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## Theory and research in social education 25/02

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# THEORY AND RESEARCH IN SOCIAL EDUCATION

Volume 25

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## FROM THE EDITOR

### WHITHER CUFA?

Much has been made of the social studies “identity problem.” Discussions over the definition of social studies have occupied many social educators, at times producing insights into our goals as well as distracting us from the work to attain them. Like the field itself, CUFA continues to grapple with an identity crisis of its own. We have not, however, put the same energy into considering the nature and aims of CUFA. I am not arguing that “organizational” concerns should supplant “intellectual” ones, but they are integrally connected. Complacency and indifference to the role of CUFA in social studies education and the larger intellectual community has, I believe, left much of CUFA’s potential as a professional organization untapped and impeded the work of social education in general.

Jack Nelson’s history of CUFA’s early years, which appears in this issue, makes clear that there has always been friction between NCSS and CUFA. The irony is that higher education members of NCSS, which are the bulk of CUFA’s membership, is the group that has historically provided much leadership for NCSS. This friction most likely is related to the potential (however unlikely) that CUFA might separate from NCSS and thus drain away an important source of ideas and leadership. At least this is how one might read Nelson’s account of the early years. Or, perhaps the friction results from the visibility of NCSS critics within CUFA. Even within CUFA however, these critics are most often merely tolerated as curmudgeonly college professors and at times marginalized as naysayers, ideologues, theory-bound or anti-teacher.

From my vantage point, it seems that we have allowed a rather narrow conception of CUFA to take hold and define the organization’s role and purpose. CUFA has essentially become: (a) space in the NCSS annual convention program where research findings are presented and teacher education issues are discussed and (b) the publisher of *Theory and Research in Social Education*. At the time of CUFA’s birth, in the late 1960s, these functions were considerable accomplishments that did much to advance systematic research and thinking in social education. Providing space on the NCSS program for research and teacher education issues and publishing *TRSE* remain important, indeed crucial, roles for CUFA. I believe, however, that the boundaries of what is possible and appropriate for CUFA to undertake as a professional organization have become circumscribed to the point that it is difficult for us to imagine what CUFA might become if it dared to individuate.

A more proactive and independent CUFA would strengthen the organizational, as well as intellectual, health and vitality of CUFA and NCSS. I am *not* suggesting that CUFA sever its ties to NCSS. To the contrary, now more than ever CUFA has an important role to play within the Council.

CUFA can (and should) differentiate itself while maintaining a close alliance with NCSS.<sup>1</sup> Fields such as science education, for example, have benefited from a diverse and dynamic set of organizations, with a significant overlap of memberships and various cooperative arrangements.<sup>2</sup>

Where is CUFA headed as an organization? What are the possibilities?

I propose that we undertake a serious examination of what we want CUFA to be. We might begin by reexamining the mission of CUFA and its relationship with NCSS. Discussions of this nature might be initiated by brief position papers exploring various possibilities and presented as part of a series of open forum discussions at CUFA meetings. These papers might be made available in advance on the TRSE-L Electronic Forum or the new TRSE web site or published in the journal or the *CUFA Newsletter*.

Secondly, I suggest that we consider changing the name of CUFA. The "College and University Faculty Assembly of NCSS" defines its membership by job role rather than interest and is an "in-house" reference. Many people do not know or are confused by what "CUFA" means. Creating a new name that is descriptive of the purposes of the organization would inform others (and remind us) of what we are about. What might be the social education parallels of the "National Association for Research in Science Teaching" or the "Association for the Education of Teachers in Science"?

Thirdly, we must restructure the CUFA meeting schedule. One day a year is simply too little time for us to share research findings; discuss the crucial issues relevant to scholarship, curriculum, instruction and teacher education; and take care of the business of the organization. Expanding our meeting time as part of the NCSS annual convention and also meeting in conjunction with other associations, such as the American Educational Research Association, would provide more opportunities for face-to-face interactions and might help increase membership. In addition, CUFA might consider sponsoring a portion of the programs at NCSS regional meetings or state social studies council conferences. The New York State Council for Social Education, for example, has a long tradition of holding state-wide conferences for university-based social educators as well as meeting in conjunction with the New York State Council for the Social Studies.

As CUFA approaches its thirtieth year, I am reminded that in family relationships it is considered a positive development when children grow up, take responsibility for their own lives and move out of the house. An offspring's independence creates an important condition for the development of a healthy, mature relationship with parents. It is time for CUFA to move out of the house and develop a new relationship with its parent organization—a relationship characterized by respect, trust, cooperation and autonomy.

I hope these ideas spur you to think about the future of CUFA and that we have an opportunity to explore these and related issues at our

meeting in Cincinnati this fall. In the mean time, I encourage you to join the conversation on the TRSE-L and dare to consider what we might make of CUFA.

E. W. R.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> It has been my experience that many members of CUFA/NCSS believe that CUFA should not differentiate itself from the Council because both organizations are best served when they speak with one voice. Often, the assumption is that competing voices undercut one another, divide the organizations, divert attention from other priorities and have a deleterious effect on programs and activities. I respectfully disagree and contend that independent voices as part of constructive deliberation on issues will only enhance the work we do as social educators. There is little warrant to concerns on the part of some CUFA members that our organization needs NCSS too survive as an effective professional organization. CUFA certainly benefits from its affiliation with NCSS (and I want that relationship to thrive), but that affiliation is not a necessary condition for CUFA's existence or effectiveness.

CUFA is an *autonomous* organization and receives a number of benefits from its affiliation with NCSS (e.g., membership management, convention planning). Of course, the membership structure is such that all CUFA members are also members of NCSS, so they receive NCSS benefits such as the Council journals and bulletins, etc. On the other hand, CUFA pays NCSS a management fee for handling its finances. The primary expense of CUFA is the publication of this journal, which is sustained by CUFA dues. NCSS no longer provides TRSE with the two thousand dollar subsidy it did in the early years of the journal's existence. The Council does little to promote TRSE beyond placing copies of the journal in its exhibit hall booth at the annual convention nor does it provide production services for the journal. NCSS's involvement with the journal is limited to subscription management and handing back issue sales.

<sup>2</sup> In science education the broad field professional organization is the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA). In addition, there are at least two independent and primarily higher education groups: National Association for Research on Science Teaching (NARST) and the Association for the Education of Teachers in Science (AETS). NARST meets with NSTA and the American Educational Research Association in alternate years. AETS meets with NSTA. Both higher education groups publish their own journals independent of NSTA.

## **Social Studies Teachers' Conceptions Of Discussion: A Grounded Theory Study**

Bruce E. Larson  
Western Washington University

### *Abstract*

*The purpose of this paper is to develop an initial theory of teachers' conceptions of classroom discussion. Six high school social studies teachers participated in this study, and were purposively selected to permit data collection from a diverse and theoretically interesting sample. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and a think-aloud task, and were analyzed using grounded theory's constant-comparative technique. During data analysis, six conceptions of discussion emerged. Teachers thought of discussion as recitation, teacher-directed conversation, open-ended conversation, a series of challenging questions, guided transfer of knowledge to the world outside the classroom, and practice at verbal interaction. In addition, five factors emerged that seemed to influence the teachers' use of discussion. Explanations and excerpts from the data are provided to illustrate each of the conceptions. These hypothetical categories contribute to previous research on discussion by revealing the complexity of teachers' conceptions of discussion. Implications of these findings for teachers, teacher educators, and researchers interested in classroom discussion are examined.*

Discussion is a valued educational practice. With its connection to social interaction and civic participation, discussion is often thought of as a method of instruction benefiting the social studies (Engle & Ochoa, 1988; Gross & Zeleny, 1958). Contradicting this claim, however, are research findings that suggest discussion is rarely used in America's classrooms. Recitation persists in classrooms, despite its frequent criticisms (Cazden, 1988; Goodlad, 1984; Hoetker & Ahlbrand, 1969; Stodolsky, Ferguson, & Wimpelberg, 1981). Teachers' infrequent use of classroom discussion, however, is only part of the problem. Often when teachers claim to use discussion, they are in fact using techniques with attributes of recitation. As an example, a teacher talked for 87.8% of the class period during the portion of the lesson he claimed used discussion (Swift & Gooding, 1983). This paper begins an exploration of teachers' thinking about classroom discussion.

I report a grounded theory study. My objective was to develop an explanatory theory of teachers' conceptions of discussion. A previous study of a smaller set of teachers reported the first layer of findings about teachers' conceptions of discussion (Larson & Parker, 1996). Additional detailed descriptions from a selection of teachers will lead to the construction of a detailed set of "grounded hypotheses" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). A grounded theory of this sort should be useful for studying the persistence of recitation under the guise of discussion, and for improving instruction with classroom discussion.

## **Review of Literature**

### **Conceptions of Classroom Discussion**

Using classroom discussion serves several educational purposes because it is a unique form of classroom talk, and a very special group dynamic. Discussion requires students and teacher to talk back-and-forth at a high cognitive and affective level, both with one another and the subject matter being discussed. Dillon explains this by stating, "What they talk about is an issue, some topic that is in question for them. Their talk consists of advancing and examining different proposals over the issue" (1994, p. 7).

In a summary of literature about the use of discussion in instruction, Gall (1985) reported that discussion is an effective way to promote higher level thinking, develop student attitudes, and advance student capability for moral reasoning. In short, discussion provides opportunities for student thoughtfulness about a chosen topic or issue. Attempts to suggest the necessary and sufficient conditions for discussion have been made (Bridges, 1979, 1987; Haroutunian-Gordon, 1991; Miller, 1992), as have characteristics of different types of discussions (Alvermann, O'Brien, & Dillon, 1990; Gall & Gall, 1990; Roby, 1988), and the influence of teacher questions on classroom discussion (Dillon, 1994; Hunkins, 1995; Roby, 1988). These attempts to lay out descriptions of discussion characterize it as a structured conversation among participants who present, examine, compare and understand similar and diverse ideas about an issue (Wilén & White, 1991). This is in sharp contrast to recitation, which is characterized by teacher-dominated classroom talk, and typically entails an interaction process between teacher and students similar to: teacher posed statement/question ⇒ student response ⇒ teacher feedback/evaluation.

Teachers and researchers seem to use the term "discussion," however, when referring to a wide range of classroom activities. Dillon (1984) found discussion often labels many types of teacher-student interactions. Roby (1988) provided an example of different conceptions of discussion, based on the questioning strategies a teacher uses. Discussions range from being highly teacher centered (similar to the recitation definition given above, and labeled by Roby as a "Quiz Show") to highly student centered



(labeled by Roby as a "Bull Session"). Bridges (1979, 1987) established a list of conditions he says are necessary if people are to engage in discussion. These conditions include: putting forward more than one point of view about a subject; having discussants who intend to develop their knowledge, understanding, and judgment on the matter being discussed; and, requiring discussants' to hold to certain principles of conduct during discussion. Without adherence to these conditions, Bridges claims "discussion simply cannot take place" (1979, p. 26).

While the conceptions suggested by Roby and Bridges assist in developing a theoretical understanding of classroom discussion, there is little empirical research of teachers' conceptions of discussion. Most research relies on observations of classrooms; the focus of research usually is on the external, observable characteristics of discussion. What observations do not necessarily provide are insights into the thought process of teachers. Identifying what teachers think about discussion might reveal how, and why, discussion is used in the classroom.

The actions of teachers in the classroom are influenced, even determined, by teachers' underlying thought processes (Clark & Peterson, 1986). Some researchers suggest that teachers will visualize an activity in their classrooms prior to instruction in order to determine whether the activity will "work" in that particular educational context (Yinger & Clark, 1983). In a review of research on teacher thinking, Isenberg (1990) suggested that teachers' thinking may be guided by a "personally held system of beliefs, values, and principles" (p. 324). Further, teachers' reasons for selecting certain instructional strategies "may not be clearly understood until teachers try explaining their actions" (Isenberg, 1990, p. 324). Examining teachers' conceptions of discussion allows teachers to explain their thinking about discussion.

### **Discussion and Democracy**

Democratic societies are dynamic and changing, for democracy is a way of life (Dewey, 1916). In this view, "democracy is not already accomplished, needing only protection, but a path that citizens in a pluralist society try to walk together. It is this commitment that unites them, not a culture, language, or religion" (Parker, 1996, p. 191). Therefore, citizens should not merely elect those who will govern them, but participate in self governance themselves. This is what has been labeled as "strong" democracy (Barber, 1984, 1989). One of many important roles of a citizen is a willingness and ability to interact with others on matters of common concern. Discussion is the chief medium for this interaction.

Why do public discussions of important issues affecting families, communities, and nation infrequently occur? No simple answer is possible. However, one of the many reasons for a lack of talk could be that citizenship does not require the skill or the "know how" to engage in public talk about important policies or issues (Barber, 1984, 1989). Citizens need com-

petence in the skills of discussion if they are to engage in fruitful interactions in a democratic government (Barber, 1989; Dewey, 1939; Larson, 1995; Larson & Parker, 1996; Lucas, 1976). If skill in discussion can enhance public talk among democratic citizens, then identifying a set of discussion skills is needed. Possible discussion skills include listening (with an ear to considering opposing opinions), clearly making claims, supporting claims with facts, helping a group move through obstacles, critiquing ideas and not individuals (keeping a high respect for human dignity), and developing together a shared understanding of the problem or issue (Barber, 1984; Mathews, 1994; Parker, 1996). Classrooms might be thought of as citizenship laboratories in which students of different race, ethnicity, gender, social class, and ability groups learn how to engage in discussions with one another on matters of common concern (Dewey, 1916).

Before descriptions and recommendations of classroom discussion proceed much further, it should be helpful to study what teachers think. While a few studies define discussion from a teacher or student perspective (Athanases, 1993; Marshall, 1989; Miller, 1990), discussion is typically defined by researchers without benefit of teachers' views. Accordingly, I decided to examine the conceptions of social studies teachers, for whom the recitation/discussion confusion is a very old problem.

The primary research question for this study was: What are teachers' conceptions of discussion in high school social studies classes? In addition, I explored four ancillary questions: (a) Do teachers have more than one conception of discussion? (b) What characteristics do teachers consider typical of classroom discussions? (c) What purposes do teachers believe classroom discussions serve? (d) What factors seem to influence teachers' use of discussion?

## Method

### Teachers/Informants

A purposive sample of six high social studies teachers was selected for this study. All claimed to use discussion as part of their teaching strategies, and all were nominated by building principals as being thoughtful and effective teachers. Teaching assignments were similar, with each participant teaching one or more of the following high school social studies courses: world history, United States history, current events, American government, sociology, or psychology. While any subject area may use discussion, Gross and Zeleny (1958) emphasized the specific role of social studies in teaching classroom discussion: "Since adult organizations so often make decisions with respect to policy by means of the discussion method it is difficult for a teacher of the social studies to over-emphasize (discussion techniques and procedures) in the classroom" (p. 484). Social studies, with its connection to social interaction, societal critique, and civic

participation, may be the part of the school curriculum where classroom discussion is most appropriately used by teachers (Engle & Ochoa, 1988).

The participants taught at one of two schools: a suburban, primarily White high school (three teachers); or, an urban (inner-city), racially diverse high school (three teachers). Similarities in a sample are helpful for generating initial categories (conceptions of discussion) and properties, and for establishing conditions under which a category exists (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This was my approach when choosing my first sample; the three teachers at the suburban high school. The initial categories were best expanded, refined, and elaborated upon by adding a second sample that was different from the first sample. The teachers at the urban school were chosen for this purpose. They taught students living in a community that was different socio-economically and ethnically from the first sample group, and they taught students with different abilities than the first sample set. Two sample groups provided data from teachers who had diverse backgrounds and teaching experience, worked in diverse communities, and taught diverse students. All of the teachers were Caucasians.

Teachers at the suburban high school taught either "regular track" or honors classes. I will refer to them as: Alex, Bill, and Cathy. "Alex" is 46 years old and has taught U. S. and world history and advanced placement U.S. history for 22 years. He has both an undergraduate and master's degree in history. "Bill" is 40 years old and has taught 11th grade U.S. history and 12th grade current events courses for all his 18 years of teaching. He has an undergraduate and a master's degree in history. "Cathy" is 44 years old and has taught U.S. and world history, psychology, and sociology for 22 years. She has an undergraduate degree in English, with a minor in social science, and a master's degree in secondary education.

Teachers at the urban high school taught either "low track," "regular track," or honors classes. Their names are Deborah, Elaine, and Frank. "Deborah" is 50 years old, and has taught for 14 years. During the past five years she has taught U. S. history in self-contained, special education classrooms. She has an undergraduate degree in education with a minor in United States history, a special education teaching certificate, and a master's degree in early childhood special education. "Elaine" is 40 years old and has taught U. S. history, and sociology for 20 years. She has an undergraduate major in sociology with a minor in history and a teaching credential in secondary social science. She has a master's in counseling. "Frank" is 55 years old and has taught advanced placement U. S. history, honors American government, and regular-track U. S. history courses during his 25 year teaching career. He has an undergraduate degree in political science, and a master's in educational administration.

### **Data Gathering**

Data were of two kinds: responses to an interview schedule and responses during a think-aloud task. Interviews preceded the think-aloud

task. In the *interview*, the teachers spoke directly about their conceptions and definitions of discussion. They described the mental image that came to mind when they heard the term classroom discussion, distinguished between an ideal discussion and an imperfect one, gave examples of discussion, and listed educational rationales for discussion. The *think-aloud* exercise was an additional technique to explore these teachers' notions of ideal discussions. Following a technique suggested by Anderson (1980), five vignettes of classroom interaction, each a paragraph long, were composed. These drew on Roby's (1988) five-level model described earlier. Each vignette describes a classroom discussion in one of five teachers' classrooms (Jim, Kerry, Jack, Chris, Brian). Jim's vignette describes a "quiz show," Kerry's a "problematical discussion," Jack's an "informational discussion," Chris' a "dialectical discussion," and Brian's a "bull session." These vignettes are included in the appendix.

The teachers were asked to order the vignettes from the one most like a discussion in their classroom to the one least like it, thinking aloud and sharing their reasoning all the while. Then, using their top ranked vignette, the teachers were asked to sketch on a seating chart the interaction patterns they thought would occur during such a discussion, again thinking aloud. These lines depicted the verbal interactions between teacher and student, student and teacher, and student and student.

### Data Analysis

The analysis of data consisted of the following four stages. First, I generated categories by examining collected data, attempting to identify common themes in the data. This was the constructive phase of data analysis where I read the transcriptions and created initial categories. The second stage involved the integration of categories and their properties. During this stage, I compared similarities and differences among the categories created in stage one. Some categories combined with others that had similar properties. The third stage further integrated the data around fewer, more encompassing categories. This process entailed: creating new categories, refining (sharpening) categories, and elaborating (further illustrating) existing categories. These first three stages did not necessarily follow this linear progression. Typical of this method of analysis, these stages formed a repetitious process of coding, comparing, and refining (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The constant comparison of data led to the fourth stage of data analysis: writing a "theory in-process" of teachers' conceptions of discussion. These conceptions, abstracted from the data, are then available for comparisons with other samples that provided additional sources of data. This analysis procedure has been illustrated with data from the first sample set in a previous publication (Larson & Parker, 1996).

## Findings/Hypotheses

### Conceptions of Discussion

Teachers' conceptions of classroom discussion are varied, and impact the way teachers plan for discussion in the classroom, the purpose of discussion in the classroom, and teacher expectations of discussion. In this section I present the following six conceptions that eventually emerged from the data: discussion as recitation, as a teacher-directed conversation, as an open-ended conversation, as posing challenging questions, as a guided transfer of knowledge to the world outside the classroom, and as practice at verbal interaction. According to the canons of the grounded theory approach, I present these as *hypotheses* that are *grounded* in data and *tentative*, pending additional rounds of data gathering and analysis. As such, they provide an additional layer of understanding of teachers' conceptions of discussion. Because they are hypotheses, I use the present tense and speak generally of "teachers" rather than of "these six teachers." Each conception of discussion is presented along with segments from the interview and think aloud transcripts. I provide data to illustrate each category, and to reveal how the categories were developed. Segments of field notes and quotations provide evidence that the categories are well grounded in the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

1. *Discussion as Recitation.* Teacher-dominated classroom talk characterizes discussion as recitation. Interactions between teacher and student typically follow the three-step pattern that is detailed in the recitation literature: 1) teacher initiated statement/question; 2) student response; 3) teacher feedback/evaluation. Teachers emphasize its utilitarian value: When they want to "cover" a large amount of information, assess students' understanding, or review for a test, this type of discussion is preferred. A comment by Cathy is illustrative:

This is not my choice of how discussion is to be used, but it does serve a definite educational purpose if I were reviewing for a test, or after a chapter/unit had been covered. It is an effective way to make sure the students...read the textbook and understand the main points...There are definite times for this use of discussion, and it is not a completely invalid method.

These discussions can be used as "oral quizzes," with each answer receiving immediate attention from the teacher. Because teachers can ask students to produce specific answers to questions, recitation becomes a quick, efficient way to evaluate students.

Elaine reported using recitation during discussions she called "quiz shows." Teams of students competed to answer her questions correctly. She described the interaction and purpose in the following way:

If we are having a quiz show, where half of the class is on one side and half on the other, then I'll read the question and see who can get the answer. I can cover the same thing [privately with] textbook questions that I cover [publicly with] the quiz show discussions, but they have to prepare for them so their team can win.

Similarly, Deborah, believed that discussion "can be a kind of oral testing...[where you are] trying to find out generally what they know about the topic. You stress 'wrong answer,' 'right answer.'"

When teachers want to control the topic of discussion and transmit specific information, recitation-style discussions are useful. Teachers determine who talks merely by selecting one student over another. Student-to-student interactions rarely occur when teachers ask questions and evaluate student responses. During recitation-style discussions, teachers are able to distribute information to students quickly and efficiently. When teachers are "in a hurry to cover information," they rely on lecture or recitation. In fact, when teachers are not lecturing, this type of discussion is the main way they verbally transmit facts and ideas to students. Through questioning and by providing feedback, teachers are involved in every interaction and are able to transmit particular facts and ideas to students.

2. *Discussion as Teacher-Directed Conversation.* Another way teachers conceive of discussion is as a conversation that they lead and control. There is more student-student interaction than in recitation, hence more the feel of a conversation; and the conversation is conducted for different purposes: Teachers want their students to understand multiple perspectives, or they want to encourage a deeper understanding of the topic being discussed. Still, the conversation is tethered to a teacher-selected question or topic. Teachers report that they actively direct the conversation, but allow students to interact more freely. Bill explained its purpose:

[T]here are also other kinds of discussions that I try to construct that definitely will get students from point A to point B. There is a light bulb that I want to ultimately turn on, whether it's a piece of knowledge, or whether it's a concept I want them to understand.

One way teachers move the conversation along is by prompting and summarizing student comments. For example, Elaine reported that she often follows student comments with the following sentence stem: "So what you are saying is..." By doing so she attempts to highlight those comments pertinent to the question or topic, and downplay those that are not. Alex recounted directing a discussion by continuously referring his students to an opening question (e.g., "Why should we be responsible for the homeless?").

By directing the discussion, teachers control their students' behavior and control the content being covered. This technique is less "controlling" than recitation, however. Students respond to teacher-posed questions, but they also are encouraged to comment on student-posed questions that pertain to the teacher-selected topic. In addition, the teacher does not provide feedback on every student comment, as is the case during recitations. Still, the teacher's presence is critical to move the discussion in a predetermined direction.

During these discussions, teachers are actively participating with students as well as correcting and directing them. Teachers insure that everyone has the opportunity to talk, and students rely on their teachers to maintain order. As Elaine said:

I don't think I could step away from my class every day and have it [their discussion] be as rich. So that is the real role of the teacher—to guide. [W]hen we begin to discuss [controversial] topics or questions, I suppose that I am the chief facilitator in that a lot of times the students get all caught up in the topic. They know if they raise their hands...I will acknowledge them, so they won't just sit there and worry about never talking. I make sure there is order.

Frank directs students toward several points of view without "parading" the facts past them during a lecture. His role was critical to the discussion because he encouraged students to talk and react to his comments and ideas. Teachers believe they direct discussions in an attempt to expose their students to multiple perspectives on a topic, and to determine how well students understand perspectives other than their own. Some of the perspectives are presented when students share their own points of view, findings from personal reading, and results of their research. Cathy's goal, for example, was not to reach a consensus or draw a conclusion but to "engage" students and draw out their ideas about the topic. She thought this helped her students, as burgeoning citizens, to understand one another's viewpoints.

Teachers also direct discussions by providing scripts, or roles, for students to assume during the classroom interactions. The roles themselves serve as a constant guide for the interactions. Bill set up "contrived" discussions from particular time periods in American history, and then used role-playing and questions to challenge students' understanding of how decisions were made and what people believed. For example, his students role-played discussions among congressmen in 1789. Students researched a role, assumed that character, then reenacted a congressional hearing. Some students represented people from the present day as well, and entered the discussion by bringing knowledge that was different or unknown in the 1700s. As this diverse group tried to question, negotiate, and converse on

a specific topic, students addressed multiple points of view across multiple eras of history. These roles served as a constant guide for the interactions during the classroom discussions.

3. *Discussion as Open-Ended Conversation.* Teachers do not always direct discussions or evaluate student responses. During open-ended discussions, teachers claim to verbally interact with their students as participants. Teacher and students alike make comments and offer opinions. At times open-ended discussions turn into debates and heated arguments. Students often will leave class “mad at each other and mad at me,” according to Alex. Bill maintained that open-ended discussions provide students with “tremendous freedom to explore ideas:”

[The teacher] is not telling them [the students] what avenue they have to follow. I mean they may start talking about document “Y” but may end up in what seems to an outsider a completely unrelated area. And I don’t have any problem with that. I think it helps students understand that their world is interconnected; that mature, intellectual ideas are interconnected.

Open-ended discussions offer students the opportunity to experience a free flow of ideas, and to enjoy this flow. As Elaine said:

A lot of times they [students] will still be talking about the issue on the way out the door. And I like that because that shows me that the discussion meant something to them.

By interacting with students, teachers attempt to model *how* to participate in open-ended discussions. Part of what they model is enthusiasm about the topic of discussion and enjoyment of the discussion process itself. Open-ended discussions also provide students with a safe environment in which to tackle controversial issues in a diverse group. Such interactions are important to teachers because they feel their students need this experience. As Bill said:

You’re building confidence. Most of these people [referring to his students] don’t have the confidence right now to stand up in front of the school board meeting or public library committee....I really don’t care where the students are in terms of opposing or supporting [a topic] when we’re all done with this twenty-minute discussion.

Cathy made roughly the same point:



They know a lot of things. But they haven't the experience. So sometimes we bounce it off each other for the experience. I try to be fairly neutral.

Teachers view open-ended discussions as a close approximation of "adult" conversations—or conversations in which participants can freely share what they know about a given topic. During the discussions, the teacher does not feel obligated to offer input or guidance. "A lot of times I don't even get to provide my point of view, but that doesn't really matter," said Elaine. Deborah, emphasizing the need for students to interact with one another, added that the teacher should only "prod occasionally, once the discussion starts."

It is important to note that open-ended conversations center on a particular concept, piece of information, or question. While they may have an open end, they do not have an open beginning. When asked if discussions were open for any topic that the students wanted to talk about, teachers quickly respond that the value of open-ended discussions is the freedom students had to talk about a subject or issue in any *way* they wanted, not necessarily on any *topic* they wanted. Teachers carefully select the topic to be discussed, deciding whether it meets two criteria: It must fit into the curriculum, and be a topic about which the students already know something. Elaine recounted an example of showing a ten-minute clip from the television show "20/20" to initiate student thinking about gender inequities in the workplace. She followed this with a question "to provide a definite starting spot" for the discussion, then she became a participant with her students. Bill's comment illustrates this further:

These young people can't walk in just cold, [with the teacher] saying "OK, just talk." There's something that is predetermining the topic of discussion. The teacher has to provide the students with some form of a catalyst—a reading, a quot[ation], a passage—and they're supposed to read it, consider it, and be super critical of it before they walk into the arena [classroom]. If it's just a discussion for the sake of discussion, it...would be a nice homeroom class activity, but not necessarily an academic activity.

4. *Discussion as Posing Challenging Questions.* While teachers frequently combine questioning and discussion, the purpose of this conception of discussion is to challenge students' beliefs and ideas. Discussion as posing challenging questions differs from discussion as recitation because teachers are not seeking particular answers. It differs from teacher-directed conversations because teachers' questions are not intended to guide students or lead them to a certain end point. It differs from open-ended conversa-

tions because teachers continue to pose specific questions throughout the discussion; their role is as questioner rather than participant.

For Elaine, questions “challenge” and “puzzle” students and encourage them to “request information they have not thought about—more details or different perspectives.” Teachers involve themselves in a discussion by posing challenging questions to students, and commonly answer student questions with additional questions. Bill, for example, said he often rephrased his students’ statements as questions in an attempt to spur a reaction from them:

I see myself coming in and engaging people in almost a Socratic dialogue...Throw questions, prompt. I do that an awful lot in...large groups especially. I do a lot of role-playing...where I take on a persona, I take on a position that I know will spark a reaction from the audience. And I at times take that to the extreme. It’s my opportunity in class to be an actor, and basically to elicit dialogue and a reaction from them [with questions]. But not in a chaotic sense. Again, with some structure so that whether it’s a reaction of an individual or a small group of people, other folks are in the background listening to that...and then having an equal opportunity to react. I see my role at times in helping them paraphrase one another’s reactions [by asking repeated questions].

Teachers seem willing to pose provoking questions as long as they encourage deeper thought about the topic being discussed. Bill’s reference to challenging students for the purpose of “spark(ing) a reaction” in the above quotation provided a good example of this approach. Questions direct students’ thinking about a topic, but their answers are not the end goal. The real goal is to encourage the process of thinking about a topic, through questioning.

Teachers also play “the Devil’s advocate” with students, often questioning anything that is said. Alex reported that he assumed this role, hoping his students would “logic through the information and be more thoughtful about the ideas they formed.” His emphasis was on eliciting “logic,” rather than emotion. Deborah said it was all right to take an “opposing view if you have to,” but she was concerned about students becoming offended when she did. She told her students that she was not necessarily identifying with the opposition, but was representing the thinking from it. Instead of starting with “I think...,” she used “What if I thought...?”

I guess I use [this approach] because I am trying to get them to see that there are other points of view because they [the students’ perspectives] are so narrow...they often come from very

narrow backgrounds, so they hide behind this "I know this is right" attitude.

Teachers think this conception is useful when they detect that their students are biased, have not considered other points of view, or have a shallow understanding of what is being discussed. In each case, the questions intend to expand student thinking. Since teachers want students to examine their own understanding and opinions, teachers need to loosen their control over the interactions. As Cathy suggested, teachers are faced with a dilemma between wanting students to think on their own and wanting to lead students to a particular conclusion:

Sometimes I hope they will [answer in certain ways, or answer certain questions], but they don't always...and I will accept that...I will accept what they come up with.

The purpose, thus is to challenge, rather than direct, student thinking.

5. *Discussion as Guided Transfer of Knowledge to the World Outside the Classroom.* Teachers hope students will take into the world knowledge that is formed initially in the classroom. Discussion, when used to help students with this transfer, involves the generalization of knowledge acquired in school to non-school settings. These discussions engage students in a process of generalizing from particular facts and details to the circumstances in the larger world around them.

The role of teachers during discussion as guided transfer is similar to the role described for "teacher-directed" conversations, in that the teacher, more than the students, guides the discussion. It is different in that the objective is for each student to consider how school knowledge might prove useful in their life. Herein lies the distinctive value of these discussions: the very act of discussing allows students to connect what they learn in school to their own life in ways other methods of instruction may not be able to help them do. As Cathy said, it involves students "in problem solving...the talk is about what is in the book and is then *applied* to current events" (emphasis hers). She continued:

[My] main point for discussion is that...you can effectively use the inductive process. How does what we learned about "there and then" relate today? How is it similar, how is it different, and what are some conclusions we can draw?

In other words, the process of discussing encourages students to carry historical and background knowledge (the "there and then") from school settings to their lives outside of school (the "here and now").

When linking historical events to the present, students and teacher discuss to learn about a particular historical event, and to learn how that

event has affected the present. It is the process of discussing that provides the learning. Again, Cathy explained:

We can take an idea that is presented in the material, and then allow the students to explore the ideas, the consequences, the ramifications of the things that they hadn't considered in just straight textbook-ordered, formal presentation..., a lecture or film, or if you did a worksheet for the reading.

Similarly, Alex reported using discussions to help students "make analogies and...connections between the past and the present." Perennial problems, he believed, affect us repeatedly over time. He used discussion to help his students recognize links between problems that seem unconnected on the surface, but share a similar underlying problem. Bill commented similarly, "I am a real proponent of taking what you do in class and making sure there is a link to the political realm. A real, not a make-believe, a real link."

For Alex, these discussions require students to develop a "higher level of thinking skills" about the subject under discussion. He described higher-order thinking as the ability to organize a collection of information about one topic so it could inform a different, related topic. For Bill this meant that students could "synthesize" their knowledge to make it clear to others. Students have to put several different ideas together in their own words. Students' comments then represented this reformulation of their knowledge. Bill offered additional insight: "if they can do it in this artificial environment, then I think I'm guaranteed...that they will then continue those kinds of dialogues at their places of employment, at the dinner table at home, or in a public forum."

Additionally, the process of discussing, teachers believe, increases student motivation to make connections between what they talk about in school and what is happening in the world around them. Elaine referred to this directly when she said, "Discussion causes students to feel they have a voice now, and they start taking interest in *Time* magazine or reading the newspaper because it has something in it that we talked about in class." She continued:

Parents have given me lots of positive feedback because their kids are coming home and talking about stuff that they learned. Because now it's their own. They heard another person say something that they disagree with, or that they don't know about, and suddenly they are motivated to go check it out.

