By simulating such actions in the classroom and in so doing, recreating the obstacles and impediments involved in bringing about positive impacts, teachers can equip students to participate more fully in the political process. This article describes the use of a simulation activity—*Playing the President*—which allows students to explore the complex, often frustrating legislative process from the perspective of the nation’s chief executive.

### **Civic Literacy and Political Efficacy**

The public views previously described are problematic for teachers, and not simply because they are incorrect. Social studies is the “curricular home of citizenship education, the field charged with preparation of the nation’s future citizens” (Fitchett & Vanfossen, 2013, p. 1). Our ability to accomplish this mission is restricted by the various misapprehensions Americans harbor about our government. In many ways, perhaps, the confusion is understandable, given its complexities. Juckett and Feinberg (2010) illustrate this, in trying to help students grasp the intricacies of gerrymandering—not only the actual districting process, but the political calculus behind it (p. 275). Distorted views, ironically, may be worse than factually incorrect beliefs, in that they distort our expectations and reduce our willingness to take positive civic action.

Civic literacy goes beyond “merely the knowledge of isolated facts about government . . . but rather the ability to think critically and objectively about the nation’s fundamental premises, policies, and practices” (Ross, 2000, p. 141). This means helping students become informed and politically active citizens who engage in civic dispositions such as “writing a letter to members of Congress, calling state legislatures, or participating in town hall meetings with fellow citizens” (Juckett & Feinberg, 2010, p. 274).

A crucial element of civic literacy, however, is the belief that the system can, and *does*, work on our behalf—slowly, perhaps, but working nonetheless. This belief has two separate dimensions: *internal* and *external efficacy*. The former is the belief that the individual can participate meaningfully in the political system. Guyton (1988) describes this as “the belief that one has personal control over the political sphere” (p. 30). External efficacy is the conviction that the system is responsive to our needs and actions (Campbell, Gurin, & Miller, 1954; Aish & Joreskog, 1990; Lerner, 2004). Morrell (2003) characterizes this as “perceptions of powerfulness (or powerlessness) in the political realm” (p. 589). Stentz and Lambert (1977) stress that, “before a citizen is likely to invest the time and energy in participation, he or she must surely have developed feelings of confidence that such an expenditure of effort will be worthwhile” (p. 61). Many contemporary Americans don’t share this confidence. According to a 2014 CNN poll, just 13% of Americans trust the government—worse than 40 years earlier, in the midst of the Watergate crisis (Lucas, 2014; CNN/ORC Poll, July 18-20, 2014).

Developing efficacy is one route to fostering civic literacy and the promotion of civic action (Levy, 2011). Citizens generally do not participate in the political system when they lack faith in their ability to engage effectively (Pasek et al., 2008). The more informed a citizen is, the more capable he/she feels in participating, and the more likely it is he/she will do so (Delli, Carpini, & Keeter, 1996, p. 30; Pasek et al., 2008). This is encouraging, when applied to students—teachers exert considerable influence over students’ sense of political efficacy and their future participation (Forrest & Weseley, 2007; Pasek et. al., 2008).

Students need to understand that political achievements are the result of lengthy deliberation, often fueled by the willingness to barter and compromise, what Hergesheimer (2004) calls “the very stuff of which governing is made in a democracy.” The knowledge that “it is possible for political leaders to disagree without destroying, to bend without breaking . . . and to lose the vote but keep on working for a good cause” (Hergesheimer, 2004, p. M2), can help students maintain their own sense of efficacy—the motivation to use the skills that are innate to civic literacy.

### **The Value of Simulations**

In a simulation, participants make choices to achieve objectives in a setting that approximates “an empirical mode of reality, such as a political process” (Vansickle, 1977, p. 85). Research indicates the value of simulations in developing political efficacy (Stroupe & Sabato, 2004; Boocock, 1968; Dressner, 1990; Levin-Goldberg, 2009). They also develop student interest in (and knowledge of) selected subjects, as well as fostering communication skills and self-awareness (Ghere, 2004; Druckman, 1995; Wright-Maley, 2011). Simulations are especially useful in clarifying processes (Baranowski, 2006), and they are effective for a variety of topics, including deficits (Wright-Maley, 2013), the labor movement (Wade, 1993), manifest destiny (Evans, 1993), or interdisciplinary strategies (Schur, 2007).

Gustafson (1993) explored the use of simulations to teach legislative processes, as students shepherded fictional “bills” through the system to highlight the obstacles lawmakers must navigate. Similarly, Juckett and Feinberg (2010) used an online simulation to explore gerrymandering “from the perspective of a politician” (p. 275). These simulations highlight the necessity of political consensus-building—students must consider “when is the right moment to compromise and when [to] sustain a conflict, even if violence might ensue” (Ghere, 2004, p. M9). This can be challenging; Gustafson (1993) points out that simulations can “produce considerable frustration and distraction—in themselves, valuable lessons” (p. 95).

Wright-Maley (2011) describes how simulations are most effectively used in the classroom. He identifies five basic elements. In combination, these strategies make simulations an effective addition to a social studies classroom:

- Providing background content knowledge
- Preparation (includes learning student roles within the simulation and how the content aligns to their tasks)
- The simulation performance
- Debriefing the experience and lessons connected to the simulation
- Assessment of the learning resulting from the simulation (p. 10).

### **Playing the President**

The goal of *Playing the President* is to highlight the dissonance between public perception of the presidency and the office’s legislative tools. The simulation was generated by the author and has been used in advanced placement and regular-track U.S. government and politics courses in public high schools (typically 12<sup>th</sup> grade). Students are shown the clip described above from



*The West Wing* and asked to reflect on this depiction of the president as a powerful figure who commands the respect that he is not given instinctively. Then the students are told they will be playing the part of a fictional president in order to evaluate the role of the executive branch in creating new laws. Students face the decision that all presidents must contend with—whether to sign a proposed bill or to oppose it.

In accordance with Wright-Maley's (2011) framework, the students are first provided with two types of background knowledge—a president's political/legislative tools a fictional biography of the president. Initially, students are coached through the various options they have. If the president does not support a bill, s/he can veto the bill; Congress can override this veto with a two-thirds' vote, but this is relatively uncommon. The president also has the *pocket veto*, which can only occur within the final ten days of Congress' term; if Congress adjourns before the ten days passes, the bill does not become law. It is important to point out to students that this has become a largely political tool, as the president can kill a bill of which s/he disapproves without the direct challenge of a veto.

Finally, the president has a largely theoretical tool—*impoundment of funds*. Thomas Jefferson was the first to do this, where the president simply refuses to spend money appropriated by Congress—and it lasted until 1974, with the passage of the Impoundment Control Act. Today, presidents may propose *rescissions*, but the request must be approved by both Houses within 45 days. Though hypothetical, some scholars assert that the power still exists, at least as a delaying tactic (Brownell, 2001).

These are the legislative tools with which students are equipped; this does not, however, establish the context in which these tools can be used. A hypothetical scenario is given to the students, to establish the political dynamic within which they will have to make decisions:

You are a first-term president in your second year in office. You are a moderate Republican from California, and you were elected with 47.9% of the popular vote and 276 electoral votes, versus 44% and 262 electoral votes for your opponent. Your election is only the second time since 1996 that a candidate won the presidency with less than 50% of the vote. You are aware that you defeated the Democratic nominee in part due to the campaign of a highly liberal third-party candidate, who split the vote of the Democratic Party. Congressional Democrats thus feel that you have entered your presidency weakened by public perception—moreover, they are pressured by liberal activists to address the concerns raised by the third-party candidate. You can expect little help from the left.

There are many political variables at work in this scenario. The president enters office having won, at least in part, because the Democratic vote was split. Concerned with reelection, the president's moderate stance means difficulty in winning over more ideological members of the government. This restricts students from more extreme policy decisions, and forces them to consider the nuances of their choices. The decision to simulate a Republican presidency was made to attach students to a particular political philosophy, and was not motivated by preexisting political affiliations. The context below frames the coming choices for the students; it would not provide motivation to avoid choosing easy answers (signing every proposed bill, for example, or vetoing them all):

Your party, the Republicans, controls the House by 20 votes. The opposition party, the Democrats, controls the Senate by three votes. The Republicans have great hopes for taking back the Senate in the midterm elections this November. They are relying on a strong legislative session to increase their chances. You are determined to avoid the “midterm jinx” (the president’s party almost always loses seats in the midterm elections), and you intend to run for a second term. You know, however, that you won the last election on a promise of “common sense” moderation, and you can’t risk appearing too conservative to left-leaning voters, or too liberal (and thus, weak in your own party) to right-leaning voters. You have not yet issued a veto in your presidency. After meeting with leaders of both parties and Houses, you have a good idea of what sort of bills you will face in the next few months.

Here, students face a set of sobering facts—they face a divided Congress, competing ambitions, and a strong desire to both increase the GOP’s numbers and to secure their own reelection. Students are also provided with a chart detailing the nature of party representation in both houses of Congress (see Table 1):

**TABLE 1**  
**Simulated Congressional Representation by Party**

	<b>House of Representatives</b>	<b>Senate</b>
Republican	227	48
Democrat	207	51
Independent	1 (caucuses with the Democratic conference)	1 (caucuses with the Republican conference)

The teacher should first brief the students on the simulation and its context. Students are then divided into small groups and given an opportunity, in accordance with Wright-Maley’s (2011) recommendations, to prepare—learning their roles (in this case, as the fictional chief executive) and aligning content to the task at hand (here, the political variables at work in each scenario).

Students will then consider a series of “bills,” and must develop at least two factors supporting signing then and two factors against then, in order to consider contrasting perspectives. They are also asked to develop at least two “points to consider”—who is proposing the bill, the odds that it may pass, who may benefit, any impact on electoral outcomes, and so forth. Finally, the students will have to decide on a course of action—to sign the bill, to veto it, or to pursue some alternate choice (e.g., pocket veto, impoundment of funds, or other options).

The bills are, in most cases, based on real legislation, proposed in Congress or at the state level. They were chosen primarily to reflect many of the policy choices and pressures a president may face. Teachers can, of course, design their own “bills,” in order to reflect different topics, or the interests of their students. The simulation’s goal is to help students understand the president’s role in the legislative process and the tools available to influence it. Table 2 details four bills that have been used in this simulation.

