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THEORY & RESEARCH
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The Editors, Board, and readers of *Theory and Research in Social Education* extend a warm thanks to Michael Whelan for his service as Book Reviewer Editor. Michael has done a superb job in this capacity since 1996. He will remain a member of the Editorial Board and continue his work advancing social studies education issues in New York State and nationally.

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THEORY & RESEARCH IN SOCIAL EDUCATION

Civic Illiteracy and Social Education

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Findings from the civics portion of 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress released last fall prompted many to call for an overhaul of civic education (Ross, 2000). Richard Niemi and Jane Junn in their recent book, *Civic Education: What Makes Students Learn*, offer a different perspective, arguing that civics course work is having a positive impact on student knowledge (see Patricia Avery's review of *Civic Education* in this issue). And former National Council for the Social Studies president Tedd Levy called the NAEP civics results "remarkable" and "amazing" given social studies has not received much attention or support in the latest wave of educational reform.

Few would argue that NAEP scores are the best indicators of an active and participatory democracy. As Niemi and Junn point out, civics classes typically focus on the structure and functions of government, offering a consensus view of the world; minimizing issues of politics and ideology. Levy (1999) argues in *Education Week* that:

> Civic education is the only school subject that helps youngsters develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good. It is where students develop a core of basic knowledge and ways of thinking drawn from many disciplines, learn how to analyze their own and others' ideas and opinions, and become motivated to participate in civic and community life as active, informed citizens. It is one of the most fundamental programs in the schools, and it is time to give it some attention and support. (p. 43)

Most *TRSE* readers would, I think, agree with Levy that this is what civic education is *supposed* to be. The reality is something else altogether.

John Marciano's *Civic Illiteracy and Education: The Battle for the Hearts and Minds of American Youth* (1997) offers a fruitful starting point for sorting out the state of civic education beyond test scores. Marciano's book is a devastating indictment of contemporary civic education. He convincingly argues civic education narrows students'

learning options and fosters uncritical patriotism and militarism, which in turn, undermine thoughtful and active citizenship in a democracy.

Marciano contends civic literacy is not merely knowledge of isolated facts about government or history—although knowledge is important—but rather the ability to think critically and objectively about the nation's fundamental premises, policies, and practices. For Marciano, civic illiteracy is not defined by test scores, but rather caused by uncritical conformity. The crisis arises from the failure of schools to encourage social criticism and a failure to challenge curricular representations of history and national policies (especially regarding war), which most often promulgate one-sided conceptions serving the interests of what Marciano labels the "dominant-elite."

Marciano begins by carefully delineating the crisis of civic literacy as represented in the flood of blue-ribbon reports on education since 1983 as well as the work of influential critics that shaped the dominant-elite view of the United States in the late-twentieth century—such as Allan Bloom, William Bennett, Robert Bellah, R. Freeman Butts, and Paul Gagnon. Marciano concludes that the essential principles of the dominant-elite perspective on America are abstract and vague, bearing little relationship to actual government policies. For example, while the formal curriculum of social studies identifies citizenship, justice, equality, freedom, diversity, and democracy as key issues, it often ignores the roots of oppression as well as oppression's utility for the dominant-elite. By downplaying the roots, the particulars, and the applications of oppression, students develop an indifferent, if not nonexistent, understanding of the disconnect between the ideal and the real in contemporary democratic societies (see Vinson, in press).

Marciano then contrasts the dominant-elite perspective with a dissenting view of America built on the work of W. E. B. Dubois, Noam Chomsky, bell hooks, June Jordan, Manning Marable, Michael Parenti, and Howard Zinn, all voices rarely heard in the media, and as Marciano points out, virtually excluded from secondary social studies classes. The dissenting view explores how racism and imperialism ultimately shape students' knowledge of peoples and nations and justifies the domestic and foreign policies of the United States, particularly its aggression against people of color (e.g., Cambodia, Cuba, Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala, Grenada, Iraq, Korea, Laos, Lebanon, Nicaragua, Panama, Southern Africa, and Vietnam).

The dissenting view is then supplemented by a review of the radical/critical tradition in educational theory, which challenges the conception of civic literacy offered by most educators. Marciano redeems important parts of Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis' much-criticized *Schooling in Capitalist America* (1976), illustrating how liberal educational reforms present a facade of meritocracy and legitimize the political economy and class system.

The second half of the book presents case studies of how civic illiteracy is both cultivated and resisted in schools. In a chapter titled "Civic Illiteracy and American History Textbooks: The U.S.-Vietnam War," Marciano updates his analysis of the distortions and inaccuracies found in history textbooks, which previously appeared in his book with William L. Griffen, *Lessons of the Vietnam War* (1984). History textbooks support, without examination, the dominant-elite version of the nation, including: the U.S. is a democracy run in the interests of the people; government and educational leaders desire a civically literate and informed citizenry; and that U.S. perpetrated/sponsored aggression and violence are accidental by-products of essentially humane policies.

His analysis of textbooks illustrates the most fundamental premise of civic education—gaining students' support for the dominant-elite narrative of America and U.S. aggression against other nations. "Students are ethically quarantined from the truth about what the U.S. has done in their name," says Marciano.

> They are not helped to see the relationship between this country and the world, and the connections between historical events, victims, and victimizers. Most importantly, they are not helped to think critically so that they might condemn the government for its crimes against humanity—a taboo subject in nearly all classrooms. (p. 87)

The final two chapters continue the emphasis on education and war in an analysis of the Persian Gulf War and how a number of teachers engaged students in informed and critical dialogues about the war.

In *Deterring Democracy* Noam Chomsky writes,

> a society is democratic to the extent that its citizens play a meaningful role in managing public affairs. If their thought is controlled, or their options narrowly restricted, then evidently they are not playing a meaningful role: only the controllers, and those they serve, are doing so. The rest is a sham, formal motions without meaning. (p. 6)

In this sense, Marciano argues most civic education in the U.S. is about the control and regulation of knowledge in the interests of the dominant-elite. These same goals are embodied in standards-based educational reforms and mandated high-stakes tests, which are at the heart of current school reform efforts at the state and national levels, affecting all areas of the curriculum.

Marciano concludes that while it's necessary for teachers and students to hold a critical and accurate understanding of the how the

political economy works, this is not a sufficient condition for challenging the ideological hegemony in the nation and schools. The "low-intensity pedagogical war" fought by critical teachers must be part of a larger movement for social change if civic illiteracy is to be overcome. "The struggle for civic literacy," says Marciano, "will come down to what teachers, parents, youth, and citizens actually do with their critical knowledge and civic literacy."

The good news is that students, parents, and teachers across the nation are building a grassroots movement to resist the state regulation of knowledge. Groups like Chicago's PURE, Virginia Parents United to Reform Standards of Learning, Organized Students of Chicago, The Whole Schooling Consortium (WSC), and the Rouge Forum are all engaged in this struggle.

Marciano rightly emphasizes the importance of working both in and out of schools in order to educate for civic literacy. This summer the Rouge Forum and WSC, along with the Whole Language Umbrella will convene progressive educators, parents, students, and community members from across North America at the International Education Summit for a Democratic Society. The Summit—June 26-28 at Wayne State University in Detroit—is designed to promote the kind of civic literacy and collaborative action Marciano calls for.[1] The full import of Marciano's insights and spirit cannot be grasped until we start to work together for true civic literacy. *Civic Illiteracy and Education*, gives us a thoughtful foundation to build this movement on.

Note

[1] The Summit is open to all interested people. For more information visit the Summit web site: http://www.coe.wayne.edu/CommunityBuilding/edsummit2000.html. Or contact Michael Peterson at 313-577-1607 or jmpeterson@mediaone.net.

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Social Studies Teacher Educators' Perceptions of Character Education

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Abstract

The increasing popularity of character education, coupled with state mandates and recommendations from national organizations, have heightened the perceived importance of preparing teachers for their role in the character development of students. The purpose of this study was to describe the perceptions of social studies teacher educators regarding common themes of contemporary character education, the scope of character education, and the importance of the inclusion of character education issues in a curriculum/methods course. The sample consisted of 298 members of the National Council for the Social Studies who indicated involvement in either elementary or secondary teacher preparation on their membership form. The data were collected by mailing a questionnaire to all subjects and conducting follow-up telephone interviews with approximately ten percent of the respondents. The findings suggest support among social studies teacher educators for the themes of contemporary character education, for a broadly conceived scope for character education that includes social studies goals, and for including character education as a topic in a curriculum/methods course.