The result of this motivation is more in-depth learning about a topic, which helps students recognize connections between topics and concepts rather than merely compare facts.

6. *Discussion as Practice at Verbal Interactions.* Teachers at times plan discussions so students may practice engaging in verbal interactions with one another. They believe that students become better discussants when they watch appropriate behavior during a discussion modeled by the teacher, then receive opportunities to practice engaging in discussions. Under this conception, teachers think of discussion as a skill that requires practice sessions. Bill explained that “[Discussion] is nothing you walk into. It is something you literally teach the students to do over a period of time.”

This conception is similar to “discussion as open-ended conversation,” but their purposes are different. Open-ended conversations begin around a teacher-determined topic or question, then diverge so students can experience the free-flow of ideas often present in adult conversations. “Practice discussions,” by comparison, may or may not begin around a teacher-determined topic or question. The primary purpose is to develop in students the interaction skills they need for discussions.

Teachers justify the departure from a rigid scope and sequence of their course curriculum, and the use of class time for practice, because they believe students need experience talking and interacting with one another. Their hope is that future discussions will be more refined as a result of the practice sessions. Though these discussions are described by teachers as “practice,” teachers believe curricular goals are being met. Namely, discussion competence becomes the subject matter—the desired outcome of instruction and an end in itself—more so than a method of instruction.

Students are able to discuss most any topic of their choosing, since the purpose is to develop skill at interacting verbally. Frank explained:

I let it [discussion] go where the students like, because as long as I can see that people are scratching their head and thinking, and that they have some point of view that others might react to, that's fine with me and I'll let them continue. We are often going off in another direction. But I would guess that someone coming into the class cold, or someone who didn't spend every day with us might say “what the heck is going on?” But I don't care, as long as I can see that they are engaged in what's happening in here and get something out of it.

Teachers are concerned, however, about teaching subject matter (e. g., U. S. history teachers want to teach U. S. history). Bill, for example, said he tried to connect his practice-interactions to course content. To him, a practice discussion was a “structured dialogue” where students “talk together” with him. He put his students in a situation,

that will allow, encourage, almost require students to talk with one another about a particular topic. Could be in a small group

setting, or could be a student-led large group discussion...You know I have, in the U. S. history classes, lots of discussions in that I don't lecture...we do a lot of talking together about historical events, time periods, peoples, but there is a lot of structured dialogue there as well.

Each of the teachers had surprisingly few rules for students during these practice discussions, other than to listen and respect their classmates' rights to share their opinions and ideas. They often do not teach a specific list of "do's and don't's." Teachers emphasize the intent of rules, rather than the rules themselves. Elaine accomplished this through explicit instruction:

I spend a lot of time at the beginning of class teaching them about respect and about listening, and that it is important to have a voice and also to let others to have a voice, and the whole process of discernment.

Alex recalled telling his students to respect others and not offend classmates:

It's very essential that they respect each others' ideas...I tell them I don't care what you say as long as it's not personal, against anyone here at school, anybody in this classroom, against your teacher, and it's within good taste, you can go ahead and say it.

The practice from these discussions helps classroom interactions.

### **Summary of Teachers' Conceptions of Discussion**

Below is a thumbnail description of the six conceptions. Illustrative statements from my sample are included after each.

1. *Discussion as recitation.* Teacher asks questions, students respond, and teacher evaluates responses. Information is distributed quickly and efficiently: "If I were reviewing for a test...or wanted to make sure students had read the textbook and understand the main points presented, I will lead a discussion [that seeks specific answers to questions]." Cathy

2. *Discussion as teacher-directed conversation.* Teachers direct a conversation with students to help students understand a topic or "point." Students are encouraged to contribute any information they know, and teacher judges its relevance to the lesson's objective. "There are...discussions that I try to construct that definitely will get students from point A to point B. There is a light bulb that I want to ultimately turn on, whether it's a piece of knowledge, or a concept I want them to understand." Bill

3. *Discussion as open-ended conversation.* Teacher and students freely share what they know about a predetermined topic. These discussions

become debates or heated arguments over a limited number of points. Teachers introduce the topic, then participate in the discussion but do not direct it. "[D]uring the discussion, [students] fed off of each other. That's what discussion ought to be. It ought to be people who are just bursting with a contribution or a question that leads to something else." Deborah

4. *Discussion as challenging questions.* Teachers pose questions to students but do not evaluate responses. Instead, additional questions are asked to challenge and puzzle student assumptions and logic, and to develop thinking skills. This type of discussion is often equated with a technique called the "Socratic Method." "Ask questions, and never give any answers, but pose problems in questions and not draw things to a close." Cathy

5. *Discussion as guided transfer of knowledge to the world outside the classroom.* Teacher and students apply knowledge of the past to the present, and transfer knowledge acquired in class to other situations and circumstances. Teachers act as a guide and help students generalize particular facts and ideas to the larger world around them. "How does what we learned about 'there and then' relate today? How is it similar, how is it different, and what are some conclusions we can draw?" Cathy

6. *Discussion as practice at verbal interaction.* Teachers think of discussion as a skill that requires practice. They believe that students become better discussants when they receive both modeling from the teacher about appropriate behavior during a discussion, and opportunities to practice engaging in discussions. "[Discussion] is nothing you walk into. It is something you literally teach the students to do over a period of time." Bill

### **Influences on Teachers' Conceptions of Discussion**

While the purpose of this paper is to report on teachers' conceptions of classroom discussion, a number of factors that influence these conceptions emerged during the analysis. Here I present a brief description of these influencing factors because they appear to be integral to the conceptions. I give their labels and brief descriptions, again with illustrations drawn from the data.

1. *Student diversity.* Teachers recognize that students in a classroom are not identical. They come together each class period with differences in cultural background, ethnicity, gender, race, learning styles, and ability. Teachers see classroom diversity positively and negatively, and often weigh these differences when planning classroom discussions.

2. *Lesson objectives.* Discussion is considered to be a time-consuming method of instruction relative to other methods. As a result, teachers are more likely to dominate classroom interactions when the objectives of a lesson emphasize learning a specific body of information in a specific amount of time. Teachers who plan discussions so students will build their own understanding during the interactions allow for the extra time needed during discussions.

3. *Age and maturity of students.* Teachers do not use discussion in the same way across their several classes. They discriminate, more likely conducting discussion in classes that have what they call more “mature” students—students they describe as some combination of older, more knowledgeable, less defensive, and more socially adept. More maturity is needed when the purpose of the verbal interactions is to express different perspectives and increase the students’ general understanding about a particular topic.

4. *Sense of community in the classroom.* The sense of community that teachers and students perceive in the classroom affects discussion. When teacher and students view the class as a community, they are more inclined to interact with one another. “Community” is comprised of attributes such as: trust and respect for one another, feelings of personal safety, an appropriate size of the group, and common goals for exploring issues and course-content together.

5. *Interest level of students.* In order for discussion to work in the classroom, students need to have an interest in the topic being discussed, and they must believe that discussion is a worthwhile method of instruction. Teachers consider very seriously their students’ interest level in the discussion topic. If they determine a low level of interest, then discussion is not used. Likewise, if students do not value discussion as a method of instruction, then teachers will use less-interactive methods of instruction.

### Implications

What this study has provided, in short, is insight into teacher thinking about classroom discussion. Teachers’ conceptions of discussion and the factors that influence the use of these conceptions have received little research attention; the theoretical categories presented here help to fill this gap and set the stage for the development of a more formal theory about teachers and discussion. Here, I focus on three implications of this study: The complexity of teachers’ conceptions, the role of teachers as discussion leaders, and suggestions for educating teachers about using classroom discussion.

#### Complexity of Conceptions

Teachers have multiple conceptions of discussion. This may explain why prior research has claimed that teachers will label any teacher-student interaction as “discussion” (Cazden, 1988; Dillon, 1984, 1990; Gall & Gall, 1990; Wilen, 1990). This conclusion, however, does not fully credit teachers with the amount of thought they give to classroom interactions. On the surface, teachers will call most classroom interactions discussion, but in their minds they differentiate between different types of discussion, with each having specific characteristics and purposes. Teachers think dif-



ferently about discussion based on what they hope to accomplish during a lesson.

Teachers do consider recitation to be a type of discussion, but this is not their only conception. They also use discussion to accomplish higher-level cognitive goals such as understanding multiple perspectives, building knowledge, and developing thinking skills. They see value in the *process* of discussing as well as in the product or outcome of the discussion. Teachers believe it is the talk that occurs during discussion that helps students understand a particular topic better. Barnes' (1992) recommended the same use of discussion when he claimed that we talk our way into insight through "rough draft" and "final draft" talk.

### **Leading Discussion**

Teachers believe that their leadership role during classroom discussion is critical to the success of the discussion. While this does not imply that teachers want to control all of the interactions, it does imply that teachers are not always comfortable with a role equal to that of student/participant. Teachers report that they lead differently depending on the conception of discussion to which they are adhering. They are, however, very involved in the classroom interactions regardless of the type of discussion taking place. The classroom teacher's participation is critical to the success of the classroom discussion. The self-perceived roles of teachers during recitation-style discussions are apparent: teachers determine what information is important, distribute it to the class, and evaluate students—typically with questions. Their role changes for other conceptions, but does not lessen in importance. Even when teachers assume more the role of participant with students, they reported involvement in the interactions that are still different from the students because they regularly model appropriate behavior, assess the accuracy of information being presented by students, and act as a monitor to insure the discussion serves the purpose for which it was planned.

### **Teacher Education**

Teacher educators and school administrators should consider teaching the discussion method because of its potential to enhance student learning and democratic citizenship. Through classroom discussions, students might develop abilities to interact with others about issues of common interest. This is critical for a democratic system of government that values input from its citizens. Students, thought of as citizens-in-process, might learn how to engage in discussions with classmates of different races, genders, social status, and abilities. Teaching future teachers about using discussion as a method of instruction is an important step in democratic citizenship education. As a starting point, teacher educators might examine purposes and characteristics of the six conceptions with teachers, and dis-

cuss which one(s) could best attain outcomes closely associated with democratic citizenship.

Additionally, constructivist thought suggests that students learn subject matter better when they are required to organize it themselves and develop an individualized understanding of the concepts being taught. Several conceptions of discussion (teacher-directed conversations, posing challenging questions, and guided transfer of knowledge) encourage this type of learning. Discussion is a valuable tool for teachers to have in their collection of instructional methods, especially in light of long standing calls for educators to teach problem-solving skills and to promote conceptual understanding of material. Using classroom discussion, however, is a difficult task for teachers. Instructing pre-service and in-service teachers explicitly about discussion, and the factors that influence discussion, could encourage its effective use in the classroom.

### Conclusion

On the theoretical level, this study provides empirical support for models about conceptions of discussion. This fills a gap in conceptual models of teachers' conceptions of discussion by offering knowledge grounded in data. If discussion is to be used in the classroom, then we must know what teachers think about it, how they plan to use it, and what purposes it serves in the classroom. On the practical level, by establishing a basic set of conceptions, this research allows teacher education, and the classroom teacher, to be on the "same page" conceptually when referring to discussion. The literature review of Wilen and White (1991) reveals that characteristics of discussion in the classroom are not widely known. It is important to develop some idea of what teachers envision as discussion before descriptions of discussion in the classroom proceed much further.

I have attempted to initiate an understanding of teachers' conceptions of discussion. Six conceptions were developed along with five influences. Companion studies are needed, of course, in other subject areas and settings, and as a consequence some conceptions and influences will be eliminated and others added. Teachers and supervisors can reflect upon classroom practices. Researchers and teacher educators can provide instruction on discussion itself as they reflect on the hypotheses that develop.

### Appendix Five Discussion Vignettes

1. *Jim.* Jim's students have just finished reading an eight page section of their history text. Jim plans to discuss with his students a series of questions that he has written about information contained in the textbook. By listening to the students' answers, he plans to get a very "general" idea of what they remember. His questions are given to anyone in class. Sometimes he calls on students, but at other times he

## **Appendix (Continued)**

allows them to answer without raising their hands. When a right answer is given, Jim moves to the next question. When a wrong answer is given, he probes the student's response, or he calls on a classmate, until the right answer is given. Occasionally no one can get the right answer and he has to refer his students to the page in the book where the answer can be found. Jim uses discussion to evaluate student knowledge and to review information they have received in class.

2. *Kerry*: Kerry uses discussion to help solve problems that she presents to the class. Kerry does not have a predetermined answer that she hopes the students will discover through the discussion. She finds a problem that she thinks will make her students think, or at least that will puzzle them. The discussion helps clarify the problem, and ultimately assists the class find a solution to the problem. Her role during the discussion is to give the students information that they had not thought about — more details, different perspectives of the problem — in order to puzzle them. By discussing the problem, the students help each other understand the problem, clarify ideas, and eventually come to a consensus about the problem. Kerry does not see herself as the holder of information for the students to tap into. She sees herself as the person who challenges the students' comments to insure that they are making sense. She uses discussion so students can encourage each other and learn from each other as they solve a problem or a puzzle.

3. *Jack*: Jack uses discussion to bring out facts about opposing opinions. His students' opinions and comments are evaluated by the class for their factual bases. Through discussion, his students connect facts and information that they have learned to a certain topic or context. When they need more information, they either continue to discuss their ideas to make them more clear, or research more information to support their opinions. Conflicts and disagreements are resolved by examining the truthful elements of each opinion and combining truthful and factual details with others. Opinions and thoughts during the discussion are scrutinized for facts that can be supported with details other than the person's opinion. Jack does not want to say an opinion is "right" or "wrong", but wants to discuss with his students the opinions presented, and examine them for their content. He wants students to inquire about facts and learn information so they can use it in the discussion. He feels that discussing their opinions will encourage them to build a better understanding of what they do and do not know.

4. *Chris*: Discussions in Chris' class are used to examine what information students have about a topic, and raise questions about what the students do not know. Chris is able to use what the students have learned in other settings, and gathers many different points and comments from the students. Opinions, facts, and knowledge the student brings to class are all used to broaden perspectives about a topic. The teacher also presents information, and models how to think critically.

## Appendix (Continued)

Comments from students are accepted as they build a general base of knowledge about a topic. In many ways, Chris plays "Devil's Advocate" because she questions ideas in order to expose what is not known, and what is needed to help clarify and help understanding. Comments made during the discussion are not right or wrong. Chris encourages comments that add information to the topic being discussed. Chris likes to use discussion because it allows all students to voice their opinions about an issue or topic. She does not want to give all the information to her students. Instead she relies on discussion to provide opportunities for her students to help each other increase the amount of information they have.

5. *Brian*: Brian wants his students to participate in discussions, and chooses not to direct them very much. If a student expresses an opinion, other students are free to challenge and question that opinion. Arguments are part of these discussions, but courtesy is demanded. Brian is never exactly sure where the discussions will lead, and often allows them to be directed by the students. The ground rules of discussion are that everyone is entitled to express their own opinion, and there is little emphasis on what the right answer or better answer may be. Students often leave class having had a heated argument or debate. The important part of these discussions is not that the students come to a consensus about the topic, but that they have a forum to present their thoughts and opinions. Each student approaches a problem from their own perspective. Discussion is a way that these perspectives, and opinions, can be presented for consideration by the class. Brian believes that these types of debates/ discussions will encourage learning.

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## More Than a Pretty Cloth: Teaching Hmong History and Culture Through Textile Art

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### Abstract

*This article describes one teacher educator's efforts to learn about Hmong culture and history through a study of textile arts and women who created it and use the textile arts to teach preservice teachers in a social studies methods course about this culture. The students responded positively to learning about Hmong culture and history through paj ntaub, reflecting the possibilities of this medium as a teaching tool. Textile arts, decoratively stitched fabrics often created by women, provide a valuable, but often overlooked resource for inquiring into and learning about a culture. Hmong paj ntaub is a complex form of textile art which decorated clothing and identified the wearer's Hmong subgroup when the Hmong lived in Laos. The textile art on baby carriers and burial clothing reflected Hmong religious beliefs. When the Hmong fled to Thailand as refugees, their economic survival became dependent on the creation of marketable textile arts which led to changes in designs, colors, products, and the type of textile art produced. A new form of textile art, story cloths portraying aspects of Hmong culture and history, was developed and sold by textile artists in Thailand. As recent immigrants to the United States, the Hmong create paj ntaub to preserve their culture through sewing special clothing and celebrating the Hmong New Year.*

On my office wall is a large story cloth stitched by Yia Vang, one of 1,500 Hmong people living in the local community. The story cloth, a stitched picture on cloth, shows everyday activities as the Hmong lived in Laos—harvesting corn, rice, and pumpkins, people and horses carrying harvested crops in baskets, winnowing and grinding rice, making sticky rice cakes, feeding chickens and pigs, and people wearing traditional, distinctive clothing while they work. Even though I do not speak Hmong and Yia speaks very little English, she was able to offer me a glimpse of her life in Laos through the story cloth. Yia and other Hmong have represented Hmong history and culture through story cloths as well as continue a long textile art tradition in *paj ntaub*, pronounced “pon dow,” for decorating baby carriers and clothing for everyday wear, celebrating the New Year, for burial, and for creating small needlework squares exchanged as gifts.

The purpose of this article is to portray my efforts to learn about Hmong culture and history through a study of Hmong *paj ntaub* and the women who create it. The impetus for this research is my commitment to develop a multicultural, social reconstructionist approach (Janzen, 1995; Sleeter & Grant, 1994) to teaching social studies methods for preservice teachers. As part of the study, I also created teaching strategies and materials to introduce Hmong culture and history through the unique Hmong textile arts to students in a social studies methods course.

Infusing the social studies methods course with Hmong history and culture is part of my continuous development of the course to reflect aspects of Sleeter and Grant's (1994) multicultural, social reconstructionist approach and Janzen's (1995) multiculturalism approach to teaching social studies. Janzen encourages social studies educators to emphasize the importance of respecting and maintaining different cultures within the United States and the world rather than focus on the value of diverse cultures assimilating into majority culture. Sleeter and Grant invite educators to work for social structural equality and cultural pluralism by affirming cultural diversity, dealing directly with oppression or ways resources and power are distributed inequitably, and teaching ways of working together to create a more equal society. By integrating main ideas from Janzen and Sleeter and Grant, I have developed the following goals for the course: (1) include the experiences and perspectives of women and men from different races, cultures, and socioeconomic classes; (2) value cultural diversity, different belief systems, ways of life, and equal interaction between ethnic groups; (3) address issues of racism, sexism, and/or class oppression; (4) think critically about different views; and (5) encourage social action as a way of moving toward equality.

In this article I review the social studies field's depiction of the importance of visual art in social studies; provide background information about my study of Hmong textile art and artists; describe what I learned about the history and culture of Hmong people in Laos, Thailand, and the United States; portray my use of Hmong textile arts in teaching preservice teachers about Hmong history and culture; review students' responses to the use of textile arts as an instructional tool; and conclude with the value of textile arts in teaching social studies from a multicultural, social reconstructionist perspective.

### **The Importance of Textile Art in Teaching History and Culture**

The social studies field provides some support for teaching about history and cultures through visual arts, but the integration of visual art with social studies is more of a marginal emphasis as compared to the consistent focus on the integration of literature with social studies. When art is encouraged, painting and sculpture are likely to be the focus. Textile arts



are often overlooked because of their designation as a craft and their connection to women and domestic life (Gordon, n.d.).

The social studies field through the national organization, the National Council for the Social Studies, invites the inclusion of art in teaching about history and different cultures. In the recent *Expectations of Excellence: Curriculum Standards for Social Studies* (1994), the first thematic strand focuses on the study of culture and cultural diversity. One method of engaging in this study is through artistic creations which "serve as expressions of culture and influence behavior of people living in a particular culture" (p. 49) and "contribute to the development and transmission of culture" (p. 79). Hmong *paj ntaub* are artistic creations which not only express Hmong culture through unique designs on clothing and baby carriers, but also help to develop and maintain cultural identity through clothing. The creation of *paj ntaub* was an important part of the responsibilities of Hmong women along with growing and preparing food and caring for children while living in Laos. Story cloths began to be created by both women and men when the Hmong lived in refugee camps in Thailand and a few continue to create these stitched pictures in the United States to portray the history and culture of the Hmong.

Another recent publication by the National Council for the Social Studies is Selwyn's *Arts and Humanities in the Social Studies* (1995) which emphasizes ways students can learn social studies content through the arts. The author limits his focus to theater, creative writing, and literature as examples of infusing art and the humanities in social studies and integrates the study of art as part of cultural or historical studies with students creating art to represent their understanding of main historical/cultural concepts or main themes. Unfortunately, Selwyn does not include textile art or any other examples of visual arts except statues as a source of information about a culture or historical period.

However, Selwyn does provide good reasons for the infusion of art with social studies. One is that art and history are already integrated. Art, along with music, dance, theater, and writing are artifacts of and a means by which to study a culture and its history. If one wants to study history, art is part of that study. This guideline is very appropriate in the study of Hmong history. As the Hmong lived in Laos, then migrated to Thailand and the United States, the changes in their textile art reflected their accommodations to different physical and cultural environments. Second, art can provide a way for students to interact with the social studies content which may lead to greater understanding, emotional engagement, and personal meaning. Because students often find social studies content uninteresting, including art as a window into a specific historical period or culture may make the content more appealing. The visual appeal of story cloths and different forms of *paj ntaub* may spark students' curiosity in studying this textile art more closely, but also exploring other resources such as folktales, music, and published histories in learning more about Hmong history and

culture. Third, learning through art addresses students' different learning styles, especially wholistic learners who prefer to see relationships and the broader picture. Hmong *paj ntaub* provides a broader view of Hmong culture and history by showing the significance of art in everyday life, in celebrating special ceremonies such as the New Year, in identifying oneself as belonging to a specific Hmong subgroup, and in indicating some of the values of Hmong culture such as family, group identity, and industriousness through the creation of the art.

Other reasons for the use of art in studying history and examples of ways to integrate paintings with social studies themes are found in *Studying History Through Art* (Sunal & Hatcher, 1986) as part of the *How To Do It Notebook* series by the National Council for the Social Studies. The authors encourage social studies educators to use art such as paintings as resources for social studies because art may provide a more direct and powerful form of communication than verbal messages for children. Sunal and Hatcher also suggest art may portray values, life-styles, technology and the milieu of a certain time or place and may help students develop a better understanding of people and their development. When artists create art, they are expressing their social knowledge which children can use in constructing their own social knowledge. Although Sunal and Hatcher list textile arts such as needlework and quilting as examples of arts, their focus on paintings once again overlooks the potential of textile arts as a valuable historical and cultural resource. The reasons they suggest for using art as an important resource for social studies apply to the use of story cloths. For young students, the visual images of Hmong everyday life in Laos, the disruption of their lives due to the Vietnam War, or the escape from Laos to Thailand as portrayed in story cloths may provide greater background knowledge in a more memorable manner than a verbal explanation of these aspects of Hmong history. Story cloths also show the agricultural lifestyle among the Hmong while living in Laos and the tools or technology they used for harvesting and preparing food. When Hmong textile artists depict certain aspects of Hmong culture or history on story cloths, they are providing their perspectives on events by choosing what to focus on and how to represent it.

A final avenue by which the social studies field could promote the integration of art with social studies is through the publication of journal articles. Two main journals published by the National Council for the Social Studies, *Social Education* and *Social Studies and the Young Learner*, which I surveyed from 1989 through July, 1996 and discovered only four articles describing examples of the use of visual art in teaching social studies concepts or topics. In contrast, every year *Social Education* publishes recommendations for outstanding children's literature in grades K-8 through the annotated bibliography "Notable Children's Trade Books in the Field of Social Studies." Children's literature is also a regular feature of each issue of *Social Studies and the Young Learner*.

Daniel (1989), in one of the published articles on art, suggested the study of medieval pictures of daily life, slides of the structure of the catacombs and art found on the catacomb walls, and the mosaics created in Pompeii and Ostia as a strategy for young students to learn about early Italy. Second, McCall (1994) encouraged the study of quilts made by European American and African American women as a means of learning about United States history. Third, Chilcoat (1990) outlined the use of Indian ledger art as a resource for high school students to learn more about plains Native American tribes such as the Sioux or Cheyenne in the United States. Finally, Epstein (1994) described a classroom study of the use of an art-based curricular unit in teaching late nineteenth century European and Asian immigration to the United States through students' interpretation of paintings, songs, stories, cartoons, poems, and oral histories. Although these are valuable suggestions for the integration of art and social studies, the journals reflect little concern for textile arts and visual arts. When social studies educators integrate visual arts with social studies, they may provoke greater interest among students, use additional resources for teaching about a particular culture or time period, and incorporate additional voices in the social studies curriculum.

### **Background to the Study of Hmong Textile Art**

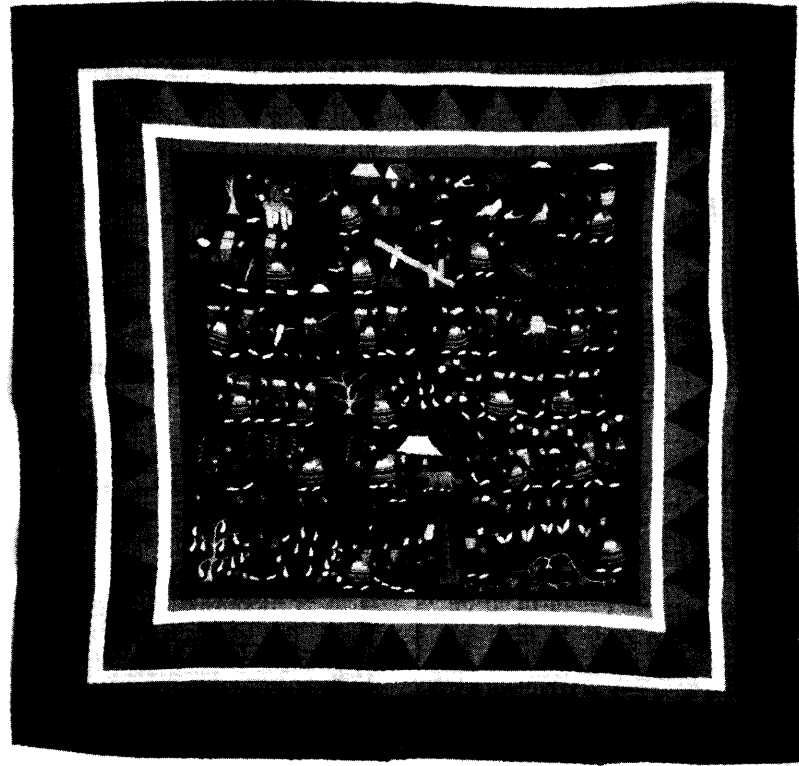
In an effort to learn more about Hmong history and culture and introduce this knowledge to students in our social studies methods course for elementary education majors, I undertook a study of Hmong textile art and the women who create it. I chose to study Hmong history and culture because of the limited knowledge students and I possess, the marginal status of the Hmong due to their limited formal education and income (Paisano, 1993), and the prejudice and discrimination which the Hmong regularly face. My choice of textile art for the study reflects my commitment to including women's voices in the social studies curriculum. Textile art, which women from different cultures, races, and classes often create, is typically viewed as a craft and less valuable than male-dominated painting and sculpture. Another reason for the focus on Hmong textile art is the patriarchal nature of Hmong culture with men holding positions of formal power within families and clans in Laos (Pfaff, 1995; Quincy, 1995), in refugee camps in Thailand (Cha & Small, 1994), and in communities in Wisconsin (Hein, 1996). In traditional studies of the Hmong, it would be challenging to include women's perspectives due to the custom of men serving as the primary spokespersons for the family and culture. Since women have been and continue to be the primary textile artists, I chose to focus on women artists and their art as a means of providing Hmong women's perspectives on Hmong history and culture.

During 1995 with the support of my university's faculty development program I engaged in a study of Hmong textile art. During the spring and

summer, 1995 and with the help of my department's graduate assistant, I completed searches through various library data bases for texts and articles focusing on Hmong history and Hmong textile art. I also solicited suggestions for texts from an English as a Second Language teacher from the local school district who was very knowledgeable of Hmong culture. These sources provided background knowledge, helped in developing questions for my interviews with local Hmong women, and provided a context for their individual stories.

In order to identify Hmong women to interview, I solicited suggestions from the ESL teacher who had many contacts with Hmong women. She recommended a translator who was proficient in both Hmong and English and the names of five Hmong women of diverse ages, who had lived in the United States varying amounts of time, and sewed different types of Hmong textile art. I first hired the translator, Hua Yang, a 22-year-old elementary education major at the university who was employed part-time as a translator for the local school district and also the parent of two young daughters, and had her arrange the interviews.

Through Hua's assistance, during the summer of 1995 I interviewed five women (including Hua herself) at their homes for approximately one to two hours each session. I interviewed Yia Vang (age 45) twice since she lived in the United States the least amount of time (two or three years), but did the most sewing. Yia sewed traditional reverse applique "flower cloths," story cloths, and *paj ntaub* for New Year clothing for her family. She and her family lived in a refugee camp in Thailand for 12 years where she learned to create story cloths, but Yia now lived in the local community with her spouse, four daughters, and four sons. She, along with Hua's mother, Hua Xiong (whom I also interviewed) spent a significant part of their life in Laos. Hua Xiong (age 65) lived with her spouse and focused primarily on creating new *paj ntaub* designs for New Year clothing for family members, although her eight sons and three daughters were now all adults. The third informant was Chao Yang (35 years old) who had lived in the United States with her spouse, four daughters, and two sons much longer (approximately 15 years), worked for wages outside of the home, but still sewed *paj ntaub* to decorate New Year and burial clothing for her family. Finally, two informants were younger women with young children, Hua (the translator) and Xee Moua. Xee was 22 years old, married, worked for wages outside the home, and cared for her four children, ages two to eight. The younger women struggled the most with finding time to sew because of their family and job or school responsibilities. However, they both believed in the importance of sewing to maintain cultural identity and continued to sew *paj ntaub* for New Year and burial clothing for their families despite their demanding schedules. As a group, these women sewed traditional reverse applique "flower cloths," more recent story cloths, "American" products such as aprons and bookmarks from traditional designs, and stitched *paj ntaub* as decorative art on clothing worn in Laos, Thailand, and in the United



*"Everyday Life in Laos" is a story cloth stitched by Yia Vang while a refugee in Thailand. The story cloth depicts Hmong people wearing traditional clothing and working together to harvest crops, process rice, and feed animals. Yia Vang is one of 1,500 Hmong now living in Oshkosh, Wisconsin.*

States. None of the women depended on sewing textile art for their main income, although three sold needlework when they could.

During the interviews I asked the women how they learned to sew, why they first learned, the types of sewing they had done and whom they sewed with while living in different countries, their views of their sewing, why they chose certain designs or colors, the amount of time needed to make specific pieces of textile art, the techniques needed to make different designs, the meanings of different designs, how their sewing changed when they lived in different places, what they sew now, how sewing fits into their everyday lives, and their views on sewing *paj ntaub* while living in the United States. I also requested and received permission to audiotape each interview. I hired a transcriptionist to transcribe the interview tapes which resulted in 123 pages of interview data. I analyzed the interview data for main themes and significant quotes to illustrate the themes. This analysis was integrated with my notes and analysis of main themes from the books and articles read. I developed three categories for organizing the main themes according to the changing purposes of textile art for the Hmong as they lived in three different countries: "Textile Art as Cultural Expression in Laos," "Textile Art for Economic Survival as Refugees in Thailand," and "Textile Art to Preserve Cultural Identity in the United States." In order to provide a check on my understanding of the main findings from the interviews and literature review, Hua Yang read and commented on a rough draft of my report. In the next section of the article, I will describe what I learned about the importance of textile art in the history and culture of the Hmong as they lived in Laos, Thailand, and the United States.

### **The Hmong: Among the Most Recent Immigrants to the United States**

The Hmong originally lived in central Siberia, then migrated to northern China as early as 2500 B.C. (Quincy, 1995). After centuries of persecution in China, in the mid-1800s, many Hmong families escaped to live in Vietnam, Thailand, and Laos. Most Hmong Americans lived in Laos where they settled around a large plateau called the Plain of Jars in the northern provinces. The Hmong were one of 60 ethnic groups in Laos, the largest being the lowland Lao or Lao Lum who often did not get along with the Hmong due to religious and agricultural differences. When the French invaded Southeast Asia at the end of the 19th century, Hmong leaders developed relationships with the French to gain power (Pfaff, 1995).

After World War II, Nationalist forces in French Indochina defeated the French colonial rulers. French control of Indochina collapsed in 1954. The Vietnamese celebrated the liberation of their country as the end of "colonialism" while the Americans described the defeat of the French as "Communist aggression." President Eisenhower sent advisors and materials to strengthen anti-Communist leaders in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. The United States helped fund the Royal Laotian Army and prohibited the

Communist Pathet Lao from legitimate participation in the country's governance. The Pathet Lao allied itself with the North Vietnamese who were supported by the Soviet Union and China. The North Vietnamese and their Laotian allies funneled supplies through Laos to South Vietnam along a network of trails known as the Ho Chi Minh Trail. President Kennedy ordered the Central Intelligence Agency to recruit a secret army of Laotian and Vietnamese highlanders to cut off these supplies. Hmong soldiers participated in the secret army by ambushing the Communist supply lines, guarding radar installations which guided United States bombers over North Vietnam, and acting as a front-line defense of Laos (Pfaff, 1995).