TABLE 2

## Simulated “Bills”

Name of Bill	Description
American Discovery Act	<p>This addition to the annual budget appropriations will increase the budget of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to \$21 billion—a small but significant increase over the previous year, from \$18 billion. The increase is aimed at developing a manned mission to Mars.</p> <p>The Republican House leadership believes that space exploration is a positive goal that all Americans can believe in. The Democrats seem willing to go along, and the bill is expected to pass both houses by a wide margin. You know the funding for NASA is coming, in part, from a surprising source—the funds that had been set aside for a national pre-kindergarten program, modeled after a very successful version you implemented in California as the state’s governor. It is one of the accomplishments you focused on during the campaign and a reason moderate voters supported you. The Republican leadership understands this puts you in an awkward position, but they refuse to consider any other cuts in an already lean budget and categorically refuse any tax increases.</p>
Detainee Treatment Act	<p>A Senate bill requiring humane treatment of prisoners held in U.S. custody. The bill enjoys wide bipartisan support, having passed the Senate 73-27 and the House 295-170. The bill is sponsored by a Republican senator who is hugely popular in his own state and is rumored to be considering a presidential bid in the future. You have argued that your administration does not torture detainees, but you are concerned about Congress’s attempt to strictly define presidential powers. You believe that the Founding Fathers never intended for the legislative branch to be able to limit a president’s authority, especially in times of war. The bill is scheduled for a vote eight days before the end of the current Congress’ term.</p>
Maternal Protection and Information Act	<p>A House bill that would require all clinics that offer abortions to inform patients that, after the third month of pregnancy, a fetus is able to feel pain. The bill is sponsored by a very conservative House Republican. It is likely to pass by a slim majority, and has a good chance in the Senate, given that two Democratic senators from traditionally “red” states have been targeted by the Republican leadership in the upcoming midterms and will need to show off their conservative side. The bill is strongly supported by the pro-life lobby—one of its national leaders has said publicly that your decision will go a long way toward ensuring their support in the next election (given that they did not strongly endorse you in the last one, with your moderate stance on abortion rights). You feel, as a conservative, that this bill tramples on states’ rights. Moreover, you were elected as a pro-choice Republican.</p>

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Name of Bill	Description
Religious Liberty Act	<p>This is a Senate bill that would allow small businesses (e.g., caterers, florists, bakers, wedding chapels) to refuse service to gay couples based on the owner's religious beliefs. The bill's sponsor claims that in the wake of many states' legalization of same-sex marriage, this law would be a corrective allowing people to maintain and act upon their religious convictions. Opponents claim that the bill would essentially legalize discrimination against same-sex couples. The bill seems likely to pass the House and faces unclear prospects in the Senate. Conservative Democrats, facing reelection in the fall, may choose to support the bill in order to shore up their local support. Your chief of staff advises you that the bill goes far beyond what a 2014 Supreme Court decision about religious freedom allowed, and that the bill's passage would certainly provoke legal challenges.</p>

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### **Pedagogical Considerations**

Teachers should note that this simulation is appropriate for students already familiar with the legislative process. Given the complexity of the variables, it is not designed as a mechanism for learning new content (Corbeil & Laveault, 2011; Wright-Maley, 2013). For each bill, teachers should encourage students to explore the possible outcomes of the options available to them, paying attention to the status of each bill (has it passed both Houses? What is the vote count? Could either House, if so desired, sustain an override of the president's veto?). Students should also consider the mitigating factors around each bill—why is it being proposed? Who supports it? How strongly? What will each choice cost the president—and how much?

It is common for students to restrict their choices to the ones provided—sign the bill, veto it, seek a pocket veto—but it is important for teachers to help students grasp that a president may also choose to do nothing. For instance, the “Religious Liberty Act,” is likely to pass the House of Representatives, but faces an uncertain future in the Senate. Considering Congress' makeup, as well as the presence of several conservative Senate Democrats (inferred in the preceding bill scenario), students should recognize that the bill's passage is anything but assured. Similarly, students should consider that the Senate's minority party can effectively stymie legislation through the filibuster. Thus students may place their faith in members to stall or kill the bill.

Some students may have the goal of defeating their (fictional) political opposition, thus “winning” the simulation. For instance, in the “American Discovery Act,” students often note that the funding is being directed from a universal pre-kindergarten program, a signature achievement of this president. Students are regularly aggrieved at this, and wonder why other Republicans might support such a clear attack on the president's priorities. There are several possible reasons—the House's desire to signal their prominence over a newly elected executive, the Republican intent to push a conservative agenda (and in so doing, to eliminate an expansion of education spending to which they presumably object), the implicit view that the “presidency” is weakened by circumstance, and thus is unlikely to resist. A veto in this case might be the emotionally satisfying choice, but it might not be the wisest one.

In a similar vein, students have to consider which battles are worth fighting. One of the primary supporters of the “Detainee Treatment Act” is a possible Republican rival, and vetoing the bill would deny that figure a significant political victory, but it would also make that rival more politically prominent as a result. Should students opt for the short-term benefits in contesting with a possible competitor? Or consider the long-term costs of a law that could potentially limit the authority of future presidents? The number of factors in play can seem daunting, but their presence indicates a rich opportunity for critical analysis of a complex process.

The actual performance of the simulation can take many forms. Teachers may choose to lead a whole-group discussion of the various options, or to allow student groups to meet separately or to collaborate on shared decisions. As Wright-Maley (2011) recommends, there are two pedagogical elements that should follow the performance: a debriefing period, in which the teacher should make explicit connections between the simulation and the content embedded in it; and an assessment of the learning that has, ideally, taken place (p. 10). In previous iterations of the simulation, students have completed post-performance essays justifying and clarifying their decisions. On other occasions, students have debriefed each other in post-simulation interviews to explain and justify their choices.

### **Issues to Consider**

Simulations generally require significant planning in order to meet curricular objectives and to “approximate the reality of the phenomenon students are learning” (Wright-Maley, 2011, p. 20). As a result, they can “play out in unexpected ways” (Wright-Maley, 2013, p. 96), and may be comparatively time-consuming. This is why simulations are relatively uncommon, especially for less advantaged schools and students (Kawashima-Ginsberg, 2013).

Another issue is complexity—a simulation must be challenging for students, but not so much that they will be unable to navigate it. Realistic scenarios must be presented “in a simplified manner such that participants can derive meaning from the activity without undue interference from the noise of reality” (Wright-Maley, 2013, p. 89). In this instance, the simulated bills must be engaging without trivializing the issues they address, a possibility when teachers incorporate potentially controversial topics into their classrooms (Totten & Feinberg, 1995).

Simulations can also be difficult to carry out. Students need help in critiquing the scenarios, evaluating perspectives, and collaborating on decisions. Teachers often play multiple roles, including “facilitator, spectator, cheerleader, corrector . . . and thief,” shifting a good idea from one group to another (Wright-Maley, 2011, p. 14). In managing a simulation, teachers have to be capable of switching from teacher-led instruction to facilitation, in order to help students’ views evolve (Gilley, 2004; Glavin, 2008). It isn’t surprising that teachers may be reluctant to use simulations, but the goal—to foster civic literacy to show how the system works (even if it is only in fits and starts)—is worth the effort.

Wright-Maley (2011) describes factors that can maximize the simulation’s impact—what he terms “going the extra mile” (p. 10). Some of the elements include the development of “social capital” (the development of sustained relationships with students and garnering support from other teachers and administrators); committed engagement by the teacher; positioning students for success during the simulation by accommodating diverse instructional needs; publicly

showcasing the students' performances; and a "physical takeaway—a memento, award, or keepsake" (p. 11). By incorporating these elements, teachers can use this strategy to positively impact dispositions across the social studies discipline (Williams & Williams, 2007).

Often in the social studies, we emphasize knowledge connected to discrete outcomes—great documents, historic events—and less about the process by which those outcomes are achieved. The philosopher Max Weber (1919) once described politics as "a strong and slow boring of hard boards." It is essential for our students to fully understand the political process, with all its compromise and frustration, in order to sustain civic efficacy, their belief that the system is working as it was designed to. Civic literacy is often inhibited because of our "failure to develop critical decision-making skills [and] inattention to values issues" (Kickbush, 1987, p. 174). Simulations like *Playing the President* give students an opportunity to practice the boring of hard boards on their own and, through that, to develop their own critical appreciation of how the political process functions.

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# MODELING THE C3 CURRICULUM IN BILLINGS, MONTANA

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The C3 curriculum framework melds the multiple disciplines of the social studies into one useable document. However, for many classroom teachers it remains a philosophical document that has little bearing on the reality of the everyday classroom. This article demonstrates the practicality of student activity that models many elements of the C3 framework and makes suggestions for partnerships between schools, museums and other community services.

In 2013, the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework's introduction reflected several years of collaborative work between 15 groups aligned with the social studies. The work of classroom teachers, state experts, college faculty, and other social studies stakeholders resulted in a document that promotes critical thinking and other components crucial to preparing students for their lives after the classroom. While multiple states have adopted the C3 and many have extolled its virtues, very few suggestions for the classroom teacher have been available. As a model of how the C3 framework can be demonstrated in an innovative and reproducible manner, a high school American studies class partnered with a local historical center, public library, Montana Public Broadcasting Service, and Humanities Montana (the state's connection to the National Endowment for the Humanities) to learn research skills, conduct oral histories, and design a museum exhibit for junior history and English. The learning process they experienced mirrors the Four Dimensions of the C3 framework:

1. Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries
2. Applying Disciplinary Tools and Concepts
3. Evaluating Sources and Using Evidence
4. Communicating Conclusions and Taking Informed Action

Throughout, I reference elements of these Dimensions. Each dimension is referenced using the accepted notation, such as (D2.Civ.II.9-12), which refers to Dimension 2, Civics indicator 11, Grades 9-12. For more information access the C3 framework at: [www.socialstudies.org/c3/c3framework](http://www.socialstudies.org/c3/c3framework).

The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework is modeled on a daily basis in an American studies classroom at Billings West High School (Montana). The class meets daily for two hours, and students must complete district expectations and curriculum for both American history and



English. Students choose to join the class, and while many are college bound, some are headed to trade school or directly into the work force upon graduation. The school of 2,000 students offers regular history and English classes plus honors English and advanced placement American history as other options for the junior year.

In 2013-14, the class partnered with the local history museum — the Western Heritage Center — to research, design, and create an exhibit that examined outbreaks of racial violence in Billings 20 years earlier. Several racial incidents in the town became the catalyst for a community-wide effort to become a more inclusive community. This burst of civic pride ultimately led to the formation of a national group called *Not in Our Town*. Students had the opportunity to be creative beyond the classroom walls and textbooks. They were challenged to think critically and to overcome their own preconceived ideas and prejudices.

The task posed to the students was to examine the state of racial issues in Billings and to put those events into perspective with current issues while drawing on their understanding of history. At this point, the class began following ideas as laid out in C3, including the Inquiry Arc and the actions described in the various Dimensions (NCSS, 2013). The goal of social studies educators was to encourage and facilitate engaged and responsible citizens. The steps below outline how one high school class accomplished this using the Four C3 Dimensions. The local news covered the efforts of the students over the course of the project, and those articles may be accessed with the links in the Appendix.