Character education is increasingly receiving support among state governments, local school districts, and professional organizations (Greenawalt, 1996; Milson, 1998; Nielsen, 1998). Nielsen (1998) reported that, "Forty-eight of the fifty states have completed or are in the process of completing state educational standards which address character education" (p. 9). Those promoting character education perceive an epidemic of irresponsibility and diminished civility in schools, as well as in society, and stress the importance of dedicated efforts to teach students the traits believed to promote good character (e.g., Ryan & Bohlin, 1999; Lickona, 1991; Wynne, 1997; Benninga, 1997). Some critics, however, contend that many such efforts are improperly conceived and are unlikely to achieve lasting results (e.g., Lockwood, 1991; Kohn, 1997; Purpel, 1997; Molnar, 1997). The current discourse on character education has created some confusion over the meaning of char-

acter education (Lockwood, 1997). It is difficult to define character education, in part, because there is disagreement over the appropriate emphasis and scope of character education. Some educators wish to emphasize caring, compassion, and the community-building potential of character education (e.g., Noddings, 1995, 1997; Schaps et al., 1997; Etzioni, 1998). Others see connections between character education and multicultural education (Gay, 1997), the epidemic of Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (Sockett, 1997), and the education of inner-city youth (Cross, 1997). Still others have developed slightly different labels for character education. Lickona (1997) labeled his approach comprehensive character education and includes drug and alcohol prevention and abstinence-based sex education. Wynne (1997) labeled his approach for-character education and discusses character education as a form of discipline with an emphasis on maintaining obedience and order.

Much of the criticism of the current character education movement reflects this apparent lack of a specific scope and definition. According to Kohn (1997), the term character education has acquired both broad and narrow meanings. In a broad sense, character education may be described as any effort by the school to address the moral growth of the students. Character education may be viewed as synonymous with moral education, values education, family planning, drug prevention, and any other affective objectives of the school. In a more narrow sense, character education may be defined as a particular method of moral training with a set of strategies and common goals and assumptions. Kohn (1997) argued that "the two meanings of the term have become blurred, with the narrow version of character education dominating the field to the point that it is frequently mistaken for the broader concept" (p. 154).

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) recently endorsed character education in a position statement that called for "a renewed effort by social studies educators, schools, and communities to teach character and civic virtue" (Haynes et al., 1997, p. 227). The position statement is based on the premise that a democratic system of government requires a virtuous citizenry. The role of education in general and social studies education in particular is to "foster a reasoned commitment to the founding principles and values that bind us together as a people" (Haynes et al., 1997, p. 225). The civic apathy and cynicism that seem to be pervasive today threaten the social cohesion that is developed through a common commitment to democratic principles. The NCSS identifies fostering a commitment to fundamental democratic principles (e.g., popular sovereignty, rule of law, religious liberty), fundamental democratic values (e.g., liberty, equality, promotion of the common good), and civic dispositions (e.g., civility, open-mindedness, toleration of diversity) as an essential com-

ponent of social studies education. The position statement closes with the following challenge to social studies educators:

> Social studies teachers have a responsibility and a duty to refocus their classrooms on the teaching of character and civic virtue. They should not be timid or hesitant about working toward these goals. The fate of the American experiment in self-government depends in no small part on the store of civic virtue that resides in the American people. The social studies profession of this nation has a vital role to play in keeping this wellspring of civic virtue flowing (Haynes et al., 1997, p. 227).

If social studies teachers are to be expected to "refocus their classrooms on the teaching of character and civic virtue," social studies teacher educators are faced with the challenge of preparing teachers for such a role. As Lickona (1993) noted, "Character education is far more complex than teaching math or reading; it requires personal growth as well as skills development. Yet teachers typically receive almost no preservice or inservice training in the moral aspects of their craft. Many teachers do not feel comfortable or competent in the values domain" (p. 11). Arguably, preservice social studies teachers are unlikely to receive adequate instruction regarding character education unless social studies teacher educators perceive a need for such preparation. The literature concerning teacher preparation for character education suggests that teacher education programs are not currently training teachers adequately to function as character educators. Berkowitz (1998) argued that obstacles to teacher training in character education, such as disagreement about the meaning of character education, perceptions of limited space in the preservice curricula for character training, and a lack of character education expertise in teacher training institutions, have resulted in poor teacher preparation. He also noted that negative perceptions of character education among teacher educators are likely to hinder the growth of teacher training in character education. In a nationwide survey of deans and chairs of teacher education programs, Jones, Ryan, and Bohlin (1998) found that "Despite widespread support for character education, . . . [it] is not currently a high priority in the curriculum of teacher education" (p. 17). The authors noted that their findings suggest a dichotomy between the expectations placed on teachers to serve as character educators and the training they receive for this role. They concluded that "Character education needs to become a more explicit, intentional focus across the curriculum of teacher education, not merely left to the informal efforts of individual professors" (Jones, Ryan & Bohlin, 1998, p. 27). Similarly, Mathison (1998) found that both student teachers and

experienced teachers perceived a need for greater attention to character education in teacher preparation programs. Only 13% of her respondents agreed with the statement "The topic of character education was addressed thoroughly in my teacher preparation program" and 74% agreed that "The issues surrounding character education should be addressed in a more comprehensive manner during the teacher preparation process" (Mathison, 1998, p. 33).

Overcoming the obstacles to effective teacher training presented by Berkowitz (1998) and examining the perceptions of stakeholders in teacher education (i.e., Jones, Ryan, & Bohlin, 1998; Mathison, 1998) are necessary steps if the status of character education in teacher training institutions is to improve. However, the literature appears to lack explanations of how teacher educators perceive character education and how they go about teaching this topic to preservice teachers. Given the recent position statement of NCSS, this study attempts to contribute to an understanding of social studies teacher educators' perceptions of character education and their approach to teaching this topic in social studies curriculum and methods courses.

Conceptualizing Contemporary Character Education

Due to the lack of a clear and widely accepted definition of character education, I have conceptualized character education based on six themes evident in the contemporary literature:

1. There is a moral crisis in society that schools have a responsibility to address.

2. Role models and exemplars are important aspects of character development.

3. Some degree of didactic instruction is desirable in character education.

4. Young people need opportunities to practice good character.

5. Schools must establish a positive moral climate.

6. A community-developed list of traits should guide character education programs.

Moral Decline

The relationship between the school and society is an important key to the rationale for character education. According to contemporary character education authors, our society is in a state of rapid moral decline. Numerous statistics of high levels of dishonesty, irresponsibility, drug abuse, violent crime, teen-pregnancy, and other vices are cited as evidence of societal moral decay (Lickona, 1991; 1993; 1997; Kilpatrick, 1992; Wynne, 1997; Glanzer, 1998; Benninga & Wynne, 1998). Character education authors argue that these societal problems are too frequently evident in school-age youth. This societal moral crisis will continue with calamitous consequences, it is argued, unless schools begin dedicated efforts to address the character development of students.

Role Models

Character education authors also underscore the need for teachers to consider both their influence as role models for students and the character-building potential of the curriculum. The character education literature encourages teachers to serve as models of good character by demonstrating positive character traits in their interactions with students, parents, teachers, and administrators (e.g., Lickona, 1991, 1993). Teachers are also urged to contemplate the powerful impact of their actions in the classroom and strive to exemplify good character (Ryan, 1986). Additionally, teachers are advised to view the standard curriculum as a source of character-building lessons by engaging in activities such as examining the character traits of historical and literary figures (Ryan, 1986; Lickona, 1991, 1993, 1997; Benninga, 1997; Benninga & Wynne, 1998).