After the Americans withdrew from Vietnam in 1975, the Royal Lao government collapsed, the secret army disbanded, and American allies feared they would be targeted for revenge once the Communists came to power. Others fled the destruction of their homelands from the years of war. Over 100,000 Hmong escaped to Thailand from 1975 until 1992 while another 200,000 remained in Laos. In Thailand the Hmong lived temporarily in refugee camps until they believed it was safe to return to Laos or resettle in another country such as France, French Guyana, Australia, Canada, or the United States (Johnson & Yang, 1992; Pfaff, 1995).

### **Textile Art as Cultural Expression in Laos**

The Hmong created the social organization needed for survival in the mountainous areas of Laos. Ten to 30 families formed a small village to produce the necessary food, clothing, housing, and tools. The farming methods were labor intensive which required large families consisting of many children and several generations. Men were considered the head of families and leaders of villages (Pfaff, 1995; Quincy, 1995). The Hmong valued their families and family members supported and protected each other. Each person had a job to contribute to the family. Hmong children often learned what they needed to know to survive by observing and working along with their parents and elders (Johnson & Yang, 1992).

The Hmong also developed a migratory lifestyle due to their agricultural methods. They practiced "slash-and-burn" farming which included clearing trees in forested areas, hauling away large pieces of wood for building, and burning small branches to finish clearing the fields for planting. The ash from the fire provided the only fertilizer for the soil. The fields were usually located within a two-hour walk from the village and family members carried tools and harvested crops in baskets on their backs while wealthier families used horses. Every family member helped plant and harvest different kinds of rice, corn, squash, melon, tubers, sugar cane, yams, cucumbers, pumpkins, radishes, beans, onions, eggplant, bananas, different herbs and spices (Pfaff, 1995; Quincy, 1995; Vang & Lewis, 1990). These crops fed the family and their domestic animals: pigs, chickens, cows, and horses. The Hmong also planted poppy seeds for opium, the cash crop. Women and girls usually took care of the crops after planting, cared for the

animals, took care of children and the house, cooked, and sewed while men and boys hunted to extend the food supply. The Hmong made the simple farming, hunting, and food preparation tools they needed. After several years of "slash-and-burn" farming in one location, the soil's nutrients became depleted and new fields had to be created, eventually leading to the movement of the village closer to the fields. Because of these regular moves, the Hmong did not build large, permanent houses. Instead, they constructed functional, peaked-roof shelters with dirt floors consisting of one large multi-purpose room and one or two smaller rooms for sleeping. Women cooked over large earthen stoves and stored household utensils and bedding on planks fastened to rafters (Pfaff, 1995; Quincy, 1995). The migratory lifestyle discouraged the integration of visual arts in homes, but the creation of *paj ntaub* on clothing provided visual art and beauty in portable aspects of everyday life (Bessac, 1988).

Formal education was usually not part of the Hmong lifestyle due to their physical location. Most Hmong did not attend school because schools were often located far away from their mountainous villages. Families had to bear the significant cost of their children boarding away from home to attend school. Those families who could afford to, educated their sons, not their daughters (Goldstein, 1988). Of the five women I interviewed, all but Hua Yang, the interpreter, were school-age while living in Laos. Yia, Hua Xiong, and Xee never attended school at all. Xee remembered why she did not receive any formal education.

In Laos, the schools are all in one main city. Everybody from around here have to come to that one city. If you live really, really far, like two days away, and your parents don't send you, you can't go. Plus, usually only the guys went, not usually the girls. Very, very seldom would girls go. (Interview with Xee Moua, 6/16/95)

In contrast, during the Vietnam War, Chao and her family moved closer to a city in Laos and she completed the fourth grade there. The Hmong living in Laos until the 1950s were not literate in their first language. The Hmong language was only an oral language until American and French missionaries used the Romanized Popular Alphabet (RPA) system to develop a written representation of the Hmong language (Johnson & Yang, 1992; Pfaff, 1995). When Hmong children attended school, they often learned to speak, read, and write other languages such as Lao, Thai, and French (Roop & Roop, 1990). In contrast to Western views on literacy, many Hmong believed an oral culture was superior because printed words could be more easily destroyed than memorized words (Bessac, 1988).

Women and girls integrated artistic and cultural expression with daily life through sewing *paj ntaub* or decorative stitching onto clothing. *Paj ntaub* was a complex form of textile art using applique, reverse applique, cross



stitch, batik, and embroidery. Textile artists used several layers of cloth and incorporated different designs such as geometric, symbolic representations, and those based on the natural environment (Chan & Livo, 1990). For reverse applique designs, the artist cut a symmetrical, geometric design from a top fabric, turned it under, and stitched in place, leaving spaces for the contrasting background fabric to show. The design came from the interplay of the top and bottom fabrics. In contrast, applique involved sewing pieces of fabric onto a background with the design in the top fabric only (Soltow, 1991). Older sisters, mothers, and grandmothers taught their younger sisters, daughters, and granddaughters as young as three years old to sew. They often taught through modeling rather than through direct instruction (Peterson, 1988a). Girls spent years learning different patterns and developing various sewing skills to sew Hmong clothing by hand (MacDowell, 1989).

Three of the women I interviewed recalled learning to sew at a young age while living with their families in Laos. Hua Xiong remembered learning to sew when she was seven or eight years old. "My mother taught me. At first she would start the beginning of the pattern for me. Then I would keep going. If I had any questions, just ask and she'd help me" (Interview with Hua Xiong, 6/13/95). Girls had to learn to measure material precisely, have a steady hand, develop eye coordination, concentration, patience, and learn hundreds of patterns (Catlin & Swift, 1987). The best textile artists developed the ability to reproduce designs by looking at them, cutting designs without patterns, folding under edges, and using a small needle to sew tiny stitches (Peterson, 1988a; Roop & Roop, 1990). The first piece girls made was often a sash because it had a repeating pattern of alternating squares made from embroidery and reverse applique (Catlin & Swift, 1987). Young girls first learned counted cross stitch, then moved to chain, running, blanket, and satin stitches (Peterson, 1988a). Yia Vang recalled first learning to sew when she was nine years old beginning with counted cross stitch, then advancing to reverse applique techniques.

Chao Yang also remembered her mother and older sister teaching her to sew when Chao was five or six years old. Since her mother sewed and Chao knew she was going to grow up and become like her mother, she learned to sew as well. She learned to make different *paj ntaub* designs and different kinds of stitches for clothing. Chao explained why all girls learned to sew and the importance of *paj ntaub* designs on clothing.

It's been a tradition, what one generation did, the other ones do, to make each generation be connected to it. As each generation goes on, it picks up where the other generation left off. They don't know why, they just do it. Kids wouldn't defy tradition. Women could not wear a shirt without a design on it. Even if you are really, really poor, you have to get some design on the

collar [of a shirt]. You could not wear it without a design. (Interview with Chao Yang 6/12/95)

Hmong women and girls made all the clothing for their families. First, they stitched the *paj ntaub*, then sewed the clothes, then sewed the *paj ntaub* onto the clothing which were worn everyday. In contrast, in Xee Moua's secluded village, women and girls sewed clothes for their families, but did not create *paj ntaub* designs for clothing. They did little trading with outside groups who might have brought different fabrics, threads, or designs to their village.

The clothing the Hmong women and girls created also provided one means of cultural identification for the family. Each Hmong subgroup had distinctive clothing. When the Hmong originally lived in China, they were one group, but their subjugation by the Chinese led to division into several Hmong subgroups (Pfaff, 1995). The two main Hmong subgroups were the White Hmong and the Blue/Green or Colored Hmong. The White Hmong women wore black pants or white pleated skirts with embroidered aprons, and highly decorated shirts. The decorated collar piece on the shirt was worn with the design face up. The Blue/Green Hmong women wore colorful appliqued batik pleated skirts, long black aprons, and black shirts. The shirt's decorated collar piece was worn face down. Generally, women's clothing had more *paj ntaub* (textile art) while men's clothing was less elaborate (Vang & Lewis, 1990). Decorative needlework embellished hats, turbans, shirt sleeves, hems, belts, and collars (Peterson, 1988a).

Women and older girls were responsible for sewing and decorating clothing as well as working in the fields, feeding families and domestic animals, and caring for young children. They might sew late at night or during the rainy season. "If it is rainy, then we [my mother, three older sisters, and I] would sit down together and rest and sew. Sometimes we just carry the sewing when we do the gardening and farm. We sit down in the grass and sew" (Interview with Chao Yang, 6/12/95). Hua Xiong recalled sitting on small stools with her mother and two sisters to sew. "We do have day similar to Saturday and Sunday where we have a rest. We would do our sewing then or if it would rain so hard that we couldn't go outside, we would do our sewing" (Interview with Hua Xiong 6/13/95).

Not only was clothing made for everyday wear, but it was a custom to make new clothes for everyone in the family by the New Year which was celebrated after all the crops were harvested around December. Several believed it would bring bad luck to wear old clothes at the New Year festival (Chan & Livo, 1990). Some Hmong might have more than one new outfit to select the best for New Year's and others might have only one new outfit which they wore every day after New Year as well. During the New Year celebration different Hmong subgroups came together, each wearing their distinctive clothing. For three days to two weeks, the Hmong ate, played games and musical instruments, sang, and courted. Pigs and chick-

ens were killed and cooked and harvested crops were prepared for the special New Year dinner. Older girls and boys from different clans met their mates through the courting game of ball tossing (Roop & Roop, 1990). When girls were old enough to sew all their own clothing, the *paj ntaub* on their clothing let their prospective parents-in-law assess the girls' character, creativity, and willingness to work hard by the quality of the needlework (Peterson, 1988a). Another incentive for girls to learn to sew well was the improvement of their prospects for marriage. "Someone who knows how to sew tends to get a better husband and have more chances of getting a husband" (Interview with Hua Xiong, 6/13/95).

Textile art was part of the life cycle for the Hmong living in Laos. In addition to sewing *paj ntaub* for clothes, Hmong women integrated different designs in baby carriers made for their grandchildren. Baby carriers enabled mothers to carry their young babies on their backs and the designs guarded the babies from unfriendly spirits (Peterson, 1988b; Pfaff, 1995). Girls received a trousseau of clothes decorated with needlework from their parents when they married. Daughters and daughters-in-law stitched funeral or burial clothes embellished with textile art for their parents and parents-in-law (Chan & Livo, 1990). It was a strong tradition in Laos for the Hmong to be buried with funeral clothes decorated with needlework which showed the deceased was well respected and loved and the design made them recognizable to their ancestors in the next world (Catlin & Swift, 1987). Women made these clothes well in advance of the death of their relatives. The death costume might include a white robe from head to ankle, skirt, shirt, uniquely designed *paj ntaub* as shirt collars or pillow covers, and additional *paj ntaub* on top of the body (Chan & Livo, 1990). Pillow covers or large collars on the funeral clothes supported the deceased's head as the body was carried from the bier to the grave (Bessac, 1988). The funeral clothes might vary among different Hmong subgroups and men's clothing might be more elaborate than women's (Catlin & Swift, 1987). At the time of the interviews, both Chao Yang and Xee Moua were sewing burial clothes for family members. Chao was using the reverse applique technique to create what she described as a "worm" pattern, but what other writers labeled as a "dreaming maze" pattern often used on the collars of White Hmong burial clothes (Livo & Cha, 1991). Xee was completing the crossed stitch embroidery for a burial shirt and skirt.

In addition to sewing needlework designs on everyday, New Year, wedding, and burial clothing and baby carriers, Hmong women created small needlework squares which might be similar to what became known as reverse applique "flower cloths." These needlework squares were often gifts exchanged through rituals among family members. When a girl married, her mother may give her and her new husband a *paj ntaub* as a going-away present. The parents of the son-in-law may also give the daughter's mother a *paj ntaub*. The children reciprocated by giving traditional needle-

work squares to their parents and in-laws (Livo & Cha, 1991; Vang & Lewis, 1990).

Sewing as cultural expression and the agricultural lifestyle of the Hmong in Laos were disrupted by the Vietnam War. The Hmong assisted the United States soldiers, the Royal Laotian Army, and South Vietnamese soldiers in fighting against the North Vietnamese. By 1972, the war had claimed more than 10,000 Hmong soldiers and perhaps twice as many civilians. The war destroyed Hmong homes and farmlands, North Vietnamese soldiers forced families to flee, and families moved to more central areas of Laos, sometimes escaping to the jungles and living in temporary, crude shelters (Pfaff, 1995).

When the Americans withdrew from Vietnam in 1975, it caused panic among the Hmong who feared reprisal from the Communists once they came to power. From 1975 through 1992, more than 100,000 Hmong escaped across the Mekong River into Thailand while approximately 200,000 Hmong remained in Laos. Communist soldiers patrolled the Mekong River banks to impede the Hmong escape efforts. Those Hmong with no financial resources paddled across on makeshift bamboo rafts which frequently sank. Others tried to swim and many drowned. Those Hmong with a little money purchased inner tubes to float across and wealthier people hired river boatmen to take them across the Mekong River. Almost half of the Hmong who tried to escape to Thailand died enroute (Pfaff, 1995; Roop & Roop, 1990).

### **Textile Art for Economic Survival as Refugees in Thailand**

For those Hmong successfully arriving in Thailand, their struggle to survive continued once they entered a refugee camp. Refugee camps were established after 1975 at Chiang Kham, Ban Nam Yao, Nong Khai, Ban Napho, Loei, and Ban Vinai, where the women I interviewed had lived. The camps were extremely crowded with two or three families sharing a bamboo hut ten-feet square, cooking collectively, and sleeping in shifts. Illnesses and deaths resulted from overcrowding, poor sanitation, and malnutrition (Pfaff, 1995). About 50,000 Hmong who stayed in the refugee camps were reluctant to leave to resettle in another country because they hoped they could return to Laos. The refugee camps were a temporary residence for the Hmong, although many remained there for over a decade (Peterson, 1988c). Three of the women I interviewed lived in Ban Vinai only two or three years while Xee Moua lived there six years and Yia Vang lived there for 12 years. Although women and children were in the majority in the camps, women had little voice in the running of the camps (Cha & Small, 1994).

Life in Thailand's refugee camps provided the Hmong with opportunities to expand and integrate their textile art skills with their cultural knowledge to meet their economic needs (Peterson, 1988c). The Hmong arrived at the camps with few possessions and little money which was spent in

crossing the Mekong River and then on food and shelter in the camps (Pfaff, 1995). The Hmong had leisure time for sewing because most did not farm or care for animals while in the camps. They needed a method of earning income which the women's textile art tradition filled (Peterson, 1988b). Xee Moua learned to sew *paj ntaub* in Thailand while a relatively young girl of nine years of age. "We started to sew because we got paid for what we were doing. So we had to make some income for our family, and that was the only way to do it" (Interview with Xee Moua, 6/16/95). Since no one in Xee's village in Laos had sewed *paj ntaub* on clothing, Xee also learned these stitches and techniques in Thailand. During this period in the refugee camps, sewing changed from solely "women's work" to "women's and men's work." Hmong men became involved primarily because sewing became an important economic function (Cha & Small, 1994) or they assumed some of the cooking and childcare responsibilities so their wives could sew full-time. "All the women sewed and some men, if they wanted to sew. My husband know how. Some children ten years old would sew" (Interview with Xee Moua, 6/16/95).

Not only did the Hmong sew for income, but they also continued the tradition of sewing clothes for the New Year. Even though the Hmong began to adopt the clothing styles of the Thai, they continued to make and wear traditional clothing and celebrate the New Year while they lived in the refugee camps. The New Year clothing itself changed as Hmong from different subgroups lived and sewed together and borrowed aspects of their clothing from each other (Vang & Lewis, 1990). Xee explained how sewing textile art for economic survival overshadowed the time spent on maintaining culture through sewing New Year clothing.

If there was a New Year approaching, we made *paj ntaub* for wearing. Other than that, we made *paj ntaub* for selling. During the regular year, we made *paj ntaub* every day. We did it all the time. There was no Saturday or Sunday rest. We did it all day. During the New Year, we have a custom where you cannot sew or spend money or do any work for three days. We rest for three straight days, without touching the needle, without spending any money at all. That's just the custom. The old people have always passed it down like that. (Interview with Xee Moua, 6/16/95)

Yia Vang also spent considerable time sewing in Thailand and her oldest daughter, Mai Xiong, learned to sew as most young Hmong girls nine years old and older did. Yia said she could either sew or cook food to sell at the open market as a way of earning enough money to feed her family. "We sew until it's dark. I don't really take care of the children or house. I sew all day. This is my job, my husband helps me" (Interview with Yia Vang 6/9/95).

Sewing techniques and styles changed to appeal to Western markets while the Hmong lived in Thailand. At first textile artists continued the reverse applique style in abstract designs such as elephant's foot, spider web, or snail *paj ntaub* patterns, or "flower cloths." However, these designs did not sell as well as they hoped, so relief workers at the refugee camps suggested Hmong textile artists adapt traditional designs and use muted colors of gray, beige, and blue in new products rather than continue the bright colors the Hmong preferred when they sewed for themselves. Hmong textile artists began to integrate traditional reverse applique designs or cross stitch embroidery patterns on such Western products as bedspreads, pillow covers, aprons, bookmarks, and wall hangings (Roop & Roop, 1990). These were products the Hmong never used personally in Laos or Thailand, especially since most Hmong were not literate and possessed very simple household possessions. They were familiar to middle-class Americans, however, and often used by them. By creating a bedspread with eight panels of the reverse applique elephant's foot design, Hmong textile artists revealed their creativity and adaptability in sewing on a significantly larger scale than the six-inch needlework squares given as gifts among family members in Laos (Peterson, 1988b).

Reverse applique designs were one of the most difficult to learn, and Hmong textile artists continued to use precision cutting, invisible stitching, symmetry, and balance in their textile art in new products integrating these designs (Peterson, 1988b). Yia Vang explained why this type of sewing was so challenging.

Only the older women know how to make these [reverse applique flower cloths]. It's much harder to learn, harder on the eye. You have to fold really carefully so it won't have a crease. It's a lot of bowing your head and really working on it. I can get one of these [flower cloths] done in about one day if I work all day. So people don't attempt it anymore. There are not a lot of people who can do this anymore. (Interview with Yia Vang, 6/9/95)

In the late 1970s the Hmong began to create a new form of textile art, story cloths, with embroidered figures, animals, and scenery (Peterson, 1988c). These were called *paj ntaub dab neej* or "flower cloths of the people, customs, and traditions" or translated simply as "story cloths." (MacDowell, 1989; Peterson, 1988a). Story cloths became a significant means of recording aspects of Hmong history and culture comprehensible to a broader audience. Good story cloths communicated to Hmong as well as nonHmong, illustrated aesthetic standards of style, sewing techniques, and details, and revealed the truth (Peterson, 1988c). Stitching story cloths was not as technically difficult as the reverse applique style and cross-stitch embroidery for clothing, but some artists felt sewing story cloths was boring, exhausting, time consuming, led to eye strain, and muscle and back

aches (Cha & Small, 1994; Peterson, 1988a). Yia Vang said if she sewed all day, she could stitch the figures on a story cloth in one and one-half days and complete the border in another two or three days.

Various aspects of Hmong culture and history were recorded in thread including: everyday life; religious or social ceremonies; flora and fauna; folktales, myths, and legends; and war, escape, and dispersal in refugee camps and other countries (MacDowell, 1989; Peterson 1988c). One main theme of story cloths was everyday life in Laos which might portray women and men wearing traditional clothing near typical houses they lived in with their families, working together growing and harvesting different foods, processing food for eating, using tools for farming and preparing food, and raising animals. A second theme of story cloths was religious and social ceremonies such as the New Year celebration. These story cloths might portray rituals to ensure good luck for the New Year, different Hmong sub-groups wearing traditional clothing, betting on fighting bulls, feasting on different foods, and playing the courting game of ball tossing. Another theme of story cloths was the flora and fauna of Laos. Some of the animals were stitched in colors resembling real animals. "In Laos, we never saw a white bear, so I would never sew a white bear. We sew from our knowledge" (Interview with Yia Vang, 6/9/95). However, other animals on story cloths appeared to be stitched in colors to add to the beauty of the cloth (pink deer, blue rhinoceroses, pink and blue squirrels, and multicolored, exotic birds) rather than provide authentic portrayals of animals in Laos. At times, real and mythical animals such as dinosaurs and dragons were integrated on story cloths (Bessac, 1988).

A fourth theme of story cloths was folktales, myths, and legends. Since the first English translations of Hmong stories were folktales, folktales came to be illustrated in story cloths. A weakness of these story cloths was their highly condensed versions of folktales traditionally passed from generation to generation orally. Very long stories were reduced to a few scenes and phrases and key elements were omitted. The danger of folktales becoming summarized in story cloths remained in their replacement rather than supplementing the oral forms which might prevent people from learning the full stories (MacDowell, 1989).

A final story cloth theme was war/escape/dispersal. These story cloths might show North Vietnamese or Communist soldiers forcing the Hmong from their homes in Laos, soldiers shooting at and killing each other, planes dropping explosives on Hmong houses, the Hmong escaping with their animals and hiding in temporary shelters, crossing the Mekong River in boats, on bamboo rafts, or using inner tubes as flotation devices, and being directed to refugee camps in Thailand.

Story cloths provided significant records of primarily an oral culture, but how they began in the refugee camps in Thailand was unclear, although several theories have been posited as explanations. One theory was that Hmong women in the Ban Nam Yao refugee camp in 1977 began creating

*paj ntaub* spontaneously (MacDowell, 1989). Another theory was that the Flowery Mia group from China brought this tradition with them when they immigrated from China to Thailand about 1980. They often made cloths with large, single animals portrayed which Hmong textile artists borrowed (Bessac, 1988; MacDowell, 1989). A third theory was that the Chao Fa group in the Ban Vinai refugee camp developed an archive of Hmong lore and trained young men in music and arts. Perhaps the members of this movement were behind the making of story cloths since they were concerned with reinventing and resystematizing Hmong culture (Bessac, 1988). A fourth theory states that Hmong who had moved to the United States and were homesick for their homeland suggested their relatives remaining in refugee camps create stitched scenes from the old life, their escape from Laos, myths, and stories (Bessac, 1988; MacDowell, 1989). A fifth theory focused on relief workers such as those from the Christian and Missionary Alliance organization living in the camp who encouraged the Hmong to sew and sell pictorial *paj ntaub* depicting traditional Hmong culture which would appeal to Western Europeans and Americans customers (Peterson, 1988a, 1988c; MacDowell, 1989).

Ideas for story cloth themes came from camp workers, textile marketers, needle artists themselves, relatives who resettled in other countries, Bible stories, children's books, and English as a Second Language texts (MacDowell, 1989). Because artists could see each other's work or might make many of the same drawings, many story cloths were similar (Bessac, 1988; Peterson, 1988a). In the creation of story cloths, women and men worked together. A small number of male artists created the designs for the story cloths by using pencils, pens, or chalk to draw the designs on cloth which were then stitched by women and men needle artists. The needle artists used satin, chain, or straight stitch embroidery to complete the designs, but retained control over the colors of thread used, background fabric used, and the degree to which they followed the drawings (MacDowell, 1989; Peterson, 1988b). The only woman I interviewed who made story cloths was Yia Vang who obtained drawings on cloth from male artists in Thailand which she stitched. The completed story cloths retained some aesthetic standards and creativity of the needleworker. Most artists had some education or studied art in a camp program for men only, so frequently used a left to right horizontal orientation, put people and animals in profile, and made the characters active. They occasionally used printed captions or copied drawings from other artists with more skills (Peterson, 1988a, 1988b, 1988c).

At times, male artists gave their drawings to relatives to stitch and everyone participated in the profit from the sale of the finished story cloths. In other cases, male artists sold their penciled cloths to needleworkers for \$2 to \$20 (1980s prices) and the needleworkers retained the profits. In yet a third circumstance, someone commissioned artists to create particular drawings or tell them a story to be drawn, then located needle artists to stitch



the designs, and purchased the completed story cloths to resell (Peterson, 1988c). Yia Vang said sometimes someone purchased drawings from an artist, gave to her to sew, then sent the finished story cloths to relatives in the United States who sold them and returned the money to Thailand. Some story cloths also contained stitched English captions, but most Hmong did not know English and could not understand the English captions they sewed on their art. However, these English captions may help English-speaking audiences understand what the artist hoped to communicate (MacDowell, 1989; Vang & Lewis, 1990).

The process of sewing changed while the Hmong lived in the refugee camps in Thailand. In Laos women usually sewed only with other female family members whereas in Thailand sewing became more communal. Women (and perhaps men) often came together to sew and talk. They usually sat on low stools with no hoop or stretcher to hold their sewing (MacDowell, 1989). Yia especially remembered sewing with other women.

You had a bunch of ladies together and everybody sews, and it was like a competition, too, to see who gets done the fastest. After breakfast is done, the women would get together with their friends outside under a tree or sit on the steps in the shade and sew and talk. Once you do get a lot of ladies together, time really passes by because it is fun talking and discussing stuff. Even the little kids, like my daughter here in Thailand was actually sewing, because you get paid for doing it. It's a little income. It encourages people to do more. It was fun. Your hands were working as fast as they can, but your mouth was also working fast. The days went by really fast. Hmong people tend to stick together and do things together. Even if my friends or acquaintances don't come to me, I'll go to them [to sew]. As we sewed, maybe we would talk about the *paj ntaub* or our past life in Laos or how we were when we were younger. At first sewing together started with close friends, but as you get people moving into Thailand maybe a bunch of girls will invite the newcomer to join, so it gets bigger. (Interview with Yia Vang, 6/9/95)

As young girls joined the group, they learned different sewing techniques and designs. Xee Moua had similar experiences of sitting with other women and those who knew how to sew different *paj ntaub* designs taught those who did not know those designs. They usually sat outside for the light, joked around, talked, competed, and encouraged each other to sew more and sew better.

The significance of story cloths has remained in their storytelling and narrative form for Hmong as well as nonHmong. Story cloths could become pedagogical tools for teaching Hmong children who never lived in Laos or Thailand what life was like in those countries for the Hmong. Story

cloths could also help build connections between diverse people in the United States and Hmong Americans by illustrating aspects of Hmong history and culture for different audiences to understand (Peterson, 1988c). Each story cloth was a text or collection of essays of experiences and commentaries telling about the lives and struggles of the Hmong (Peterson, 1988c). In addition, story cloths were a valuable source of folk history and provided a personal as well as a communal narrative about everyday life or an important event created by people who frequently did not know a written language (MacDowell, 1989). Story cloths could also be described as a form of assimilationist art because artists portrayed traditional life in an accessible, figurative style (Peterson, 1988c). Even more importantly, story cloths might be a form of advocacy art which publicized the traditions and plight of the Hmong people, portrayed Hmong perspectives on Hmong history and culture, and pleaded for understanding from nonHmong people (Bessac, 1988). War, escape, and dispersal story cloths especially reminded Western audiences what sacrifices the Hmong made after helping the United States in the Vietnam War and why they deserved assistance. For the Hmong who have been a marginal group of people wherever they lived, story cloths represented an artistic response to oppression and an act of standing up for themselves against domination (MacDowell, 1989).

Since story cloths were created mainly for economic survival, Hmong textile artists utilized different avenues for selling their products. One was through booths set up around the perimeters of the refugee camps to display sewing for sale to occasional camp visitors or Bangkok and Chiang Mai merchants who visited the camps to buy in volume. Other avenues for selling textile art were through relief organizations' international marketing networks or through the Hmong themselves sending shipments of *paj ntaub* to their relatives in the United States to sell and return the money to the textile artists. Families living in the United States advised the needleworkers what the consumers liked. Story cloths and other textile art began to be exported to the United States in the late 1970s. Unfortunately, women and men needle artists were paid approximately half of what the cloths sold for in the United States, \$2.00 or \$3.00 for small pieces (3' square) and \$400.00 for the largest (110" x 90") (Peterson, 1988c). Large story cloths might take three or four months to make and represented an investment of 500 hours (Chan & Livo, 1990). One woman reported spending three months finishing one or two pieces and earned only about \$20.00 for each piece. Lamentably, even diligent embroiderers might earn only \$1.00 a day (Cha & Small, 1994).

### **Textile Art to Preserve Cultural Identity in the United States**

After their migration to the United States, the Hmong continued to struggle to survive economically and culturally in a significantly new environment. In 1980, more than 20,000 Hmong moved to the United States

and now there are approximately 100,000 to 120,000 Hmong living in this country (Chan & Livo, 1990; Johnson & Yang, 1992). At first, the Hmong's most pressing needs were finding housing, food, and clothing, then they could focus on learning English, obtaining basic education, and finding employment (Johnson & Yang, 1992). Surviving economically and culturally continues as a concern today. The Hmong remain among the poorest citizens in the United States (Hein, 1996; Paisano, 1993) and cultural conflicts are increasing between first generation and later generation Hmong. As Hmong children become more socialized into prevailing norms, values, and behaviors through schooling, they often question children's traditional role of helping the family and the custom of extended family members living together (J. Jari, personal communication, October 30, 1996). Part of the strength of the Hmong to survive in different environments in the past often came from family and clan cohesiveness. Balancing the need for education and the resulting socialization changes in children and youth with the need for maintaining cultural identity is a significant challenge for the Hmong today.

In the past, Hmong textile artists helped preserve Hmong culture and survive economically by sewing *paj ntaub* to wear and to sell. These were primarily women's and girls' roles in Laos and Thailand, significant contributions within Hmong patriarchal culture. In the United States, Hmong girls especially experience conflicting messages about their role. Hmong families often value education and want their children to become educated to help them survive in society and obtain good jobs, but they also want their daughters to fulfill responsibilities at home in cooking, cleaning, and child care, and reproduce the Hmong community through marriage and children (Goldstein, 1988). Within the local community, many Hmong families now encourage their daughters to finish high school, although they also might encourage early marriage (J. Jari, personal communication, October 30, 1996). Most of the Hmong women I interviewed had limited education, except for Hua Yang who completed K-12 education in the United States and was presently attending college to become a teacher. Xee Moua graduated from high school after migrating to the United States while Chao Yang, Yia Vang, and Hua Xiong all took some English as a Second Language classes at a technical school. Chao and Xee spoke some English while Yia and Hua Xiong spoke very little. All five women were committed to and contributed to preserving the Hmong culture through marriage, rearing children, and creating *paj ntaub* for traditional New Year and burial clothing. Most faced additional responsibilities of contributing economically to their families through paid employment, which increased their power in the family, disrupted traditional gender roles, but limited time for creating textile art for preserving Hmong culture. Since creating textile art now largely serves to preserve Hmong culture and heritage, it has again become "women's work." Few Hmong men in the United States have been able to support their families on their wages and most families struggled

economically (Goldstein, 1988). Sometimes women worked in low-paying jobs such as hotel maids while their husbands stayed home and cared for children. This change in roles has been stressful for the men who are used to being the family leader (Livo & Cha, 1991).

If Hmong women could earn a viable income through creating and selling *paj ntaub*, they could meet their economic needs while preserving Hmong culture. However, most Hmong textile artists in the United States have been unable to earn much money through the sale of *paj ntaub* even in items designed for American customers (Fass, 1986). Needle artists might earn only the minimum hourly wage in the sale of their textile art, which did not lead to economic independence (Scott, 1992). Increasingly, women discouraged their daughters from sewing *paj ntaub* as their main income (Peterson, 1988a). Most of the women I interviewed did not create textile art as a significant means of earning money, although Hua Xiong made small items like turtle pin cushions and book marks to sell from her home and Yia Vang continued to sell flower cloths, story cloths, coasters, and aprons with traditional design she made while living in Thailand from her home as well. Other small groups of Hmong women from surrounding communities sold traditional flower cloths and story cloths in their booths at local art fairs each summer. They also applied these reverse applique and embroidered designs on items produced to appeal to local, non-Hmong customers such as clerical stoles, table runners, hot pads, t-shirts, and sweat shirts. Most women stayed home creating textile art and caring for children while their spouses worked for wages. The sale of their needlework supplemented the family income.

A growing concern among the Hmong is that the unique textile art may be a dying art since young women today generally are doing less sewing than they might if they lived in Laos or Thailand. Story cloths and reverse applique "flower cloths" are being made less and less by Hmong textile artists in the United States (MacDowell, 1989). When Hmong women living in this country become too busy to create traditional New Year clothing, they might purchase the clothing from artists living in refugee camps who can sew full-time (Peterson, 1988a, 1988b). Additionally, textile artists from the refugee camps in Thailand have been the main creators of story cloths and flower cloths, but these camps were scheduled to close in 1996 (Haas, 1996). Since girls and women in the United States are attending school longer, engaging in part-time work outside the home, and finding more lucrative employment than sewing and selling their textile art, they have less time to practice the traditional art of sewing *paj ntaub* (Vang & Lewis, 1990). However, sewing New Year clothing and celebrating the traditional New Year are still very important to the Hmong. The Hmong can visit each other's communities, young people can meet other young people and possibly their life mate, the Hmong can continue a cultural tradition, and celebrate being Hmong (Peterson, 1988a, 1988b).

The women I interviewed faced conflicting demands on their time. Xee Moua juggled a full-time factory job, caring for her four children including helping them with homework, taking care of a vegetable garden in the summer, and cooking, along with sewing *paj ntaub* for New Year and burial clothing. These pressures limited Xee's sewing to winters and week-ends. Even though it took Xee two months to embroider the *paj ntaub* for a jacket and skirt, she valued creating traditional New Year clothing for her family and wanted her daughters to learn to sew.