### **Dimension One: Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries**

While museum staff chose the theme of the exhibit, students had to create/ask the compelling questions after an introduction to the issues. This assignment took place in the regular American history curriculum and focused on development of student research and presentation skills. Using a variety of collaborative approaches, students explored social tensions, racism, different community reactions, and finally their own perspectives. Dimension One suggests that assignments meet the social interests of the students, while helping them understand ongoing issues in their community (D1.1.9-12 and D1.2.9-12). West High pupils learned of political and historical events, both local and national, without the “drudgery” of serial textbook chapters and worksheets (D1.3.9-12 and D1.4.9-12). In doing so, they met district expectations for research skills at the junior level, and they did so without using Wikipedia, Google or the other current fallbacks of student research.

A significant component of the project included understanding the role of local government and how officials responded to citizens. To answer their research questions, students spent time in the archives at the Western Heritage Center and the public library identifying multiple primary documents from the original incidents (D1.5.9-12). These documents included newspapers, first person accounts, and other ephemera distributed on windshields and left on doorsteps.

### **Dimension Two: Applying Disciplinary Concepts and Tools**

Students learned interviewing techniques from several local news personalities, including reporters from print, television, and radio mediums. Using their historical research from

printed materials, students composed questions and conducted interviews of more than a dozen participants from the rallies during the mid-1990s. Perhaps most striking was the interview of the controversial (and current) county treasurer who publicly made racist comments about President Obama. His remarks, which played prominently in the local news media throughout the 2013-14 school year, added relevance to understanding the civil rights issues outlined in the textbook. Interestingly, when students called him and asked for an interview, he agreed and defended his words and actions. Students were earnest and skilled enough that this individual and others made frank comments about their views of race then and now. Students interviewed several former mayors (two of whom diametrically disagreed about the city's reaction to the racial attacks), police chiefs, religious leaders, and state legislators. The C3 curriculum calls for students to evaluate public policy and its outcomes (D2.Civ.II.9-12 through D2.Civ.IV.9-12); and these students discovered that they did not always admire their elected officials. As part of the final exhibit, the edited interviews played on a screen for visitors sitting in a small theater. All of their work led to significant understanding of the civic process in the Billings community and helped them comprehend how government worked and what their part was in the process. Students not only gained an understanding of civic virtue, but practiced it (D2.Civ.VI.9-12 through D2.Civ.VII.9-12). As the authors of C3 write, these students were "promoting the common good and protecting rights" (p. 34) in their effort to understand the past and explain the connections to the present.

Using oral interviews, archival research, and classroom discussion from the American studies course, students had to evaluate their sources and decide how to make sense of competing narratives and conflicting interpretations. The class had several intense discussions about racial issues, including one student who offered that racism, both in Billings and the country, had ceased to be an issue many years earlier. These conversations were taking place in the context of a historical examination of slavery, the Civil Rights movement, and other pertinent events. Most students learned that the threads of history connect to the present. Although the main focus centered on history and politics, a sense of geography played a key part. Most students in the class come from a northern European heritage and for the first time realized that a significant portion of the Billings community was Jewish and Hispanic; confronting family prejudices and background opened their eyes to a different view of the community (D2.Geo.I.9-12 through D2.Geo.III.9-12). This altered dramatically their perception of Montana and their town as an isolated portion of the country immune to racial tensions.

Concurrently as their English assignment, they also read the classics *The Grapes of Wrath* and *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water*. The latter novel resonated well with students in its depiction of the struggles of race on a Montana reservation. Reading and studying important literature clearly meshes with the expectations of the English components in the Common Core. The juniors gained a clearer understanding of their regional culture (D2.Geo.IV.9-12 through D2.Geo.VI.9-12) from the mix of research, literature, and class discussion.

Students then designed an exhibit that illustrated their understanding of the connections between the past and current perceptions and would in turn challenge the museum visitors to confront their own perceptions of race. As they had gathered voluminous materials from their research and interviews, they not only had to interpret conflicting views, but also write a viable script that would make sense to museum visitors for the next six months (D2.His.IV.9-

12 through D2.His.8.9-12). Their writing demonstrated a strong understanding of change and continuity; the “who and why” of history become key in explaining the past (D2.His.1.9-12 through D2.His.3.9-12). Instead of classroom exercises in historical thinking that came from a textbook’s worksheet, the class learned that they could not simply write opinions, but must use the multiple views and integrate them into a cohesive whole that explained the connection of the incidents decades earlier with current interpretations (D2.His.9.9-12 through D2.His.1.7.9-12). The students also helped edit the writing of a grant to fund the costs of the exhibit’s creation.

### **Dimension Three: Evaluating Sources and Using Evidence**

The exhibit, entitled “Who are you, who are we?,” opened in late May 2014 with local dignitaries, the governor of the state, parents, and other interested citizens in attendance. Visitors entered the gallery through strobe lights that illuminated floor-to-ceiling mirrors. In the main hallway, two students on a continuous loop narrated an introduction to the city-wide effort 20 years earlier and the students’ contemporary interpretations. Moving down the hallway, viewers confronted the words of hate from earlier decades from flyers, hate mail, and other distributed materials that students had unearthed in their research. One infamous incident involved white power materials placed under windshield wipers of cars parked for a theatrical production. To re-create that highly publicized distribution, students found old wipers at a local auction yard and mounted them on the exhibit walls to hold reproductions of the hate materials. Visitors were invited to lift the wiper to read the vituperative words that had brought together the Billings community and sparked the nation-wide group *Not in our Town* (D3.1.9-12 through D3.4.9-12).

In perhaps the most evocative scene, observers could peer into a window with spider-web cracks and see the entire class holding anti-hate placards. They chose this as a representation of the seminal event that ignited the community-wide effort 20 years ago to refute racism in Billings. An unknown individual had hurled a brick through the bedroom window of a local Jewish family; a menorah in their preschool-age son’s room was the target. Students captured the fear that families had felt in the 1990s.

Simultaneously, in the spring of 2014, the Billings city council debated and listened to testimony on enacting a nondiscrimination ordinance for the community. The lengthy council meetings and the testimony from multiple perspectives fueled intense class discussions on civil rights and the democratic process. Like the town in which we live, students brought multiple perspectives to class. Ultimately, the city council rejected the ordinance by one vote.

### **Dimension Four: Communicating Conclusions and Taking Action**

A month after the May opening, the national *Not in Our Town* organization held their annual conference in Billings. Several hundred people came to a reception at the Western Heritage Center to reflect on what 22 high school students had learned about themselves, their community, and their ability to take civil action. The last of the major components calls for students to understand that there can be a range of audiences. Their exhibit was open to the public from mid-May of 2014 until the Western Heritage Center’s annual closing just prior to holiday season at the end of December. More than 30,000 visitors, including hundreds of

elementary students on classroom trips, observed their work and gave thoughtful, evocative feedback (D4.1.9-12 through D4.3.9-12).

### Conclusion

Classroom teachers face many challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> century preparing students for standardized tests and curricular expectations from local and state agencies. The C3 Framework offers a grounded pathway for teaching good social studies skills. Most students will not spend their working lives reading textbooks and answering questions, and therefore need experiences in how to 1) develop questions and plan inquiries, 2) apply disciplinary concepts and tools, evaluate sources and use evidence, and 4) communicate conclusions and take informed action (NCSS, 2013). This project meets state and district curriculum expectations and provides an example of virtually all the significant components of the C3. Students in my class identified significant historical issues, asked reflective questions that led to substantive research, designed ways of showing what they had learned, and indeed demonstrated civic responsibility. This unique manner of teaching research skills appealed to all skill levels across the class and allowed students other than the top 10% to shine and to display talents that would not otherwise surface in the standard term paper assignment.

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### Appendix

#### Links to Coverage From Local Newspapers Illustrating the Process and Accomplishments of the American Studies Class

Benoit, Z. (2014, February 23). West students recreating multimedia project on combating hate crimes. *Billings Gazette*. Retrieved from [http://billingsgazette.com/news/local/west-students-creating-multimedia-project-on-combating-hate-crimes/article\\_d7c8b737-f30b-5242-956e-b9240ba4ab02.htm](http://billingsgazette.com/news/local/west-students-creating-multimedia-project-on-combating-hate-crimes/article_d7c8b737-f30b-5242-956e-b9240ba4ab02.htm)

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Welcome to Billings where not in our town began. (2104, June 18). *Billings Gazette*. Retrieved [http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rc=t&source=web&cd=2&ved=0CCgQFjAB&url=http%3A%2F%2Fbillingsgazette.com%2Fnews%2Fopinion%2Feditorial%2Fgazette-opinion%2Fgazette-opinion-welcome-to-billings-where-not-in-our-town%2Farticle\\_a9351036-b1bb-5312-8266-12be47512530.html&ei=QjiDVKGfB4imyAT1h4KwCw&usq=AFQjCNGh3LwBgI47arkWxyeyySrrJZvYsg&sig2=KQqoAQnbEoRS2KNyP8rZ2Q&rbvm=bv.80642063,d.aWw](http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rc=t&source=web&cd=2&ved=0CCgQFjAB&url=http%3A%2F%2Fbillingsgazette.com%2Fnews%2Fopinion%2Feditorial%2Fgazette-opinion%2Fgazette-opinion-welcome-to-billings-where-not-in-our-town%2Farticle_a9351036-b1bb-5312-8266-12be47512530.html&ei=QjiDVKGfB4imyAT1h4KwCw&usq=AFQjCNGh3LwBgI47arkWxyeyySrrJZvYsg&sig2=KQqoAQnbEoRS2KNyP8rZ2Q&rbvm=bv.80642063,d.aWw)

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# STUDENT TEACHING IN SOUTH AFRICA: AN INTERCULTURAL EXPERIENCE

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This descriptive case study at the intersection of multicultural and global education analyses a multiracial teacher candidate's student teaching experience in South Africa. The findings suggest that overseas student teaching provides a unique opportunity to enhance preservice teachers' intercultural sensitivity and global awareness to benefit students in their future multicultural classrooms.

## Introduction

Historically, people with different cultural backgrounds have often lived segregated lives in ghettoized communities. However, because cultures are dynamic, they provide opportunities for enhancing intercultural understanding (Portera, 2011). This is especially important for aspiring teachers, as not only are their students likely to be multiracial or multiethnic, but diverse along linguistic, religious, ability, and economic lines as well (Ladson-Billings, 2001). A major goal of teacher education programs is to prepare teachers who use a culturally relevant pedagogy that enhances intercultural sensitivity and global awareness (Cushner, 2007, 2012a; Ladson-Billings, 2001). The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) continues to emphasize the importance of helping students make global connections in order to reduce ethnocentric barriers by providing "a forum for discussion of issues of inequity and unfairness, racism, and power in and among nations" (NCSS, 2001a, 2001b, 2010). Preservice teachers who participate in an extended international student teaching experience have the unique opportunity to immerse themselves in another culture.