Didactic Instruction

Those who began promoting character education during the 1980's were opposed to the values clarification approach popular during the 1970's and early 1980's (e.g., Ryan, 1986; Benninga, 1988; Lickona, 1988; Wynne, 1988). Values clarification was viewed by many character education authors as a value-neutral and morally relativistic approach to values education (Ryan, 1986; Lickona, 1991). Character education authors argued that teachers and schools had become neutral on moral issues because they were afraid of imposing values on students. The moral relativism that seemed to underlie the values clarification approach is strongly rejected by character education authors who assert that certain universal moral values do exist and that teachers and schools must be firm proponents of these values (Ryan, 1986; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999; Lickona, 1991, 1993, 1997, 1998; Wynne, 1988, 1997; Benninga & Wynne, 1998). Those advocating character education urge teachers to reject moral relativism by expressing their

indignation at examples of immorality and by explicitly teaching the traits of good character.

Although character education proponents agree that universal moral values exist and that teachers must openly advocate these values, they disagree on the degree to which didactic instruction should be used for moral advocacy. Some suggest limited use of didactic instruction with an emphasis on explanation and reflection (e.g., Lickona, 1991; Ryan, 1986). Ryan (1986) explained, "Exhortation should be used sparingly, and it should never stray far from explanation. Nonetheless, there are times when teachers must appeal to the best instincts of the young and urge them to move in a particular direction" (p.232). Others suggest using didactic instruction often to compel students to behave in a prescribed manner. For example, Benninga and Wynne (1998) stated, "We intend such words as *instill in, transmit to,* and *habit formation* to describe the process of character development and mature moral decision-making" [emphasis in original] (p. 444).

Practicing Character

A critical component of character development, according to character education advocates, is the opportunity to practice the traits of good character. This behavioral component serves to reinforce the cognitive (moral knowledge) and affective (moral feeling) aspects of character. Students may be given the opportunity to practice good character through participation in service programs or clubs (Ryan, 1986; Lickona, 1991, 1993, 1997; Wynne, 1997), classroom decision-making, (Benninga, 1988; Lickona, 1988, 1991, 1993, 1997) and cooperative learning (Lickona, 1988, 1991, 1993, 1997). Wynne (1997) argued that cooperative learning and shared decision-making can be detrimental under some circumstances and suggests peer tutoring, team competitions, and serving as a classroom aide or crossing guard as appropriate character-building activities (Wynne, 1988, 1997).

School Climate

According to most character education authors, character cannot be effectively developed unless the entire school is committed to this effort. The character education literature contains many recommendations for creating a positive moral climate in the classroom and a positive moral culture in a school (e.g., Lickona, 1988, 1991, 1993, 1997; Ryan, 1986; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999; Kilpatrick, 1992; Wynne, 1988). It is suggested that a positive classroom environment can be developed by considering factors such as the fairness of rules, the balance between competition and cooperation, the balance between individuality and community responsibility, the treatment of less-able students, and the presence of ethical questions in classroom dialogue (Ryan, 1986). Teachers and administrators are urged to consider how factors

such as the leadership of the principal, the school discipline policy, student government, recognition programs, and a schoolwide sense of community can lead to a positive school ethos that reinforces the values taught in classrooms (Lickona, 1993). On the importance of a moral school culture, Kilpatrick (1992) remarked, "the ethos of a school, not its course offerings, is the decisive factor in forming character" (p. 266). Wynne (1988) also stressed the importance of the moral climate of the school; "it is ...important that whole schools and individual teachers carry out activities designed to build character, that the overall conduct of adults and young people in the schools reflect a concern for character development, and that this concern be interwoven throughout the school program" (p. 424).

Trait Lists

Character education authors recommend that schools implementing character education programs generate consensus among stakeholders by identifying a list of character traits based on universal values that the community believes are important. The process of generating a character traits list involves three key recommendations for the implementation of character education in a school. First, character education authors suggest that schools seek to develop a partnership with parents and community institutions (Lickona, 1991, 1993, 1997). This effort not only serves to generate support for the program, but also aims to involve parents and community members in reinforcing the traits taught in school. Second, the process of developing a trait list will provide a response to the common question "Whose values will be taught?" (Lickona, 1991; Benninga & Wynne, 1998). Finally, the assertion that specific universal values exist that should be taught to all children is emphasized by creating the trait list. The identification and definition of these values are critical first steps in the implementation of character education. Community involvement in the process of developing character trait lists is recommended not because it is believed that each community will develop a unique list, but because it is believed to be important for a community to publicly affirm the existence and importance of these traits.

Method

This study examined social studies teacher educators' perceptions of character education. Specifically, the study addressed perceptions of (a) the common themes of contemporary character education, (b) the appropriate scope for character education and (c) the importance of including character education issues in a social studies curriculum/methods course. Additionally, the data were examined to determine whether or not the grade level specialties of the respon-

dents explained differences in perception. Theoretically, there is reason to believe that character education should proceed with different methods and attempt to achieve different outcomes at elementary and secondary grade levels (Tappan, 1997). Research and experience also suggest that elementary and secondary teachers—and teacher educators—see their roles somewhat differently (Leming, 1991). Moreover, many of the programs that are labeled *character education* are implemented in elementary and middle schools. While this study was not designed to inspect or explain the bases of these grade level differences, it was hypothesized that elementary-oriented teacher educators would have both more familiarity with character education and more positive perceptions of the appropriateness of character education.

The sample for this study consisted of 298 members of NCSS who identified themselves as "teacher prep - elementary" or "teacher prep - secondary" on their membership applications. Both questionnaire and interview data were collected and analyzed. Following a pilot study in which the questionnaire was tested and revised, all members of the sample received the Character Education in the Social Studies Questionnaire (CESSQ) by mail (see Appendix A). The CESSQ consisted of 38 Likert-type items designed by the researcher to measure perceptions regarding the themes and scope of contemporary character education, as well as the importance of character education in the curriculum/methods course (Oppenheim, 1992). A total of 205 out of 298 CESSQs were returned for an overall response rate of 68.7%. The reliability of the entire questionnaire, as well as each of the subscales, was calculated using the Cronbach's index of internal consistency. The reliability coefficient for the entire scale ($\alpha = .8509$) was judged to be satisfactory. Similarly, the reliability coefficients for the themes subscale ($\alpha = .8048$), the scope subscale ($\alpha = .6747$), and the course subscale ($\alpha = .8359$) are believed to be acceptable evidence of the reliability of these scales (Glass & Hopkins, 1996; Huck & Cormier, 1996).

Following the collection of the CESSQ data, a semi-structured interview protocol, developed by the researcher, was utilized to explore the perceptions of the respondents in greater depth (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995; Creswell, 1998). The interview participants were asked questions such as, "What usually comes to mind when you hear the term *character education*?" "What bothers you about character education?" "Do you discuss or teach about character education in your methods courses?" "What do you hope students will learn about character education?" Twenty (10%) of the CESSQ respondents were randomly selected and contacted for interviews. Seventeen of these respondents agreed to participate and were interviewed by telephone.

The telephone interviews were tape recorded with the permission of the participant and transcribed by the researcher.

Respondent Characteristics

An inspection of the mailing labels generated some concern that certain recipients of the CESSQ were not members of the target population of social studies teacher educators. Some of the addresses on the list were primary and secondary schools rather than colleges and universities. It was difficult to determine the employment position of the recipient based solely on the address, however, since many were home addresses. One modification to the CESSQ, following the pilot study, was the addition of a box asking recipients to select their primary position of employment. The categories available were similar to those used by the NCSS membership form: "K-12 Teacher," "Principal/Assistant Principal," "Supervisor/Coordinator," "College/University Faculty," "Consultant," and "Other - please describe." Respondents who checked "Supervisor/Coordinator," "College/University Faculty," "Consultant," or an applicable "Other" category such as "retired College Faculty," were coded as "target" respondents. It is believed that these positions of employment afford significant opportunities to be involved in teacher education. Those who self-identified as "K-12 Teacher" or "Principal/Assistant Principal" were coded as "non-target" respondents. Of the total of 205 CESSQ forms that were returned, 156 (76%) were target respondents and 49 (24%) were non-target. The presence of non-target respondents generated some concern for potential bias in the data since K-12 teachers and administrators are not typically considered teacher educators. Therefore, the non-target respondents were excluded from the data analysis.