It is important because when they [my children] get older and see an outfit they like, it would be better if they could make it, so they don't depend on me to make it. If they don't know how to make it, once they get older and get married, if they don't know how to make it, slowly it will die. If they don't keep it up, our children will not know what it is to be Hmong. The children will become more Americanized, they won't have anything to hold on to. They won't have anything that is Hmong. (Interview with Xee Moua, 6/16/95)

Hua Yang learned to sew as a young child in the United States, but began to sew more *paj ntaub* for New Year clothing for her children after she married and became a parent. She also confined her sewing to the summers when she was not attending college full-time. During the school year and the summer, Hua worked part-time as a translator for the local school district which she added to the constant demands of housework and child care. Hua's daughters were interested in learning to sew, liked wearing traditional Hmong clothing, and preferred it to "American" clothing. Their enthusiasm for and appreciation of the New Year clothing Hua made and Hua's anticipation of a completed New Year outfit motivated her to sew. "It's more relaxing [to sew]. It gives me time to stop and think. I guess what keeps me going is that I want to see it completed. I want to see the whole thing finished to see what it looks like" (Interview with Hua Yang, 6/20/95).

Hua Xiong, like many older Hmong women, had more time for textile art and was often more skillful, but her declining eyesight, stiff hands, and the physical discomfort of sitting and sewing for long periods of time limited her sewing. Yet Hua continued to create *paj ntaub*, wearing glasses and sewing primarily in the winter. As an accomplished textile artist, Hua continued to create new designs all sewn by hand for New Year clothing, especially elaborate hats. She was very committed to preserving Hmong culture through textile art and found new materials through relatives living in California to make new hat designs.

I do it for my grandchildren. I want them to have it, that's why I keep sewing, not for my own children, but for my grandchild-

dren. I want to have something to give to my grandchildren. Someday when I'm no longer here, I want my grandchildren to know these are from me. I want to leave something behind, something made by my own hand. I want to keep that tradition, that's why I keep sewing and I remember. (Interview with Hua Xiong, 6/13/95)

Hua contributed to the dynamic nature of *paj ntaub* on Hmong clothing and wanted others to as well. "I hope Hmong people come up with new and more ideas for sewing and find ways to keep the tradition alive, so the sewing doesn't die out" (Interview with Hua Xiong, 6/20/95).

Chao Yang continued to sew New Year and burial clothes as a hobby despite the challenges of child care, housework, gardening, and a full-time job in a factory. However, Chao struggled with the additional obstacles of her own lack of enjoyment for sewing and her children's dislike for wearing Hmong New Year clothing. "It's [sewing's] not like anything I'd really like doing. There are other things I'd like doing, too. But I feel I have to because each child should have some *paj ntaub* so they remember their custom, so they know they're Hmong" (Interview with Chao Yang, 6/12/95).

Creating traditional New Year clothing has been eased by the availability of necessary sewing supplies from two "Hmong" stores owned and operated by Hmong people in the community. The Oriental Grocery Store was first established in 1985 to sell grocery items, especially rice. In 1993 it was expanded to sell clothing, sewing supplies for New Year outfits, and finished bedspreads, coasters, purses, and jacket collars made by Hmong still living in refugee camps in Thailand. The owners began selling fabrics as a service to the Hmong community since Hmong women found it difficult to find the fabrics they wanted for New Year clothing from local "American" fabric stores.

All of the Hmong women I interviewed had taught, were in the process of teaching, or were planning to teach their daughters to create *paj ntaub* for traditional Hmong clothing. Some daughters were very interested in sewing; others were not. At first they were learning cross-stitch embroidery for parts of the New Year clothing. Yia Vang explained why it was important for the next generation to learn Hmong textile art.

I wish the kids in the near future will know how to sew. I wish there was some way I can transfer what I know in my head so the kids know how to do it. If it keeps up the way it is now, eventually, sewing *paj ntaub* will die out and people won't know it. And when I get older, I can't see to be able to show them how to do it. I want my daughters to know, when I pass away, that sewing is our Hmong custom and they should pass that down to their kids. If I don't teach them, then when I pass away, that

skill will pass away with me. Then they won't know that sewing is part of the Hmong people. (Interview with Yia Vang, 6/30/95)

From this research I developed a greater respect for and understanding of the Hmong's dedication to maintaining their cultural identity through creating *paj ntaub* while living in three different countries as "minority" people with limited power and status. The changing nature of *paj ntaub* also illustrates the dynamic nature of culture and the Hmong people's abilities to adapt to different circumstances while still striving to maintain their unique identity. As one of 60 ethnic groups in Laos, the *paj ntaub* on clothing distinguished the Hmong from other groups and revealed the complexity of Hmong culture when traditional, Western indicators of complex cultures such as written language, formal educational structures, modern communication and transportation, and advanced technology were limited. As refugees in Thailand, the Hmong not only maintained their cultural identity by continuing to create *paj ntaub* for New Year's clothing, but they also created a new form of textile art through story cloths which helped them to survive economically and record history and culture for themselves and other people throughout the world. Through story cloths, Hmong textile artists foster a greater understanding and empathy for the challenges Hmong people have faced throughout their history. Finally, after the Hmong immigrated to the United States, they continued to maintain their cultural identity by sewing *paj ntaub* for New Year and burial clothing, although Hmong textile artists have experienced little success in making a living wage from sewing. As a way of introducing this new knowledge to students, I used examples of textile arts created by Hmong women to encourage students to learn more about Hmong culture and history as well as women's experiences and perspectives regarding their culture.

### **Teaching Hmong History and Culture Through Textile Art**

During my research, I purchased several examples of textile arts created by the Hmong women I interviewed and women selling textile arts at a local art fair. The samples included story cloths, reverse applique "flower cloths," and clothing such as sweat shirts and t-shirts decorated with *paj ntaub*. Through these purchases I hoped not only to acquire examples of beautiful textile art to use as teaching tools about Hmong history and culture, but also to provide some economic support for Hmong families and their textile art. With permission, I took photographs of four of the women I interviewed (one woman declined to be photographed) and examples of their textile art. I also received permission to photograph two displays of Hmong textile art at a local art fair and the sewing supplies for making traditional clothing to celebrate the Hmong New Year sold through a local, Hmong-owned grocery and clothing store. Over 50 slides were prepared

from these photographs and I wrote a script to elaborate on the slides by integrating main ideas about Hmong life in Laos, Thailand, and the United States from published resources and interviews and illustrative quotations from the interviews.

The slide presentation served as the primary pedagogical tool to introduce students to Hmong history and culture during the fall semester, 1995. However, additional instructional activities were included to engage students in learning. Prior to the class session, I asked students to complete a brief reading on the history of the Hmong and the textile art they created (Roop & Roop, 1990) and write informally about the reading through the "believing" and "doubting" game (Elbow, 1973). This writing strategy encouraged students to "believe" the authors and explain their main ideas, but also to critically analyze the authors by "doubting" their intentions, research methods, or main ideas.

Before students arrived in class, I developed a classroom display of several story cloths, reverse applique "flower cloths," numerous texts on Hmong history and culture suitable for children and as teacher resources, and wore a sweat shirt embellished with a small story cloth showing animals in Laos. During the class session I introduced these materials and used the samples to explain the difference between story cloths and reverse applique "flower cloths." Students also were able to examine the needlework and texts. Hua Yang, the translator for the research, was introduced to the class and served as a guest speaker to elaborate on the slides and photographs, show examples of traditional New Year's clothing and a baby carrier she had used with her own daughters, and respond to students' questions.

As an introductory activity to encourage involvement and interest in learning about Hmong history and culture, I designed an inquiry activity with 8" x 10" photographs of six different story cloths. Students were divided into six small, cooperative groups. One group studied a photograph of a story cloth showing a map of Laos divided into different provinces. People from different ethnic groups wearing distinctive, traditional clothing were stitched near the province in which they lived. Two groups observed photographs of two different story cloths showing everyday life in Laos including harvesting crops and preparing food. A fourth group examined a photograph of a very detailed story cloth depicting the many activities involved in celebrating the Hmong New Year. A fifth group focused on a photograph of a story cloth showing Hmong and North Vietnamese soldiers fighting and killing each other while planes were dropping bombs overhead. The last group concentrated on a photograph of a story cloth which depicted the Hmong fleeing from their homes in Laos while North Vietnamese soldiers were shooting at them, Hmong families escaping across the Mekong River, and arriving at refugee camps in Thailand. The students observed carefully the photograph of one story cloth



and individually wrote one thing they noticed in the story cloth. Then as a small group, they discussed and recorded responses to these questions:

1. What do you think is going on in the story cloth?
2. What is the artist trying to represent?
3. Why do you think the artist created this story cloth?
4. What did you learn from the story cloth?

Following the small group discussions, group members showed the photograph of their story cloth to the class and explained their interpretation of it. Hua and I extended the students' interpretations with any additional knowledge we could contribute. At the close of all the activities, I asked students to write about what they learned about the Hmong, which activities dealing with Hmong history and culture were especially valuable and why, and what suggestions they had for improving class activities to increase their learning about Hmong history and culture. Students' responses are described in the next section.

My goals for what students would gain from these different activities were linked to the multicultural, reconstructionist approach to the course (Janzen, 1995; Sleeter & Grant, 1994). I was endeavoring to include Hmong women's and men's experiences and perspectives; value Hmong culture, beliefs, and ways of life; portray the oppression the Hmong experienced in different countries as well as how the Hmong survived; and encourage equal interaction among the Hmong and diverse people. Since my experiences with students and community members in the past revealed a lack of knowledge about why the Hmong migrated to the United States, first of all I wanted students to learn more about the history of the Hmong and what led to their escape from Laos and resettlement in the United States. Perhaps the students would begin to speak out when they heard others expressing misconceptions and prejudicial comments about reasons for the Hmong presence in their communities.

Second, I wanted the students to empathize with the hardships the Hmong endured due to their support for the United States during the Vietnam War and the struggles the Hmong continue to face in the United States. Unfortunately, the lack of understanding and empathy in the local community has led to criticisms of the Hmong obtaining welfare benefits and English as a Second Language services in schools.

Third, I hoped the students would understand and appreciate the complexity of Hmong culture, the ways of life, values, beliefs, and intricate textile art and how these were integral to the survival of the Hmong in different settings. Through understanding and appreciating the Hmong culture, I hoped students would begin to view the Hmong as complex, strong, and resilient people in both Laos and the United States and not relegate the Hmong to victim roles.

Finally, I wanted the students to understand the importance of textile art in providing a significant representation of history and culture for the Hmong as well as other cultures. By “reading” and studying Hmong story cloths especially, we can learn more about the history and culture of the Hmong. Textile art is often created by women in a number of different cultures which provides a means of understanding that culture and women’s experiences. I hoped the students’ teaching about numerous social studies topics or concepts would be influenced by the new knowledge and appreciation they gained about the Hmong and textile art in general.

### **The Potential of Textile Arts as an Instructional Tool**

Students’ positive responses to the use of textile arts as a means of learning about the Hmong in our social studies methods class reflect the possibilities of this medium as a teaching tool. I could observe students’ interest and engagement in our class session with the various activities focusing on textile art, and their written evaluations of the class activities verified my observations. When students responded to my question of what were the most important ideas they learned from the class activities, the most frequent responses disclosed that students understood that story cloths were reminders of Hmong history and that sewing was important to this cultural group. Overall, students’ comments showed they learned more about the Hmong, how they arrived in the United States, and the hardships they endured because they assisted the United States during the Vietnam War.

In responding to my query about which activities were valuable, the most frequent response was the inquiry activity with the enlarged photographs of the story cloths because it encouraged them to think more carefully about what the story cloths represented. One student elaborated on the merit of this activity.

I found the activity we did on examining a story cloth and then sharing it with the class especially valuable because it was a time when you really thought about all the work put into these cloths, how important their sewing is to them, and it also helps me understand some of the history of the Hmong.

The second most valued activity was the slide presentation because its visual aspect increased the students’ understanding of Hmong culture and history. Another student expressed how much she learned from it.

I found the slide show and making the connection between the crafts and the people who made them very important. Again this shows the meaning of each article of clothing or each cloth. It made me realize the significance and importance of keeping

their [Hmong] history alive and how they are trying to uphold their heritage here since they can no longer live in Laos.

As Selwyn (1995) suggested, art [including textile art] can be a productive means for students to interact with social studies content. Students' engagement and learning about Hmong history and culture seemed to be affected positively through the use of textile arts. Students' responses also gave credence to Sunal and Hatcher's (1986) suggestion that art may provide a more powerful form of communication than verbal messages. As one student wrote, "Each story cloth has several things going on. The more you look, the more you learn" and another student contributed, "The slides put faces and concrete ideas to the abstract ideas we talked about." The significance of what students learned about the Hmong was also shown in several students selecting Hmong culture as the topic for the social studies curriculum unit they developed and taught in their clinical placements in elementary classrooms during the same semester. One teaching team introduced Hmong textile art by showing different "flower cloth" patterns and encouraged the children to design their own "flower cloths." Another team developed a similar inquiry activity with photographs of story cloths as the one we completed in class and invited Hua Yang to speak to the children about the significance of the Hmong New Year and show traditional clothing decorated with *paj ntaub* worn during the celebration.

### Conclusion

For teacher educators dedicated to a multicultural, social reconstructionist orientation to teaching social studies, we need to continue to learn about different cultures within the United States and around the world and incorporate this knowledge in our teaching. Too often our formal educational experiences provided limited studies of diverse cultures, oppression which cultural groups have experienced, and ways groups have resisted their oppression which we can draw upon as educators. In order to follow Janzen's (1995) and Sleeter and Grant's (1994) recommendations for teaching toward the goals of cultural pluralism and social structural equality, we must educate ourselves about different cultures, using methods which respect each culture. We should move beyond academic studies of different cultures to include developing respectful relationships through research or other face-to-face interactions as a means of understanding members of a cultural group as real people and their experiences and perspectives on their culture. Through the interviews with Hmong women, I developed an appreciation for women's power and influence within the limitations of Hmong patriarchal culture. Women continue to be instrumental in sustaining the family, in helping families survive economically, and in maintaining Hmong culture.

In this article, I have emphasized the value of studying textile arts and understanding textile artists' interpretations of their art and experiences as an avenue for inquiring into and learning about a culture or ethnic group. Despite the lack of attention to integrating textile arts and other visual arts with social studies from the social studies community, these decoratively stitched fabrics provide a valuable resource for gaining insight into a culture. Textile arts can reflect group identity, everyday life, historical events, special ceremonies, beliefs, and values of a culture. They also represent an avenue for textile artists, frequently women, to exert influence, portray their own and group perspectives, and contribute significantly to the continuation and change of their cultures even within the restrictions of patriarchy. By incorporating textile arts, social studies educators encompass additional voices and perspectives from a culture whose voices and views might otherwise not be heard.

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## **The Early History of the College and University Faculty Assembly of NCSS: A Personal View**

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### *Abstract*

*CUFA, the College and University Faculty Assembly of the National Council for the Social Studies, was formally established as an NCSS affiliated organization in 1969. Prior to that date, social studies educators from colleges and universities met at NCSS annual meetings, starting in 1965. This essay is a personal history of events leading to the establishment of CUFA and its refereed journal, Theory and Research in Social Education. Set in the contexts of the the professionalization of subject field education and the school reform movement of the 1960s, the establishment of an organization for college level social studies educators to communicate about their common interests seemed a natural development. Although there was considerable support in many quarters for such a group, there were tensions and obstacles that created difficulties. Traditions of internal conflicts between scholars and teachers, subject specialists and educators, and school and university faculty members of NCSS created problems in the effort to organize CUFA and publish a research journal.*

### **Introduction<sup>1</sup>**

The College and University Faculty Assembly (CUFA) of the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) was formally established in 1968, with a charter adopted in 1969. As a result of a chance happening at the 1964 NCSS meeting, a group of social studies faculty members from colleges and universities in New York state met to discuss matters of common interest, and these sessions led to a call for a national meeting. That first national meeting occurred during the annual NCSS meeting in 1965. It was unexpectedly popular, illustrating that college and university social studies education faculty members desired an opportunity to meet, share ideas and scholarly work, and develop the field of social studies education—the CUFA agenda.

In hindsight, it might appear that the evolution of CUFA, and its journal, *Theory and Research in Social Education* followed a logical and straight-forward plan well coordinated among congenial leaders of NCSS and the

founders of CUFA. That is not the case. There was no grand plan and extensive friction resulted between NCSS leaders and the higher education faculty group at crucial stages in CUFA's development. Important segments of the NCSS leadership exhibited considerable resistance to the development of a college faculty group and to its initiation of a research publication. There was reluctance on the part of some members of the informal college faculty group to separate college faculty from the other NCSS membership, while others wanted to break away from NCSS and affiliate with the American Educational Research Association (AERA) instead. CUFA's early period, therefore, included several examples of halting and sporadic progress.

The early days of CUFA are important to members with archivist mentalities and to me personally, but the development of CUFA also stands as an example of a stage in the evolution and legitimation of the study of subject matter education in institutions of higher education in the United States. The professionalization of teaching and subject field scholarship since the mid-19th century is one context in which to examine the evolution of CUFA. That context suggests reasons for both the conflicts and the supportive conditions that affected CUFA. The context is briefly sketched here to provide a framework for examining CUFA's early years and as a potential source of understanding later developments in CUFA.

### Context for Some Arguments

In the decades before the turn of the 20th century, the professionalization of teaching and scholarly work was both enhanced and limited by the establishment of professional organizations. The National Education Association (NEA), founded in the mid-19th century, was formed partly to provide increased visibility for the teaching profession, but was heavily influenced by school administrators who were its primary leaders (Wesley, 1957). In the two decades immediately preceding the 20th century, the first discipline-based professional organizations emerged. These groups represented the interests of higher education teachers and scholars in several fields of social knowledge, e.g., the American Historical Association (1884), the American Political Science Association (1880), and the American Economic Association (1885). Since World War II, the number of these professional associations has more than doubled (Clark, 1987). Organizations provide strength, focus, and greater visibility for their subject fields, but they also limit intellectual endeavors in their attempts to protect organizational special interests and through the institutionalization of dominant ideas about knowledge and scholarship (Wilson, 1979).

The academic subject associations helped professionalize higher education, becoming the focus of much of the career work of academic faculty and were "useful to individual academics for advancing themselves" (Wilson, 1979, p. 157). As scholarship became more important to career advancement in higher education, involvement in organizational meetings

and scholarly publications increased. Membership and activity in these organizations was measured, association publications were influential, and organizations' focus on scholarly research defined criteria for tenure, promotion, and professional status. The work of teaching in higher education became a less of a concern for the subject field associations, although they often established committees on teaching and K-12 education, which on occasion were influential. The higher education disciplinary associations periodically take strong interest in K-12 education and advocate on curriculum, instruction, and teacher education.

The NEA, and later the American Federation of Teachers, were associations of K-12 teachers. NCSS was founded in 1921 as a department of the NEA during a surge of interest in the professionalization of teaching and in a period when ideas of progressive education were increasingly popular. One of the ideas emerging from progressive education circles was the importance of developing broad field curricula, as in social studies. NCSS was assisted in its development by established associations of teachers of history and other social subjects and in particular by the American Historical Association. NCSS emerged as the organization devoted to social studies education in schools. There have been sporadic challenges to that position, often coming from historians and others intent on protecting professional interests as well as undergraduate enrollments and also from critics of progressive education and the progressive concept of social studies as a field of study.

NCSS has drawn its membership primarily from secondary school teachers, with a large segment coming more recently from elementary schools. The founders and the leaders of NCSS in the past, however, often came from its college and university faculty members (Thornton, 1996). This situation has been seen by many NCSS members as a mixed blessing and as an area of tension. Significant complaints have arisen that the college group excessively dominates NCSS, far-beyond their level of membership. These conflicts between the K-12 and higher education members of NCSS have been a long-term concern of NCSS, with resulting changes in organizational structure. For example, elections to national office are now organized by grade-level or type of social studies work to assure that college and university faculty members cannot constitute a majority of the governing body.

In addition to the suspicions that arise among K-12 and university faculty members of NCSS, there are also internal conflicts among higher education members, some of which artifacts of the professionalization of separate subject fields (Hertzberg, 1981, Barth, 1996). College and university faculty members of NCSS are drawn mainly from faculty whose positions, academic backgrounds, and professional status are in departments in education, history, or the social sciences. Professors of education are the largest segment of this group, but even the education faculty usually have academic credentials from history or social sciences and many have strong allegiances to those subjects.



Common battles in higher education among the subject fields are also played out in NCSS and in CUFA. There have been periods of cooperation and collaboration among these fields. For example, the work of the first, more scholarly, and more influential National Commission on the Social Studies in the Schools during the late 1920s and the 1930s involved prominent social scientists and educators (Beard, 1932). But, historic divisions and suspicions among these disciplines have often clouded and inhibited social studies and NCSS activities. The serious strain in the relationship between subject specialists, (e.g., historians and geographers) and social studies educators is illustrated in such events as: (a) Sputnik-era battles over progressive education and the establishment of social studies in the place of separate disciplines (Bestor, 1953, 1955); (b) the organization of the curriculum projects in the 1960s in which "subject matter specialists" were expected to lead and educators were to be minor players; (c) actions and reactions in the heavy handed conservative reform movement in the 1980s which tried to expand the domination of history in the social studies curriculum (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1983; Preseissen, 1985; Nelson, 1991; Whelan, 1992), and (d) the 1990s effort to marginalize NCSS in process of developing national curriculum standards for history, geography, and civics. In addition to arguments between history specialists and social studies educators, relationships among historians and social scientists working to improve social studies teaching in schools have also been strained. The domination of history and the relative exclusion of the social sciences in the social studies curriculum, for example, was one of the reasons for the founding of the Social Science Education Consortium during the period of federally supported social studies curriculum projects in the 1960s.

### **Curricular Context of the Period**

By the 1960s, social studies had been a subject of study in the schools for over half a century, and NCSS had been holding annual meetings for four decades. Following Sputnik in 1957, a heavy barrage of attacks on progressive education and the public schools included extensive criticism of social studies. Calls for the elimination social studies from the school curriculum and its replacement by more history teaching were prominent (Bestor, 1953). The federal government embraced educational reform during the 1960s providing extensive funding for curriculum projects in many fields, including social studies. This reform effort aimed to improve teaching in history and the social sciences based upon an approach to disciplinary knowledge proposed and later recanted by Jerome Bruner (1960, 1986). The funded curriculum projects became the focus of much activity on the part of higher education faculty in history, the social sciences, and education. These projects also attracted the interests of professional associations of scholars and associations of K-12 teachers.

In this period of great interest in the revision of school teaching and curriculum, the traditional conflicts between disciplinary specialists and

education faculty were somewhat muted. The curricular projects provided a location for shared academic and pedagogic concern. Joint project participation, research opportunities, conferences, and publications suggested a more open arena of mutual respect, albeit with subject specialists in key positions, than had often been the case in the past. There were, however, still many areas of suspicion and disdain among these groups. For example, when I was a candidate for a faculty position at the State University of New York at Buffalo in 1963, the position was jointly in history and education and I was interviewed by both departments. Relations among faculty in these departments at Buffalo were generally good, and faculty members in history and the social sciences gave me considerable support. However, when I arrived at Rutgers University as a professor of education in 1968 I was surprised to find that the history department would not permit graduate students in education to take their courses because the historians considered education students inferior (despite the fact that most of my students were graduates of Rutgers with majors in history and good academic records). After significant effort, the rigid policy of Rutgers' history department changed, but many suspicions remained.

Similarly, conflicts within NCSS among K-12 and university members also diminished, but were still an undercurrent, in the 1960s. There were criticisms that the college professors dominated the annual NCSS meetings, but the regular reports of project progress and the involvement of K-12 teachers in project design and evaluation mitigated some complaints. NCSS meetings still contained many higher education faculty presentations, but many K-12 teachers were also actively involved.

NCSS meetings, however, were not a place for university faculty members to discuss their interests, particularly the presentation and critique of research findings. The NCSS annual meeting provided a forum for university faculty to present workshops on curricular and pedagogical ideas to teachers and to learn from teachers about issues of classroom practice. In contrast, the American Educational Research Association (AERA), was advancing as the leading scholarly association for education professors in the 1960s. AERA significantly expanded its focus by adding new divisions and many Special Interest Groups (SIGs) to accommodate new specializations and member interests. AERA conferences consisted almost entirely of higher education faculty members presenting and critiquing scholarly papers, similar to conferences of other academic subject fields.

During the same time, subject field education (e.g., math, English, science, and social studies), was an area of increasing interest for graduate study and research. Indeed, this was a period of significant expansion for higher education institutions and their faculties and increased opportunities for funded support for educational work at all levels. Many universities, including SUNY-Buffalo and Rutgers, initiated or expanded graduate programs in these subject field education areas. Previously, many of these institutions had undergraduate teacher education and masters programs

that emphasized teaching practice in math, English, science, and social studies, but relatively few had doctoral research programs in these specialties. Faculty members who taught social studies teacher methods and curriculum courses often had obtained their doctoral degrees in broader education fields like curriculum or social foundations, or had doctorates in history or a social science. Developing specializations in subject field education and their emerging scholarly focus stimulated higher education faculty members: "There is a real need for subject matter educators, with a good background in both subject matter and at least one of the behavioral sciences, who are research oriented" (Scandura & Nelson, 1965. p. 52). They sought organizations where these interests would be encouraged.

### **The Pre-CUFA Meetings of Higher Education Faculty at NCSS (1964-1967)**

In November 1964 at the annual meeting of NCSS in St. Louis, seeking relief from conference activities, I sat on a bench in the hotel lobby next to a person whose conference badge identified him as "Barry Beyer, University of Rochester." Barry had just graduated with a doctorate in history from the University of Rochester and he was newly employed there to teach social studies methods courses and develop a graduate program in social studies. I had been employed at Buffalo, just 50 miles from Rochester, only one year earlier. My primary duties were to develop the existing social foundations and sociology of education program and to initiate the university's doctoral program in social studies education. Not only were Barry and I virtually neighbors, we taught the same kind of teacher preparation and advanced courses and shared interests in developing graduate social studies programs.

We agreed that it was peculiar that we lived and worked about an hour apart in western New York, engaged in nearly identical academic activities, but we had to meet on a hotel bench in St. Louis. We also agreed that so-called social studies "methods" teachers in New York did not know each other and could benefit from a meeting. That chance encounter prompted me to contact officers of the New York State Council for Social Studies and the New York State Department of Education to see if we could arrange a meeting of social studies methods instructors in the colleges and universities of the state. The New York State Council for Social Studies (NYSCSS) provided a session for us at their February 1965, conference. We titled the session, "Social Studies Education at the College Level," which I chaired. That session attracted 36 faculty members from public and private institutions across the state as well as some supervisors from large school districts. Several session participants would subsequently play an important part in CUFA's development: Barry Beyer, William T. Lowe (Cornell University), Bertha Davis (New York University), Gerald Snyder (SUNY-Albany) and Ted Kaltsounis (SUNY-Oswego).

The discussion at NYCSS produced a desire for a larger scale and more focused meeting at the state level and interest in the possibility of a meeting at the national level. Mildred McChesney, Director of Social Studies in the New York State Education Department, for example, encouraged the establishment of a committee to plan a separate state meeting of methods instructors, and indicated that state funds might be available (G. Johnson, Notes, New York Conference, 1965). Most attendees agreed on the meeting idea for New York State, but there was some appropriate skepticism about the proposal for a national meeting. Lowe stated some reservations: there may not be much interest, we may not get a large crowd, and we may not have much to do there. These were important questions and inserted a proper caution. Despite his reservations, Lowe was very supportive of the attempt to get a national meeting. His help provided significant assistance in getting the national group underway, advising on plans for the first meeting in 1965 and serving on the program steering committee, making arrangements with a major speaker, and serving as chair for a session at the second national meeting in 1966.

Gerald Snyder contacted the New York State Education Department to seek sponsorship for a meeting of methods instructors to discuss the newly revised New York social studies curriculum. The department agreed, and that meeting was held in Albany in June 1965, with participants from 20 institutions, including leading social studies figures, such as Isidore Starr (Queens College, CUNY), Julian Aldrich (New York University), Peter Martorella (SUNY College at Buffalo) and Louis Vanaria (SUNY-Cortland). The group selected Lowe, Beyer, Snyder, and me to plan a separate statewide meeting for college faculty members to discuss issues relating to the methods class. I also agreed to make some contacts for a national meeting at NCSS.

The planning group met twice and developed a grant proposal for a meeting of New York college social studies faculties. We agreed that we needed a "formal organization of social studies methods instructors," those who spend more than half their instructional time in social studies, an organization unaffiliated with any other group (Planning Notes, Ithaca, NY, 1965). The stated purposes for the organization were to stimulate research, provide collective leadership to critique and improve social studies education, and offer liaison with other groups involved in social studies. The grant was approved and the meeting was held in Syracuse, November 4-5, 1965. Faculty members from 30 higher education institutions in New York attended. Among the participants were a number of nationally active faculty: Lowe, Martorella, Roy Price (Syracuse University), Martin Feldman (Hofstra University), George Dawson (NYU), and Eli Seifman (SUNY-Stony Brook) among others. Lawrence Metcalf (University of Illinois) co-author of one of the most scholarly social studies methods texts, gave the keynote address on the topic of improving methods courses. John Gibson (Director of the Lincoln-Filene Center at Tufts University), examined media and

materials; Bertha Davis discussed teaching techniques; and Arno Bellack (Teachers College, Columbia University) explored research issues. That meeting led to a formal proposal for a continuing college faculty organization, to meet in conjunction with the New York State Council for Social Studies at their annual conference. Richard Whittemore (Chair of the history department of Teachers College, Columbia University) was elected chair of the group.

Events in New York developed very quickly, with plans and implementation for three meetings occurring in one year. Meanwhile, I was trying to set up a meeting at NCSS for November 1965. Before moving to SUNY-Buffalo, I had been on the faculty at California State University, Los Angeles and had met John Michaelis (University of California, Berkeley) a leader in NCSS. When contacted, Michaelis recommended writing to Richard Gross at Stanford University, who was NCSS vice-president and program chair for the NCSS meeting in Miami in 1965. Isidore Starr, president of NCSS, had also encouraged me to pursue a college level meeting at NCSS. I wrote to Gross requesting a university faculty session at the Miami NCSS meeting. He promptly responded that he was "very interested" but that the regular program was already full, so he suggested that the college group might meet at an off conference time (R. Gross, personal communication, June, 1965). Gross also recommended that I contact Merrill Hartshorn who was the executive secretary of NCSS.

Hartshorn, by phone, expressed concern about the effort, offering several reasons why it might not work. He indicated that the program was already crowded and that the program committee would have to approve any additions. He also suggested that a separate meeting of college faculty might be viewed negatively by many members of NCSS, and that it might not draw many people because of the multiple competing activities that occur at NCSS. His reluctance notwithstanding, I indicated that I would be making a formal request by mail, and Hartshorn agreed that would be a good idea. My formal request to Hartshorn indicated that Gross and Starr had been consulted; Hartshorn responded that the meeting was an "excellent idea and one that I would like to see implemented" (M. Hartshorn, personal communication, September 13, 1965), though he stated that the program was crowded. He suggested that the group could meet on a Wednesday, the day before the regular NCSS sessions started. Hartshorn requested that I write a short announcement for the NCSS program and he allowed us to use an NCSS mailing list of college members. I sent a program announcement to Hartshorn, and prepared another announcement to be mailed to the NCSS list of college-level members.

The 1965 session was set for two hours on Wednesday, the day immediately preceding the regular NCSS sessions and the day established for many NCSS organizational matters, including committee and House of Delegates meetings. My letter to potential attendees identified them as faculty with responsibility for "social science" education, and invited them to

attend an NCSS session on November 24, 1965 from 2:00 to 4:00 PM at the Americana hotel in Miami. The center of the letter noted the "ever-increasing research and experimentation in social science education, and a lack of adequate communication among faculty working in pre-service, in-service, graduate, and research programs in the field" (Nelson to social science education faculty, October 11, 1965). The invitation was to a session which included Michaelis giving a short report on the curriculum projects and Lowe discussing the college level organizing activities in New York state, followed by a discussion of common interests and possibility of organizing future events.

Despite the relatively inconvenient time for the meeting, over 150 college and university faculty members attended. Attendees included many NCSS leaders such as: Jack Allen (Peabody College), James Becker (NCA Foreign Relations Project) Helen McCracken Carpenter (Trenton State and former NCSS President), Edwin Fenton (Carnegie Institute of Technology), Jean Grambs (University of Maryland), Edith West (University of Minnesota), Jonathan McLendon (Florida Atlantic), Ray Meussig (Ohio State University), James Shaver (Utah State University), as well as Gibson, Lowe, Michaelis, Starr and Metcalf.

That discussion of common interests led to strong support for establishing a steering committee to prepare plans for a session at the 1966 NCSS meeting in Cleveland. The Steering Committee elected at the 1965 meeting consisted of Harris Dante (Kent State University), Fenton, Lowe, Michaelis, Meussig, and me. I agreed to serve as chair. The committee was industrious, developing plans for an all day meeting to occur the day before the regular NCSS meetings and consisting of speakers and respondents, group discussions, and an exhibit of social studies curriculum project materials.

Hartshorn and I talked during the next few days at the NCSS conference about the college meeting and the plan to have an all day meeting in 1966. He was impressed at the size and representativeness of the attendees, and agreed to have the NCSS Board of Directors consider our 1966 program request. He indicated that, if the Board approved, he would arrange for meeting rooms and other facilities for the 1966 conference. I also asked Hartshorn to ask the NCSS Executive Committee to recognize our new Steering Committee, since we had no other official standing.