This descriptive case study, begun without prior assumptions, presents an analysis of one individual's experiences during a student teaching abroad semester. Aletta (pseudonym) was a preservice teacher with a mixed Caucasian and African American background who, as part of the Consortium for Overseas Student Teaching (COST), completed her secondary language arts student teaching at one of the top schools in South Africa. It is important to note the difference between study abroad and student teaching abroad programs. Study abroad programs typically involve a relatively short group experience under the supervision of a college instructor, while student teaching abroad is an individual experience for the duration of entire academic term. While the research literature on student teachers' developing intercultural understanding is quite extensive, it has been overlooked in the field of social studies teacher education. However, this research suggests that regardless of their program of study, student teachers experience significant

professional and personal growth as well as increased global awareness while teaching abroad (Cushner, 2004, 2007, 2012a; Dantas, 2007; Doppen & An, 2014; Quezada & Alfaro, 2007). Aletta's experience can serve to inform the social studies teacher education field as a case study.

Almost a quarter of a million American students now study abroad each year; however, they are disproportionately female and Caucasian and tend to seek out traditional locations (Stroud, 2010). Although African Americans make up less than one out of every 25 study-abroad students, a significant motive for their participation is to learn more about their heritage (Brux, 2010). Research has also shown that motives for participation in study-abroad experiences must be understood in the context of students' learning motives and the interplay between these motives and those of the people with whom they interact (Allen, 2010). For some participants, most notably those who can be categorized as justice-oriented citizens, this includes the opportunity and responsibility to engage in social action (Doppen, Misco, & Patterson, 2008; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).

My objective in conducting this study was to gain a deeper understanding of Aletta's intercultural experience. I requested and obtained Aletta's informed consent to participate in this study because of her background and desire to student teach in South Africa. Since nearly all student teachers who participate in the COST program are Caucasian, I believed she would contribute a unique perspective on the experience. Consequently, this study sought to address the following research question: How did Aletta's student teaching experience in South Africa enhance her intercultural sensitivity and global awareness?

Bennett (1993) developed the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, which provides a useful framework for analysing the impact of an international student teaching experience on an individual's development along a continuum of six stages from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism. The *denial* stage refers to the inability to see cultural differences and is followed by a *defense* stage in which individuals are able to recognize differences but continue to adhere to the superiority of their own culture. Next is the *minimization* stage in which people tend to minimize differences by suggesting that all humans are essentially the same. In the *acceptance* stage, individuals begin to analyze cultural differences, which lead them into the *adaptation* stage when they become increasingly competent in communicating across cultures. In the final *integration* stage, they have developed multiple frames of reference and are able to move relatively easily between different cultures.

The COST program is limited to 15 universities in the United States that serve as sending sites. Since its inception in 1972, COST has attempted to dislodge participants from the familiar by providing them with the opportunity to immerse themselves in a different culture by completing their student teaching in public and private institutions in various locations around the world where English is the language of instruction (see <http://www.gvsu.edu/cost/>).

## Method

Qualitative researchers have argued that the methods of the human sciences should be interpretative with the aim of discovering how people construct their own unique meaning (McCracken, 1988; Stake, 1995). I chose to use a case study approach, as it involves an inductive

process of discovering the world as seen through the eyes of the participants (Hutchinson, 1997; Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 1994).

The findings in this study are based on multiple sources that include Aletta's COST application, two reflections she wrote as part of a required two-week-long, full-time pre-program practicum in the United States, a semi-structured interview before her departure for South Africa, her daily journal entries while in South Africa, a Teacher Work Sample (TWS) based on the unit plan she taught, a survey she completed after finishing her student teaching, and a semi-structured interview after her return to the United States. Together these sources provide a rich record of Aletta's experiences between April 2009 and July 2010.

### **Aletta**

To understand Aletta's overseas student teaching experience, it is important to understand her as a person. Aletta grew up in a small mid-western community. Although she was of mixed Caucasian and African-American heritage, fellow students at her large (1,000 students), predominantly white school "definitely identified [her] as black . . . just because there were no people of color, period" (personal communication, February 11, 2010). Being one of only five "African-American" students at her high school, she explained, her best friends were white or she wouldn't have had any. Her church, started by her grandfather, was about evenly divided between Caucasian and African-American parishioners and located in "a pretty rough neighborhood" where "most of the kids [were] from a low socioeconomic status" (personal communication, February 11, 2010). It was her experience in Sunday school that helped Aletta decide to become a teacher. A missionary trip to a girls' orphanage in Haiti during her senior year in high school, an inspirational teacher during her senior year and her participation in a summer program for at-risk public school students during her junior year in college further solidified her decision to become a high school English teacher.

Her church experiences influenced her desire to also become a missionary. Before her trip to Haiti, she had not had any international experiences. However, somehow in middle school, she developed the feeling that this was something she should do, and she started to think about Africa. In retrospect, Aletta wondered why she was thinking so much about Africa, when in fact, she did not know anything about the continent. In her own words, she just "felt like that's where I should be . . . like it's something that I'm supposed to do, and so then when I went to Haiti my senior year, I think it was more this is definitely, you know, what I want to do" (personal communication, February 11, 2010). This feeling was so strong that she decided to participate in the COST program despite having to leave her two-year-old son. She had the strong belief that the COST experience would benefit both of them as "the United States is becoming more multicultural" (personal communication, February 11, 2010). Interested in learning more about her African roots, Aletta requested to student teach in South Africa where she received a placement in a large metropolitan area in Eastern Cape province.

Aletta also longed to have experiences beyond her student teaching to include encounters with issues of "poverty, AIDS, and things like that" (personal communication, February 11, 2010). Well aware of the legacy of apartheid in South Africa, she realized the country "still has some race issues and problems" but wanted to "just go and, you know, and form [her] own opinion"

(personal communication, February 11, 2010). She did not think that “any type of racism [was] going to be different than . . . things” she had gone through in the United States (personal communication, February 11, 2010). In fact, during her prior practicum in the United States, after having read a student’s explicitly racist journal assignment, she wrote that her “classroom [would] embrace diversity on all levels,” that she wanted her students “to learn to embrace all people,” and that she would “not accept any derogatory comments or stereotypes in her classroom” (practicum, December 10, 2009).

Thus Aletta’s mixed racial background, her desire to learn more about her heritage and make a difference in the world suggest that she was in the early stages of ethnorelativism. In this *acceptance* stage individuals begin to seek out, analyze, and accept cultural differences.

### **South Africa**

Aletta’s personal motives intersected with South Africa’s unique history of apartheid. According to recent statistics, South Africa has a population of approximately 52 million inhabitants, including approximately 14.4 million children, ages 5-19. Based on racial categorizations in South Africa, Black Africans make up nearly 80% of the population; Whites and Coloureds both slightly less than 9%; and Indians/Asians, approximately 2.5% (Statistics South Africa, 2015). Education is compulsory for all children from the year in which they turn 7 to the end of the year in which they turn 15 or the end of grade 9, whichever comes first (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2008, p. 20).

Since the official end of apartheid in 1994, education in South Africa has transformed significantly. The roots of apartheid education can be traced to the Smuts Act of 1907, which stipulated that “no coloured child person shall be admitted to or be allowed to remain a pupil in any school, class, or institution for white children” (Meier, 2002). However, the Bantu Education Act of 1953 marked the formal introduction of apartheid education in South Africa (Soudien, 2009). Subsequently, students were schooled in separate education systems each under separate control (Fiske & Ladd, 2004). Two years after the fall of apartheid, the South African Schools Act of 1996 outlawed discrimination and forced schools to open their admission to all students but at the same time mandated them to create a School Governing Board (SGB), composed of the principal and elected representatives of parents, teachers, staff, and students, which is authorized to determine the school’s own medium of instruction, cultural character, extramural activities, teaching staff, and fees (Soudien, 2009).

Despite these significant changes, patterns of educational inequality and racialized identities remain as a result of gatekeeping approaches that limit access through language of instruction and school fee policies (Fiske, 2004; Fiske & Ladd, 2004; Francis & Hemson, 2011; Hill, Baxen, Craig, & Namakula, 2012; OECD, 2008; Ndimande, 2012). Critics argue that education in South Africa continues to be based on an apartheid culture of racial and cultural essentialism rather than critical multiculturalism (Francis & Hemson, 2011; Meier, 2004; Waghid, 2009).



## Student Teaching

Aletta's first experience upon arrival in South Africa was her accommodation on the living grounds of a white host family in a house that included two adjacent apartment buildings. Picked up by her White "host mom," Aletta was informed that she would have ten roommates—something she had not expected. She found her host family "rather standoffish" (journal, March 22, 2010). Nearly one month after her arrival, the relationship with her host family remained strained. Disappointed, she wrote: "I thought I would be forming a bond that would last for years with a family in another culture. [Instead] we are locked out of the main part of the house at all times of the day. . . . I have not felt welcomed for a single moment since I've been here" (journal, March 22, 2010). Rejoicing that she was "so excited to never have to see [her] host family again," things had not got much better by the time of her departure (journal, June 6, 2010).

From the first day she arrived, Aletta decided she would explore the city. She expressed feeling uncomfortable about living in a "predominantly White" and "affluent" community and around "all the [White] Afrikaans [sic]" in the local establishments (journal, March 22, 2010). Instead, she looked forward to experiences in which she wouldn't be a minority anymore and would be able to "ventur[e] to the township and experience authentic South African things" (journal, March 22, 2010). Under the impression during her first days in the country that "everyone has a black maid . . . even the more affluent blacks," she hated "never [being] introduced to them, even if they are standing in the room" (journal, March 22, 2010).

The school setting was another important experience. Aletta's first encounter at Siyabona High School, a pseudonym, was more positive than with her host family. At the morning staff meeting, one of the department heads introduced her to many of the teachers at the school and then gave her a tour of the building. This welcome made her instantly decide that "everyone here is lovely, and I already feel comfortable" (journal, March 23, 2010), a sentiment that continued throughout her stay at the school.

A public school, Siyabona High School had a racially mixed, non-compulsory student population. It was housed in a facility that included a restaurant complex, a solar-heated swimming and water polo pool, a library and media center, physics and life science laboratories, a social science laboratory, numerous sports fields and courts, a music auditorium, as well as a network computer center. The school's vision was to maintain a progressive approach toward building a nation by integrating academics; cultural and sporting events; spiritual, emotional, and moral development; and social awareness. While Siyabona's language of instruction was English, Afrikaans was taught as an additional language. Other subjects taught at the school included the arts, economic management, guidance, life orientation, mathematics, music, natural science, social science, technology, accounting, business, and tourism. Cultural activities included numerous student clubs focused, among others, on art, donating blood, dance sports, AIDS, radio transmission, Toastmaster, choir, science, and Christian religion.

Aletta was assigned to teach three language arts classes—two for grade 9 and grade 11 with Mrs. Singh and one for grade 10 with Mr. Nombeko (both pseudonyms). Unlike South Africa's racial composition, Black Africans made up 26%, Coloureds 34%, Indians/Asians 5% and Caucasians 35% of the 82 students in her three classes. When visiting Mrs. Singh's class, Aletta found out that "next term her 11s [would] begin a unit on *To Kill a Mockingbird*, which is exactly what [her]

practicum [had] focus[ed] on” (journal, March 23, 2010) and which became the exclusive focus of her journal. Although she “loved” being at Siyabona, even before the end of her first week at the school, Aletta began inquiring “about teaching in a township school” (journal, March 22, 2010).