The respondents were also asked to categorize themselves by the grade levels that they would consider to be their areas of expertise. Respondents were given the choices "Elementary," "Middle School," and "High School" and were asked to "check all that apply." The target CESSQ respondents identified themselves as follows: 53 elementary (34%), three middle school (2%), 23 high school (15%), 31 both elementary and middle school (20%), 23 both middle school and high school (15%), and 23 (15%) selected all three categories and are hereafter labeled "all levels." The 17 interview participants identified their grade level specialties as follows: two early childhood (12%), five elementary (29%), four elementary and middle school (24%), four secondary (24%), and two all levels (12%).

Limitations

Given the lack of a clearly agreed upon definition for the term *character education*, it is possible that the respondents had somewhat differing interpretations of the topic under study. Respondents were

not provided with a definition of character education because there was some concern that responses would be based on agreement or disagreement with the definition rather than with the larger issues under study. Furthermore, it is likely that respondents had varying degrees of familiarity with current character education proposals and practices. Although a response rate of 68.7% may be considered suitable for survey research, the possibility of response bias must be considered. It is reasonable to assume that some of the non-respondents are not familiar with, not interested in, or perhaps opposed to character education.

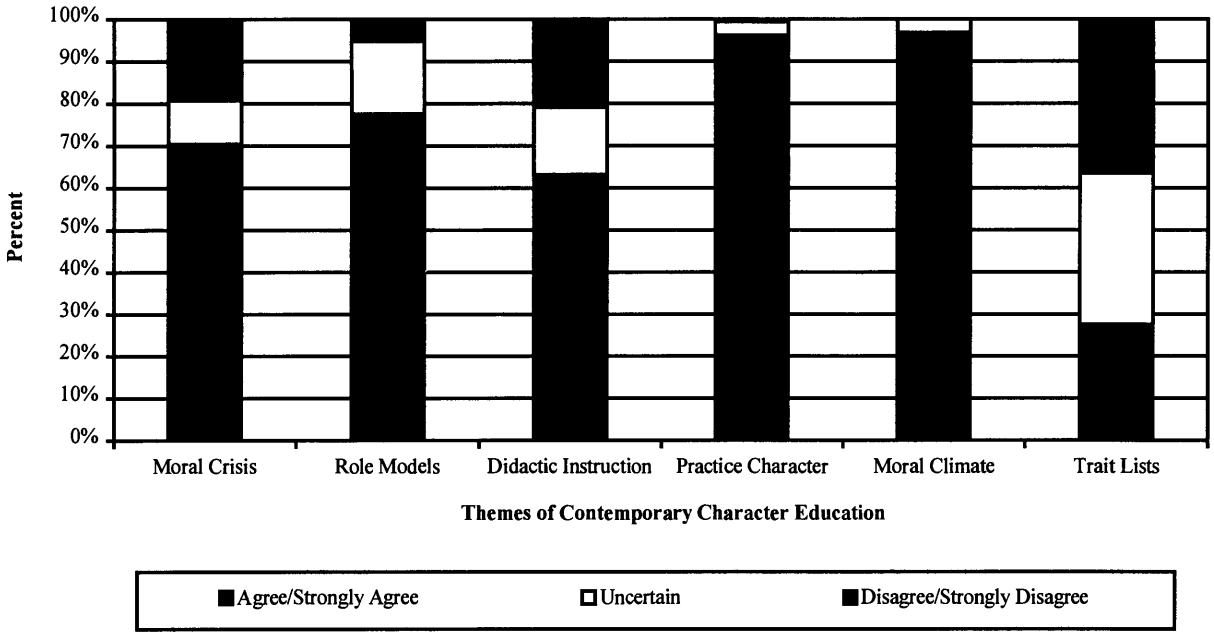
Findings

Although one should consider the potential limitations, the findings of this study provide some insight into how social studies teacher educators perceive character education. The results suggest that grade level specialties do not appear to influence perceptions of character education. Furthermore, the data suggests that social studies teacher educators tend to support many character education themes and favor a broad scope for character education. There is also strong support for character education as an important topic of study for preservice teachers. Although the results appear largely positive for advocates of character education, the findings reveal problematic issues surrounding this topic. Each of these findings will be explored.

Influence of Grade Level Specialty on Perceptions of Character Education

In order to test the hypothesis regarding differences in perception among grade level specialty groups, a one-way analysis of variance was conducted for the subscales of the CESSQ relating to the themes of character education, the scope of character education, and the inclusion of character education in the curriculum/methods course. The results for the themes subscale [$F(5,150) = 1.273$, $p > .05$], for the scope subscale [$F(5,150) = .285$, $p > .05$], and for the course subscale [$F(5,199) = .845$, $p > .05$] were not statistically significant. These results suggest that grade level specialty was not an important factor in the CESSQ scores of the respondents. Similarly, no pattern of response based on grade level specialty was evident among the interview participants. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected and the results of this study are presented without regard to the respondents' grade level specialties.

Figure 1. **Responses to Theme Statement**



Perceptions of Common Themes of Contemporary Character Education

The distribution of responses to the theme statement items presented in Figure 1 suggests some level of support for all but the sixth theme. The respondents offered the strongest level of support (96.8%) for the notion that schools must establish a positive moral climate. Similarly, most (96.1%) favored character education that provides students with opportunities in school to practice good character. Furthermore, many (77.6%) concur with the assertion that students need virtuous teachers as role models. These three themes seemed to present few problems for most of the respondents. The response to the remaining themes, however, was somewhat mixed. An examination of the data regarding perceptions of moral decline, didactic instruction, and character trait lists reveals several problematic issues.

Moral decline and school responsibility. The respondents tended to agree with the statement of the first theme, "There is a moral crisis in society that schools have a responsibility to address" (51.9% agree; 18.6% strongly agree). Similarly, respondents agreed with items intended to support this theme. For example, 89.1% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "The school has a responsibility to instill positive character traits in students." One interview participant described character education as a means of making this responsibility more explicit:

> It's my basic belief that the heart of everything we do in schools—the very core of what we do—is values education. I don't think that we are very honest with ourselves about it—that we're not always cognizant of what values we're teaching children and how we're teaching those children those values. I think character education programs at least make those kinds of issues explicit.

Additionally, respondents tended to disagree with items intended to oppose this theme. Most, 85.9%, of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, "Schools should not be expected to play a role in solving the ills of society."

It seems apparent though that while respondents favor the notion that schools have a responsibility for the character development of students, they do not tend to perceive the moral decline that character education authors lament. There was a high level of uncertainty and division among the respondents concerning the statement, "Moral standards in this country are in rapid decline" (25.6% agree; 20.5% uncertain; 38.5% disagree). Similar results were apparent for the statement, "Too many youth today engage in immoral activities" (36.5% agree; 25.6% uncertain; 26.3% disagree).

Didactic instruction. The assertion that some degree of didactic instruction is desirable received a mixed response from participants. There was division over the statement, "When necessary, teachers should attempt to change the values of students so that they more closely reflect certain desirable community values" (39.1% agree; 23.1% uncertain; 28.2% disagree). Similarly, the statement, "Teachers must express their indignation at examples of immorality if they hope to influence the character of students" elicited a high level of division (40.4% agree; 22.4% uncertain; 26.9% disagree). Some of the statements made by interview participants confirm the division on this issue. One participant remarked, "We can't really make the assumption that these kids are mature enough to make these moral judgments without some sort of background or training." However, another interview participant, when asked what bothered him about character education, replied, "I've seen some very coercive programs under the guise of character education."

Character trait lists. The proposition that, "Character education programs should be based upon a community-developed list of character traits" received a very divided response (27.6% agree or strongly agree; 35.9% uncertain; 36.6% disagree or strongly disagree). A similar division was evident in the responses of the interview participants. One participant explaining what she liked about character education remarked,

> I think if you have people sitting down and trying to reach some sort of consensus on which character traits will be emphasized or incorporated into the character education program, that's a step forward. I think that's an important conversation for people to have.