Hartshorn was concerned that the college group might draw leaders from the main NCSS sessions, and he did not want the meeting to conflict or compete with the regular sessions. He also expressed misgivings about the effort to separate the college group from NCSS. I indicated that my intent was to provide a scholarly orientation for college faculty to discuss development of the field and shared interests. The NCSS meeting did not provide that as it was constituted. Hartshorn's concerns led me to arrange a special meeting with him and other NCSS staff members in Washington within a few months after the 1965 conference.

By January 1966, the college planning committee completed its work, organizing a full day program for Wednesday, November 21, the day before regular NCSS meetings, but on the same day as the House of Delegates meeting. The timing created a conflict for a few college faculty who were also delegates. Initially, Hartshorn agreed to the Wednesday all day meeting, noting that the unexpectedly large attendance at Miami demonstrated a "vital interest" and hoping that it was not just the location "that brought them out a day early...in our program planning I am blocking this out for all day Wednesday" (M. Hartshorn, personal communication, February 2, 1966).

When I met with Hartshorn and some NCSS staff in early 1966, he suggested that the attempt to create a separate college group might not be in the best interests of NCSS. I responded by noting the size of attendance at the 1965 session and the encouragement of many faculty to move forward, including correspondence from people who had not been able to attend the 1965 session. I also commented that many college faculty lamented the lack of opportunity to discuss shared interests and the discontent among teacher leaders of NCSS because they thought that college faculty dominated NCSS. Hartshorn worried that I might lead the group out of NCSS and into AERA, where the SIGs were emerging. I assured him that I belonged to both groups and saw mutual benefits and no conflict, however, I noted that the NCSS college group may, on its own, decide to form under AERA auspices rather than NCSS. He seemed somewhat relieved by this, but found himself in a position where he could not stand against our group meeting. He was not pleased with the circumstances. Hartshorn reported that the NCSS Executive Committee had recognized our Steering Committee and that we had some status within NCSS, though it was unclear what the relationship was. The meeting ended more or less amicably, but it was clear that Hartshorn was expressing the concerns of many NCSS leaders, who saw the college group as a threat.

Hartshorn telephoned me sometime later to report that NCSS did not want us to meet on the same date as the House of Delegates and that the NCSS Board of Directors had instead scheduled our meeting for Tuesday, November 22. I agreed to consult our Steering Committee. The Steering Committee approved the date change, but several members were very concerned about potential loss of attendees and the apparent lack of support by NCSS. The Tuesday meeting date put us on the same day as the meeting of the Council of State Social Studies Supervisors, another group just beginning to meet independent of NCSS. Although our meeting did not conflict with the House of Delegates, meeting on Tuesday meant that many college faculty would have to arrive two days ahead of the regular NCSS sessions. And if these faculty were not delegates to the NCSS House they would have no activities arranged for Wednesday. The Steering Committee had already agreed that the college session, unlike the closed meetings of the Council of State Supervisors meeting, would be open to all NCSS

members. This was consistent with recommendations received in correspondence from K-12 social studies educators, such as Ray Hiner, supervisor of social studies for the Richmond Schools, who had attended our session (personal communication, December 3, 1965).

In March, I sent a letter to the college and university faculty on the NCSS mailing list explaining developments at the 1965 session, enclosing a list of attendees and the new Steering Committee, and announcing the all day Tuesday meeting for 1966 (Nelson to NCSS list, March 1966). My ambivalence in identifying our group is represented in how I addressed the letters to "social studies educators," but referred to the group as "social science education professors." The letter asked for suggestions regarding the meeting. Charles Myers (Rider College) recommended that the group be organized to represent the division he had noted at the November meeting, with one group focused on research and theory issues and the other on methods classes and student teaching (C. Myers, personal communication, April 7, 1966). Several responses heartily supported the 1966 meeting, but expressed dissatisfaction with the change in dates, as Don LaDue (Temple University) wrote:

My only regret is that the committee finds it necessary to have a meeting of social studies educators outside of the regular national conference rather than as an integral of our national meeting. (D. LaDue, personal communication, March 22, 1966)

Michaelis agreed to organize an exhibit of the curriculum project materials for the 1966 meeting, and he was able to obtain sample material from 20 of the 26 federally funded projects in social studies. Dante undertook relations with NCSS in regard to getting rooms and facilities, registration of attendees, and the necessary coffee service. Lowe organized and chaired the morning general session which included Metcalf speaking on the methods class with John Jarolimek (University of Washington) and Leonard Kenworthy (Brooklyn College) as respondents. Meussig took responsibility for the lunch arrangements and reservations. Fenton arranged the afternoon general session on the topic "Simulation Research," which included an address by Herbert Simon, an economist at Carnegie Institute who later received the Nobel Prize in Economics. Simon identified research work using computer simulations as a cutting edge field for social educators to consider in their own scholarship.

The late afternoon discussion topics were arranged around research interests in the following topics: world affairs, curriculum, controversial issues, research methods, and values education. Chairs of these sessions included Val Arnsdorf (University of Delaware), Will Cartwright (Duke University), Dorothy Fraser (Hunter College), Mark Krug (University of Chicago), John Lunstrum (Indiana University), Byron Massialas (University of Michigan) and Fannie Shaftel (Stanford University). An evening



general session on "The Nature of Social Studies Education," was highlighted by an address by James Barth (Purdue University) and response by Dwight Allen (Stanford University). Barth's address was a result of a letter he sent in which he stated:

I do believe that the Social Studies are being forced to greatness and if there was ever an opportunity for professional Social Science professors to demonstrate they have ideas to offer, now surely is the time. (J. Barth, personal communication, December 3, 1965).

This idea became a rationale for the field and a call for the establishment of a "meeting to share common concerns among university social studies teachers" (J. Barth, personal communication, January 29, 1966). Ken Carlson and William Schunak, doctoral students at SUNY-Buffalo, were the staff and librarians for the project materials exhibit.

With a near doubling of attendance from 1965, to over 250, the 1966 meeting was considered a success. Attendees who submitted evaluation sheets marked positive ratings for the all day session, multiple sessions on scholarship, professional and social interactions, and quality of presenters and program. A business session held during the lunch period considered whether another day-long meeting at NCSS in Seattle should be organized for the next year. There was broad support for that activity, and the 1967 College and University Planning Committee was created. The committee consisted of Harry Barnard (Rutgers University), Robert Jewett (Ohio State University), Jack Sutherland (San Jose State University), Jarolimek and Snyder. I agreed to serve as committee chair. We decided to follow a pattern similar to 1966 for the 1967 program, and established subcommittees: to plan the program, to develop a proposal for organizing to continue our group, and to initiate a placement service. Jarolimek was in charge of on-site arrangements for the Seattle meeting, and Sutherland was program chairman. Harry Barnard, who had just moved from Rutgers to the University of Kentucky, argued for an employment placement service, because of the increasing number of college level positions open in social studies education and the strong interest of many doctoral students who attended in 1966; he agreed to organize the service. The organizational structure subcommittee was chaired by Snyder, and Jewett chaired a subcommittee to propose ways and means of financing the college group and what relation we should have to NCSS.

Fred Stopsky (Webster College) and David Hobson (Fairleigh Dickinson University) wrote to indicate that the 1966 meeting had stimulated them to collaborate on "A Working Paper Regarding the Nature of a Society of Social Studies Educators" (F. Stopsky, personal communication, November 28, 1966). Their working paper noted problems of communication among scholars in the field and the need for a group to develop an

information exchange about curriculum projects and research. It also argued for regional college level social studies centers and state organizations of college social studies educators to work with state education departments. The working paper proposed a format for the 1967 meeting that relied on papers circulated in advance and time available for regional discussions to develop similar state organizations. It was suggested that we "declare a one year moratorium on any discussion as to whether the social studies is a discipline or not...we are not denying the importance of such topics, but they have just been beaten to death" (Stopsky & Hobson, 1966). These suggestions were sent to our planning committee and both authors, along with Richard Whittemore and Ambrose Clegg (University of Massachusetts) were placed on Snyder's subcommittee on organizing a college group.

Among other things planned for the 1967 meeting was the suggested moratorium on whether or not social studies is a discipline. The topic was not to be banished forever, or considered resolved, but it was seen as divisive and unnecessarily repetitive. Understandably, some felt that the issue need not be raised again and others preferred that scholars in social studies not challenge the pretentiousness of other subjects. (The topic, however, is a fundamental issue that deserves periodic reconsideration because it raises appropriate questions about defining the characteristics and nature of the field—an issue that applies to all vital fields of knowledge. The unfounded presumption that only history and certain social science fields are disciplines, but social studies is not, is a reflection of the continuing argument between separate subject specialists and social educators which still haunts much of the discussion of social education (Keller, 1992; Nelson, 1991), and which lies behind some of the conflicts within the college group.)

Hartshorn was very interested in our 1966 session, attending parts of it and engaging in conversations with many attendees. He indicated to me that he was very pleased with the turnout and level of support for continuing the group, but he said that some members of the NCSS Board of Directors as well as some other influential NCSS members had told him of their dismay that the college faculty were separating themselves and of their fear that we might leave NCSS to join with AERA. I repeated the point that I had no such intent and that the college group meetings were open to all NCSS members, adding that we planned to have an all day meeting in 1967 and would want a placement service set up. He agreed to assist us on the 1967 meeting and to consider the placement service, but he noted several problems that might arise.

After the 1966 session, there was a rash of correspondence in response to a request for comments and suggestions on the program. For example, Bob Zangrando, Assistant Executive Secretary of the American Historical Association, was very commendatory and suggested a special emphasis on the new curricular materials and teacher education (R. Zangrando, personal communication, November 28, 1966). Maurice Guysenir, Professor

of Education and Social Science at Illinois Teachers College, recommended increased staff at registration, reorganizing the sessions, and separate sessions at some point for faculty interested in elementary and secondary level work (M. Guysenir, personal communication, November 28, 1966). Katherine Cotter, Assistant Professor of Education at Boston College, complimented the speakers, but was disappointed in the discussion in the teacher education session because it recycled old issues (K. Cotter, personal communication, November 28, 1966). Jonathan McClendon, Professor and Chair of Social Science Education at the University of Georgia, noted the "amazingly high initial success of the first full day college teachers sessions at NCSS" and raised the problem of having the meetings two days ahead of the regular NCSS meeting (J. McClendon, personal communication, December 16, 1966). And Ridgway Shinn, Dean of Liberal Studies at Rhode Island College, felt the "day I spent was very well worth it" suggesting that a discussion of research on pre-service and in-service teacher education and studies of the new curriculum projects should be the 1967 focus (R. Shinn, personal communication, December 20, 1966). These letters illustrate the diversity of interests and academic titles of those involved in pre-CUFA meetings.

The Planning Committee for 1967 considered many suggestions for the program and some policies to govern the sessions. We decided to develop a more research oriented program, patterned after the AERA meetings, where proposals for research sessions would be blind refereed and selection based on quality; there would also be time available for discussion of methods and curriculum ideas and for state faculty groups to meet. The topics proposed included the organization and operation of social studies education programs in higher education, research on experimental methods courses and teacher education, impact of federal sponsorship of curriculum projects, and the supply and demand of social studies teachers. Snyder's subcommittee on organizing developed a proposal based on the major principle that we should exist within NCSS, "not as a splinter group nor as a group formed to subvert the direction or policies of NCSS, but as a special interest group within the general membership of NCSS" (G. Snyder, personal communication, March 19, 1967).

After the 1966 meeting, Adeline Brengle, NCSS President, asked me to chair an *ad hoc* committee to develop a proposed NCSS policy on how special groups might "affiliate" with NCSS (A. Brengle, personal communication, December 17, 1966). The Committee included Ralph Cordier (Indiana University of Pennsylvania and President-elect of NCSS), Leonard Ingraham (New York City Public Schools Supervisor), Ronald Smith (Portland Public Schools Supervisor and Vice-President of NCSS), George Ek (Colorado State Department of Education), and Isidore Starr. We worked by phone and mail, and produced a proposed policy (Proposed Policy, April 13, 1967) that affiliation be available for groups of social studies educators with common interests, whose work complements the work of NCSS. Af-

filiation was to be flexible, with support from NCSS during early years, informal affiliation for up to five years with formal affiliation by votes of the group and the NCSS Board and include: (a) joint membership in NCSS and the affiliated group, (b) office space and assistance from NCSS, (c) representation in the House of Delegates and (d) joint annual meetings. The NCSS Board considered the committee report and “expressed concern” about several matters, including holding affiliated meetings that conflicted with the House of Delegates and with the proposal for representation of affiliated groups in the House. Shirley Engle an NCSS Board member was chosen to attend the 1967 “College-University Faculty group” meeting and expressed the Board’s views. Engle, as NCSS program co-chair, was also directed to give priority to House of Delegate sessions in arranging the next year’s program.

Snyder’s organizational structure committee produced a report for discussion at the 1967 Seattle meeting. They proposed a formal organization based on objectives including the examination of research, improved communication, work with local and state groups, and developing more effective dissemination of knowledge and information. In addition, there were a series of organizational questions for group discussion, e.g., written constitution or informal working agreement, affiliation or not with NCSS, qualifications for membership, open or closed meetings, types of organs for communication, ideas about dues, relations with NCSS and other groups. The committee recommended such things as: nominal dues (one or two dollars), a newsletter, and open meetings (An Examination of Factors, 1967) Marcus Gillespie, Associate Secretary for NCSS, was the primary staff contact person for conference arrangements. He was particularly helpful and responded quickly with support to a number of our requests. Since we had not anticipated the number of attendees at the 1966 meeting, we had long lines at registration, Gillespie wrote to Jarolimek to be sure that problem did not occur in 1967, and to raise some cost issues:

...there was a jam-up at the registration because of the unexpected attendance. We hope, therefore, that you will have at least two or three alert persons, perhaps graduate students, who will be there to assist...everyone attending the college and university session would register for the [NCSS] conference, paying the regular \$3 registration fee.

Gillespie went on to indicate that those attending only the one day college session would only pay a fee of \$1.00.

The 1967 program for Seattle, Wednesday, November 22, ran from 9:00am to 10:00pm, and included a general session with Mark Krug on new concepts in social studies, and a business meeting to discuss the organizational subcommittee report. Richard Gross, now President of NCSS, welcomed the group. Luncheon speakers were Phil Bacon and Jarolimek

on their "Tri-University Project in Elementary Education." Thirteen afternoon discussion groups were based on papers accepted for presentation or curriculum project reports. An evening session featured Edgar B. Wesley, President of NCSS in 1935 and Professor Emeritus of the University of Minnesota, speaking on "Are the Social Studies Arriving, At Last?, Or, Is History on the Way Out?" Obviously, Wesley was fully aware of one of the continuing major battles in the field.

The preliminary program announcement was sent to the NCSS college group mailing list. That elicited a number of responses from faculty members at many institutions. Most were highly complimentary and indicated interest in attending and helping. However, Byron Massialas wrote to:

express my disappointment with the program...The program as it now stands tends to perpetuate the stereotype of the social science educator being a methods teacher and a supervisor of student teachers, but not a researcher...no provisions have been made to report research findings." (B. Massialas, personal communication, October 17, 1967).

My apologetic response recognized my overall responsibility and the program's overemphasis on methods and materials, noting that the program committee had to rely on proposals sent in. Further, I commended Massialas's active involvement in and support for research and bemoaned the lack of a publication devoted to scholarly work in social studies education (Nelson to Massialas, personal communication, October 23, 1967).

Again in 1967, over 250 persons attended the college level sessions. Harry Barnard, with Gillespie's help, organized a conference placement service. The placement operation continued during the day's events and was very busy. The business meeting discussion of the Snyder subcommittee report and questions on establishing a formal organization was overwhelmingly positive; attendees decided to have a committee draft a set of bylaws for the 1968 meeting in Washington, DC. The group elected Jean Grambs as chair for the 1968 meeting, and the Executive Committee included Metcalf, Kaltsounis, Massialas, Lunstrum, and me. Grambs brought an invitation from the University of Maryland to have the college group meet on that campus in 1968 with bus transportation provided from the hotels. The college group voted to accept the invitation. There was some dissension on the grounds that not only was the college group meeting on the same day as the House of Delegates, they would now also be meeting a distance from NCSS. I asked the business meeting how many would be at the House meeting if they were not at the college session; only 6 raised hands out of the approximately 250 in attendance.

That afternoon, I attended the NCSS House of Delegates meeting and argued against a resolution which called on the NCSS Board of Directors

to prohibit other groups from meeting on the same day as the House. As part of my argument, I noted that less than 5% of the college group would have a conflict. Gross, chairing the House, asked the members how many of them had an interest in attending the college sessions. About 20 of them raised their hands, some 15% of the membership. Despite my arguments and the evidence of limited actual conflict, the resolution passed the House. Thus, the NCSS Board was asked to encourage other groups (at that time there were only two: the state supervisors and our college group) to not hold their meetings on the same day as the House of Delegates.

My letter to Grambs, the new chair of the college group, noted this information, and suggested that we hold firm to our meeting on Wednesday as a service to the college people (personal communication, November 27, 1967). She responded that it was a problem, but that we might meet on Tuesday at the University of Maryland, and she would set up meetings with federal education officials in Washington for Wednesday as a way of relieving the problem of college faculty having to come two days early.

Hartshorn had been informed about our move to the University of Maryland campus and expressed strong concern about the formation of the college group. In response to one of his letters, I repeated what I had told him previously at the NCSS meeting: that Grambs was now the chair, that the Maryland invitation had included easy access to the NCSS meetings by bus, and that the college group had accepted the Maryland invitation partly to relieve NCSS from extra facilities arrangements. Further, I reiterated my point that "I have been concerned that the college group not split into a separate entity from NCSS, and I feel that the college group has been particularly supportive of NCSS activities." (J. Nelson to M. Hartshorn, copy to J. Grambs, personal communication, January 15, 1968). Interestingly, I had heard many comments from attendees at the college group sessions that these sessions were the only reasons they came to NCSS, and that they might not stay for the regular NCSS meetings.

Snyder wanted to get more reactions to the organizational questions presented at the 1967 session to prepare a formal organization proposal for the 1968 meeting (G. Snyder to J. Grambs, personal communication, January 10, 1968). Unfortunately, Grambs was unable to respond to his request until September, noting her involvement in the "professors' program" and organizing a "theme of the general conference". She proposed, instead, a meeting of a "nuclear group on Tuesday sometime" to plan organizational recommendations for the college group business meeting (J. Grambs to G. Snyder, personal communication, September 10, 1968). She had earlier written to me to indicate her support for an organization of professors, but recommended that it be "less formal", and indicated her doubts about Massialas' idea of the potential influence of an organized group of social studies professors, noting that "a few outspoken prima donnas can do more in our field than one more organization" (J. Grambs, personal communication, June 25, 1968).

Snyder was not pleased with the delay, as he noted in a letter to me that enclosed copies of his correspondence with Grambs, but he wanted to move forward in the organizing effort and sought to have a short meeting at the 1968 conference to discuss strategies (G. Snyder to J. Nelson, personal communication, September 18, 1968). I responded that I could meet, and noted that "We have played with this [a formal organization] for two years, and should be arriving at some basic decisions" (J. Nelson to G. Snyder, personal communication, September 26, 1968). And I wrote to Grambs to express my interest in getting a decision made on an organization (J. Nelson to J. Grambs, personal communication, October 10, 1968). Snyder, following Grambs's suggestions, expanded the organizational committee and sought a meeting to prepare on Tuesday, the day before the college group meeting at the University of Maryland.

The 1968 meeting was held on Wednesday, November 27, at the University of Maryland; about 275 attended. The placement service was discontinued because the U.S. Employment Service lacked funds, and Grambs was not aware of that in time to make other arrangements (J. Grambs to J. McLendon, copy to Nelson, personal communication, November 13, 1968). The morning session was on World Order and Human Rights and included an introduction by Metcalf and presentations by Saul Mendlovitz (Professor of International Law at Rutgers and Director of the World Law Fund), and Clyde Ferguson (Dean and Professor of International Studies at Howard University). There was a lunch and business meeting in which the organization proposal was discussed, followed by six concurrent sessions on such topics as controversial issues, evaluation, micro-teaching, and inner city school issues. Byron Massialas chaired a special session on a model for research training in social studies education.

Just before the 1968 meeting, Massialas had sent a detailed three page letter to Ralph Cordier, NCSS President, with copies to the NCSS Board of Directors and other college level colleagues. His letter commended Cordier for establishing a task force to examine the future of NCSS, and raised a series of important and provocative questions that might guide the group's deliberations. Massialas expressed concern that NCSS seemed to be deteriorating while the National Council of Teachers of English had substantial growth and diversity. He also wondered:

*Why is Social Education of such low quality?...Why are the majority of booklets and pamphlets put out by NCSS of such low quality?...Why do our conventions never change in format and organization? Why are they so unimaginative?...Why is it that NCSS has never taken a stand on a social issue?...Why does NCSS almost deliberately avoid the critical analysis and examination of issues facing the profession and why doesn't it encourage continuous dialogue and examination of ideas?...Why hasn't NCSS taken the leadership in new projects? Why is the organi-*

zation a follower rather than a leader?...Why does NCSS continue to affiliate with the NEA and the American Historical Association?...How about the AFT, and how about all the other social science disciplines that are growing in size and importance?" (B. Massialas to R. Cordier, personal communication, November 13, 1968).

Massialas provided some elaboration and evidence to support his questions, and requested a reaction. In later correspondence, Massialas noted that neither Cordier nor any member of the NCSS Board responded (B. Massialas to S. Engle, copy to Nelson, personal communication, January 20, 1969), but many of Massialas's concerns were similar to issues identified at the college level meetings. Still, there was considerable concern among attendees that we not separate the group from NCSS, challenge the leadership of NCSS, or become "too provocative." This served as a backdrop to the 1968 deliberations on an organizational structure.

### **Formation of CUFA and Birth of *Theory and Research in Social Education* (1968-1973)**

Snyder's committee report from 1967 was reexamined at the business meeting in 1968. The group voted to establish itself formally as an organization, electing ten representatives to rotating terms on a Steering Committee, and charged them with drawing up organizational plans, by-laws, and programs. The Steering Committee included: Jean Fair (Wayne State University), John Lunstrum (University of Georgia), Charles Billings (a doctoral student at the University of Michigan), Kaltsounis (University of Washington), Metcalf, Barnard, Whittemore, Massialas, Snyder, and me. The Committee elected me as Chair and Fair as Secretary, and gave responsibilities for a placement service to Barnard and program co-chair to Kaltsounis and Massialas. We also decided to request funds from NCSS to have a special Steering Committee meeting to work on organizational plans. I made the funds request, and the NCSS Board of Directors approved funds for our meeting in March 1969. Massialas's invitation to meet at Ann Arbor was accepted.

After the 1968 meeting, Barnard wrote to suggest that I contact Hartshorn immediately to inform him of our intention to formally organize:

He should know that this is no longer an ad hoc, hip-pocket operation, that we intend to develop until it has a significant impact on NCSS...It is too late to mince words with Hartshorne...we should let him know what we think of the lack of real scholarly and professional impact NCSS is having." (H. Barnard, personal communication, December 3, 1968).



Barnard also recommended a more research-focused program, with critical reaction to papers, and that we stop the series of lectures. He suggested that I contact Ambrose Clegg, who was trying to start the Special Interest Group in Social Studies at AERA, to try to keep the college group from splitting. On the latter point, I asked members of the steering committee if they were attending the AERA meeting in Los Angeles in February 1969, so that we could meet and talk with Clegg and other social studies researchers about mutual interests. That meeting was cordial and established amicable relations between the AERA and NCSS groups.

Massialas responded in support of Barnard's letter and asked for a joint session with the NCSS Board of Directors for a "direct confrontation where we air our views." He also suggested that we request special sections of *Social Education* for the university group to control for the publication of research findings and proposed "radical system change" for NCSS. (B. Massialas, personal communication, December 9, 1968). Massialas sent a "Call to Action" to all members of the CUFA Steering Committee. Massialas made several important points: we should stop the old NCSS patronage and nepotism system in scheduling panels and speakers for the annual meeting; substitute AERA-form refereed scholarly papers; secure a share of NCSS resources to publish research monographs, a research journal, and organize scholarly conferences; enact a charter; improve NCSS publications; seek control of part of *Social Education*; publish our own newsletter; take leadership in examining and commenting on social issues; attack the general "anti-research orientation" of NCSS; make our leadership responsive to the CUFA membership unlike the "aloofness and inertia" of NCSS officers; recruit new members; and arrange time at the annual meetings for "speak-outs" to offer opportunity to evaluate NCSS performance. (B. Massialas to Steering Committee, personal communication, December 30, 1968).

Kaltsounis responded to Massialas's call and agreed with his critique of NCSS, but questioned his "tone", noting that we needed to have good communication with NCSS leadership (T. Kaltsounis to B. Massialas, personal communication, January 3, 1969). I had created some confusion about the co-chairmanship for the 1969 program, since both Kaltsounis and Massialas were elected, but Massialas had not been at the meeting and Kaltsounis had agreed to start the process by sending materials to NCSS about the program. I called to each of them to apologize, and we agreed to an AERA-like format of blind refereeing of papers proposed for presentation, critics assigned to each presentation. Both Kaltsounis and Massialas were involved in decisions on the program.

Massialas also contacted Shirley Engle, President-Elect of NCSS, to compliment him on trying to change the Houston meeting to improve the quality of NCSS sessions. Massialas wrote four single-spaced pages with more suggestions to improve NCSS as an active and more scholarly association. Among other comments, Massialas noted his concern that his pre-

vious criticisms had been viewed as "harassment" and not constructive by NCSS leaders, and hoped that Shirley recognized the need for NCSS to reform and get away from the "old guard and the traditional ways in which NCSS operates" (B. Massialas to S. Engle, copies to J. Jarolimek, R. Smith, J. Nelson, personal communication, January 20, 1969). Massialas was not only addressing some significant areas of conflict within NCSS, he was also reflecting many of the concerns expressed in the CUFA meetings about NCSS leadership.

I sent a note to the NCSS college level address list noting that "The College and University Faculty Group of NCSS organized formally at the 1968 convention and elected a steering committee to develop a charter and the 1969 program at NCSS in Houston," adding that CUFA would vote on the charter and that a placement service would operate (J., Nelson to Colleagues, January, 1969).

With \$1000.00 from NCSS to cover basic expenses, the CUFA Steering Committee met at Ann Arbor, Michigan on March 21-22, 1969. I had drafted a proposed organizational charter calling for the group to be known as the College and University Faculty Division of NCSS, and circulated it to the Committee in advance (Organizational Charter Proposal, March 7, 1969). The Committee discussed the proposed charter, voting to approve it with some modifications and to have me submit it to the annual CUFA business meeting in November. The revised charter named the group "College and University Faculty Assembly of NCSS," its dues to be determined by the Assembly, its status to be an autonomous group "within the framework of the NCSS" and having a continuous liaison with NCSS, and its structure to include an Executive Committee with rotating three year terms, and a series of standing committees to include one on research and one on political and social action (Proposed Organizational Charter, March 22, 1969).

The Steering Committee also discussed the nature of NCSS affiliation: making joint membership in CUFA and NCSS voluntary, providing CUFA control of its own budget and seeking representation of CUFA in NCSS House of Delegates. There was agreement that CUFA should be able to publish its own materials and set up its own annual conference program. Minutes of the meeting note that the annual CUFA meeting was to be held on a Tuesday, with concern expressed that no conflicting clinics be scheduled by NCSS, preferring to conflict with the House if any conflict was necessary. The Committee also drafted a set of recommendations to be sent to the newly established NCSS task force on reorganizing NCSS. Among our recommendations were: that NCSS Executive Secretary position be limited to a five year term, that the House become the policy-making body of NCSS, that the NCSS annual program be rejuvenated, that a rigorous assessment be made of the quality of NCSS publications, and that NCSS take steps to toward an early termination of its affiliation with the NEA (Minutes, Steering Committee, March 21, 22, 1969).

With Massialas and Kaltsounis as co-program chairs, the 1969 CUFA program required submission of paper proposals with abstracts, and blind refereeing for selection. They also proposed to go beyond the Tuesday meetings and sought sections of the regular NCSS meeting on Friday and Saturday for some additional college sessions. Jarolimek, NCSS Program Chair for 1969, initially agreed to provide the extra sessions, but later changed that decision and finally, after a series of letters, offered five, rather than the six sessions which Massialas had requested ( J. Jarolimek to B. Massialas, copy to J. Nelson, personal communication, August 11, 1969). He later provided the sixth session.

There was some concern that the college sessions would be closed to other NCSS members, but that was not the case. The 1969 sessions included a Steering Committee meeting during the morning on Tuesday, six paper sessions in the afternoon, a business meeting in which the charter was discussed, an evening address by Wilbur Cohen (former Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare and then Dean at the University of Michigan) and six other paper sessions on Friday and Saturday.

The business meeting, November 25, included a report on the program and the selection of papers, and a report by Barnard that the effort to provide a placement service had failed because the state of Texas had not provided funding and NCSS would not support it. The Proposed Charter was discussed and amended slightly. The charter, as amended, was passed by vote of the group, and the group voted to have the Steering Committee become the new Executive Board of CUFA, with the following members elected for varying terms to replace those whose terms had expired: James Bunting (doctoral student, University of Michigan), Jack Fraenkel (San Francisco State University), Gerald Marker (Indiana University), Harry Jackson (Western Washington University), and Jan Tucker (Stanford University) (minutes, Business Meeting, College and University Faculty Assembly, November 25, 1969). Barnard was elected Chair.

The lack of a research publication in the field was discussed. Some called for a separate CUFA publication, and others suggested that *Social Education* should publish more research. Dan Roselle, NCSS Director of Publications and editor of *Social Education*, announced that *Social Education* had just started publishing a special section on research under the editorship of James Shaver. *Social Education* was under pressure from a number of quarters. Roselle had sent a memo to various NCSS leaders and the *Social Education* Advisory Board in June, 1970 seeking advice about potential changes in the journal. In response, Howard Mehlinger, Director of the High School Curriculum Center in Government at Indiana University, noted that as he had a:

rather low estimate of the quality of much of the thinking and writing in the social studies field, until members of the discipline are more rigorous with themselves, I think it is unlikely that the journal can show vast and significant improvement. (H

Jack L. Nelson

Mehlinger to D. Roselle, copy to R. Barr, personal communication, October, 2, 1970)

Mehlinger noted that he had met with historians who want to publish articles of value to history teachers, but who do not see *Social Education* as a vehicle (H Mehlinger to D. Roselle, copy to R. Barr, personal communication, October, 2, 1970). Mehlinger did not mention research publications or CUFA, addressing his comments to revitalizing the journal for teacher readership. Many CUFA members, however, strongly desired a separate publication featuring research and scholarly work. Roselle seemed to want to hear divergent views, but was strongly committed to retaining NCSS editorial and publication control over all.

Barnard arranged for a meeting in April in Washington with Hartshorn, Engle (NCSS President) and me to discuss the CUFA-NCSS relationship. We prepared a discussion memo for the meeting and the discussion was generally congenial and productive, with agreements on affiliation conditions, including: autonomy for CUFA on its budget, program, and activities, some support from NCSS staff, and continuation of the annual meeting arrangements (M. Hartshorn to H. Barnard, personal communication, May 15, 1970).

Although CUFA had now been officially established, there remained some confusion on the organization's title. The call for paper proposals for the 1970 meeting in New York City, sent by co-program chairs Jack Fraenkel and Jan Tucker, used the term, "College and University Faculty Group" and refers to CUFA throughout the call. At the 1970 meeting, however, CUFA was the standard term. June Chapin (College of Notre Dame and Secretary of CUFA) submitted minutes for the November 24, 1970, Executive Board meeting of the "College and University Faculty Assembly", and Harry Jackson, acting Secretary at the Business meeting of the group, also reported the group as "CUFA". By the end of the 1970 meeting, the group had settled into CUFA.

The 1970 meeting established regular dues of \$5.00 per year starting with 1971-1972 and \$1.00 for graduate students. A report on negotiations with NCSS over affiliation and services was given and it was decided to have a placement service without external support (minutes, CUFA Business Meeting, November 24, 1970). Val Arnsdorf, JoAnn Sweeney (University of Texas), and Chapin were elected to three year terms on the Board, and the new Board elected Gerald Marker to be chair for the 1971 meeting in Denver.

Once again, the issue of a research publication arose. Many CUFA members wanted a scholarly journal for the field, and there were several comments that *Social Education* was not the appropriate vehicle because of its traditional interest in short, practitioner-oriented articles and the limited scope of the new research supplement. Roselle responded that *Social Education* was very interested in research, that they now received very few research papers, and that there were not sufficient funds to publish a sepa-

rate journal for CUFA. Several CUFA members were not satisfied with the response, insisting that there was substantial research being done and that CUFA should go on its own into a journal. There was an agreement that the topic be carried forward to next year's agenda, and that CUFA continue discussions with NCSS about a research publication.

Anna Ochoa (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee)—a CUFA member who was also a member of the NCSS Publications Board—had met with Cleo Cherryholmes and Gary Manson of Michigan State and subsequently proposed that the NCSS Board consider forming a new research publication. The Board viewed the idea favorably and charged Ochoa to explore the idea and prepare a prospectus (A. Ochoa to A. Clegg, personal communication, February 24, 1971). Ambrose Clegg (University of Washington) was the chair of the CUFA Research Committee and was asked to work with Ochoa as a way of involving CUFA in the deliberations about a new publication, which would be financed by CUFA dues (G. Marker to A. Clegg, personal communication, February 19, 1971). Ochoa conducted a survey of potential readership and obtained information on production costs and editing, while Clegg sent a questionnaire to his CUFA Research Committee. Illustrating some of the concerns of CUFA members, David Welton (Syracuse University) responded to Clegg by supporting a research publication, but he raised several negative points. Welton suggested that the proposal was “a great idea but poorly timed” and argued that it could “alienate a considerable proportion of our potential members...Would a research journal not serve to reaffirm NCSS's affiliation with collegiate concerns in the eyes of many teachers?” (D. Welton to A. Clegg, personal communication, March 16, 1971). There were decidedly mixed opinions on such matters as funding, editorial control, independence, and relations with *Social Education*.