To prepare for the next term, Aletta decided to reread Harper Lee’s novel, the Great Depression-era story of Atticus Finch, a widowed lawyer who is appointed by the court in the racist fictional town of Macomb, Alabama, to defend an African American who has been accused of raping a young white woman. Since Aletta was already familiar with *To Kill a Mockingbird*, which is standard reading in many American language arts classrooms, yet with a distinct connection to social studies, she was “thrilled to teach it . . . because of its discussion of race and [applicability] to life in South Africa’s history” (journal, April 12, 2010).

About to start her unit plan, the recent murder of Afrikaner leader Terre Blanche provided an immediate current event connection with *To Kill a Mockingbird*. In a classroom discussion about the murder, Mrs. Singh shared the story of how she had once been told by a student that she could not possibly be the mother of her two Indian children because she was white. After informing her students that race didn’t matter because “we all have the same color hearts,” she intimated to Aletta that the students “hold [talking about race] inside because they are scared” (journal, April 14, 2010). This led Aletta to infer that while “the topic is taboo now,” Terre Blanche’s murder had nonetheless ripped open the “wounds that were caused by apartheid” (journal, April 14, 2010).

Aletta’s most important learning objective for the *Mockingbird* unit was for her students to understand that “what is right is not always popular” and that an author’s perspective influences the reader’s interpretation (TWS, May 8, 2010). She began her unit with a review of Harper Lee and the Scottsboro Boys, the story of nine African American defendants who in 1931 stood accused of raping two white women in Alabama. She then discussed Abe Meeropol’s *Bitter Fruit*, a poem inspired by a 1930 photograph of two African-American men who were lynched in Indiana, as well as the story of Emmett Till, a fourteen-year-old African-American boy who was murdered in Mississippi in 1955 after reportedly flirting with a white woman. After showing a picture of Emmett Till’s open casket that left her students “shocked and bewildered” as well as “disgusted,” Aletta explained to them that “judging people based on outward appearances or any other stereotype is never okay” (journal, April 28-29, 2010).

When she continued to struggle with classroom management after the first month, Aletta “was desperate to turn things around” (TWS, June 8, 2010) and decided to develop a lesson on empathy to help her students better understand her own personal struggle in the classroom. Selecting a passage from *To Kill a Mockingbird* in which Atticus explains to his young daughter Scout that “you can never really understand a person until . . . you climb into his skin and walk around in it” (p. 33), she asked her students “to walk around in the skin of a new teacher [or] the skin of a traveller in a foreign country” (journal, April 30, 2010) This led to a “most incredible day” and “an amazing breakthrough” when the students realized the assignment “sound[ed] like you,” and everyone “left the class with a refreshed attitude and new respect for each other” (journal, May 3-4, 2010).

Aletta's quest to venture into the townships became reality when she was invited to visit the family of one of her students. Taking a "traditional" taxi, "guttled to fit up to 15 people" and "noticeable because of the blaring music" (journal, April 30, 2010), she enjoyed seeing people walking around the neighbourhood, something uncommon in her section of the city. She visited a rehabilitation center for juvenile boys found guilty of robbery, rape, and murder. The trip ended with a visit to one of her students' grandparents' house, where a meal of fish and deep fried balls of dough gave her an upset stomach. Yet, she wrote, "I have not felt happier in a while" (journal, April 30, 2010).

During her last three weeks in South Africa, Aletta found an opportunity to volunteer at a township community center for adults where she taught conversational English and job interview skills. While at the center, she learned of a children's home where she then also volunteered to tutor students who had been removed from their homes because of abuse or neglect. Although she helped them rehearse for an upcoming song and dance concert, she had to miss the performance due to her scheduled departure.

Even after finishing her student teaching at Siyabona, and with only four days left before her return flight, Aletta once again volunteered for yet another service project in which she "sorted through hundreds of boxes of baby clothes and items." Finally, after a "totally worthwhile" goodbye staff meeting at Siyabona and a last visit to the children's home, it was "goodbye, South Africa! [and] time to move on to the next chapter" (journal, June 8, 2010).

Reflecting on her township experiences, Aletta wrote:

People keep telling me to travel more and relax, but people do not understand me. This is what I love to do. I like to help children and adults come closer to achieving their dreams. I do not do it for personal satisfaction. Oftentimes I walk away feeling like I have not touched a single soul, especially here; however, there is always a chance that someone is influenced, which makes everything worthwhile" (journal, May 12, 2010).

Aletta also used the school's Easter break to visit Cape Town, where she "actually enjoyed [herself] because it was totally different than the all-white [establishments] that we have been to so far" (journal, April 2, 2010). On the way to Cape Town, she stayed at a Rastafarian community where she visited a small school. Reflecting on her stay she wrote, "This was an awesome experience, and I'm so happy that I did it. The stories and lifestyles of another culture are amazing to watch. You can learn so much!" (journal, March 30, 2010). Visiting the Slave Lodge in Cape Town led Aletta to reflect on the lives of the estimated 63,000 slaves who were imported there to build the city. She simply could not "wrap her mind around the concept of slavery" and "understand that groups of white men took it upon themselves to force people with darker skin into violent servitude" (journal, April 3, 2010).

One week before her return flight, "refus[ing] to leave South Africa without seeing Robben Island" (journal, May 29-30, 2010), Aletta decided to return to Cape Town for the weekend to tour the island where Nelson Mandela spent 18 of his 27 years in prison. The stories shared by the tour guide, an ex-prisoner on the island himself, "really saddened" her, but knowing that "Mandela emerged from that situation and became such a peaceful authority really made [her] happy," and affirmed that he "definitely is one of my heroes" (journal, May 29-30, 2010).

## Back Home

In a long personal interview one month after her return, Aletta reiterated the idea that race is a taboo subject in South Africa. However, she thought that although its people “collectively want to move on . . . there are still some things that need to be addressed” and that it is “unfair to just sweep [them] under the carpet.” While she did not believe that her own “coloured” background was ever an issue, she “tried to talk about it a few times and get to the bottom of what coloured was.” When she “brought it up one time” to her grade 11 students “they got so bent out of shape about it because now to them color is just a culture, it doesn’t mean anything to them.” When she suggested that “coloureds [do] have different cultures,” her students disagreed. “They don’t even understand what it is anymore,” she stated (personal communication, July 13, 2010).

Although Aletta did not believe that racist attitudes were prevalent among her students, she noted that they still “kind of stick with their little cliques.” She thought that she was able to get through to them by not addressing race explicitly but rather by offering scenarios to discuss “things that would make it more personal [and] could be led back to race . . . so that we didn’t have to talk about race, race, race all the time,” and that might lead them to think, “Why do you keep talking about race? It’s not a problem here anymore.” Telling stories about hangings and lynching, such as that of Emmett Till, got “them pretty interested” and to admit that while this had happened in the United States, it “happened here [in South Africa] too” (personal communication, July 13, 2010).

Aletta explained clearly that, unlike her COST roommates, she specifically sought out additional experiences in the townships “other than in [her] privileged high school.” She “wanted to do all these things” because “the people came from the townships and . . . needed help.” When her roommates asked her, “How did you end up there?” Aletta told them, “Well, I looked it up. . . . If you want to do stuff, you need to take initiative.” It bothered her that they asked her whether they could come along on a visit. She felt it was a significant difference between her and “the other students that they wanted to do township tours” and “just go . . . see the homes . . . and then leave.” But, she commented, “Who wants to go and say, ‘Oh, poor you’ [and] then go back home? What does that do for anybody” (personal communication, July 13, 2010)?

## Conclusion

Student teaching in South Africa provided Aletta with a unique intercultural experience that allowed her to grow professionally as well as personally and deepen her understanding of global citizenship (Allen, 2010; Bennett, 1993; Cushner, 2007; Dantas, 2007; Quezada & Alfaro, 2007; Stroud, 2010). It also provided her with an opportunity to connect with her African roots and learn more about her own unique heritage (Brux, 2010).

Aletta’s racially mixed background deprived her of the “invisible knapsack of white privilege” (McIntosh, 1990). Although it sensitized her to issues of racism, at the same time it impeded her development of intercultural sensitivity. Prior to her departure for South Africa, Aletta appeared disposed towards seeking out, analysing, and accepting cultural differences. Her initial encounter and subsequent interactions with her White “host mom” and the surrounding Afrikaner community suggest she remained anchored in the *defense* stage (Bennett, 1993). However, her unit plan and multiple township experiences suggest she actively sought to gain a

deeper understanding of the Black African experience and ventured beyond acceptance into the early stages of *adaptation* (Bennett, 1993), as she appeared to be more at ease interacting with members of the race with which she more closely identified.

In addition to and intertwined with her mixed racial background, her religious background also deeply influenced her disposition toward the world around her while in South Africa. As a teacher candidate who can be categorized as social justice-oriented, she sought out opportunities to analyze and understand the interplay of social, economic, and political forces and, through her own actions, called explicit attention to matters of injustice and to the importance of pursuing social justice in both her own and South African society (Doppen, Misco, & Patterson, 2008; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Unlike her more personally responsible roommates and driven by her own beliefs, Aletta used her context in and beyond the classroom to address issues of race and inequality.

Student teaching in South Africa provided Aletta with a mixed bag of experiences that nonetheless helped her become a better prepared teacher. Her experiences suggest that more preservice teachers should avail themselves of the opportunity to student teach in another culture. When preservice teachers develop a higher level of intercultural sensitivity and global awareness and learn how to address controversial issues such as racism, their future students can only benefit. Aletta's unique personal background and student teaching in a country with a recent history of racial segregation, in many ways comparable to that in the United States, calls attention to the need to address racial inequity rather than treating it as an elephant in the room. One way this can be accomplished is through planned experiences that require preservice teachers to interact with members of a different race from the same country as well as from abroad.

Teacher educators should help future teachers examine their own personal beliefs and develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions they will need to implement a culturally relevant curriculum in our increasingly diverse schools (Ladson-Billings, 2001; NCSS, 2010). This especially applies to the preparation of future social studies teachers. Few social studies preservice teachers seek out an overseas student teaching experience. This suggests the need for targeting these preservice teachers during their early college years so they can plan for their overseas student teaching experience. In addition, we must infuse global education in the social studies teacher preparation curriculum in order to enhance social studies teacher candidates' global-mindedness so that they that can better prepare their own future students for the globalized world in which they will live.

Aletta believed that her overseas student teaching experience made her "more prepared to adapt to change, and more willing to accept people who are different." She learned that she could "stand on [her] own two feet [and felt that] it had changed her life, emotionally and professionally" (survey, June 10, 2010). If more preservice social studies teachers would follow in Aletta's footsteps, perhaps the next generation of social studies teachers will be able to state as Aletta did: "I am more prepared to adapt to change, and I am more willing to accept people who are different" (personal communication, July 13, 2010).