At least four of the interview participants, however, were opposed to the use of trait lists. One participant was concerned about the possibility that the values identified could be interpreted in many different ways and thus taught differently by different teachers. A second interview participant was also bothered by the interpretation of values. When asked what bothered her about character education, she responded,

> It bothers me...that many people in education, as well as in the legislature, are defining character education in terms of values. My problem with values is that what they are calling values are behaviors. [For example], I have no problem with teaching respect, but I don't think that's a value. Trying to teach [respectful behavior] without undergirding it with a value of individual rights or diversity or the com-

> mon good makes it much more difficult to get where we want to go.

Similarly, a third interview participant describing what bothered her about character education explained,

> [I am bothered by] ...anything that's labeled character education that has too restrictive a definition or curriculum or a personal set of values that has been defined by somebody else. I think character education needs to be broad in terms of its interpretation. Hopefully, there are some commonalities that one can agree on in making up the curriculum of character education, but we have to be very careful that we avoid stereotypes and prejudices.

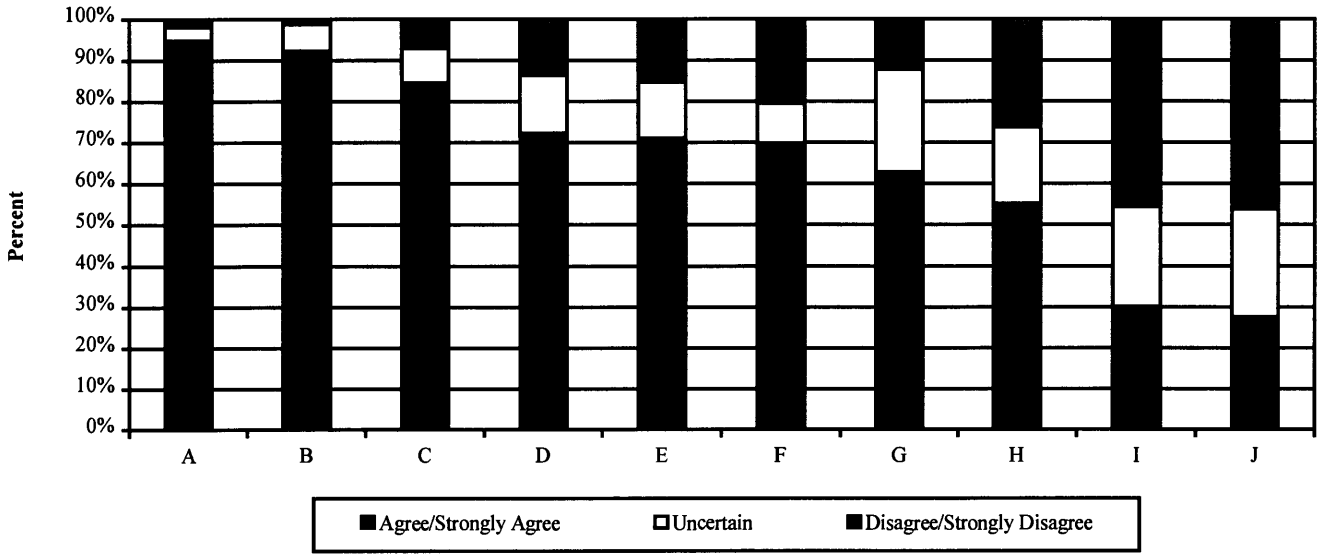
Respondents were similarly divided over the supporting statement, "Character education programs should primarily focus on inculcating community values" (16% agree; 28.8% uncertain; 39.7% disagree to strongly disagree). One respondent who agreed with this item qualified this response by stating, "If these values reflect appreciation and respect for diversity and full democracy." Other respondents who disagreed added comments such as: "Inculcating is an inappropriate methodology in values education programs." and "I question being community specific."

Although the issues of trait lists and inculcation received a mixed response, some support for related notions was evident. Most, 91.7%, supported the statement "There are universal moral values that are worth instilling in children." An interview participant remarked, "I think honesty and respect and respect for each other—all those things would be values that we'd all cherish. I can't think of any regular society or civilization that wouldn't value those things." Additionally, 76.3% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "Character education programs should require schools to work as partners with parents and the community." The respondents also tended to disagree with statements such as, "Commonly identified character traits, such as respect and responsibility, are euphemisms for uncritical deference to authority" and "Teaching character traits to students is unlikely to influence their behavior."

Perceptions of the Scope of Character Education

The second section of the CESSQ included 10 items designed to measure the perceptions of respondents regarding the scope of character education. Each of these items either proposed or rejected including another aspect of education within the framework of character education. The distribution of responses presented in Figure 2 sug-

Figure 2. **Responses to Scope Statement**



Character education should include:

A = Social issues analysis
B = Citizenship goals of social studies
C = Democratic classroom
D = Multicultural education
E = Previous approaches to values education
F = School discipline policy
G = Effects of consumerism
H = Drug/alcohol prevention
I = All affective goals
J = Abstinence-based sex education

gests that respondents generally favor a broad scope for character education, particularly when including those aspects of education typically associated with the social studies such as citizenship, social issues analysis, democratic classrooms, and multicultural education. For example, 92.3% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "A character education program should address many of the citizenship goals of social studies education."

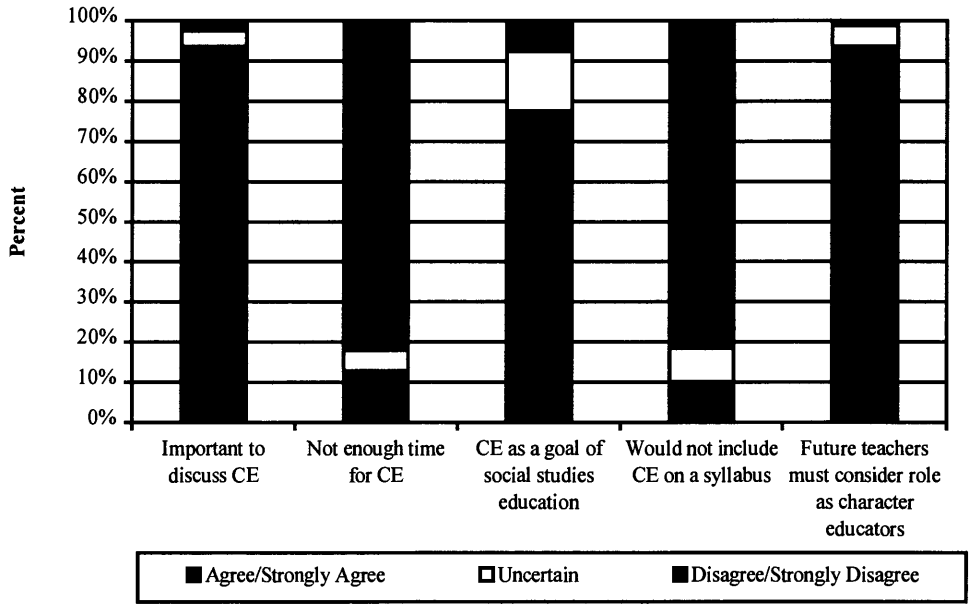
Although the respondents seemed to favor including social studies oriented goals in character education, some of the issues promoted by those advocating character education received somewhat divided responses. Most respondents, 55.1%, favored including drug/alcohol prevention efforts in character education, yet 26.2% preferred to keep such efforts separate from character education. Moreover, the proposal to include abstinence-based sex education received a very divided response with most, 46.2% in disagreement. Finally, the item which proposes perhaps the broadest scope for character education, "The term character education should be used in a broad sense to describe all of the affective goals of a curriculum" also divided respondents (30.1% agree or strongly agree; 24.4% uncertain; 45.5% disagree or strongly disagree). One interview participant captured the problem of scope and the meaning of character education. When describing what comes to mind when she hears the term character education she remarked, "I think of citizenship education and the character traits of a good citizen, but I'm also aware that that's not the meaning that a lot of other people carry with that term".

Perceptions of Character Education as a Topic in a Curriculum/ Methods Course

The distribution of responses presented in Figure 3 suggests that most social studies teacher educators support including character education as a topic in a curriculum/methods course. The respondents (93.6%) affirm both the importance of discussing character education with preservice teachers and the need for future social studies teachers to consider their role as character educators. Furthermore, 77.6% of the respondents agreed that character education should be discussed as one of the goals of social studies education. Most respondents also disagreed with the items intended to suggest leaving character education out of a curriculum/methods course. Many, 82.1%, disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, "There is not enough time in a social studies curriculum/methods course to spend time discussing character education." A similar proportion of respondents, 81.4%, disagreed or strongly disagreed with items stating that character education would not be on their syllabus.