Issues surrounding a separate CUFA research publication resurfaced at the 1971 Denver business meeting. Considerable and often rancorous debate at this meeting included attacks on the structure and quality of NCSS publications and derision of social studies research in general. After loud and active deliberation, a decision was made to propose a research journal for CUFA.

JoAnn Sweeney was elected CUFA Chair for 1972 and she appointed Ochoa, Clegg, and me to develop plans for a CUFA publication. Ochoa agreed to chair the group, and I agreed to draft a proposal. Ochoa was concerned that her new position as Chair of the NCSS Publications Board would be seen as a conflict of interest if she also chaired the CUFA journal committee, and she expressed her view that the interests of NCSS would be better served by a journal co-sponsored by NCSS and CUFA (A. Ochoa to J. Sweeney, copies to committee, personal communication, January 25, 1972). We all agreed that there was no conflict of interest, but I was not pleased about the idea of co-sponsorship, arguing that CUFA must have complete editorial control over its journal and the NCSS Publications Board or editors must impose no restrictions on CUFA. I further noted, “There is

some antagonism to CUFA as a separate entity, and more particularly toward a separate research publication...this was evident at the CUFA meeting in Denver"(J. Nelson to A. Ochoa, personal communication, March 14, 1972). In an earlier letter to Jo Sweeney, I noted my support for an independent journal and responded to claims made at the CUFA meeting about poor quality of research in the field:

The test of whether or not there are sufficient quality manuscripts available to publish is met by publication on a trial basis for a couple of years, then judging... The oral arguments against the publication that I have heard for the past several years would convince me that the field is loaded with boobs, impostors, and incompetents... These same arguments would dispose me against attempting the kinds of programs that CUFA has held at NCSS during the past three years... They would also convince me to abolish doctoral programs... (J. Nelson to J. Sweeney, copy to A. Ochoa, February 7, 1972)

Our committee gathered information on costs, and developed a proposal for the journal. Cleo Cherryholmes had a major grant at Michigan State University that involved an annual national conference. Ochoa and I were included as participants in the conferences and we met there in early 1972 to consider the CUFA journal proposal; she later discussed the proposal with Clegg by phone. Our proposal was for an independent research journal to be published as an annual until it was well established. The journal's basic costs were to be covered by CUFA dues. I proposed that we offer NCSS the opportunity to provide funds for the journal based on a pro-rata of NCSS dues paid by college level members and additional funds to provide CUFA journals to NCSS members. Over the course of time, we were able to arrange an annual subsidy of \$2,000.00 from NCSS to support the publication, providing copies to NCSS for distribution as they wished. Although the original plan was for a continuing subsidy, we often had to renegotiate with the NCSS Board of Directors to have the funds reinstated each year.

Several journal names were proposed: "Theory and Research in Social Education," "Studies in Social Education," "Social Study," "Bulletin of the CUFA Social Educators," "Social Inquiry," and "Social Research and Theory." Ochoa asked if I would be willing to serve as editor and I agreed to do it, if no one else could be found (A. Ochoa to J. Nelson & A. Clegg, personal communication, June 27, 1972; J. Nelson to A. Ochoa & A. Clegg, personal communication, August 1, 1972). In a later discussion with Cherryholmes, he agreed to become Editor and I would serve as Associate Editor for the first issues. We settled on *Theory and Research in Social Education* (TRSE) as the journal's title, and agreed to submit a proposal with detailed costs and editorial structure to the 1972 CUFA business meeting in Boston. The Boston meeting, held November 20, 1972, approved the pro-

posals, and 500 copies of the first issue of *TRSE* were published November 7, 1973 (Cherryholmes, November 14, 1973). The first issue included a statement from the editors that summarizes much of background to the early history of CUFA.

A developing profession creates institutions that further its aims. *Theory and Research in Social Education* is the latest but, we hope, not the last in the institutionalization of systematic thinking and research in social education. A healthy and developing profession is characterized by a critical and sustained flow of ideas and research findings upon which an intellectual structure can be built and tested repeatedly against reality. The College and University Faculty Assembly (CUFA) of the National Council for the Social Studies was formed to provide a serious forum for discussion by faculty and research personnel about the roles, functions, nature, and consequences of educating students in social scientific, historical, humanistic, and social policy knowledge. (Cherryholmes & Nelson, 1973. pp. 3, 4)

### Summary

The 1960s pre-CUFA period was one of vitality in professional organizations and educational reform. Academic and professional associations had become institutionalized and were significant influences on scholarly and teaching careers. Educational reform in the 1960s produced substantial involvement of specialists in subject fields and education at K-12 and university levels. Subject field education emerged with a research and academic career agenda. It was an opportune time for scholars in social studies education to find common areas for communication and critique. Yet, long-standing arguments between liberal arts and professional studies faculty members; traditional and progressive education advocates; and school and university faculty members of NCSS formed a setting for a troubled beginning of CUFA and its research journal, *Theory and Research in Social Education*. These battles, however, enlivened the early debates over the birth and development of CUFA. They also, consistent with intellectual discourse necessary to all vital academic subjects, provide a context for continuing and important debates over the rationales, defining characteristics, and nature of the field.

The original idea to provide a place for college level faculty in social studies education to communicate about mutual interests and scholarship has become institutionalized. There is now a significant body of scholarly literature in the field and a continuing interest in research at the annual CUFA meeting; and *TRSE* has developed into the preeminent scholarly journal for social education. Periodic calls for the faculty group to engage in critical examination of social and professional issues and to act as a force to improve NCSS, however, have not been as productive in stimulating

CUFA to action. All in all, CUFA has become established and serves the field, the faculty, and the profession. The value and quality of that service deserves review in a future examination of CUFA's later years.

#### Note

<sup>1</sup> A common protocol for scholarly writing provides that personal pronouns and personal experience be stricken, or severely restricted and read very skeptically. That is a protocol that I support and attempt to follow in most of my work. I have marked up many a student's doctoral study for such transgressions as the use of "I", and such inaccurate and unfortunately inclusive phrases as "As we have seen..." However, in preparing this manuscript about my recollections of the early years of organizing what later became CUFA, I found it to be nearly impossible, and very awkward, to avoid the use of personal pronouns and experience.

My effort to write of the earliest days of CUFA depends on my experiences and a personal collection of documents from that period. My active involvement in the establishment and development of CUFA is a subject of some pride to me, and I am pleased to present my version of how this organization started. That personal involvement makes it difficult to write about actions as though they happened to someone else; it also makes it difficult to pretend objectivity about the acts and their consequences. Thus, I use personal pronouns and experience extensively in the following piece.

I had the privilege of working with a group of colleagues of intellect and integrity to establish and develop CUFA. Many of their names are sprinkled throughout this essay, but I have undoubtedly missed some important individuals and misconstrued some information because of memory lapse or lack of documentation. I apologize for those gaps and gaffes, and encourage those who know to contact me or *TRSE* to correct this record. History, of course, is not truth; this is merely my recollection, reconstruction, and interpretation of events of the past. Documents used are scheduled to be given to the NCSS archives at Teachers College, Columbia University for others to examine in preparing critiques and many of the persons cited can be interviewed for their interpretations. I want to thank Wayne Ross for the invitation to write this essay, and to thank Bill Lowe, Byron Massialas, James Barth, and Ken Carlson for reviewing it for me.

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## DIALOGUE

### LANGUAGE, DEMOCRACY, AND TEACHERS' CONCEPTIONS OF "DISCUSSION": INSIGHTS AND DILEMMAS FROM LITERACY RESEARCH

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Understanding teachers' conceptions of discussion is a neglected and important issue in American education, with consequences for student learning and thinking in every subject area. Subject-specific work in classroom discussion has often tended to be in the area of literacy. In this response to Bruce Larson's report "Social Studies Teachers' Conceptions of Discussion," which I approach as a conversational turn in a dialogue, I briefly review a few relevant insights from literacy research on text discussion and suggest how that work, along with current frameworks for understanding discussion, provides a broader context for understanding social studies teachers' conceptions of classroom talk. In part, I want to reflect on the relationship of open-forum classroom discussion to democratic education and to raise a few questions I believe we need to pursue in scholarship across the disciplines.

#### **Possibilities for Discussion and the "Problem" of the Teacher**

Larson takes a constructivist stance in his interview study aimed at revealing the conceptions of classroom talk among six high school social studies teachers, who had an average teaching experience of over 20 years. The in-depth interviews and the interesting task related to rank-ordering descriptive scenarios of classroom talk (from Roby, 1988) were used to stimulate teachers' descriptions of how talk unfolds in their own classes. The six teacher conceptions emerging from the analysis differentiated teacher purposes for classroom talk, providing a window on the values and goals for social studies instruction among this group of teachers. Some of the ideas in the section called "Influences on teachers' conceptions of discussion" provide intriguing themes and, I agree with Larson, "They appear to be integral to the conceptions." In fact, I wonder if connections among these emergent themes might, with further grounded theory analysis, provide pattern explanations for *why* the teachers' discussion conceptions differentiated ways of talking as they do. That is, what basic social processes or value structures organize social studies teaching as it is described in the descriptive categories? I will take up this idea later, but first, want to look at teacher values and conceptions of discussion in literacy research and in theory.

The framework Larson uses to define discussion (Bridges, 1979) has its roots in the British Language Across the Curriculum (LAC) movement of the 1970s and 1980s. At the center of this pre-Thatcher curriculum re-

form and much literacy research was the theory that language is a tool for thinking (Britton, 1970; Vygotsky, 1962, 1978), not simply a conduit of meaning. In this view, language is a primary mediator of learning, a way of knowing. As we cast our understanding into words, language pulls thought along with it, making our “first-draft” thinking visible, available for revision and reflection. Exploratory, sense-making talk thus plays a central role in developing understanding. Bridges (1979) argues that the “distinctive and peculiar contribution” of discussion (p. 50) to developing one’s understanding or thinking lies in its setting of several perceptions of the matter under discussion alongside one another, challenging our own view of things with those of others. These social constructivist views, central to much current literacy research, treat learning and understanding as a social rather than an individual process.

This kind of social dialogue for learning, as Larson suggests, presents a startling contrast to typical classroom talk—recitation—which has been found to dominate interactions in all types of schools in research across this century. As opposed to presenting the world and knowledge as fixed in words, discussion theoretically presents the world as in need of interpretation, and treats knowledge as something that is made and remade in dialogue with others. Discussion is the kind of talking that can create perplexity, the impetus to reflective thinking (Dewey, 1933), and dramatize the social necessity for justifying beliefs (Rorty, 1979). In such talk students have the opportunity to reshape and reinterpret their existing pictures of the world, working on their understanding from their own frames of reference to construct new knowledge socially with others.

Research on small-group discussion provides evidence for these views of language and learning. Concerned that teachers would be unable to share authority for interpreting and thinking with students, researchers in the LAC movement placed students in small friendship groups with a printed problem or text and a tape recorder. Extensive research using this method (e.g., Barnes & Todd, 1977; Edwards & Westgate, 1987) provided evidence that the quality of students’ talk typically exceeded the quality of contributions and thinking in teacher-led classroom talk, revealing to the teachers who reviewed the audio tapes unexpected student abilities. A similar line of research has continued. In a recent study of peer-led discussions of narrative texts, as compared to teacher-led ones, students expressed themselves more fully and explored puzzlements of interest to them; over a series of peer-led discussions students internalized cognitive processes associated with engaged reflective reading to a much greater degree than those in teacher-led discussions (Almasi, 1995). Yet social and cognitive limitations in peer-led discussion also appear in groups, sometimes interfering with such processes of collaborative learning (e.g., Barnes & Todd, 1977).

The problem of working out how to give students opportunities to take control of their own meaning making, yet still provide needed teacher

support is especially keen in literature discussions. Evidence from teacher-led literary discussions, particularly in elementary schools, has demonstrated how teachers and students negotiate new roles in contexts in which students and teachers specifically trained to facilitate collaborative discussion jointly constructed meaning in their talk together (e.g., Eeds & Wells, 1989). Still, large-scale studies of literature curriculum and teaching suggest that talk about literature in secondary schools has remained "a relative traditional enterprise" based in New Critical perspectives; that is, it tends to focus on literal comprehension questions and teacher-directed analysis of traditional texts to support teacher-perceived meanings, rather than on recent "constructivist" approaches (Applebee, 1993). A "central dilemma" of classroom discussion of texts (Barnes, Churley, & Thompson, 1971) has been and continues to be how to give students responsibility to determine topic and level of discussion, which prompts their engaged thinking and opportunities to construct understanding, and still provide teacher support as students need it.

This dilemma appears, I believe, in the descriptions of the social studies teachers Larson studied. Cathy and other "teachers are faced with a dilemma between wanting students to think on their own and wanting to lead students to a particular conclusion." While the teachers called the talk discussion, Larson notes that they seemed to conceptualize discussion as a more or less teacher-selected and monitored activity. In literacy research the way that teachers solve this dilemma creates the role they take and, thereby, the context for discussion. In ethnographic cross-class comparisons, for instance, teachers were found to signal the intended purpose for discussion explicitly and implicitly though their ways of talking to students and about texts; the discourse of some teachers opened up thinking and, in other cases, narrowed possibilities (e.g., Gross, 1983; Miller, 1990). The central differences evident in their ways of talking were rooted in each teacher's conception of the text being discussed—as either an occasion for making justifiable meanings or as a container of a single meaning in itself. But some teachers' conceptions were conflicted. For example (Miller, 1990), one teacher engaged in a text-discussion project explicitly asked students for "divergent thinking" about the text, but in multiple ways communicated her contradictory view of meaning in the discussion of philosophic texts; as she finally formulated her conception of text in an interview, "The text stands alone as written in stone." The conflicted role she tried to enact was "allowing" students to "discuss," but also insisting on her perceived text meaning (Miller, 1990). Discussion as defined by Bridges was undermined by such a goal, and once her initially active students constructed the teacher's actual purpose, they became silent, waiting for "the teacher to explain what it means."

Much literacy research on discussion of texts reveals such tensions in English teachers' conceptions about and enacting of discussions of literature (e.g., Marshall, Smagorinsky, Smith, 1995). The conceptions articulated

by the teachers were “rarely embodied in the actual discussions that took place in their classrooms” (p. 131). For example, although teachers envisioned students collaboratively constructing their understanding of literary text, teachers controlled the flow of talk along the conventional lines of teacher-centered text analysis. Teachers elaborated brief student comments, weaving them together and contextualizing them, doing the thinking they had said they wanted students to do. Across this series of studies of literature discussion, the persistence of historical ways of talking in classrooms—teachers’ “own deeply instilled sense of the ‘right’ way for schooling to proceed” (p. 131)—thwarted their stated beliefs and intentions. Teachers’ plans of allowing students to use their own language and frames of reference to work on their understanding collaboratively were subverted by the teachers’ need to speak and to control text meaning in traditional ways.

In contrast, large-scale studies of discussion in English classes found that discussion of open-ended questions without predetermined answers led to students’ substantive engagement and sustained personal commitment to understanding texts, which had strong, positive effects on students’ literacy achievement (Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991). A growing body of evidence in literacy classrooms shows that when students engage in collaborative talk and activity in classes where they are treated as active constructors of meaning, they learn to use personal knowledge and language strategies shaped through the talking and activity (Newell & Durst, 1993; Langer, 1995; Marshall, Smagorinsky & Smith, 1995; Miller, 1990, 1993, 1996a, 1996b). In these classes the teachers created sophisticated roles as conversational partners, providing literacy concepts and strategies as they become appropriate and useful within the developing classroom dialogue. The ways of thinking made available during purposeful open-forum talk—for example, during discussion about problems or differences in understanding—have been shown to move inward over time to transform students’ empathetic perspective-taking (Athanases, 1993), dialectical reasoning (Miller, 1990, 1993, 1996a, 1996b), and narrative thinking (Langer, 1995). If these are strategies and ways of thinking we want students to learn through discussion, we need to understand how teachers’ conceptions of discussion potentially promote or interfere with such productive talk.

### **Social Studies Teachers’ Conceptions of Discussion**

In the absence of evidence of how the social studies teachers enacted their intended discussions, a look at their discourse for describing their conceptions of discussion gives some insight into their stances toward students’ construction of knowledge and understanding. For instance, one teacher’s description of the conception labeled “Discussion as Challenging Questions” was from Bill: “I see myself coming in and engaging people in almost a Socratic dialogue. Throw questions, prompt. I do that an awful lot in...large groups especially...I see my role at times in helping them

paraphrase one another's reactions [by asking repeated questions]." Bill and the other teachers felt the "Socratic method," an approach popular in English and social studies teacher education classes in the 1960s and 1970s, encouraged "deeper thought," Larson reported. Bill's language—e.g., throw questions—suggests little time for thoughtfulness between repeated questions. Research evidence, too, suggests that such questioning depresses student thinking and, across many fields, that questioning functions to signal unequal rights of speaking—marking who is in control and who is passive (e.g., Dillon, 1982).

In his interpretation of this "Challenging Questions" conception of discussion, Larson points out, that the teacher "role is as questioner rather than participant," and "teacher questions direct students' thinking about a topic." He seems to imply here that, using Bridges' conception of discussion, some of the conceptions of discussion which emerged in the study are not "discussion," although they might be alternative possibilities for classroom talk. The talk as described by the teachers tended to be, using Larson's vivid word, "tethered" to the teacher. Besides determining purpose and controlling the talk, teachers determined facts and controlled how they were used. The conceptions of discussion seem to be embedded in assumptions that schools and teachers control and transmit knowledge, although in several different ways (e.g., recitation, directing conversation to make clear a point, reasoning out a "consensus"). The teacher and student roles described by the teachers appeared to be limited by a conception of knowledge as already pre-formulated: often this began with "an idea that is presented in the material, or "what is in the book" which is then "transmitted" or "acquired" and, then, "applied," or "transferred" and so on.

Only when the purpose was for students to practice social roles were they allowed to have any control of topic-ownership and, potentially, authority to negotiate interpretations and knowledge. Even in the conception of "Discussion as Open-Ended Conversation," which seems closest to Bridges' conception of discussion, it is the teacher who provides "a definite starting spot" (Elaine), always "predetermining the topic of discussion" (Bill). Teachers perceived that students would have "tremendous freedom to explore ideas," (Bill), but the teachers also conceived that they would control the talk as "academic activity," determining which topic fits the curriculum, and, as Larson summarizes, judging which topic "the students already know something [about]." These teachers' language-in-use sometimes revealed conflicted notions of the kinds of talking they proposed as discussion.

Possibly, an unintended effect of using Roby's (1988) five discussion vignettes as a prompt for talking about their own class discussions was to stimulate teachers to use conventionalized ways of describing classroom talk, a familiar "speech genre" or pre-packaged way of speaking about teaching and knowledge (Bakhtin, 1986; Wertsch, 1991). Roby (1988) him-

self tends to do so, polarizing the “logical possibilities” of conversational content in classrooms as either concerned with the terms “in the students’ milieu or those in the teachers’ subject-matter” (p. 164), rather than conceiving of possibilities for joint construction of meaning and understanding. Roby’s scenarios (each labelled with a teacher’s name) appear to be categorized along two simultaneous lines of analysis—teacher purpose for discussion and teacher perception of what counts as relevant knowledge and evidence in that discussion conception. “Jim” controls for correctness of facts in recitation; “Kerry” controls knowledge by creating consensus; “Jack” controls knowledge by leading students to determine what facts are “truthful.” “Chris” sees discussion as accumulating a knowledge base; students talk to students “to help each other increase the amount of information they have.”

“Amount of information” students “have” is central to the first four vignettes, although they differ in preferred ways of assessing or promoting increases to information. The “Brian” vignette abandons concern with information or knowledge altogether, because in this conception, the substance of thinking becomes unimportant as social process becomes the singular goal. This scenario is similar to the “Discussion as Practice at Verbal Interactions” conception generated from the teachers’ descriptions.

The limitations in the Roby scenarios are notable particularly because the teachers’ conceptual categories grounded in Larson’s data reveal a similar focus on various ways of controlling information (and not controlling talk seen as social “practice,” unrelated to substantive knowing). In both schemes, conceptions of discussion as *mutually* examining a topic with equal rights of participation to produce knowledge jointly do not appear. There is little sense in the scenarios or the conceptions of “reciprocity of the roles of teacher and learner,” with respect for the opinions and ideas of others and a skepticism of one’s own and others’ authority over knowledge that undergirds the epistemology of discussion (Bridges, 1979, p. 54). My concern is that in the conceptions as described, participants are not so much engaged as potential sources of insight, as much as the teacher engages them as benefactors of insights. In fact, as Larson points out, teachers always “assess the accuracy of information being presented by students, and act as a monitor to insure the discussion serves the purpose for which it was planned.” There is little sense that “the learning outcomes are open” in a way that “democratizes knowledge” (Bridges, 1979, p. 68-9).

What is interesting here are the kinds of discussions which are missing. I wonder whether the social studies teachers’ conceptions of discussion might also include an open-forum, curricular conversation, sometimes initiated by students? I wonder if these teachers ever embarked on a “Discussion as Guided Transfer of Knowledge to the World Outside the Classroom” and found, suddenly, that as students considered “how school knowledge might prove useful in their life” the talk veered to “Discussion as Posing Challenging Questions,” *but initiated by students* challenging oth-

ers' points of view? Over the course of the school year do these teachers provide opportunities for students to appropriate the roles of inquirers, of questioners, of connection-makers themselves, perhaps all in the same multi-purposed discussion, not "tethered" to a teacher-directed topic, but instead prompted by a felt subject-matter question: "Demand for the solution of a perplexity is the steadying and guiding factor in the entire process of reflection" (Dewey, 1933).

What are other potential teacher roles in discussion? What counts as a "fact" or "truth" in social studies? And might the politics of knowledge itself be a fruitful topic in classroom discussion? That is, for example, how does a teacher direct students to "consensus" based on "facts," if there are simultaneous conflicting "facts" which are not amenable to resolution or assigning "truth"? And what implications do such questions have for education in a democracy? What do these teachers' conceptions communicate to students about knowledge, about the role of discussion, about the role of citizens in a democracy?

### **Discussion as Problem-Posing Dialogue**

A question for research across the disciplines is this: How can we extend and transform conceptions of the possible forms of discussion toward those not yet conceived by teachers shaped by their experiences in the schools over the last 20 years? Let me suggest one example of another conception of discussion—as substantive open-forum inquiry in the form of an ongoing problem-posing dialogue (Friere, 1970).

In a study of integrated social studies-English classes (Miller, 1996), eleventh-grade students and two teachers engaged in open-forum discussions and writing and other dialectical activities that fostered student awareness of the multiple, sometimes conflicting languages for understanding texts and social issues. The teachers provided assistance at points of need, sometimes in the form of posing problems or juxtaposing texts/perspectives (e.g., stories, reports, personal experiences), and often in the form of conversational strategies for moving from unreflective speech to conscious reflection about one's own and others' assumptions and values. In this team-taught U.S. history/American literature class, the social studies teacher focused on a critical stance toward authoritative texts, like history textbooks, often asking such questions as, "Who is the speaker? What is his agenda? What voices are left out?" This English teacher focused more on making connections among texts, between texts and life, and on creating a coherent story of events from multiple perspectives. She asked such questions as, "What connections can you make? What other perspective can you imagine? What do you make of all of that?"

The discussions among the students in the classes, orchestrated jointly by these two teachers, led to an open-forum for posing problems, considering the lived experiences of people as a kind of history, questioning how



events have been presented in American history textbooks, and inquiring into possible answers. In these classes the democratic community became a central feature as talk became central, with both students and teachers raising and pursuing questions. For both teachers, the biggest surprise was how important discussion was for their students. She said, "It's the glue that holds them together." He said, "It's like food for them." The interdisciplinary classroom context evolved through discussion into a democratic classroom culture nourished and held together through problem-posing talk. Over the year, ethnographic case studies revealed that students began to internalize both teachers' ways of talking and thinking made available in the problem-posing space of the class. What students internalized along with the subject matter was a specific method of dialogic inquiry, what I have called a critical-narrative discourse, based on the conversation between the social studies teacher's critical thinking and the English teacher's narrative thinking.

In their ongoing discussions over the year much purposeful, unanticipated learning occurred. Students internalized *simultaneously* the social and cognitive strategies made available in the discussions, as well as stances toward texts and subject-matter knowledge. In this way, discussion helps to shape our knowledge of the subjects we study in school, to develop our ways of thinking, and to create a dialogic world view. In general, the concepts, structures and processes of discussion move inward, transforming to "inner speech," enabling us to do later in thought what we could at first only do in speech with others (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978). In this sociocultural conception, our talking with others can transform our knowing, our understanding, and our thinking, as they eventually become our "voices of the mind" (Wertsch, 1991).

In the integrated classes, democratic community evolved as problem-posing discussion became central. These teachers had the courage of complexity in their "epistemology of pluralism," as they and their students created "in microcosm a transformed set of relationships and possibilities for social futures" (The New London Group, 1996). Returning to Bridges' (1979) vision for discussion and democracy, what are the implications of such social futures for democratic education?

### Discussion and Education in a Multicultural Democracy

In *Education, Democracy and Discussion*, Bridges (1979) explores the relationship between the social and ethical values inherent in discussion and a long tradition of political writing which regards discussion as "a central, characteristic and valued procedure in democratic government" (p. 150). This focus on the democratizing influence and "moral culture" of group discussion has been under-conceptualized in research on discussion in literacy and schooling. Lasting contributions to students' democratic orientations come from how teachers and schools treat students, knowl-

edge, controversy, and culture in classrooms throughout their educations (Bridges, 1979; Sigel, 1991). We need an American vision, perhaps, of discussion across the curriculum.

In his transdisciplinary vision of the “curriculum as conversation,” Applebee (1996) argues against intellectual taxonomies of knowledge which present what we know as orderly, but static and fragmented; he proposes that acting to know the world requires entering into an ongoing dialogue for inventing our understanding in genuine inquiry, linking us and our ideas with others. These social links are becoming increasingly important in schools. Historically, as changing images of literacy in our culture have moved us along a line of increasing autonomy for the individual, we have simultaneously lost the links of community connectedness of our early oral traditions (Myers, 1996).

In his argument for using classroom discussion, Larson notes the importance of viewing democracy as a way of life with “citizens in a pluralist society” walking—and talking—together. I couldn’t agree more. This question of the discussion-democracy link in a multicultural society has become a central issue in transformative, “unquiet” pedagogies for English classrooms (Kutz & Roskelly, 1991), based in Friere’s (1970) problem-posing dialogues. Such critical literacy approaches include examination of the political and cultural assumptions underlying texts, including the “texts” of classrooms and society. This stance requires asking about the social realities of democracy, about how power is distributed, about who gets to speak to whom about what. I believe we need scholarship which contributes to a cross-disciplinary framework for exploring discussion as a rich source for developing critical thinkers and empowered citizens who have the courage to ask such questions. Critically empowering students in a multicultural democracy requires more than individualist views of culture, learning, and literacy (Miller, 1993). If democracy is to work, we need to learn conversation among differences valued as sources of knowing, understanding, and acting together. The principles and practices of democracy learned amid difference, through dialogue, promise to construct a cultural capacity for social connection and responsibility (Bellah et al., 1985), what Greene (1993) calls “an expanding community.”

Larson has taken a step to document what *is*, conceptually, among experienced social studies teachers. We need much more work on classroom discussion across the disciplines to describe what *might be and how*. Most of all, we need rich conceptions of conversational classrooms where students and teachers in ongoing collaboration learn critical habits of mind and social “habits of the heart” (Bellah et al., 1985).

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REJOINDER TO SUZANNE M. MILLER

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Suzanne Miller's response adds insight into current thinking about classroom discussion. She historically situated the framework of my study in a manner that gave me additional discernment into the roots and future direction of my research on discussion. Miller presents a compelling call for cross-disciplinary explorations of classroom discussion—both to learn how it might empower students to be critical and thoughtful democratic citizens, and to better understand how teachers use discussion. Additionally, her brief description of an integrated history-literature class, and the discussion leadership of the history and the literature teachers, represents the type of studies that will only enhance the on-going exploration of the thinking teachers have about classroom discussion. In this brief rejoinder I consider several of the issues related to teachers' conceptions, the nature of classroom discussion, and future research.

Miller commented that teachers' "stances toward students' construction of knowledge and understanding" likely affects the extent to which students control and initiate discussions. It is a very real concern that classroom discussion might discourage students from engaging in fruitful explorations of course content if the teacher believes knowledge is a predetermined entity. While teachers may believe that the process of talking helps students understand a topic better, whose understanding of the topic is the authority? Classroom discussion provides opportunities for a constructivist approach, as well as a democratic approach, to learning, but it does not require either.

The very nature of discussion, however, offers promise to those who are concerned about teachers telling students what to know, rather than encouraging students to think critically about the information being examined. Discussion is as much a method of instruction as it is a curriculum outcome. As a method it provides an approach for teaching content, while as an outcome or goal of instruction it emphasizes that students become competent discussants. Parker (1996), for example, describes the importance of this distinction:

Discussion competence involves something more, without which discussions may be disciplined but not democratic: reasoning with democratic values and dialectically, reconsidering them. A shared commitment to justice, equality, and human dignity fashions the talk about *both the issues at hand and the talk itself*. (p. 201, emphasis in original)

The teachers I studied used classroom discussion to explore issues and to teach their students how to discuss (Larson, 1997). They reported that discussion skills learned in the classroom could be used by students during interactions outside of the classroom. If teaching with discussion benefits students' explorations of issues in the classroom, then teaching how to engage in discussions *potentially* benefits students as they explore issues on their own.

Miller wonders whether the "social studies teachers' conceptions of discussion might also include an open-forum, curricular conversation, sometimes initiated by students." Indeed the boundaries between conceptions are not distinct, and more than one conception might occur during a lesson. Teachers described their thinking about discussion without the requirement of labeling or categorizing different types. One conception, practice at verbal interactions, specifically allowed for student-initiated discussions. However, teachers often use this type of discussion to teach the skills needed to interact. As such, they still control the curricular purpose of the talk. Miller reminds us of the decades-old dilemma facing those who teach with discussion: how does one allow for student responsibility to determine and explore a discussion topic, and still direct students to learn the interactive skills and nuances needed to participate in the discussion (Barnes, 1971).

Miller provided a brief example of discussion as a "substantive open-forum inquiry." I found her description of the social studies and English teachers' roles to be an exciting example of integrating these subject areas with the intent of helping students learn how to think about texts and social issues. As described in her response, the questions posed by the two teachers seem similar in kind to the questions used during open-ended discussions and discussions that pose challenging questions. If so, these two conceptions hold the potential to democratize knowledge (Bridges, 1979). Rather than providing a new conception, Miller may provide valuable elaboration to these two. If the conception described by Miller has critical attributes not contained in the hypothesized set of conceptions, then it provides an interesting addition. A goal of all explorations into teachers' thinking and discussion is to better understand teachers' purposes for discussion, and teacher and student roles during discussion.

Social studies has two distinguishing characteristics as a field of study: the promotion of civic competence, and the integration of "knowledge, skills and attitudes within and across disciplines" (NCSS, 1994, p. 3). Classroom discussions have the possibility of these two characteristics as well. Establishing a vision for using discussion as a tool that allows students to learn and prepare to hold the "office of citizen" seems to require an exploration, across subject areas, of teachers' conceptions of discussion, as well as conceptions of student learning and of knowledge.

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The Past And Future Of Social Studies As Citizenship Education And  
Of Research On Social Studies

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As I contemplated the invitation to join in the celebration of a quarter-century of *Theory and Research in Social Education (TRSE)* by contributing a commentary that was retrospective and/or prospective, the past and the future were too tightly interlinked to partition. Two issues have largely occupied my professional attention over the past 25-plus years—the definition of social studies and the productivity of research on social studies education (as well as in education generally). Those two perhaps seemingly disparate subjects are linked in my past-as-future quaternal thoughts.

**Definitions and NCSS**

For more than 25 years, I argued, some might even say vociferously, that social studies should be defined as the curricular area centered on citizenship education. The counter position, put simplistically, is the definition of the social studies as history and the social sciences simplified and adapted for pedagogical purposes. From that perspective, citizenship as a goal is not rejected, but considered an incidental outcome of instruction. The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) has embraced both definitions, which I have seen as a lack of conceptual coherence that impeded the professional efficacy of the organization. In that context, I joined with Shirley Engle in his criticism of

NCSS as an organizational smorgasbord, rather than a professional bill of fare with cuisinal integrity.

Concurrently, I and others have suggested that social studies education is a bifurcated field. On the one hand, there is an intelligentsia, mostly university folk, who engage in cerebral disputation over such matters as the proper definition of social studies. On the other hand are those who do the work of social studies, teaching and helping teachers, in schools. In retrospect, I failed to appreciate that the conceptually relevant split was not between academicians and practitioners, but between those who derive satisfaction from theory-practice analysis and those who perceive in practical terms the historical realities of present and future social-studies practice in the schools.

Seeking a sound conceptual basis for what is taught in schools should be a primary, continuous goal for social studies educators. Nourishment of the critical examination of definitional and other philosophical issues in social studies education is a significant professional obligation for NCSS. The College and University Assembly (CUFA) and its journal, *TRSE*, have propagated and nurtured that intellectual activity—which, for many members, is called for by university roles as well as dictated by personal drives.