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# TAKING INFORMED ACTION THROUGH CIVIC LITERACY: ONE DISTRICT'S EXPERIENCE

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Civic literacy is an essential skill for effective participation in a democracy. Every state requires civics for graduation (Baumann et al, 2014, p. 17); national and state standards include specific reference to civic skills and knowledge. Yet in many districts, there is a gap between community expectations and the enacted civic education curriculum to support civic engagement. This is a preliminary report of an ongoing case study of opportunities for civic engagement in one urban district. Initial findings focus on the nature of K-12 students' civic engagement, school level curriculum and instructional activities, and support needed to expand civic engagement opportunities.

Civic literacy is an essential skill for effective participation in a democracy (Zarnowski 2009), helping students understand their individual rights and responsibilities and make decisions that promote social justice (Hart, 2006). A synthesis of research by the Civic Mission of Schools (2003), the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills (2007), and the National Educational Technology Standards (2007) suggests five key citizenship skills (Thieman, 2008):

- **Responsible** citizens are informed; they are able to access, research, manage, evaluate and use information.
- **Informed** citizens understand complex public issues and diverse perspectives.
- **Competent** citizens think critically and creatively, evaluate and make informed decisions.
- **Effective** citizens communicate with diverse audiences.
- **Committed** citizens work collaboratively to solve problems.

Business and civic leaders in the community studied agree citizenship skills are vital to an informed work force, and "...all of the community's children deserve an educational experience that prepares them to fully benefit from and contribute to the economic, social, and civic life of our community" (Center for Student Success, 2010). Despite this affirmation of the importance of civic education, a local civic organization (Blinded, 2012) concluded: 1) democracy requires citizenship, and citizenship requires robust instruction in social studies; 2) social studies and civic education are not a priority in the district; 3) state expectations for citizenship education have been sidelined.



The gap between community expectations and the enacted civic education curriculum to support civic engagement in an urban school district in the Pacific Northwest prompted this research. This is a preliminary report of an ongoing study of preparing students for civic engagement, including national and state civic education standards, recent research on civic engagement, and initial findings on the nature of K-12 students' civic engagement, school level curriculum and instructional activities, and needed support.

### **Literature Review**

The literature about national standards for citizenship education is extensive. In the 1980's a collaborative project of the Center for Civic Education and the Council for the Advancement of Citizenship resulted in *Civitas: A Framework for Civic Education* (Quigley & Buchanan, 1991). A decade later, the NCSS position statement, *Creating Effective Citizens*, asserted:

The core purpose of social studies education is to help students develop the knowledge, skills, and values that will enable them to become effective citizens.... students should have the opportunities to apply their civic knowledge, skills and values, as they work to solve real problems... (NCSS, 2001).

*The Civic Mission of Schools* (2003) report outlined goals for civic education, summarized research on the decline of civic education, outlined six promising approaches to civic education, and concluded with recommendations: implement civic education standards, provide opportunities for students to participate in service learning, encourage student participation in school governance and simulations of democratic processes.

More recently the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills (2007), the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers (2010), and the National Council for Social Studies (2013) developed curriculum standards that incorporate citizenship knowledge and skills.

### **National Social Studies Standards Related to Citizenship**

The Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills (2011) framed the skills students need as citizens living in an increasingly interconnected world, identifying social studies content, thinking skills and literacy. Critical thinking involves the capacity to actively investigate and problem solve to support students' decision-making skills. Communication involves explanation and negotiation by clearly articulating ideas through speaking and writing, while collaboration involves working effectively with diverse groups, compromising and sharing responsibility to accomplish a common goal. Information literacy is about accessing, critically evaluating and using information accurately and creatively. These skills are vital to developing informed and effective citizens.

In 2010 our state adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies (ODE, 2010) that further define literacy skills for citizenship. The CCSS include specific standards for literacy in grades 6-12 and are predicated on content area teachers "using their expertise to help students meet reading, writing," speaking, listening, and language expectations in social studies (p.iii). For example, middle school students are expected to "introduce and support claims about a topic or issue with logical

reasoning and relevant, accurate data and evidence...using credible sources” (p.4). High school students are expected to “integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text” (p.2) and “use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products” (p.3) (ODE, 2010).

Shortly after the development of the Common Core State Standards, the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) joined with the Civic Mission of Schools (CMS) and fifteen other professional social studies organizations to draft the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards. They developed a working definition of social studies that acknowledged the role of literacy education:

The social studies is an interdisciplinary exploration of the social sciences and humanities, including **civics**, economics, geography, and history, in order to **develop responsible, informed and engaged citizens and to foster civic**, economic, global, and historical **literacy**. (NCSS, 2013, p. xii) [emphasis added]

The C3 Framework focuses on instructional planning via an “Inquiry Arc” that features four dimensions of instructional strategies (NCSS, 2013, p. xvii). The fourth dimension, communicating conclusions and taking informed action, is particularly germane to this research. The C3 Framework builds on the CCSS by emphasizing literacy to support inquiry, disciplinary understanding, and taking informed action.

### **State Social Studies Standards Related to Citizenship**

*Ohio Social Studies Review* readers are no doubt familiar with Ohio’s New Learning Standards: K12 Social Studies (2010) that emphasize civic education. Specifically,

social studies helps students develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for themselves and for the common good; prepares students for their role as citizens and decision makers...; fosters students’ ability to act responsibly and become successful problem solvers.... (p. 4)

Furthermore, the standards outline Civic Participation and Skills:

Civic participation embraces the ideal that an individual actively engages in his or her community, state or nation for the common good. Students need to practice effective communication skills including negotiation, compromise and collaboration. Skills in accessing and analyzing information are essential for citizens.... (p. 6).

These are very similar to the CCSS in ELA and Literacy in History/Social Studies adopted by our state. Both the CCSS and the C3Framework focus on civic literacy. A brief examination of our state’s social studies content standards reveals an emphasis on government structure and function (ODE, 2011). Only one of the core standards focuses on civic participation: “Engage in informed and respectful deliberation of local, state, tribal, national, and global issues” (p.1).

### **Curricular and Instructional Priorities at the National Level**

While much of the recent data on the state of social studies teaching has focused on the impact of NCLB on the decline of instructional time, little is known about what occurs during

instruction. To address this concern the Survey on the Status of Social Studies (S4) asked K-12 teachers to report on the current status of social studies curriculum and instructional practice (Passe & Fitchett, 2013). Teachers from 44 states, including Ohio, participated in the study. Several findings from the responses of over 11,000 K-12 teachers address civic education.

The majority of teachers across grade levels agreed that the most important purpose of social studies is preparing good citizens, and that the primary goal is to help develop students' critical thinking and decision-making skills (Thieman & Carano, 2013). Teaching civic responsibility and integrating current events and core democratic values were consistently reported as the highest curriculum priorities for elementary teachers. Integrating current events and teaching core democratic values were among the concepts taught most frequently by secondary teachers (Thieman, O'Brien, Preston-Grimes, Broome & Barker, 2013; Pearson & Waterson, 2013).

The S4 researchers also investigated teachers' reports of instructional practices. Secondary teachers reported their students frequently examined primary sources and completed writing assignments (essays and reflections). While these findings may suggest an opportunity for critical thinking and inquiry needed for citizenship, secondary teachers also relied on lectures and reported using textbook-based worksheets. Few K-12 teachers reported their students frequently participated in role playing/simulations or group projects (Stephens, Feinberg, & Zack, 2013). This would suggest an emphasis on content knowledge, rather than higher order thinking and inquiry called for by the CCSS, C3Framework, and P21.

However, a deeper look at teachers who emphasized civic responsibility identified two promising instructional strategies. Findings from the S4 study suggested a moderately strong correlation between emphasizing civic responsibility and teaching current events in elementary and secondary schools with the strongest correlation at the elementary level (Lipscomb & Doppen, 2013, p. 254). Also in a closer examination of the findings on teachers' use of role-playing and simulations, "teachers who reported high frequency (weekly or daily) use of role playing and simulations were much more likely to emphasize critical citizenship values in their social studies instruction" (Stephens, Feinberg, & Zack, 2013, p. 258).

The S4 data were ambiguous about the extent to which social studies teachers were helping their students become informed citizens who understand complex issues and multiple perspectives. While critical thinking and decision-making were highly espoused by teachers nationally and in our state, specific instructional strategies to ensure students developed these skills were not universally implemented. Most teachers reported traditional practices to support students' communication and collaboration skills; relatively few took advantage of opportunities to use technology to facilitate these skills. Despite reporting the use of technology to develop higher order thinking, few teachers listed role playing/simulations such as iCivics or Web 2.0 projects such as WebQuests or blogs. While many teachers reported integrating current events, fewer reported their students frequently accessed primary sources. Similarly the majority noted using multimedia presentations, but few reported their students used the Internet to complete inquiry activities and communicate with others.

## Methodology

This study builds on previous research by a local civic policy organization that examined the degree to which district schools prepare youth for a life of active citizenship. Recognizing the importance of an engaged and informed citizenry and eager to learn the state of social studies and specifically civics instruction in a local school district, the City Club of [City Blinded]<sup>1</sup> conducted a year-long research project to determine students' civic preparedness. Based on its findings the organization provided a grant to conduct further research on the district's enacted civic education curriculum. This article addresses a subset of questions from the larger study: 1. What is the nature of K-12 student civic engagement in district schools and the community including co-curricular clubs? 2. How often and in what types of civic education activities are K-12 students engaged in the classroom and school? 3. What are major goals and key concepts of the enacted civic education curriculum? 4. What support do teachers need to provide civic education to support student civic engagement? The answers to these questions are relevant to social studies educators beyond the district and may help teachers in other states advocate for civic education to promote civic engagement opportunities for their students.

The researchers, a secondary social studies teacher educator and an educational policy expert, are conducting a mixed methods study involving concurrent and interactive qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) on opportunities for civic education to support student civic engagement. Qualitative data include document analysis of district social studies curriculum and instructional practices; interviews with eight knowledgeable community members from civic education and policy organizations; and secondary data from a focus group of eight social studies teachers conducted by the civic policy organization. Quantitative data include an online survey of over 1200 district elementary and secondary teachers of social studies regarding instructional practices, curriculum concepts, opportunities for civic engagement by their students, and professional development needs. This article focuses on preliminary findings from interviews with social studies teachers and community organization leaders and initial survey results about the nature of civic engagement and the extent to which civic education is enacted in district K-12 schools.

## Findings

### Qualitative Data

In 2014 a doctoral graduate assistant conducted semi-structured interviews involving open-ended questions with eight community members from civic education and policy organizations in the metropolitan region. These community members were known to the researchers as knowledgeable providers of civic education programs; two were also public school teachers known for their leadership in providing civic engagement opportunities for their students. The interviews were conducted by phone and transcribed. The lead researcher coded the interviews for specific mention of civic engagement programs involving district K-12 students as well as challenges the providers faced.