The interview data provide further support for the CESSQ findings regarding character education as an important curriculum and

Figure 3. **Responses to Course Statement**



methods course topic and serve to illuminate these findings by describing the goals and practices of these teacher educators. All 17 of the interview participants reported discussing or teaching about character education in their curriculum and methods courses. Nine of these 17, however, addressed this issue using terms other than character education. Five referred to this component of their course as *values education*, two use the term *moral education*, and two discuss the affective domain of the curriculum in general terms. The interview participants generally reported spending approximately one to three class sessions directly teaching about character education, values education, or the affective domain. Eight of these interview participants also reported integrating character education issues throughout their courses by relating the topic to other issues when relevant. Additionally, 10 interview participants reported assigning readings that address character education. The writers identified as assigned reading included: Aristotle, Jean Piaget, Edward Wynne, Rahima Wade, Carol Gilligan, Diane Ravitch, Benjamin Barber, James Leming, Alan Lockwood, Alfie Kohn, Thomas Lickona, and Lawrence Kohlberg.

All of the interview participants were asked to describe what they hoped their students would learn about character education in their classes. The goal mentioned most often (seven of the 17 interview participants) involved considering the role of the school and role of the teacher in transmitting values to students. One interview participant explained, "My objective for my students is to see that their role as a social studies teacher isn't just to keep kids busy with history facts and so on, but that it's a responsibility on our shoulders of developing citizens with character." Additional goals for preservice teachers included: (a) understanding the relationship between character education and social studies, (b) considering the rationales for teaching values, (c) exploring strategies for integrating character education with social studies content, (d) preparing for local and state character education mandates, (e) developing background knowledge about values education, moral education, and character education approaches, and (f) keeping an open mind about teaching values.

Implications for Social Studies Teacher Education

The findings of this study suggest that social studies teacher educators generally support many of the assertions common in the character education literature. Issues that appear to be largely acceptable include the role of schools in character development, the need for positive role models and exemplars, the value of character-building activities within the school program, the significance of the school climate, and the existence of universal moral values. Additionally, social studies teacher educators seem to favor a broad conception of charac-

ter education that addresses key social studies goals such as responsible citizenship, appreciation for diversity, and the promotion of democratic values. Moreover, strong support for preservice teacher preparation for character education seems apparent.

Although these results appear promising for those advocating character education, this study reveals several problematic issues surrounding character education. Social studies teacher educators do not appear to be convinced of the moral crisis in society that character education authors bemoan and there is division regarding the desirability of didactic methods of character instruction, the use character trait lists to guide programs, and the inclusion of abstinence-based sex education. The controversy regarding these issues suggests potential obstacles to widespread endorsement of character education among social studies teacher educators. Furthermore, this controversy reveals that the preparation that future social studies teachers receive regarding character education is likely to be as diverse as the perceptions of these teacher educators. Given the finding that approximately half of the interview participants do not use the term character education in their classes, it is dubious to suggest that these educators are truly supporting the same conception of character education.

As Leming (1997) noted, "The current character education movement lacks either a theoretical perspective or a common core of practice" (p. 41). Although such a coherent theory is lacking, this study does reveal that social studies teacher educators support many of the assertions common in the character education literature. A more thorough discussion of the apparent problematic issues surrounding character education should help to further illuminate the implications of this study for social studies teacher educators.

Is There a Moral Crisis in Society?

It is unclear whether or not social studies teacher educators perceive the moral decline described in the character education literature. Perhaps the effort by character education authors to portray youth as morally corrupt is misguided and unnecessary. The stories of children committing unspeakable crimes against others with no remorse are indeed horrible and serve the purposes of gaining attention, being persuasive, and developing a sense of urgency, but they are arguably extreme examples of criminal behavior and hardly representative of youth in general. The implication is that character education will prevent these brutal acts from occurring by developing morality in such children. It is a dubious expectation that widespread character education will eliminate or severely curtail criminal behavior. However, social studies teacher educators do appear to agree with character education advocates that schools have an important responsibility for teaching students the traits of good character. Character education

may not prevent crime, but the school will always be a key agent in the development of respectful and responsible citizens. Perhaps those advocating character education should base their rationale on the important and historic role of the school in character development and avoid using extreme examples of immorality as a basis for teaching character. It seems likely, given the goals mentioned by the interview participants, that social studies teacher educators prefer to base their rationale for character education on the former rather than the latter.

Are Didactic Methods of Instruction Appropriate?

The controversy evident in the findings regarding the appropriate amount and form of didactic instruction is understandable in that instructional style is a contextual issue. This issue is a source of debate among character education advocates as well (Lickona, 1998). My experience leads me to believe that social studies educators typically favor reflective discussion over didactic lectures. The context and content of the lesson, as well as the age of the student, however, will play an important role in a teacher's decision to use one technique over another. For example, a teacher may wish to engage students in a reflective discussion of the merits of courtesy and respect for others when developing classroom rules. Nonetheless, a student who uses a racial epithet or shoves his way to the front of a line is likely to receive a stern lecture from the teacher about the meaning of respect and courtesy. Similarly, social studies educators' support for expressions of moral indignation are likely to depend on the content of the lesson. I imagine that few would argue against expressing moral outrage at the treatment of Jews in Nazi Germany, the treatment of African slaves in the antebellum United States, or the bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City. Likewise, I believe that many teachers would be comfortable in their opposition to violence, drug abuse, cheating, lying, vandalism, obscene language at school, theft, and similar illegal or inappropriate activities. However, issues such as homosexuality and abortion are unlikely to achieve such consensus. The age of the students further compounds the question. Although the findings did not suggest a difference in perceptions based on the grade level specialties of teacher educators, it would be valuable to investigate whether elementary teachers are more likely than secondary teachers to view didactic instruction as appropriate. While generally not rejecting the notion of didactic instruction, social studies teacher educators appear to be cautious about its appropriateness. The character education proponents who unabashedly advocate didactic instruction (i.e., Benninga & Wynne, 1998) are therefore unlikely to receive the endorsement of many social studies teacher educators.

Are Community-Developed Lists of Character Traits Useful?

The respondents of this study seem to recognize that, while it is possible to generate a list of character traits, involve the community and parents as partners, and potentially influence student behavior by teaching those traits, such lists should not lead to a purely trait-based inculcation program. One potential obstacle to the success of character education, therefore, is the perception that school programs are centered on inculcating character traits. The respondents appear to perceive ambiguity in the recommendation that community-developed lists of traits guide character education programs. Perhaps this is due to the concern that some programs may focus too heavily on the traits and slight the importance of other factors such as teacher role modeling, the school climate, and opportunities for students to practice good character. This potential for superficial implementation of character education should lead character education advocates to redouble their efforts to promote comprehensive models of character education that address all of the important aspects of character development rather than a limited focus on trait lists. It seems that social studies educators could inform this conception of character education by promoting the notion of fostering civic competence for the common good as a guiding principle. Character education centered on civic virtue would involve specific civic dispositions, yet these traits would be examined in the context of democratic citizenship rather than adult exhortation. The support that social studies teacher educators seem to offer for the notion of character education could be put to use to influence the direction of the character education movement toward a conception based on key social studies goals.

Should Abstinence-Based Sex Education be an Element of Character Education?

According to the results of this study, the issue of abstinence-based sex education is perhaps the most problematic issue surrounding character education. Many character education advocates are clear about the need for character education to include sex education that promotes abstinence. Lickona (1991) argues that adults who teach the importance of responsibility through character education cannot condone irresponsible behavior through "safe-sex" education. Adults must send a consistent message through sex education that sex among teenagers is irresponsible. Social studies teacher educators, however, appear to be very divided in their opinion of abstinence-based sex education as a component of character education. Approximately equal numbers of the respondents agreed as disagreed with the statement that abstinence-based sex education programs should be included in character education programs. Some may argue that abstinence-based sex education is naive and that responsibility may be stressed through

the careful consideration of pregnancy and disease prevention. Character education authors are likely to stand on principle regarding this issue and consensus is unlikely.