Those in schools (e.g., teachers, curriculum coordinators and supervisors), however, operate in a context distinguished by ongoing interactions with young people who are often uninterested and recalcitrant participants, and in an environment of school and community influences, including commitment to the historically subject-based curriculum, that is tempered by the educator's own educational experiences. Arguments about how to define social studies are not particularly compelling under those circumstances; the practitioner's driving concern is how to teach a history or economics course so that young people will learn and not be disruptive in the classroom (often validly of concern in the opposite order). Public school personnel come to NCSS looking for assistance with that professionally responsible task.

Realistically, public school teachers rarely see themselves as "social studies teachers" (nor do their students, their school administrators, or the parents), but as, for example, second or third grade, or U.S. history, world history, geography, or government teachers. For the most part, although interested in citizenship education, they see it as a by-product of their curricula, not as the centering concern. With the variety in their teaching assignments, student populations, and school contexts, and the variation in their education and experience, no single focus defines what "social studies" teachers (or curriculum supervisors) hope to receive from their association with NCSS. But, clearly, for most of them definitional ques-

tions such as, "Should it be 'social studies *is*. . .' or '*the social studies are* ...?'" lack professional salience.

So, in regard to definitional purity, one must, from the above hardly new analysis, ask, *cui bono*: To what purpose? For whose benefit? If a major, if not *the* purpose of NCSS is to influence schooling for the benefit of the students and society, then definitional purity, insistence on a citizenship-centered definition (or any other single definition) that denies the existence and appropriateness of teachers' diverse instructional orientations, is dysfunctional. From that perspective, recognizing the variety of curricular frames of reference that teachers and curriculum coordinators bring to the organization, NCSS must be (forgive me, Shirley Engle; don't call, Howard Mehlinger) a curricular/instructional smorgasbord if it is to fulfill a principal part of its mission.

Realization of the potential of widespread social studies curricula actually based on analysis of the affective, cognitive, and interpersonal demands of citizenship—e.g., a la the jurisprudential, public issues model—remains an exciting, if unrealistic, prospect. However, framing one's expectations for the contributions of social studies to citizenship within the traditional conception of the "educated person" fits better with school realities, that is, with the reality of the past as future for social studies education.

The intrinsic worth of knowledge has, of course, been the historic rationale for liberal education: The well-read person is a better citizen. The faith that, if taught well, the

study of history and the social sciences contributes to a more intelligent citizenry is not unreasonable, even if not founded on research evidence. There is no compelling research evidence, either, that curricula derived from analysis of the role of citizens will produce better affective, conceptual, analytical, or behavioral outcomes in adults.

My intent here is to affirm the existence of and the need to be responsive to curricular diversity in social studies, not to urge acceptance of or indifference to courses that are unreflective surveys of oversimplified content that leave students unengaged, uninterested, and unenlightened. Even in NCSS's preparation and presentation of a curricular/instructional smorgasbord, basic philosophical and pedagogical issues should not be given short shrift.

Teachers' explication and examination of their assumptions and their curricular import—i.e., rationale building—remain as a critical basis for effective social studies teaching. Questions that linger for examination include, for example: How can a social studies teacher generate students' interest and conceptual involvement so that the curriculum will have an impact on how they think, feel, and act? To be deemed teachable, must students share the bent toward abstract conceptualization that leads many teachers to be devotees of the study of history or the social sciences for its own sake? Is the cognitive stimulation that results from the confrontation of problems that are intellectually and emotionally real, as John Dewey argued, necessary for thinking and

thus for learning, and so a necessary basis for history-social science-based approaches to social studies, as well as for public issues curricula? In that context, the recently published *Handbook on Teaching Social Issues* (Evans & Saxe, 1996)—which might have been titled appropriately, *Handbook for Issues-Centered Education*—has much to offer social studies teachers across the public issues-academic disciplines spectrum as they consider how to teach for long-term impacts on a democratic citizenry.

### Research on Social Studies

The lack of compelling research evidence, as noted above, for choosing between an analysis-of-citizenship or a history-and-social-science based curricular focus (recognizing that the two are not necessarily mutually exclusive), or for deciding under what circumstances one or the other might be more effective (e.g., depending on student, teacher, or school setting characteristics), is symptomatic of the state of research on social studies education (as well as that of educational research in general). Recently, I was asked to write a chapter on social studies for a *Handbook of Research on Improving Student Achievement* (Shaver, 1995). The invitation came in large part because it was assumed that as editor of the *Handbook of Research on Social Studies Teaching and Learning*, I would have in mind, or at least at hand, the cumulative findings from research that would allow me to select and describe ten or more teaching practices in social studies with substantiated effectiveness.

Despite the *Handbook* and a review of past volumes of *TRSE*, it was not possible to accomplish that task. I did extract ten teaching practices, but from limited, sometimes not directly relevant studies, via a process of alchemy that involved sifting and enhancement through my frame of reference.

That experience confirmed my impression that research on social studies education has progressed little, if any, since I wrote about the lack of prescriptive research-based knowledge and the futility of a science of social studies education (Shaver, 1979, 1982). The use of quantitative research methods has been critiqued (for example, by Jack Fraenkel) and qualitative epistemological arguments and methodologies have been added to the research arsenal. One would, however, still be hard pressed to identify in research on social studies, or on education generally, the "onslaught of science" referred to in a March 10, 1997 *Newsweek* article (p. 59) on cloning. A similarly powerful, unrelenting growth of research-based theory and technology has simply not occurred in our field, nor will it, given the ontological realities of research on intelligent, interactive humans and the attendant cultural invalidation of generalizations. The realistic question is not, can our research be scientific (Can we produce the progressively stronger facts, generalizations, and theories of science?), but can our research help school practitioners to better educate the young for the good of society?

In quantitative research, inferential statistics are still used with

convenience samples, although effect sizes are more frequently reported (but usually without carefully developed criteria for the educational significance of the results). Still missing is the replication of studies. Perhaps equally critical is the absence of a sense that the problems investigated, and therefore the results obtained, are meaningful or significant to those who are responsible for social studies curricula in public schools.

The surge of qualitative research has fostered recognition of the need to attempt to understand classrooms from the perspectives of the teachers and students (and others, such as parents). More interesting, perhaps more valid, stories about classroom life are being told. A provocative dimension has been added to the research discussions that are vital to the intellectual lives of academicians, as well as to the nourishment of political agendas for some. Whether public school teachers and curriculum coordinators are finding qualitative reports to be more helpful than quantitative studies in making curricular and teaching decisions is questionable; substantiating evidence has not, to my knowledge, been reported.

The lack of research productivity does not lead me to take the anti-intellectual stance that empirical efforts to understand and affect schooling, including social studies education, should be abandoned. Rather, I am compelled to re-emphasize our failure to conduct the critical examination of our research enterprise that might position us to accomplish the sought-after ends.

The roots of that lack of reflectiveness are complex, but one is the conduct of graduate education.

Rarely has the doctoral education of educators been aimed at more than the development of research technicians, researchers with some, often shallow, knowledge of research designs, measurement concepts, and statistical techniques. Analysis of the philosophical underpinnings for our research—whether through engagement in the history and philosophy of science or the consideration of specific epistemological and ontological issues—is not often a substantial part of doctoral programs for social studies educators.

The uncritical nature of doctoral education is exemplified by faculty who insist on inferential statistics in dissertations, even with convenience samples and sometimes with population data. That replications can be useful exercises for students, as well as necessary to advance knowledge, is typically either not accepted or implemented. For the most part, doctoral dissertations are one-shot studies that lead nowhere, contributing neither to wider understanding of an educational phenomenon nor to a school district's curricular choices or solution of a local problem.

Professors tend to view the literature, rather than schools, as the legitimate source (or at least justification) of research problems. However, despite the surface emphasis on the research literature as the basis for further research, few dissertation or other studies in our field build systematically on (including

through the critical evaluation of problems, designs, analyses, or conclusions) and extend the works of others. (I still wonder if a collegial research network, such as Jack Nelson and I proposed in the *Review of Research in Social Studies: 1976-1983* (Nelson & Shaver, 1985), might be a productive model for research on social studies? Such a network might be energized and maintained by an NCSS-sponsored consortium to identify problems for investigation and organize programmatic, cooperative research efforts.)

Still begging to be addressed is the dubious, unsubstantiated assumption that research findings will lead to productive educational practice, rather than vice versa. The persistence of that belief diverts attention from research to identify effective social studies programs and then disclose the necessary conditions for their successful transfer to other schools and classrooms. The upshot of the research-to-practice fallacy is research reports marked neither by validated recommendations for effective school practice nor by using-one's-head usefulness in school-based decision-making.

### **Prologue to the Future?**

The above analysis of research on social studies education may seem overwhelmingly pessimistic in its implications. Yet, it is a basis for optimism. I recall reading somewhere that "a pessimist is a realistic optimist." That is, only by examining forthrightly the failures of our past, well-intentioned efforts can we lay the groundwork for future productivity. In Deweyan terms, to rec-

ognize and feel the problem—the incongruence between our intent and our achievements, the dissonance between our goals and our accomplishments—is the first step toward the reconstruction of our research enterprise that is needed.

Focusing on research strategies and tactics to produce findings that will help school people “use their heads” in making curricular and instructional decisions is the likely path to a different view of the productivity of research on social studies 25 years hence. In that sense, my recanting of definitional sectarianism for definitional agnosticism and the issue of research productivity are related. To ignore past realities is to ensure an unproductive future.

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## Matters of Method

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As Paul Robinson (1982) once pointed out, the common attribute perhaps shared by CUFA members more than any other is that they teach (and have taken) social studies methods courses. I therefore note with interest that the term "method" did not appear in this journal's "statement of purpose" in its first issue in 1973. Nor does it appear today. Robinson also noted that in the first 25 issues of *Theory and Research in Social Education* no article on method warranting publication had been received (p. 2). My own quick review of the journal's tables of contents in the 15 years since does not reveal any great change. Since *TRSE's* inception, what have college- and university-based faculty contributed to the enhancement of method?

Method, as John Dewey (1916) explained, means "the effective direction of subject matter to desired results" (p. 165). It is probably the arena where social studies faculty are most unfettered to explicate ideal practice. In contrast, for example, authority over the curriculum devolves on a much fuller cast of competing voices such as national commissions, state mandated courses and textbook adoptions, local curriculum guidelines and commercial publishers (see Grant, 1996). But it is social studies professors who are conventionally assumed to be the

legitimate authorities on, at least, methods classes and methods textbooks.

Despite this apparent freedom to define the agenda, however, the literature on methods courses consistently reveals underdeveloped rationales for the purposes of the course, inadequate conceptualization of the course, and student dissatisfaction with instruction received therein (see Adler, 1991; Robinson, 1982; Banks & Parker, 1990). Meanwhile, the content and use of methods texts has largely escaped systematic investigation (see Adler, 1991). In other words, if method rightly falls in the province of CUFA, it does not appear to have whetted our scholarly appetites, at least judged by what has appeared in this journal. This is particularly telling given that there is no serious debate about the mediocrity of much social studies classroom life (see Goodlad, 1984, Shaver, Davis, & Helburn, 1980; Thornton, 1994). For CUFA, is this a case of, to invoke Joseph Schwab (1969), a flight from the "practical" problems of the field?

Although even casual examination of *TRSE* reveals no shortage of writings in some way on or about or otherwise potentially relevant to method, it is hard to gauge their cumulative impact. Rather, different and overlapping terms (e.g., "instructional procedures," "teaching

strategies," "teacher decision making," "teacher thinking," "curricular-instructional gatekeeping") abound, often accompanied, of course, by entreaties for the teaching of some favored subject matter. What these diverse studies add up to for method it is difficult to say. Although I, too, hasten to argue for timely and relevant subject matter, does it really matter what we teach if our methods do not spark students' intrinsic interest in learning it? To put it another way, there is scant evidence that CUFA has been standing back and taking stock on method. While the centrality of theory and research on method to CUFA's mission does not seem contestable, is there any common meaning attributed to "method" after 25 years of this journal, not to mention what have we learned that we did not know 25 years ago?

This was not always the case. If not quite a golden age, there was a time when university-based social studies educators provided rich analyses and syntheses of methods (e.g., Horn, 1937; Wesley, 1937). Even if this did not, or perhaps was not intended to, endorse a "one best system," these writers did pull together systematically what was known, on what theory and research this knowledge rested, and tried to clarify conceptual confusions and terminological overlaps. In recent decades, methods texts appear to have gradually grown more like catalogues of often incommensurable approaches in which reference to theory and research in the field can sometimes be little more than ritualistic.

One small step toward agreeing what we are all talking about when we say "method" (or its close synonyms) would be to revisit how it has been employed in our field. According to some work-in-progress I am conducting, the history of social studies methods (stretching back to at least the 1880s) reveals that "method" has generally been used to mean one of three not entirely separable but nonetheless distinguishable things: "method" as the method of the constituent disciplines of social studies such as history (i.e., historical method); "method" meaning the arrangement of subject matter based on criteria developed from the aims of social studies education, and; "method" as synonymous with "techniques of instruction," often construed to be generalizable to different contexts and in concordance with some theory of learning. In this third meaning, method is largely reduced to technical knowledge removed from its social and subject matter contexts (see Cornbleth, 1987)

Each of these meanings has co-existed with the other two for some time. The disciplinary view appears to have enjoyed its greatest popularity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (see Saxe, 1994), with a strong resurgence during the structure of the disciplines movement of the 1960s. The second view, that is beginning with the educational purposes of social studies, gained ground after the turn of the century, and by the 1930s had become the dominant view in the literature. At times in this second view emphasis was given to harnessing the disciplines for social studies

ends, while at other times the disciplines were used merely as repositories of knowledge for other ends such as the study of societal problems or issues. Both of these uses of the second view are evident, for instance, in the recent NCSS bulletin on teaching social issues (Evans & Saxe, 1996). The third view has also surfaced throughout the twentieth century. For example, it can be seen in attention in the pages of *Social Education* to the use of technology such as film in the 1930s and 1940s and, more recently, computers.

Why method is not the subject of more sustained and focused attention, I cannot presently be sure. I do suspect, however, that the field's long-standing preoccupation with curriculum issues and curriculum reform provides us with the illusion of the power to effect educational change. Without changes in method, however, curriculum theory and reform probably will not produce much change in the place where it ultimately matters, the classroom. There is certainly plenty of worthwhile questions on method to keep us busy: for example, What would ideal methods courses look like? What instructional materials do we have on hand which would support such ideal courses? What materials need to be developed? How could teacher educators be prepared to teach such a course? How would we evaluate the outcomes of such courses and materials?

Given the present constraints on other avenues of educational improvement at both the national (e.g., Downey, 1996; Whelan, 1996) and state levels (e.g., Cornbleth, 1996; Levstik, 1996), CUFA should devote

sustained and cogent attention to method. It may be the most potent lever for reform available to us.

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## Democracy and Difference

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*This is a good time to reassert the twinned American values of a singular citizenship and a radically pluralist society.*<sup>1</sup>

My theme is a simple one. When emphasizing democratic citizenship as the guiding purpose of social studies education, educators cannot continue to do so in a way that skirts cultural identifications such as race, gender, ethnicity, language and religion, which are inevitable in a radically pluralist society. Our professional community—the loosely coupled group of citizenship-oriented social studies educators working in the United States—has tended to do this throughout the 20th century. There have been consequences. The chasm between multicultural education and citizenship education is one of the most bizarre and mis-educative. Attending exclusively and defensively to the citizen identity while ignoring, denying, or trying to “melt” away our other identities avoids the very tension on which democracies rise and fall. Doing the opposite has the same effect: By attending exclusively and defensively to our diverse individual and cultural identities, we ignore the shared political framework that we rely on to secure this diversity.

For my contribution to the twenty-fifth anniversary of *Theory*

*and Research in Social Education*, I want to take stock of this old problem—democracy and difference—and suggest a way of thinking about it that I hope will prove helpful to social studies educators. I will suggest reasons for the problem in the first section, called “Dodging Diversity,” then a way of thinking about it in a section called “The Virtue of Multiple Identities.” Identities, both individual and group, are historical events. They are stories we tell ourselves, stories that hold profound meaning for us. They are located, in ways that usually surpass our understanding, at the constantly changing intersections of time and place, social status and culture, family life and media, power relations and education, physical and mental health, and so on down the long line of socializing forces and circumstances. The “Virtue” in this section title refers to a particularly public or civic good—that of being not solely a family member, ethnic group member, speaker of a particular language, individual of this or that character, or member of this or that faith community, but perhaps all of these things *plus* a citizen who cares for the public space that secures these differences. The third section, “Curriculum Matters,” aims the ideas in the first two sections at the plans we make for educating democrats who will embrace difference.

There I deal with the longstanding tension between two emphases in democratic education: the social relations in classrooms and schools, sometimes called "climate" or "governance," and the formal curriculum—the adults' articulated plans for what should take place in classrooms and schools.

### Dodging Diversity

"The social studies are centrally concerned with the education of citizens," wrote Shirley Engle in 1960 (1996, p. 118). Engle advocated an education in decision making as the surest means to that end.

"We should emphasize decision making at two levels: at the level of deciding what a group of descriptive data means, how these data may be summarized or generalized, what principles they suggest; and also decision making at the level of policy determination, which requires a synthesis of facts, principles, and values usually not all found on one side of any question." (118).

This is good as far as it goes, but it doesn't go far enough. Students and educators need a conception of citizenship that is adequate to creative democratic citizenship in *heterogeneous societies* (Parker, 1996a and 1996b). By creative democratic citizenship, I mean, with Engle and Dewey before him, people coming together as citizens to forge a future together, conjoining to identify and address the myriad problems of public life. By heterogeneous societies, I mean not only the various interest group affiliations of the citi-

zen—the factions that concerned James Madison in *The Federalist No. 10*—but the thicker, warmer, cultural affiliations that are associated with ethnic group membership: the northern European Protestant humor of Garrison Keillor's radio show, "A Prairie Home Companion;" the family gatherings of Scottish and Chinese Americans; the rites of passage for Jewish youngsters; the African-American church choral tradition; and so on in stunning variety and number across the cultural and historical landscape. Sometimes these differences are incommensurable. Think of a fundamentalist, patriarchic Christian church and a fundamentalist, patriarchic Muslim mosque in the same neighborhood, the parents of which are sending children to the same public middle school. Or think of abortion politics.

Participation in school and classroom decision making is necessary for an education for democratic living in a diverse society, to be sure, but it is not sufficient. "We are a society constituted by many cultures," Amy Gutmann writes. "It is both morally wrong and empirically false to teach students as if it were otherwise" (1995, p. 87). My position is not that multicultural education is necessary in addition to democratic citizenship education. While that is somewhat true, it side-steps a more central problem, a conceptual problem, which is that citizenship education is incomplete without attention to the *relationship* of our citizen identity to our cultural identities. This, in turn, is an expression of the

unity/diversity tension that is inevitable in modern societies.<sup>2</sup>

It is not difficult to understand why citizenship educators have circumvented cultural diversity. Three reasons stand out. The first can be found in the thought world in which the idea *e pluribus unum* is invoked and considered. *E pluribus unum* is celebrated as an achievement—something that occurred in the American context at the time of the ratification of the Constitution in 1787. The phrase has been printed on coins, and there you have it: “From the many, one.” Nothing more needs to be said about it, not now that the formula has been struck. We had best leave well enough alone. In this way, the phrase functions to substitute an accomplishment for what is actually an aspiration: an ongoing, creative struggle to work out a relationship between culture and politics, between communities of heart, language, and memory, on the one hand, and a larger civic realm—a polity or commonwealth—that binds these groups together in some sort of democratic political community, on the other. Viewed as an accomplishment, *e pluribus unum* works ideologically to protect a few interests from one another and, together, from the dispossessed, while rendering unnecessary any fresh thinking about the relationship between cultural pluralism and political unity. *E pluribus unum*, then, has become a key term for explaining and legitimizing the belief that constitutional democracy has solved the unity/diversity tension. There’s just one problem: it hasn’t. In fact, as a

tension, nothing will solve it; rather, it must be dealt with ongoingly. Teachers need to be educating children for this tension. It doesn’t matter to me that children are (or are not) learning to “surf” the worldwide web if they are not learning to surf the unity/diversity tension. We need priorities.

A second reason why citizenship educators have dodged cultural diversity can be found in the concept “democratic citizenship,” which by definition excludes the category of culture. It does this for historically good reasons. Kings, emperors, and their clerics for centuries slaughtered, burned at the stake, tortured, enslaved, or otherwise made miserable both defiant subjects and culturally different subjects. There was no separation of church and state, nor separation of the state or the church from much else, either. Monarchs and bishops did pretty much as they pleased. With the democratic struggles of the 19th century came such separations and, simultaneously, the concept “citizen.” The citizen category was intended to be culturally neutral. As a citizen, one is an *it*, a cipher, a zero—with inalienable rights. This “it-ness” is, if awkward, worth it; for it protects the citizen from what had been the norm: unbridled tyranny by the power elite. When residing in the citizen role, one is an abstraction or an idea; one is of indifferent religion, first language, national origin, gender, social class, race, ethnicity, and, in some political communities, sexual orientation. One is, in this identity, devoid of cultural identity, historical tradition, or geographic

setting. One is, therefore, equal to all other citizens. ( $0 = 0$ .) This is what the term "political equality" means. It is *citizens* that are "equal before the law," not *people*.

The institutional analog to the citizen identity is the democratic state or republic. Just as the citizen is a zero, so too is the democratic state, ideally; it is color-blind, gender-blind, religion-blind and so on. In other words, it is neutral. At least, that's the aspiration. I asked a group of fifth-graders why the "lady justice statue," as they called it, which sat atop a file cabinet in the front of their classroom, was wearing a blind fold. They shouted almost in unison, incredulous that I had thought it necessary to ask: "SO SHE CAN BE FAIR!" This is the neutrality aspiration in a nutshell. It is a remarkable idea, and it has taken many societies a long way toward nontyranny and political equality.

A third reason is some combination of ethnocentrism and positionality. The "larger civic realm" in the United States has not in fact been sufficiently neutral. Instead, it has been the province, more or less, of a particular tribe. To wit: John Jay had the presumption to write in *The Federalist No. 2* that "Providence" gave this land "to one united people—a people descended from the same ancestors, speaking the same language, professing the same religion...." They were indeed, he asserted, a "band of brethren." In order to assert this social cohesion, Jay had to ignore (and was not unusual for it) native peoples, blacks, women, and others who were not figured into "we the people." Years

later, performing the same feat, Arthur Schlesinger (1992) feared the "disuniting" of the brethren.<sup>3</sup> He regarded *e pluribus unum* as a more-or-less established fact (from the many have come the one) which now will be undone if multiculturalism isn't constrained. Both men perceived a neutrality that wasn't, and both spoke from a tribal vantage point. These are related. The effect was to conceal existing power and status imbalances. Once concealed, they were more easily ignored while attention conveniently was diverted to the supposed deficits of those without power or status. In this way, "citizenship has itself become," wrote T. H. Marshall (1964) in what remains the seminal work on citizenship in this century, "in certain respects, the architect of social inequality."

Citizenship educators like myself and readers of this journal generally are the brethren. Privileged insiders like us historically have tended to overestimate the degree of extant social cohesion and have had more than a little difficulty perceiving our own privilege in the scheme of things; hence, Schlesinger's "disuniting" framework. Moreover, those of us who are members of cultural majorities often overlook our tribal vantage points and perceive ourselves, miraculously, as culturally neutral. Others have ethnicity; meanwhile, We "go out" for ethnic food. Peggy McIntosh, who directs the Women's Studies program at Wellesley College, realized that as a woman she had seen clearly her disadvantaged status relative to men. But as a white

person, she had not seen, or had denied, her own privilege relative to non-whites. She reflects:

"I think whites are carefully taught not to recognize white privilege, as males are taught not to recognize male privilege. So I have begun in an untutored way to ask what it is like to have white privilege. I have come to see white privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was "meant" to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools, and blank checks." (1989, p. 8)

#### The Virtue of Multiple Identities

"Participatory citizenship" and "celebrate diversity" are slogans that express the two sides of the contemporary divide between democratic citizenship education and multicultural education. Neither's meaning can be assumed. The former seems often to mean "social involvement," and the "citizenship" part is simply dropped; the latter, oddly, functions to conserve unequal relations by glossing over them. Neither even broaches the *relationship* between commonality and particularity in modern society. Both wear blinders, narrowing their vision. This indicates the contemporary education scene—this absence of a discourse that joins the two emphases.

The definition of social studies now in parlance, for example, ends with the following purpose statement: "...to help young people de-

velop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society...."

We visited the decision-making theme already and saw that it skirted cultural difference, as it does in this purpose statement. This statement, despite its strengths, only declares that our society *is* culturally diverse. No relationship between democracy and difference is struck. The question remains: How are we to think of the two of them together, in a single frame?

*E pluribus unum* has stood for the needed slogan in the past. The conventional meaning of the phrase is that unity (oneness) can and should emerge from pluralism (manyness): *from* the many, the one. But the relationship that is struck on this meaning does not actually square citizenship with difference; rather, if anything, difference is sacrificed to citizenship. The telling word is *from*. Plurality is left behind, reduced, transcended, subsumed into a greater whole. Oneness is achieved as a victory over difference. This understanding of *e pluribus unum* undergirds the brethren's assimilationist stance toward diversity and fuels the creation of two education camps: citizenship education and multicultural education. The former pulls for oneness and unity; the latter for manyness and equity. We can do better.

Doing better begins with the recognition that squaring citizenship with cultural diversity is not

so difficult unless we imagine ourselves as having (or needing to have) singular, whole identities. Of course, we don't. It is a truism that modern peoples have multiple identities. If it wasn't a truism, one would only have to look at one's moment-to-moment experiencing to see that no continuous identity can be found. When occupying the citizen identity, we are without cultural-historical identifications; we are "individuals" who are equal to all other "individuals." We are members of no group except for citizen groups: the city and state, political action committees, political parties, and so on. When residing in our cultural identities, however, we are defined by our cultural memberships: We may be middle class, black, Catholic, third-generation Japanese-American business woman, a male WASP school principal, whatever. Still, that's not the whole of our being. "I find I am constantly being encouraged to pluck out some one aspect of myself and present this as the meaningful whole, eclipsing or denying the other parts of self," writes Audre Lourde in *Sister Outsider* (1984, p. 120). That "encouragement" may bear down in powerful ways; still, it is a democratic civic virtue not to give in to it. For being American means having multiple identities. Democracy requires us to reside, from time to time, in the citizen identity, which places us in that "larger civic realm" discussed earlier. Communism and fascism go further, as they are totalitarian, and move forcefully to stamp out the other identities, closing the churches and replacing the ethnic with the

state. Trotsky, recall, declared that after the Bolshevik revolution he was no longer a Jew nor a Russian but, finally, a soviet.

Democrats reside mainly in three realms of identity. There is the political community (city or state), the tribe (ethnicity; religion), and the hearth (family; clan). These are not the only realms, but for the present purpose of linking democratic citizenship education and multicultural education, these three work pretty well. It is only in the city or state that the citizen identity is relevant; for this is the political space that corresponds to that identity. One may have several identities there, e.g., Democrat, new sports stadium opponent, "street kids" advocate, civil rights activist, voter, Block Watch captain, neighborhood organizer. All are citizen identities because they deal with problems held in common with other persons from various tribes and hearths, and each may have a corresponding social space where gatherings are held. Meanwhile, one may have numerous cultural identities (wealthy African-American male, poor Appalachian white woman, Southern Baptist, etc.), and, at the hearth, one could have still several more, both sacred and mundane: mother, spouse, lawn-mower, shrine-keeper, car mechanic, older sister, first born child, aunt, and so on. These latter identities (both tribe and hearth) are distinct from our citizen identity in key ways. They tend to be warmer (greater feelings of shared-ness, alikeness, we-ness) and thicker (these relationships "go way back"; "blood is thicker than water"). As

thick communities, tribe and hearth are communities of the heart and communities of deep and lasting memory. At certain times and places, mostly in small pre-modern societies, tribe and hearth have merged (Bender, 1978; Anderson, 1983).

Returning to virtue, we need to understand that in modern times the larger democratic civic framework is an overarching *political* association, not a cultural or familial one. In fact, an overarching cultural or familial association is impossible without discrimination and repression. It is a democratic civic virtue, therefore, to keep oneself from seeking it—to give up that yearning for warmth and similarity on a broad scale. When individuals long for it, or when elites use their power to force it into existence, is to act on a fascistic impulse to make the nation into a tightly knit group—one big family; a “fatherland.” It is to conflate culture and politics, cultural identity and citizen identity.

Being a modern democrat is to discipline oneself to yearn instead for an overarching political community that strives to be neutral while at the same time living with others who are culturally different. Being a modern democrat, then, is a unique moral stance. It means being politically one (this is our citizenship identity) *while* culturally many (these are our other identifications). That political unity is the “larger civic realm.” Dewey described it precisely as an “inclusive and fraternally associated public” (1927, p. 109). Its constitutive elements are political ideals, political traditions, political institutions, and political

struggles, not culture. It secures individual liberty and group difference. A democrat’s sentiments, meanwhile, his or her feelings of cozy belonging and warm rushes of we-ness, will need to come from his or her cultural associations—families, friendships, churches, temples, ethnic communities and other deep wells of intimacy.

This is the aspiration, paradoxically, to which people *excluded* from the larger civic realm have returned the national attention again and again. The democratic struggle in this nation has relied upon those barred from the unum, not the brethren, to deepen and extend the democracy that the brethren founded. It was from the outskirts of the public square, from the “corners of American society,” that Martin Luther King, Jr. came to Washington D. C. in 1963 to say: “When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir.... We have come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.” Similarly, Gary Okihiro writes that “the core values and ideals of the nation emanate not from the mainstream but from the margins—from among Asian and African Americans, Latinos, and American Indians, women, and gays and lesbians. In their struggles for equality, these groups have helped preserve and advance the principles and ideals of democracy....” (1994, p. ix). The brethren may have been the birth



parents of democracy, American style, but those excluded became the adoptive, nurturing parents.

In summary, making the democratic journey in a radically pluralist society requires persons to make their peace with multiple identities, and to work in the citizen identity, with other citizens, to create "a unity of individuals alongside the diversity of groups" (Walzer, 1992, p. 68). This is a political oneness that does not arise *from* but exists alongside cultural manyness. Can we do this? Even aiming our solidarity in this direction is an act of heroic civic imagination.

### Curriculum Matters

The central purpose of this essay is to suggest a conceptual framework for understanding the unity/diversity tension. I tried to do this above, and thereby to consider a reconciliation, at least conceptually, between multicultural and democratic citizenship education. I want to attend to curriculum matters, too, and I shall turn to them briefly now. Curriculum, after all, is what schools centrally are about; children are at school as students, as friends, and as citizens, and the community has put them there mainly to learn and to be nurtured according to some plan, which is the curriculum.

To begin with conclusions, curriculum theorizing, plans, and materials are available to educators who wish to reconceive the citizenship education curriculum in a way that places difference at its core, not on the margins; and conversely, to educators who wish to extend the multicultural education curriculum

in such a way as to encompass both the struggle for inclusion and creative thinking about the kind of "larger civic realm" in which inclusion is sought. Curriculum work can be found that pays attention to the social relations of the school as well as the formal curriculum. Moral growth, efficacy, and equity need to be promoted in both realms. Educators are wise to pay attention to both, not only to the formal curriculum as traditionalists often do and not only to social relations as contemporary progressivists often do. This either/or approach, as Dewey argued so well in *Experience and Education* (1938), has got to go.

*Social Relations.* Guidance on how to think about and shape the social relations of the classroom and the school is found in the work of Nel Noddings (1984), Carol Gilligan (1988), Lawrence Kohlberg and his associates (Mosher, Kenny, and Garrod, 1996; Power, Higgins, and Kohlberg, 1989), and feminist political theorists such as Mary Dietz (1992) and Nancy Fraser (1995). The creation of learning communities that promote both caring *and* fairness is within the realm of possibility, and models exist.

The seminal work on education for fairness or justice in this century was done by developmental psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg and his associates. Drawing widely on Plato, Dewey, Piaget, and Durkheim, Kohlberg delineated a conception of morality as the ability to imagine oneself in another's shoes—to take the perspective of others with sympathetic understanding and to wish for them what

one would want for oneself if one was in their place. Kohlberg found, through an extensive program of empirical research, that students can develop in their ability to reason fairly in this imaginative way given the right circumstances: particular kinds of deliberation on particular kinds of problems (moral dilemmas) in heterogeneous settings, such as history classrooms and schools.

Carol Gilligan and Nel Noddings advanced the notion that fairness is not all there is to morality; that there is also a realm of care and nurturance, a realm that is more relational and responsive than intellectual or imaginative. Noddings, more the educator than Gilligan, developed principles by which the moral climate of the school could be fashioned according to an ethic of care. Gilligan's and Noddings' work expanded the moral lens to incorporate caring (and, therefore, they would say, women) in addition to justice. It did not displace the work on justice, however: one cannot mount a comprehensible argument for caring *instead of justice or the reverse*. Clearly, both dimensions are critical, like the two wings of a bird, and both are needed both for and from both males and females.