A key finding was the anecdotal nature of civic engagement in the district. There were no comprehensive statistics on the number of students who were civically engaged either through

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<sup>1</sup> The Intergovernmental Agreement between the university and the district and the IRB approval require the names of the district and civic policy organization to remain blinded.

district schools or the community. Mock Trial, We the People Constitution Team, Project Citizen, and SUN School environmental activities were the most frequently mentioned civic engagement programs. The providers identified two major challenges for expanding civic engagement opportunities: lack of funding and professional development to support teacher implementation. A third challenge identified by some of the participants was the lack of state level accountability for social studies education and lack of state funding and support for civic engagement programs.

The civic policy organization that funded this study conducted a confidential focus group with eight district social studies teachers. The facilitator invited the teachers to share examples of their most engaging instructional activities and what made those experiences so engaging for students. Teachers reported role plays, simulations, discussion of current events relevant to students' lives and authentic real world problems; interviews of local community members, field trips, and participation in civic engagement programs (Mock Trial, We the People Constitution Team). When asked what additional resources or instructional support they needed, the teachers responded with three priorities: funding for participation in civic engagement events and transportation for field trips; time to plan, share ideas, and collaborate with other teachers; and a coordinator at the district or school level to organize guest speakers, resource people, and project logistics. One teacher's comment was echoed by the group:

I have six classes and 180-200 students. I spend three to four hours a day researching material and preparing for class. I have no time. There is no social studies coordinator in [the district], and as a result community engagement is ad hoc (May 9, 2014).

### **Preliminary Quantitative Data**

After reviewing the findings from the initial community interviews and the teacher focus group, the researchers conducted an in-depth literature review and developed an online survey that was sent to over 1300 district elementary and secondary teachers of social studies. Survey data collection and analysis is ongoing.

### **Instructional and curriculum priorities.**

What is the nature of K-12 student civic engagement in district schools and the community including co-curricular clubs? Teachers listed a rich variety of student participation in service learning and leadership at their schools including environmental clubs, Gay Straight Alliance, Black Student Union, Asian American Union, MEChA, Student Council, Interact and Key clubs. They also listed co-curricular competitions including Mock Trial, We the People Constitution Team, Project Citizen, Model Union, and Geography Bee. Teachers reported their students were also engaged in community service outside of the school through scouting, food banks, and churches.

As part of the state's framework for comprehensive guidance and counseling, schools are expected to provide opportunities to meet Career Related Learning Standards including Career Related Learning Experiences. The district in this study requires each high school student to document two Career Related Learning Experiences that may include service learning, volunteering, community service. Students complete a form and explain how their experience helped them learn about decision-making, problem-solving and communication skills, and effective teamwork. The high school International Baccalaureate programs include a community service requirement, and the district middle schools also provide opportunities for service learning.

Preliminary analysis of instructional activities indicates similar findings to the 2010 state-wide survey (Thieman et al, 2013). Over one-third of the teachers reported their students participate weekly in discussion of current local, national, and/or international issues. A majority of teachers (57%) reported at least monthly their students examine primary source materials. Given the district's emphasis on improving writing assessment scores it was not surprising that almost 50% of the teachers reported their students complete brief writing assignments at least weekly. However, teachers reported low rates of instructional activities most directly related to development of civic engagement. Over fifty percent reported their students rarely (two to three times/year) or never engage in role playing/simulations, and 60% reported their students rarely or never develop group projects to solve problems. Over 90% of the teachers reported their students rarely or never engage in civic action related to social or community issues as part of classroom instruction.

When asked about their curriculum priorities during social studies or government instruction, 41% of the teachers reported emphasizing informed and respectful discussion of issues or events at least weekly. Over 50% reported that weekly or monthly they give examples of how individuals, groups, and/or organizations can influence government policy and identify ways students can have an impact in their local or state community. However, the vast majority of teachers indicated they rarely or never emphasize evaluating candidates' and or political parties' positions on current issues. And 95% reported they rarely or never emphasize student communication of opinions to political leaders as part of class instruction.

### **Professional development support**

Over fifty percent of teachers reported they had not attended any social studies-related professional development activity in the past year, while 17% indicated they had attended one activity. When asked about barriers that prevented participation in professional development, 39% indicated time was a barrier, and 33% reported nothing was offered in their content area. Cost was not a significant barrier. When asked to prioritize professional development topics, teachers ranked student assessment in social studies/civic education first, followed by teaching students with limited English proficiency and special needs. Learning how to engage students in civic action in the community was ranked fifth out of seven professional development topics.

## **Discussion**

This study was prompted by a local civic policy organization as a follow-up to prior research on the degree to which district schools prepare youth for active citizenship (Blinded, 2012).<sup>2</sup> Interviews of community civic education and policy leaders, the focus group interview of district social studies teachers, and preliminary results from the survey emphasize several civic engagement programs that are discussed in more detail.

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<sup>2</sup> The Intergovernmental Agreement between the university and the district and the IRB approval require the names of the district and civic policy organization to remain blinded.

### **Co-Curricular National Citizenship Projects**

In our state and many others including Ohio, classroom teachers provide opportunities for their students to participate in three national civic education projects: Project Citizen, We the People Constitution Team, and Mock Trial. Preliminary analysis of the teacher survey indicated some students are also involved through the curriculum in their social studies class. Project Citizen, developed by the Center for Civic Education, promotes responsible participation in local and state government while providing an opportunity for middle, high school, and college students to monitor and influence public policy. Students work cooperatively to identify a public policy problem in their community. They research the problem, evaluate alternative solutions, develop a public policy proposal and create a political action plan to enlist local and state governments to adopt their proposed policy. Finally, they present their project in a hearing before a panel of community members.

According to the Center for Civic Education, The Citizen and the Constitution Program promotes civic competence and responsibility among upper elementary and secondary students. *We the People* curriculum provides opportunities for students to explore the history and principles of constitutional democracy through critical-thinking, problem solving, and a simulated congressional hearing. Students work in cooperative teams to prepare and present statements before a panel of community judges acting as a congressional committee and then answer follow-up questions posed by judges. Competitions are organized at the local, state, and national level. An eighth grade history teacher, who focuses on government and engages her students in the *We the People* Constitution Team and student trips to Washington, D.C., reinforced the importance of involving middle school students in civic experiences (L. Koller, personal communication, June 17, 2014).

Participation in mock trials helps K-12 students understand the law, practice critical thinking, and gain greater confidence with public speaking by assuming the roles of attorneys and witnesses in a fictional criminal or civil trial. Participants experience first-hand the difficulties that judges, lawyers and juries face in determining which facts are relevant and what legal arguments are effective. Curriculum and sample mock trials are available for elementary as well as secondary students.

### **Co-Curricular Local Citizenship Projects**

In the metropolitan area, the Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) program provides opportunities for civic engagement by developing projects designed to improve academic outcomes for students while involving them in projects that meet community needs. For example, middle school students who attend the after school SUN program learn about their neighborhood environment, and become involved in projects such as landscape renovation, gardening, and watershed improvement. Science and environmental learning leads to civic engagement.

### **Advocacy Efforts at the Local Level**

The Civic Laureate Award honors outstanding community organizations and individuals, who all believe that youth deserve a seat at the table when public policy decisions are made. The first award was presented to an environmental science teacher at a local high school. When she began teaching at the high school five years ago, the teacher discovered students were eager to

do something meaningful. Determined to empower her students through knowledge, the science teacher launched ASAP, a science and air pollution club for high school students, challenging them to apply understanding of the physical environment to bring about positive change in their community. Students have studied environmental problems, created educational materials to share in their community, partnered with the local university on an innovative plant based air purification project, and have advocated to state legislators for more protective health and air emissions regulations.

The Civic Scholars project offers students at five local high schools the opportunity to become a Civic Scholar and work with city business, non-profit and political leaders on issues such as immigration policy, climate change, racial profiling, and gender equity. The project encourages students to apply “People are working together to make positive change and we want you there! We want your insight on these topics, and we want to put you in front of decision makers to tell them what You think should be done” (City Club, 2015).

Civic Scholars attend the weekly City Club Forum with community leaders and sit on City Club research and advocacy committees. In addition, each student creates an individual project responding to one of the Forum programs. A local teacher’s description of civic engagement epitomizes the purpose of Civic Scholars: “Civic engagement is more than being informed. It’s being able to make a difference in the community. It’s about the feeling that you can make a difference and you know how” (P. Hall, personal communication, May 20, 2014).

## **Conclusions**

The benefits of civic learning have been extensively researched, and the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools articulated five benefits of civic learning: fosters civic knowledge, skills and attitudes; promotes civic equity; builds 21<sup>st</sup> century skills; improves school climate; and lowers drop-out rates (Guilfoile & Delander, 2014). However, merely, “focusing on and closely examining democratic values, believing in rights, freedoms and responsibilities... does not guarantee an informed and engaged citizen” (Pearson & Waterson, 2013, p. 136). A systematic and sustained effort is needed to provide high quality civic education to all students, not just the lucky few who happen to attend a school or community program that offers a civic engagement opportunity. The following recommendations suggest ways to expand civic engagement activities in the district.

Advocate for support by the school board and district administration. Both the interviews and initial survey data indicate the need for funding to support co-curricular programs such as Mock Trial, We the People Constitution team, and Project Citizen with stipends for teacher sponsors and support for participating in competitions. Preparing to teach Project Citizen is a lengthy and timeconsuming process. Teachers need to have extensive knowledge of their local community and the nature of public policy, access to local policy makers and policy experts and the pedagogical skills to guide their students through a complex process, which is very different from most traditional teaching (Campbell, Levinson, & Hess, 2012, p.192). Both the interviews and survey data support the need for professional development and time for teachers to collaborate.

Build civic education program linkages across grade levels. Work with elementary and middle school feeder schools to involve students in civics projects and competitions, and then parents



and students come to expect these opportunities in high school. Just as it takes time and resources to build a winning sports or music program, it takes time, resources, and support to build a civic engagement program.

Build partnerships with community civic organizations. The law-related education (LRE) organization in our metropolitan region sponsors all three national competitions; most states, including Ohio, have a similar organization. These LRE's provide curriculum, professional development, and support.

Work with district and state boards of education to include civic engagement projects as a graduation requirement. There are many models, including Career Related Learning Experiences, and Washington state's Classroom-Based Assessments that require students to complete civic learning projects for graduation.

The characteristics of responsible, informed, competent, effective, and committed citizens have powerful implications for curriculum and instruction. If we want our students to embrace core democratic values and strive to live by them, we must provide opportunities to experience democracy as a way of life in our classrooms and schools. If we want our students to develop informed opinions and creative solutions, we must engage them in deep and disciplined inquiry. If we want our students to analyze and evaluate information and ideas, we must emphasize higher order thinking skills. If we want to create tolerant citizens who can collaborate effectively as a member of a group, we must teach our students to work together and respect different points of view. And if we want our students to actively participate in civic and community life, we must link service learning to civic action (Thieman & Hart, 2007).