Conclusion

The character education movement is strong at this time as evidenced by state mandates, school programs, widespread literature, and the support of national organizations. One such organization, NCSS, has called for "a renewed effort by social studies educators, schools, and communities to teach character and civic virtue" (Haynes et al., 1997, p. 227). The need to address character education in teacher education programs is evident as character development is a complex task that many teachers do not feel comfortable performing (Lickona, 1993). The aim of this study was to explore the perceptions and practices of social studies teacher educators regarding character education in an effort to reveal the status of character education in social studies teacher education. The findings of this study are encouraging for those promoting character education. It is apparent that social studies teacher educators support many common themes in the character education literature, favor a broadly conceived scope for character education, and tend to endorse the need to prepare teachers for their roles as character educators. Further research is necessary, however, to identify appropriate and effective means of including character education in teacher preparation programs. The place of character education within teacher education is sure to raise many questions. To what degree is character education a priority in teacher education? Are social studies curriculum and methods courses the most appropriate venue for character education? Should character education become the subject of a separate, required course within teacher education? How can teacher educators who are committed to character education overcome the potential obstacles described above? Will a conception of character education based on the promotion of civic virtue serve to mitigate some of the problematic issues surrounding character education? Exploring these and other such questions will illuminate avenues for addressing character education in a more deliberate and effective manner through social studies teacher education. Such a goal would appear to be a high priority for social studies teacher educators dedicated to promoting civic virtue.[1]

Note

[1] I wish to express my appreciation to John D. Hoge for his support through all phases of this study. His patience, kindness, and integrity are truly admirable characteristics.

Appendix

Character Education in the Social Studies Questionnaire (CESSQ)

1. There is a moral crisis in society that schools have a responsibility to address.
2. The school has a responsibility to instill positive character traits in students.
3. Schools should not be expected to play a role in solving the ills of society.
4. Moral standards in this country are in rapid decline.
5. Too many youth today engage in immoral activities.
6. In order to build strong character, students need virtuous teachers as role models.
7. Students are unlikely to learn character traits by discussing the moral aspects of historical events.
8. Some degree of didactic instruction is desirable in a character education program.
9. When necessary, teachers should attempt to change the values of students so that they more closely reflect certain desirable community values.
10. Teachers must express their indignation at examples of immorality if they hope to influence the character of students.
11. Teachers should avoid stating their views on issues of morality.
12. Teachers need to provide students with opportunities in school to practice good character.
13. Community service projects are unlikely to have a positive impact on the character development of students.
14. Shared classroom decision-making activities have enormous potential to provide students with character-building experiences.
15. Both teachers and administrators should be responsible for establishing a positive moral climate in their school.
16. Schools should establish recognition programs to reward students who display good character.
17. Teaching academic subjects and teaching character are often conflicting tasks.
18. Character education programs should be based upon a community-developed list of character traits.
19. Character education programs should primarily focus on inculcating community values.
20. Teaching character traits to students is unlikely to influence their behavior.
21. Commonly identified character traits, such as respect and responsibility, are euphemisms for uncritical deference to authority.
22. Character education programs should require schools to work as partners with parents and the community.
23. There are universal moral values that are worth instilling in children.
24. The term character education should be used in a broad sense to describe all of the affective goals of a curriculum.
25. Character education should address the effects of consumerism on children.
26. Character education and drug/alcohol prevention efforts should be separate pro grams.
27. Sex education programs that stress abstinence should be included in any character education program.
28. Multicultural education should be one aspect of a character education program.
29. The school discipline policy should be separate from any character education program.
30. Previous approaches to values and moral education, such as values clarification, value analysis, and moral development, should be considered character education approaches.
31. The creation of a democratic classroom environment should be one goal of any character education program.
32. The analysis of social issues should be one aspect of a character education program.

33. A character education program should address many of the citizenship goals of social studies education.
34. It is important to discuss character education with pre-service teachers in social studies curriculum/methods courses.
35. There is not enough time in a social studies curriculum/methods course to spend time discussing character education.
36. Character education should be discussed in a social studies curriculum/methods course as one of the goals of social studies education.
37. I would not include character education as a topic if I had to write a syllabus for a social studies curriculum/methods course.
38. Future social studies teachers enrolled in a curriculum/methods course must consider their role as character educators.

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Depoliticizing Multicultural Education: The Return to Normalcy in a Predominantly White High School

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Abstract

This article examines how teachers at a predominantly white, middle-class high school enacted multicultural education in an innovative course called "Cultural Issues." Responding to often tacit pressures in their school and community, teachers placed parameters around the kinds of issues acceptable for examination, de-politicizing the curriculum and deflecting discussions from matters of oppression and privilege. We explore some illustrative examples from the course, suggesting that the micro-political contexts of school and community shaped curriculum and instruction in important but often unacknowledged ways. We argue that before reforms such as multicultural education can take root, frank attention is needed to the often unspoken influence of contextual norms upon curricular framing and classroom interaction.

It was the last day of an innovative high school course called "Cultural Issues," team taught by three teachers in a suburban, predominantly white community that we'll call Riverdale. In lieu of a final exam, teachers asked students to make brief presentations on what they had learned over the term—about other cultures, and about their own cultural frames of reference. The course had focused on unlearning ethnocentrism, and during this final session students explained the ways they had become more accepting of difference. "Culture" was understood here as the deep, taken-for-granted beliefs that groups enact routinely, a "cultural issue" as a challenge arising when a foreigner encounters unfamiliar assumptions and practices. Students frequently sampled foreign cuisine in the course, and open-minded interest in unfamiliar foods was regarded as a hallmark of fading ethnocentrism.

There were unexpected incidents, however, that pushed at the parameters teachers had established for the course. At this final class session, for instance, a student whose family had recently immigrated from India remarked in passing that he had long believed that Ameri-

cans ate squirrel for Thanksgiving, and was relieved to learn otherwise. The lead teacher frowned and asked for a show of hands ("how many of you have eaten *squirrel* for Thanksgiving?"). Rather than resolving the issue, this only provoked a wave of interest. A fellow teacher, whose origins were poor and rural, remarked that he had an uncle who used to eat squirrel. The student added with eager disgust that he'd been told Americans also ate raccoon. "It would be a very *unusual* Thanksgiving that people eat squirrel and raccoon," the lead teacher remarked firmly. Perhaps the *pilgrims* ate squirrel, an earnest Euro-American girl offered helpfully. "Ugh," responded the Indian student. "The idea of eating an animal that eats garbage *isn't* very appealing. It's sick!" "What was that?" asked the lead teacher dryly. "Something ethnocentric? The sound you hear is Nirmal's grade falling."

Much has been written of late about white educators' tendency to reduce multicultural education to superficial celebrations of "heroes and holidays," a "feasting and festing" approach that leaves out attention to issues of power and Euro-Americans' complicity in systemic inequities (Lee, Menkart, & Okazawa-Rey, 1998). At first glance, this anecdote may seem a strange instance of such "feasting and festing" run amuck, the teachers' careful attempts to associate acceptance of diverse cuisine with intercultural understanding twisted oddly askew. But we also detect a rare opportunity here—a chance for these majority white students, many of whom had not traveled much beyond Riverdale, to glimpse themselves through the eyes of people far away. The unasked questions might have been generative: What were the sources of the assumptions Nirmal relayed here? How is it that U.S. citizens are sometimes seen in a less-than-flattering light in other places? How did this encounter with stereotyping make these students feel?

This moment raises questions about the teachers' beliefs and practices as well. Why and how did they step back from this opportunity to reach beyond politically neutral explanations—ethnocentrism is bad, acceptance good, end of story? Why did the lead teacher deflect further consideration of Nirmal's question by saying his grade would suffer unless he kept his remarks within the course's established framework? More broadly, why did the team decide to confine the course's goals to appreciation of different cultural practices? Why did they not open the course to touchy matters of discrimination, bigotry, and negative stereotyping?