Mary Dietz (1992) designated the Gilligan/Noddings approach to morality a "maternalist" form of feminism "that is grounded in the virtues of woman's private sphere, primarily in mothering" (p. 71). Dietz and Nancy Fraser (1995) articulate another strand of feminism that might be called "anti-oppressionist," "democratic," or, simply, "political." This strand, on

behalf of multiple identities, maintains an interest in the citizen identity, rather than abandoning it for others. This strand is concerned especially with power relations in public spaces: Who is included and excluded? What issues are allowed on the table, and what is assumed to be off limits? How does domination contaminate the supposedly neutral public sphere? Their work is relevant to our search for a deepened and expanded vision of democratic/multicultural education because it continues the moral trek outward from Kohlberg's narrow focus on justice, through the maternalists' (similarly narrow) focus on nurturance, to the political feminists' concern for equity, justice, and inclusion.

Each aspect of this work—the Kohlberg project, the two strands of feminism—is helpful as far as it goes. None alone covers the whole moral ground. Taken together, they go further. I don't mean to gloss over important differences between them, but in combination, woven into a somewhat coherent plan, they open wide the possibility that students *can* be brought into relationships with one another that are mutual, responsive, *and* pro-democratic. The devil is in the details, of course, but here, in three parts, is what I determine to be the gist of a combined approach: First, educators should provide sustained opportunities for students to deliberate with one another the problems of school and classroom life, and teach them how to do this well. Second, educators should create environments in which caring relations

are expected, coaxed, and modeled. One of my favorite examples is from Noddings: Teachers should try to explain the source of classroom rules not in terms of obedience and order, but in terms of caring for one another and our desire to treat each other fairly (cf. Paley, 1992). More to the point, however, is a basic appreciation of what we could call "the psychology of democratic dispositions." I am reminded of Elizabeth Young-Bruehl's brilliant new work on the psychology of prejudice in its many forms: racism, anti-semitism, homophobia, and ethnocentrism; and of Donna Kerr's careful attention to "the democratic psyche," which is "both receptive of the other and self-expressive" (1997, p. 81). Third, and closely related, educators should stand firmly against oppressive practices in school, such as boys squelching girls' voices and topics during deliberation; lowered expectations for girls, African Americans, Latinos, and second-language speakers; and discouragement of discussions of difference and domination itself (e.g., racism; sexual harassment).

*The Formal Curriculum.* But social relations are not the whole picture. Achievement matters, too. Educators should teach students not only to deliberate problems that arise in the course of school life but academic problems as well—the subject matter of school. I am thinking especially of serious interpretive discussions of key texts, from Madison's "Federalist No. 10" to King's "Letter From Birmingham Jail," and nuanced civil discourse on enduring public issues: What are the

causes of poverty? Can "we the people" rule ourselves wisely? Or, as Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor charged, are we too feeble-minded and irresponsible? Put more generally, I am thinking of curricula centered on the domains of culture, politics (especially political philosophy), geography, history, economics, and international systems. Without engagement of this sort, with these texts, issues, and disciplines, deliberation is easily reduced to ahistorical blather and the cultivation of scholarship and critical thinking is replaced by the deadening drone of vocational training (DuBois, 1903). In other words, without such engagement the aggressive mediocrity—the intellectual impoverishment—of the middle-track curriculum goes unchecked (Williams, 1989; Sizer, 1996).

Now, it is well known that schools ration serious intellectual engagement and thereby "restrict students' access to knowledge" (Darling-Hammond, 1990, p. 280). They do it primarily through the segregating practice known as tracking or curriculum differentiation. Progressive educators in the 1980s and 90s have done surprisingly little work on this problem. They promoted de-tracking as the solution to the rationing problem without worrying much about the particulars of the curriculum into which the de-tracked students were placed. Thus, they ignored the basic problem of deciding *what* students should study, however they may be grouped. "All students can learn," surely, but this begs the question: Learn what? This inattention to the

problem of subject matter was not helpful, as the problem was effectively handed over to neo-conservative educators and fundamentalist religious leaders, who took it gladly. Let us look at this problem more closely.

The children of wealthy parents stand a much better chance of being rationed a knowledge-rich liberal arts education that is fairly well loaded with reading, writing, and talking about mind-altering texts, multiple perspectives, and issues of enduring importance. The urban and suburban students of the middle and working classes too often have to settle, at best, for neo-progressive innovations such as "student choice," "multiple intelligences," "learning styles," and similar initiatives that often replace the difficult work of content selection. Such innovations are strong in proportion to the extent they are put to the service of experiences worth having and knowledge worth building, but vacuous to the extent they shun or blithely ignore such planning. Lately, the latter has obtained.

This matters, for the stakes are high. First, knowledge is generative: As the rich get richer, so the knowledgeable get more knowledgeable. It matters *what* a child studies, and it matters *when* she begins studying it. The sooner she gets the ball rolling, the further it can roll (Walberg and Tsai, 1983). Second, as minority parents who pay good money to enroll their children in private academies know, knowledge has a sort-of function: It is a social-mobility ticket that gets one into places and roles that are otherwise out of

bounds (Waller, 1932). Some curricula get you into the voting booth and the Burger King; others get you into the legislature and the board room. Third: Students who become knowledgeable about democracy and diversity learn a language of power that they might then use. They could use it, most importantly, to decide whether to change the way social institutions structure the life chances of individuals and groups (Gutmann, 1987).

The problem with tracking, therefore, is twofold. On the social relations side, it segregates students who should be learning to work together for the common good. On the curriculum side, it rations a more rigorous and vigorous curriculum to the few and a mediocre one to the many. The solution put forward, logically, is de-tracking. De-tracking is supposed to extend rigor and vigor to the many while creating heterogeneous classrooms, thereby attending to social relations and curriculum renewal at once. Instead, it appears mainly to have extended the clammy embrace of mediocrity to even the few who once escaped it. Here is a pyrrhic victory if ever there was one. Classroom heterogeneity may have been achieved, but of what sort and at what price? I am reminded of the tongue-in-cheek but knowing slogan popular in Special Education departments: "Kids with disabilities have the right to the same crappy education everyone else gets!" We can do better than this. New ways of mixing, but without demanding and meaningful tasks, is as empty and impossible a social project as can be imagined. It runs

opposite to the cooperative learning research (e.g., Cohen, 1986) and oppresses the students who are subjected to it, especially those whose achievement is already at risk.

In summary, dodging curriculum planning, like dodging diversity, whether done clumsily or artfully, is mis-educative. Moreover, it protects the status quo. Ignorance, recall, does not liberate. Knowledge, by contrast, can do what every parent fears it might: It can jettison the young into the grand conversation, exposing their prejudices and emancipating them from the provinces. History, geography, politics, and economics curricula, wisely planned, are extraordinarily potent brews for just this reason. The point is driven home by Ken Osborne (1995) in his devastating review of a new volume on democratic education. He observes that many authors in the collection hold forth on "democracy" and "democratic education" without defining it substantively, instead viewing it as a procedure or set of activities. The upshot is that a wide array of fashionable school practices are called "democratic" as though the name made them so. One contributor to the book gives the criteria by which the schools selected for her study were determined to be "democratic": "Our first priority was to identify several schools engaged in democratic education, defined by us as practicing such strategies as whole language, cooperative learning, authentic assessment..." (p. 120). Another contributor writes: "We believe democracy is best taught as a process and best learned through ac-

tive participation in decision-making...." Osborne, while not dismissing the relevance of such initiatives, is sober about their limits:

"There is, of course, a certain truth to this notion of democracy as process, but it takes us only so far. It is obviously true that a richer and more powerful democratic life will depend on a higher level of civic engagement than now exists. However, it is equally true that democracy involves more than simply "empowerment" and "participation," for fascists, racists, and assorted other anti-democrats can, and often do, feel highly empowered and participative, and also feel highly committed to a certain sense of community. The fundamental question must be this: once students are empowered and are ready to participate, what will they use their skills and powers to do? What will ensure that they will use them in the interests of democracy?" (p. 122).

### Conclusion

The student population in the United States is becoming more diverse with each passing day. It will be 70% non-white and Hispanic by 2026 (Garcia & Gonzalez, 1995). We need a citizenship/multicultural education that can respond to increasing difference by looking intelligently at the whole picture—difference and democracy—not just a part.

"(T)he challenge that we are facing today," writes Chantal Mouffe, "is precisely that of developing a view of citizenship which is adequate for multi-ethnic and multi-

cultural societies. We have to accept that national homogeneity can no longer be the basis of citizenship, and that pluralism must allow for a range of different ethnic and cultural identities" (1992, p. 8). That view will not be easily won, and history teaches that it may prove too difficult. While social heterogeneity is being recognized in ever greater specificity and old forms of community-sponsored oppression revealed in ever greater number and variety, *still* governance and difference have to be reconciled if there is to be anything but totalitarianism, on the one hand, and cultural separatism on the other, both of which are their own form of suicide.

Civic educators and multicultural educators must make this their business. They cannot do so by fleeing curriculum matters for up-market theory battles, by choosing up sides on the old chasm between subject matter and social relations, or by dividing themselves into two interest groups—one that pushes for inclusion, asking "Who is left out?", another that pushes for civic renewal, asking "Inclusion in *what*?" Too many citizenship educators have dodged culture, too many multicultural educators have dodged citizenship, and scads of neo-progressive educators have dodged curriculum planning. Down-sizing superintendents fired their curriculum specialists, replacing them with so-called generalists who couldn't know enough actually to fulfill the demanding role. Teachers claimed that it didn't matter what students studied, only how they studied it. Education professors took flight

from the curriculum field, too, preferring *anything* to discussions of, god forbid, scope and sequence. And who is working on the scope-and-sequence problem? E. D. Hirsch and William Bennett.

The primary problem here, in my judgment, is figuring out a meaningful way to embrace both unity and diversity—the civic one alongside the cultural many—and to apply this integrated conception to the social relations within the school and the curriculum plan. I have tried to show that incorporating unity and diversity into a single dialectic is the key conceptual challenge, replacing the either/or fetish on which we advocate one but ignore the other. Making sense of this challenge demands of us, among many things, a recognition of one another's multiply-situated selves. Maxine Greene, reflecting on her own work, reveals this multiplicity:

"I view my own writing in terms of stages in a quest, "stages," as Soren Kierkegaard put it, "on life's way." The quest involves me as woman, as teacher, as mother, as citizen, as New Yorker, as art-lover, as activist, as philosopher, as white middle-class American. Neither my self nor my narrative can have, therefore, a single strand. I stand at the crossing point of too many social and cultural forces; and, in any case, I am forever on the way. My identity has to be perceived as multiple, even as I strive towards some coherent notion of what is humane and decent and just." (1995, p. 1)

Out of this multiplicity comes, with no small effort, the supreme civic virtue of wishing *not* for the warm homogeneity of the tribe and hearth on a broad scale, which is narcissistic, but for a cooler, overarching political solidarity that can secure the buzzing multiplicity, both within the individual and the society. This decision to ascend to democratic citizenship—to create for oneself a citizen identity among one's many other selves—is the primary moral obligation connected to the struggle for freedom and pluralism.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Michael Walzer (1992), p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> I explore this tension in "Navigating the unity/diversity tension in education for democracy" (1997). Also it is the theme of the Fall 1994 issue of *Social Research*.

<sup>3</sup> I elaborate this garrison mentality in "'Advanced ideas' about democracy" (1996a).

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## BOOK REVIEWS

Hollinger, David A. (1995). *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism*. New York: Basic Books. 210 pages, cloth, \$22.00. ISBN: 0-465-05991-0.

Review by NEIL O. HOUSER, University of Oklahoma, Norman, 73019.

David Hollinger's *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism* is an investigation of the relationship between the American nation-state and the well-being of its various cultural groups and of the influence of multiculturalism on that relationship. Hollinger's basic thesis is that recent trends within the multicultural movement have harmed the solidarity of the nation-state, which he considers a vital mechanism in helping achieve many of the very goals espoused by contemporary multiculturalists. Hollinger's response is to offer a "postethnic" perspective, an alternative way of thinking about the relationship between the nation-state and its diverse sociocultural groups. In this review I will examine Hollinger's fundamental concerns and his postethnic perspective.

### **Civic Versus Cultural Goals: The Nation-State and the Common Good**

Hollinger's basic argument is that a strong nation-state plays an essential role in securing rights and opportunities for all Americans. However, largely because of unrealized expectations related to a variety of promises (e.g., equal opportunity; liberty and justice for all), our nation has gradually shifted its focus from preserving the rights of all individuals regardless of race, class or gender to promoting the well-being of particular, historically oppressed, sociocultural groups. Along with this shift in emphasis, a "species-centered" discourse that took mankind in general as its referent has gradually given way to an "ethnos-centered" discourse that focuses on the empowerment of "particular solidarit[ies] rooted in history" (p. 4). Hollinger insists that this shift in emphasis from the general to the specific has begun to erode the vitality of our nation-state and, with it, an important means of realizing as yet unfulfilled promises reflected in our national ideals.

While acknowledging that the shift from the species to the ethnos has served an important purpose (i.e., it has demonstrated that so-called universal truths often represent little more than the interests and perspectives of particular, historically specific, empowered groups), Hollinger argues that the shift has gone too far. He asserts that the problem has less to do with the ideals themselves than with our failure to realize those ideals. Insofar as the shift has diminished our commitment to the common good in favor of the needs of particular sociocultural groups, and insofar as a species-centered orientation is needed to maintain a national identity

based on broad civic ideals rather than specific cultural aims, Hollinger insists that it has indeed gone too far.

### **The Problem with Multiculturalism**

According to Hollinger, the power of the American nation-state to secure basic rights and opportunities for all Americans is being threatened by several "formidable constituencies," including the business elite (e.g., international corporations), evangelical Christians and the ultra-conservative political right, and many modern day multiculturalists. Hollinger argues that all three constituencies have used the nation to attend to their own particular interests without contributing, in turn, to the well-being of the state or the broader community it represents. Their self-serving perspectives and practices have seriously jeopardized the potential of the United States to maintain a strong sense of national identity, to provide for the good of the people, and to serve as a model of multi-ethnic solidarity for other nation states.

Many members of the third constituency, the contemporary multiculturalists, have developed what Hollinger calls a "diasporic consciousness." Although they may identify with one or more cultural groups within or outside the United States, they are no longer committed to the state itself. As Hollinger puts it, "the proponents of diasporic consciousness sometimes look to the state as a source of entitlements, but, like the business elite, they have little incentive to devote themselves to the welfare of the national community" (p. 15).

Part of the problem is that contemporary multiculturalism has strayed too far from its "cosmopolitan" tradition, which Hollinger views an intellectual "impulse toward worldly breadth" (p. 5). Hollinger suggests that, with a few notable exceptions (e.g., the work of Randolph Bourne and W. E. B. DuBois), the underpinnings of the movement have been largely political, unidimensional and unreflective rather than theoretical, eclectic and self-regulating. As such, he claims that the current constructs of the field are inadequate to address or adapt to the many increasingly complex issues and persisting social inequities within our nation and the world.

In addition to neglecting the cosmopolitanism and theoretical rigor of early leaders such as W. E. B. DuBois and Randolph Bourne, contemporary multiculturalists have compounded the problem by embracing the very different but equally prominent "pluralist" tradition within the movement. According to Hollinger, this tradition, grounded in the thinking of early twentieth century scholars such as Horace Kallen, respects inherited cultural boundaries (rather than voluntary social affiliations) and locates individuals within one or another group (rather than multiple groups) to be protected and preserved. In Hollinger's estimation, unchecked adherence to this tradition has been fueled by and has contributed to a "pathological fear" in which talk of common ground is inevitably viewed as "a

trick to hoodwink some Americans into sacrificing their interests for someone else's interests disguised as a common interest" (p. 156).

According to Hollinger, uncritical adherence to the pluralist approach has restricted opportunities for broad social affiliation and multicultural identification while reinforcing narrowly defined race-based methods of classification (e.g., the racial-ethnic pentagon, used for governmental census and affirmative action purposes, that consists of five broad categories including African Americans, Asian Americans, European Americans, Latin Americans and Indigenous peoples). The ultimate result has been further institutionalization rather than the elimination of race-based (as opposed to either species-based or culture-based) thinking and policy-making. Hollinger points with irony to contradictory efforts that have sought to advocate and affirm a diversification of diversity, on the one hand, while at the same time supporting policies and practices that reinforce narrow, social classification based on "blood and history".

Thus, for Hollinger the most promising traditions of multiculturalism have been neglected while the most destructive have been promulgated. In seeking to promote sociocultural equity and opportunity, modern-day multiculturalists have contributed to the destruction rather than the improvement of the nation-state. In so doing, they have threatened the very mechanism needed to address their most fundamental goals.

#### The Postethnic Perspective

In response to his own concerns, Hollinger offers a "postethnic perspective" which he considers a "distinctive frame within which issues in education and politics can be debated" (p. 3). At the heart of this perspective is the notion of a "rooted cosmopolitanism" which advocates ethnic connectedness rather than separatism and a focus on the common good informed by intellectual breadth and depth. Hollinger argues that his perspective "develops and applies cosmopolitan ideals in a specific historical context: that of the past quarter-century's greater appreciation for a variety of kinds of *ethnic* connectedness" (p. 4). Among other things, his perspective favors voluntary social affiliations over involuntary affiliations, a balance between traditional "communities of descent" and the creation of new communities and sociocultural configurations, and opportunity for multifaceted rather than narrow self-identification conducive to the "diversification of diversity" and an enlarging of the "circle of we."

One aspect of Hollinger's perspective involves the freedom of voluntary social affiliation. Hollinger contends that Americans ought to be free to associate or identify with many sociocultural groups rather than being restricted to predetermined groups on the basis of tradition or need. Hence, his "postethnic perspective resists the grounding of knowledge and moral values in blood and history" (p. 3). He maintains that "ethno-racial affiliations should be subject to revocable consent"—a "choice-maximizing principle" based on the assumption that people ought to be more free than

they currently are from social distinctions visited upon them by others. Such impositions originate both within and outside the particular group. From Hollinger's perspective, the American nation-state as well as its various constituencies would benefit from a pooling and diversifying of our intellectual and cultural resources.

Ultimately, Hollinger's views extend beyond social interaction into the realms of self-development and social identification. Consistent with the goals of promoting voluntary social affiliation and creating space for new sociocultural configurations, he advocates the development of broad voluntary (rather than narrow and compulsory) self-identification conducive to an enlarging of the "circle of we" and the "diversification of diversity." The idea of enlarging the circle of "we" is based on the assumption that humans care most for those with whom we most closely identify. If this is the case, it is important for all to develop a greater sense of identification with, and therefore increased commitment to, a broader cross-section of people with different social and cultural backgrounds. As new sociocultural configurations emerge and multifaceted identities develop, Hollinger envisions a steady and essential diversification of diversity. To the extent that this diversification applies to our self-development as well as our social interaction, the effects can influence not only what we do but also who we become.

Finally, Hollinger returns time and again to the assertion that, in order to best serve all Americans, the nation-state must remain a viable entity. Reminding us that the Progressive Movement, the New Deal and the Great Society were decidedly nationalist movements seeking to speak on behalf of the American nation, Hollinger insists that the nation-state can influence public policy in important ways that cannot be duplicated by any other agency. Insofar as a national interest was served (no matter how imperfectly or inconsistently) by these state-sponsored activities, he maintains that the state can indeed help establish the necessary conditions for all Americans to enjoy greater social, economic and political equality. If we can resist the "particularizing forces" (e.g., one drop rule, either-or identities, either-or morality) that threaten our solidarity and embrace a commitment to humanitarian goals based on broad civic rather than narrow cultural commitments, he believes that we might ultimately represent not only an example of fulfilled domestic dreams, but also a model of "postethnic nationality" for the world (p. 133).

#### **Strengths and Limitations in Hollinger's Perspective**

Hollinger's perspective should be read with a critical eye. Nonetheless, many of his ideas deserve serious consideration. For example, it is difficult to imagine a more worthwhile purpose for a nation-state than to create and maintain the conditions necessary to realize ideals such as social justice and equal opportunity for all citizens. Insofar as the state influences public policy and practice, it should be used to promote our most

worthwhile ideals, and it should be held accountable for the ideals espoused on its behalf.

Hollinger's critique also raises important questions about the relationship between the common good and the well-being of particular social and cultural constituencies. By grouping multiculturalism with big business and the religious and political right, Hollinger suggests that the need for critical self-reflection transcends political, economic and ideological boundaries. It is entirely possible for those who are legitimately concerned with promoting sociocultural equity nonetheless to become excessively dogmatic, to exempt our own motives and assumptions from critical analysis, or to operate on the basis of inadequate theoretical understanding. It is also possible, as Paulo Freire has made exceedingly clear, to use the premise of social justice as a means for personal gain with little inclination to change the structural conditions underlying oppression itself. Insofar as these possibilities continue to exist, Hollinger's book is a reminder of the need for all Americans to question not only the policies and practices of others, but our own motives and assumptions as well.

Finally, certain aspects of Hollinger's postethnic perspective are both provocative and promising. For example, the idea of promoting broad social identification and commitment to a greater cross-section of others (i.e., of expanding the "circle of we") reminds us that the act of advancing the common good within a pluralistic society is at once both social and psychological. Similarly, the notion of creating space for the development and affirmation of new sociocultural affiliations (i.e., diversifying diversity) seems an important means of anticipating and embracing our steadily increasing plurality.

Although many of Hollinger's views merit thoughtful consideration, there are significant limitations as well. For instance, while there may be a certain appeal to the idea of using the nation-state to help secure our national ideals, it is important to remain skeptical of claims made on behalf of the state. As Howard Zinn (1995) notes in his *People's History of the United States*:

Nations are not communities and never have been. The history of any country, presented as the history of a family, conceals fierce conflicts of interest (sometimes exploding, most often repressed) between conquerors and conquered, masters and slaves, capitalists and workers, dominators and dominated in race and sex. (pp. 9-10)

Zinn reminds us that concepts such as "nationalism," "statehood," and "patriotism" are social constructs that have served some groups while harming others. Our history clearly demonstrates that those best served have typically been wealthy, white and male. This calls into question Hollinger's characterization of the "fear of the common" as "pathologi-

cal," and it raises legitimate concerns about who will best be served by his postethnic perspective.

Similarly, important questions must be raised with regard to certain assumptions and omissions in Hollinger's arguments. For example, after equating pluralism with a kind of cultural separatism (e.g., "pluralism respects inherited boundaries and locates individuals within or another of a series of ethno-racial groups to be protected and preserved" p. 3), he proceeds to treat "pluralism" and cosmopolitanism (intellectual breadth) as mutually exclusive. This approach seems to belie a lack of appreciation for the substantial body of work conducted by individuals concerned with the well-being of one or more historically oppressed sociocultural groups who nonetheless advocate a pluralism of ideas, a plurality of the mind, a complexity of self-identity, and a conception of pluralism that is based on social interdependence rather than independence or separatism (e.g., Baldwin, 1988; Banks, 1987; Belenky, et al; 1986; Ellsworth, 1989, 1992; Fine, 1987; Freire, 1970; Greene, 1988, 1993; McIntosh, 1989; Nieto, 1996; Noddings, 1992; Ogbu, 1987; Philips, 1972; Sleeter & Grant, 1994).

Finally, given the sometimes limited scope of Hollinger's own perspective and method (e.g., his discourse is a highly rationalist argument directed primarily toward public policy concerns rather than private lives or everyday social interaction), it is difficult to appreciate his characterization of contemporary multiculturalism as being restrictive, anti-intellectual and dogmatic. The suggestion that a movement primarily concerned with equity and justice (a "political" movement) cannot also be highly theoretical and self-critical is inconsistent with compelling evidence to the contrary (e.g., Belenky, et al, 1986; Ellsworth, 1989; Freire, 1970; Greene, 1993). As caring, intuition and personally situated cognition come to be viewed as legitimate ways of knowing and being, it will become increasingly difficult to dichotomize theory and politics, self and society, and the well-being of particular groups and the broader communities they comprise.

In conclusion, Hollinger's book addresses an issue of vital concern: The influence of multiculturalism on the relationship between the American nation-state and the well-being of its various cultural groups. His concerns with the welfare of the nation merit serious attention, and many aspects of his postethnic perspective are worthy of careful consideration. However, while Hollinger's argument deserves to be taken seriously, it should also be read with a critical eye. Hollinger has provided another important lens with which to assess the status of our society and to contemplate possible alternatives and solutions. Yet, difficult questions persist. Embracing the nation-state, for whatever the reason, tempts the recovery of a form of nationalism that has too often benefited mainstream Americans while marginalizing others. In courting the image of a postethnic America—of a move "beyond multiculturalism"—do we risk losing our hard-earned focus on numerous unresolved issues? In this regard, Hollinger's perspective cannot help but feel, for many Americans, like a

dance with the Devil. And based upon the history of our own nation, fear to engage in such a dance is anything but “pathological.”

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Teitelbaum, Kenneth. (1995). *Schooling for "Good Rebels": Socialism, American Education, and the Search for Radical Curriculum*. New York: Teachers College Press. 272 pages, softcover \$22.95. ISBN: 0-8077-3486-1.

Review by JACK L. NELSON, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, 08903.

This book was first published under the title, *Schooling for "Good Rebels": Socialist Education for Children in the United States, 1900-1920* by Temple University Press in 1993. Although no reasons are presented for the early republication by Teachers College Press, it is good to have such scholarly treatment of alternative school practice readily available in a paperback edition. The change in subtitle is puzzling, since the original provided a more accurate description of the historical setting studied and is closer to the book's actual focus on socialist Sunday schools in three American cities during 1900-1920. The larger context indicated in the new subtitle, which suggests a full treatment of socialism, education, and radical curriculum, is the subject of a very brief introductory chapter, and is then touched upon again in the conclusion of the book. Such a broad topic deserves additional and more comprehensive treatment, and one hopes that Teitelbaum takes up that charge in a future treatise. He demonstrates in this book, and in his other contributions to the critical literature, that he has the scholar's eye and the educator's concern for clear and careful explanation.

Teitelbaum's book is a worthy addition to historical analyses of various efforts through the years to provide education which challenges social reproduction. Most books about schools, especially historical texts, can leave one with the impression that schooling in the United States is naturally reproductive of society, following a pattern consistent with time periods and divergent only in terms of such factors as urban and rural, rich and poor, academic and vocational. Much of this standard educational literature suffers from the idea that school reform is a simple choice between two narrowly constructed forms of mainstream liberal and conservative political agendas. School reform is perceived as essentially a choice in which higher standards and better test scores compete with humane education in a caring atmosphere. The relation of those choices to more fundamental social, economic, and ideological purposes is often not explored.

Except for reconstructionists and more recent critical educational theorists, few question the basic socialization orientation of schooling. Unfortunately, moreover, the efforts of critical theorists appear quite often in the form of negative criticism relying on jargon understandable only to the initiated, and often lack examples of actual practice. People often form their opinions of what is possible in American education on the basis of the generalization that the choice to be made is between more educational rigor leading to academic rigor mortis or more permissiveness leading to aca-



demic decay. Radical educational thought fails, very often, to influence educational reform because it is not understood and has not been tested in practice. Thus, we dismiss radical ideas about schooling as confusing and impractical.

Teitelbaum demonstrates an understanding of this failure in the treatment of American education. Specifically, he chronicles an effort by socialists and others to counter the use of public schooling in the production of capitalist and social control views. He identifies his motivation as, "the desire to make the existence and nature of these heretofore neglected radical educational experiments more widely known...and more accessible" (p. xi). He succeeds by showing how the socialist Sunday schools were organized and operated, describing their lack of uniformity, their strengths and their problems. In clear and engaging style, with detailed scholarly citations to support his interpretations, he presents the wonders and warts of socialist education in a capitalistic society at the beginning of this century. In doing so, his book, and similar, non-mainstream examinations of schools, indicate the extent of diversity of ideas about and practices of schooling.

Teitelbaum looks at socialist Sunday schools in the United States, with detailed examination of their operation in New York City, Milwaukee, and Rochester, New York, during the first two decades of the 20th century. Obviously, all schools present value-laden perspectives. Religious denominations have commonly used Sunday schools to provide students with their religious values, often to counter public school secular instruction. Similarly, the socialist schools studied by Teitelbaum were established to provide socialist principles and critiques on weekends to counter the capitalistic education offered in the public schools during the week. There were, he notes, about 100 such schools in operation across the United States in sixty-four cities in twenty states. Data about many of these schools are non-existent or very sparse, but information about such schools in New York, Rochester, and Milwaukee was sufficient to document the work week. Teitelbaum draws from these examples to construct a fascinating treatment of socialism and its interaction with the larger society. The impact of industrialization, urbanization, and immigration shows in the establishment of radical worker education programs of a variety of types, such as anarchist and workmen's circle schools. The socialist Sunday schools aimed to help students resist the teachings of public schools that emphasized uncritical workers tied to a corporate system of consumption and efficiency. Teitelbaum indicates that although the American socialist movement was supportive of the idea of public schools, there was increasing discontent over classroom content, curriculum and instruction in public schools. That provides the book with an orientation toward curriculum and pedagogy rather than how the schools were organized and administered.

As Raymond Callahan, in *Education and the Cult of Efficiency* (University of Chicago Press, 1962), so well demonstrates in his historical exami-

nation of public school administration during the same two decades of the twentieth century, the Tayloristic efficiency movement that had produced the assembly line also had a deleterious and dominating effect upon schools. The Teitelbaum book examines one reaction to the business ethos in public education, one which offered alternative instruction in socialist principles on weekends away from the public schools.

Instruction was hardly consistent across all socialist schools; radical movements in the United States have been noted by their fractured and fractious nature, and the socialists are not an exception. Teitelbaum provides illustrations of differences among the schools in curriculum offered and teaching practices. While the schools shared a view that incorporated an abhorrence of the evils of capitalism and a love for the beauty of socialism, there was a lack of consistency or even coordination among the schools in curriculum and teaching. Clearly, the capitalists and corporate America were examined most critically in these schools, but other social institutions were also attacked, at least in some of them. The press, the church, and mass entertainment were strongly criticized for their roles in influencing American citizens toward corporate interests and underplaying class consciousness. In addition, some schools challenged the YMCA and the Girl and Boy Scouts for their unthoughtful acceptance of the social status quo, proposing that the socialist Sunday schools take their place to provide a more worthwhile and intelligent approach. Anti-progressive elements in the public schools also took their lumps at the hands of the socialist educators. Teitelbaum quotes William Kruse, of the Socialist Party's Young People's Department, as stating that the "hero worship approach to American history that prevailed in the public schools...amounted to a 'fairy tale of impossibly virtuous heroes doing a lot of unbelievably wise and noble things'" (p. 93). The staff of a Philadelphia socialist Sunday school is cited for the claim that children's minds were "molded, twisted, and unshaped in the furnace of the capitalist educational system that is filled with the poisonous gases of capitalist teachings and preachings" (p. 93).

The kinds of lessons taught in the schools examined by Teitelbaum are illustrated in titles and questions prepared by Kendrick Shedd, a former professor at the University of Rochester who became very active in the schools and was forced to resign from the University under great pressure. Shedd is given special and supportive treatment by Teitelbaum, a tribute to a courageous intellectual who became caught in the kinds of restrictions of academic freedom that dot the underside of academic history in the United States. Shedd wrote lesson outlines for the Rochester and Milwaukee socialist schools that included such topics as:

- Who works and who does not?
- Should little children and mothers work in factories?
- Do the workers get all they earn?
- Compare the work of Abraham Lincoln and Karl Marx

- Striking and Scabbing
- Home destroyers: unemployment, poverty, drink, slums, sweatshops, sickness, and disease
- The private owners of the people's lives
- Cooperation in everyday life
- Being world citizens together. (pp. 138-145)

These are lesson topics that might be difficult to get into the public schools of contemporary America.

The decline of the socialist Sunday schools is linked to such external and internal factors as the impact of the World War and its nationalistic mentalities, the Red Scare and other fear-mongering about socialism, as well as the splits among socialists over party and ideological matters. Socialists, and their schools, had been under political attack from the outside for a long time, but the war atmosphere and fear of "reds" significantly increased pressure on those teachers, parents, and students. Pacifism and socialism were widely seen as demons and threats to the United States. From 1908 to 1918, the socialist schools had grown and matured. After 1917 there was a renewed interest in socialist and other radical ideas, despite the extreme controversy they engendered. Although super-patriotism, war, and the Red Scare caused some decline in the schools, that was not the whole of the problem. By 1918, about the time the schools became officially recognized by the American Socialist Party, the party's divisions had become insurmountable and resulted in its split in 1919 into a variety of factions including, the Communist Party. Teachers and parents of students in the Sunday schools also divided along ideological lines, and the schools collapsed.

Teitelbaum sketches the main curricular themes of these schools, and the general and specific teaching approaches used. This is a very interesting and useful part of the book, especially for those interested in thinking through alternative ideas about schooling. The scholarly citations are very extensive and well explained. The use of fundamental works on socialism and education, journal and magazine articles, news reports, dissertations, curriculum and teaching materials, and a variety of personal interviews shows scholarly strength and knowledge. Many of the citations include elaborate and clearly written explanations to fill in background. In fact, the citations are often as interesting to read as the narrative text itself.

There are a few minor areas where the book could be improved, e.g., the index does not include reference to works and people in the chapter citations. And there could be a quarrel with some interpretations, e.g., including as the only example of critical perspectives in public discourse a citation to Catherine Stimson writing about multiculturalism—a nice article, but there are many others of clearer and closer identification.

On a larger scale, Teitelbaum attempts to cast the book as an example of a Gramscian analysis, but the brief treatment of Gramsci and Teitelbaum's

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claim of the relation of Gramsci's "lens" to the study is not complete or convincing. The study stands on its own in the critical literature, Gramscian theoretical grounding notwithstanding. Ken Teitelbaum continues his mission to examine democratic socialist politics and critical pedagogy in the context of American social history. This book fits well in that work.

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