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# THE VITAL ROLE OF SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION IN OHIO

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## **A Pivotal Moment for Social Studies Education and Civic Literacy**

Social studies and civic education may be on the verge of its greatest moment. After years of being marginalized as a discipline, there is a call from concerned citizens and prominent lawmakers for our schools to do a better job of promoting civic education. In Ohio, several laws have been passed recently that emphasize the study of the Founding Documents, American history and government, world history and civilizations, and financial literacy at Ohio's high schools. Funding has been restored for Ohio's grades 4 and 6 social studies assessments, which will help ensure students receive adequate instruction in Ohio and American History and World Geography before entering middle school and high school. Beyond the laws and policies of the Ohio General Assembly and State Board of Education on what must be taught, the way that social studies is taught is also going through a major transformation.

When taught well, social studies courses engage students in an active examination of the past and the world in which we live. Reading, writing, and research skills are at the heart of effective social studies instruction, and the academic vocabulary, content literacy skills, and background knowledge gained in social studies classes help students access and understand more complex texts and documents. According to educational researcher, Robert Marzano (2004), nearly fifty-five percent of a student's academic vocabulary comes from the social studies, which illustrates how the social studies play a critical role in the development of students' civic knowledge and reading and writing skills (see table from Building Background Knowledge for Academic Excellence, <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1fEEpNMkaTZ6HmrwcvNLZUU6XnflDv5YqC3ahZj5rhEw/edit?pli=1>).

New state social studies and literacy standards (<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Ohio-s-New-Learning-Standards/Social-Studies>) and the recent release of the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework (<http://www.socialstudies.org/c3>) provide teachers with guidance and an opportunity to reinvent traditional social studies classes. By utilizing the disciplinary tools of historians, geographers, economists, and political scientists, social studies teachers are teaching students to research, analyze, critically think about information from multiple sources, so that they can draw well-founded conclusions and take informed action. Ultimately, the infusion of literacy skills and the inquiry-based approach to social studies provide students with the tools

they need for the vocation of citizen and reestablish the important and prominent role of civic education in our nation's schools.

### **A Cornerstone of Democracy**

The Founding Fathers recognized that the success of the American Republic was dependent on a well-informed and engaged citizenry. In a letter to W.T. Barry in 1822, James Madison cautioned that

Government, without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a Prologue to a Farce or a Tragedy; or perhaps both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance: And a people who mean to be their own Governors, must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives.

Even though public education was not a power delegated to the national government in the United States Constitution, Madison makes it clear that education was intended to be an essential responsibility reserved for the states. As Ohio was being carved out of the Northwest Territory, the Land Ordinance of 1785 required one section of every township set aside for a public school. The Northwest Ordinance of 1787, which set the guidelines for admission of new states to the Union clarifies the duty of the people to provide public education, stating "Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged."

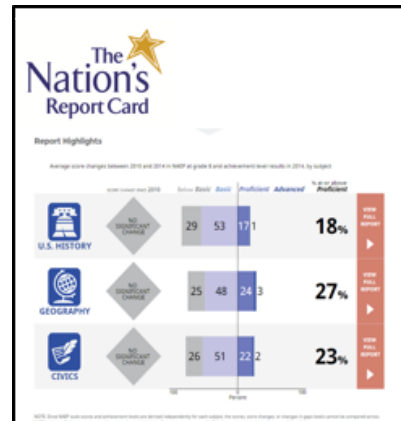
By the 1830's, teachers in one room school houses throughout Ohio routinely engaged children in recitations, lessons, and activities in effort to promote good character and citizenship using the McGuffey reader, which was first printed in 1836 in Cincinnati, Ohio. Further, Ohio's support for public education is evident in the Ohio Constitution of 1851, which requires "the General Assembly ... [to] make such provisions, by taxation, or otherwise, as, with the income arising from the school trust fund, will secure a thorough and efficient system of common schools throughout the state."

### **The Subject Left Behind**

The mission of public schools continues to be the development of productive and literate citizens, but the investment and promotion of civic education has been diminished in the era of high-stakes testing. The release of The 2014 National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) for U.S. History, Geography, and Civics ([http://www.nationsreportcard.gov/hgc\\_2014/](http://www.nationsreportcard.gov/hgc_2014/)) is an indicator that many of our young citizens do not have the basic knowledge of United States History, Geography, and Civics. The results show that a limited number of students scored at the proficient or advanced level on the assessments: (1) United States History - 18%, (2) Geography - 27%, and (3) Civics - 23%. Comparably, the most recent NAEP Assessments for Reading, Math, and Science have slightly higher rates of proficiency: (1) Reading - 36%, (2) Math - 36%, and Science - 33%. The proficiency rates on all of NAEP Assessments are low, but the social studies related assessments are among the lowest.

In part, the low proficiency rates for United States History, Geography, and Civics NAEP Tests can be attributed to the marginalization of social studies caused by federal and state legislation.

In January 2002, President Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (<http://www2.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml>) before a packed auditorium at Hamilton High School in Hamilton, Ohio. That moment marked the beginning of a steady decline in the support of and emphasis on social studies coursework in the nations' public schools. NCLB shifted the educational landscape to the collection of data and growth measures based on standardized tests in reading, math, and science.



President George W. Bush signs No Child Left Behind into law at Hamilton High School in Hamilton, Ohio in 2002.

### The Fight for Civic and Social Studies Education in Ohio

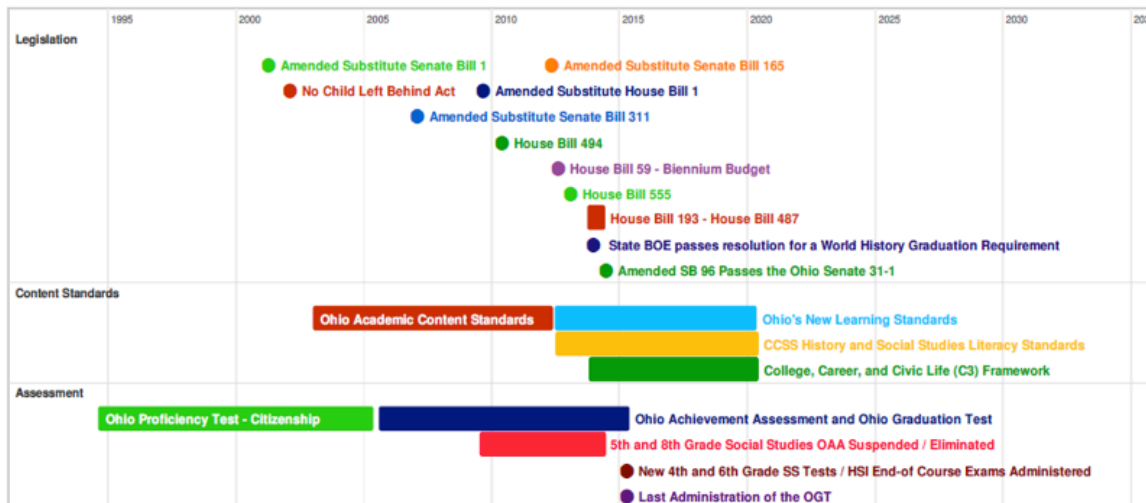
Since 1957, the Ohio Council for the Social Studies has been an active advocate for civic and social studies education in Ohio. In 2002, the Ohio Council for the Social Studies (OCSS) (<http://ocss.org>) recognized the impact that the NCLB would have on public education and advocated for the development of academic content standards and state assessments for the social studies. OCSS members were integral participants in the working groups for the roll out and development of the 2003 Social Studies Ohio Academic Content Standards ([https://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Academic-Content-Standards/Technology/Ohio-s-2003-Academic-Content-Standards-in-Technolo/Technology\\_ACS.pdf.aspx](https://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Academic-Content-Standards/Technology/Ohio-s-2003-Academic-Content-Standards-in-Technolo/Technology_ACS.pdf.aspx)), Social Studies Ohio Graduation Test (OGT) (<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Testing/Testing-Materials/Released-Test-Materials-from-the-Ohio-Graduati-1/Grade-6-Released-Tests-Materials-OGT>), and Ohio Achievement Assessments (OAA) for the Social Studies (<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Testing/Testing-Materials/Practice-Tests-for-Grades-3-8-Achievement-Tests>) at grades 5 and 8.

In 2008, the Ohio Professors of Social Studies Education (OPSSE) published a report on the State of K-12 Social Studies Instruction in Ohio (<http://www.socstrpr.org/files/Vol%203/Issue%203%20-%20Winter,%202008/Research/3.3.1.pdf>), which provided evidence that districts and teachers were allocating more time to social studies instruction each year that the Grade 5 and 8 Ohio Achievement Tests were administered. Unfortunately, the Social Studies OAAs were suspended and eventually eliminated as part of Ohio Amended Substitute House Bill 1 (HB 1) of 2009. This event erased gains made in instructional time for social studies at the elementary grades.



Governor Strickland signs Ohio House Bill 1 into law at Thurgood Marshall High School in Dayton on July 17, 2009.

Since 2010, there have been several laws passed and public policies approved to improve and promote social studies education for our students and teachers across the Buckeye State thanks to the efforts of the OCSS and other concerned citizens. In 2012, the Founding Documents Bill (SB165) was signed into law and new elementary, middle, and high school state social studies assessments were funded in the biennium budget (Ohio HB 59). Most recently, the World History Requirement (HB367, originally SB96) passed both Houses of the General Assembly and was signed into law by Governor Kasich on December 20, 2014. These legislative and policy changes have helped ensure more instructional time is provided at the intermediate grades and high school students take at least one ½ unit of American History, American Government, and World History and Civilizations as part of the three social studies units required for graduation.



An interactive timeline of Social Studies related legislation can be found at <http://www.preceden.com/timelines/34022>

## Looking Forward

It is an exciting time for social studies education in Ohio. The advocacy work of the Ohio Council for the Social Studies has helped guarantee that students will have adequate social studies instructional time in the intermediate grades due to the reinstatement of state assessments at grades 4 and 6, and Ohio's high school students will continue to take American History, World History, and American Government before graduation. Several inquiry-based models for quality social studies lessons have emerged and are being used throughout the state, including Stanford History Education Group's *Reading Like a Historian* Program and the National Council for the Social Studies' *College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework*. Most recently, Senator John Glenn, has called for the improvement of civic education and has helped launch iCivics Ohio, which includes several online modules and games aligned to Ohio's New Learning Standards for Social Studies. Moving forward, we need to embrace the moment, continue to improve our craft as social studies teachers, and promote civic education their schools and local community. Now is the time for social studies teachers and education leaders to "take informed action" and build on the strong foundation that has been laid to ensure that our young citizens have the skills and experiences they need to be successful in life.

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