Cultural differences in this school and community were entangled with a host of quietly charged issues. This was an affluent town of big new homes, a place where wealth was a source of pride, and poor neighborhoods were commonly regarded as places to be avoided. Although the high school had long enjoyed an elite reputa-

tion, it had become the subject of decidedly negative publicity the year before, when a fledgling band of neo-Nazi students distributed hate literature on campus. "Racist activity at Riverdale High," read the next day's headlines. "Racial crises are not new to the affluent district," the article noted, recounting cross-burnings, bigoted graffiti, and growing tensions. "People don't want to admit that we have a lot of racists here," one student was quoted as saying; "I've been called nigger-lover and things like that," reported another. Administrators maintained that only "about a dozen white students" were "loudly racist"; meanwhile, several young people came forth to say that "about 100 others" at the high school shared such views, charging that administrators were "unwilling to face" simmering ethnic conflict. One student dismissed the furor as "a pea under a lot of mattresses"; "a pea that causes a little trouble," a Native American parent responded, "a little irritant under your skin, but we need to react when something bad like this happens."

We find it significant that this course in Cultural Issues largely avoided these concerns closer at hand, focusing on "globalism" rather than "multiculturalism" (Brandt, 1994; Ukpokodu, 1999). We explore here the logic and evolution of this focus, arguing that the implementation of effective multicultural education must acknowledge community- and school-based obstacles to frank discussion of oppression and privilege. While recent years have seen the advent of useful curricular models to guide multicultural education practices, we as yet know relatively little about the obstacles real teachers encounter as they attempt to teach about difference. Although a few researchers (e.g., Almarza & Fehn, 1998; Merelman, 1993; Wills, 1996) have begun to suggest how school traditions work to undermine effective multicultural education, we need to know more about the ways that such initiatives are shaped by particular contexts, with their norms of leadership and curricular and social traditions. Schools, like other institutions, also have emotional aspects that can encourage the construction of comfort zones (DiPardo, in press; Evans, 1996; Hargreaves, 1997, 1998). Teachers conduct their professional lives in schools and classrooms wherein structures and values may constrain multicultural practices, discouraging exploration of controversial matters.

Initially criticized for responding too slowly to the prior year's crisis, Riverdale High administrators and teachers had soon swung into action, putting in place an array of cultural-awareness efforts. A recurrent theme throughout these efforts was the desire to promote and safeguard the school's public image, and return to what administrators and other leaders deemed normalcy. We focus here on how this normalizing urge played out in Cultural Issues, and how it led to the development and implementation of a depoliticized curriculum. Teachers framed the course in ways that would preclude exploration

of local bigotry, hastily preempting opportunities to examine connections among racism, homophobia, gender discrimination, and class privilege. While we offer a critique of such omissions, we wish to counter the usual tendency to place responsibility on teachers alone, this by locating the course within the shaping influences of school and community. Our article explores what was silenced and why, considering what these silences might suggest to those of us who would advocate more overtly political approaches to multicultural education.

Methods

This study is drawn from a larger project undertaken by DiPardo focusing on teacher collaboration and processes of school change (1999; 2000, in press). Data were collected at Riverdale High over a four-month period, encompassing the duration of the Cultural Issues course; detailed fieldnotes were recorded on a total of 31 class sessions, supplemented with audiotapes and fieldnotes documenting planning sessions and informal conversations with the three teachers. DiPardo also conducted interviews with members of the teaching team (both individually and collectively), with six students, with several school-, district-, and state-level administrators, with other teachers at the school, and with the chair of the district's Multicultural Non-Sexist Committee. She observed a number of school events (e.g., committee meetings, faculty meetings, school assemblies, in-services, and presentations at district board meetings). Finally, she gathered school and district literature, demographic information from the local public library, and newspaper articles documenting relevant activities in the community, district, and high school.

While the present study draws primarily upon fieldnotes from Cultural Issues class sessions, it is grounded in a contextualized vision of the course, taking into account its pedagogic and political situation in a particular moment and place. The central focus of this article—the teachers' desire to safeguard the school's reputation and return to normalcy—was a recurrent theme throughout the full range of the school's multicultural awareness efforts. We focus here on how it was reflected in this new course, providing a few illustrative examples.

Community, School, & Course

Multicultural Education and Riverdale High

A midwestern suburb, Riverdale is a predominately Euro-American community of around 30,000 residents; at the time of data collection, over 98% of its high school's 950 students were white. "It's a

very definitely middle- to upper-income community," explained the principal, "a very affluent community that expects a lot of students. Most parents have aspirations that their kids will go on to four-year colleges—90% go on to either a two- or a four-year college." While these statistics placed Riverdale High in significant contrast to more diverse, lower-income schools but a few miles away, community members did not generally regard such separation as problematic. Although acts of bigotry had recently come to public attention and scrutiny, teachers and community members responded to questions about the matter by maintaining that active racism had never been pervasive here. The school's much-publicized neo-Nazi group was commonly seen as a tiny and isolated band that had received more than its share of notoriety; less seldom mentioned were shouted racial slurs at a recent basketball game, the swastikas that appeared now and then on Jewish students' lockers, stories of police harassment of African Americans in the surrounding community, or the habits of homophobia that so often accompany these other forms of discrimination. But if teachers downplayed the presence of bigotry, many worried about their town's relative isolation, and expressed hopes that their students might come to appreciate diversity as both a challenge and a resource. The staff had named multicultural/non-sexist education its number one priority for the school year, and their principal boasted frequently of his staff's good will and productive work. "The more we talk, the better we get," he observed at a recent school-board meeting. "We're getting *good* at multicultural/non-sexist education."

His partner in these efforts was Michaela Cummings, an energetic middle-aged teacher who, like her somewhat younger boss, was a midwestern Euro-American with a strong interest in multicultural education. It was Michaela who had taken the lead in developing and implementing the Cultural Issues course two years earlier, an idea inspired in part by her work as the district's coordinator of multicultural/global and non-sexist education. In addition to teaching at the high school, she spent abundant time discussing diversity issues with parents, teachers, and administrators across the district. She had faced last year's storm with quiet confidence, helping her principal put in place a series of responsive measures—anti-bigotry workshops, a multicultural student association, and a new Multicultural Advisory Council comprised of community leaders, parents, and teachers (this in addition to the Multicultural/Non-Sexist Committee already required by state law). The media were invited to MAC meetings, cameras rolling as people of color expressed concerns about the school's climate and lack of attention to diversity. Michaela served as informal facilitator, quieting concerns, explaining district policy, detailing new programs, and talking up the pilot run of the new Cultural Issues course as evidence that the district had

long been proactive about multicultural education. Both Michaela and the principal brushed aside suggestions that the school was "in need" of further diversity-awareness efforts. It isn't a matter of "need," they said again and again, but of being even more cutting-edge, of making their school stronger than ever. "We all know what happened last year," Michaela remarked in an MAC meeting. "But we've risen to the challenge, and become an even greater school."

The state's equity coordinator, an African American with a strong commitment to diversity-awareness education, applauded Riverdale High's response to its recent troubles. "The administration was determined that they would not stand idly by and just throw up their hands and shrug their shoulders," he recalled. "They went to work. I think in terms of what they have done as a district, they've probably done just about as well as any in terms of getting the things on paper that need to be there to foster multicultural education." He added, however, that such efforts could go only so far:

> I'm more concerned about the climate in Riverdale proper, not the school district. The school district has some good leadership, it has done a number of things to try to minimize bias, hate speech; they've tried to promote multicultural education, human understanding and those kinds of things. The problem is I'm not so sure that the rest of the community is where the school district is. And as I've said to them, you know, the school has done its part in terms of trying to turn things around. But what about the churches in Riverdale? What about the police department? What about local businesses and the Chamber of Commerce? What about the real estate association? How can these elements of the community do something about changing the attitudinal barriers that exist for people from diverse backgrounds to live there and prosper in Riverdale? Kids come to school with those biases; they don't learn them at school, for the most part. So the community is largely responsible for that. Schools are just reflections of communities.

The school was reaching out to the community through efforts like its new Multicultural Advisory Council, undertakings marked by a degree of mutual wariness. A senior citizen on the Multicultural/Non-Sexist Committee could inevitably be counted on to say something so "extremely bigoted" that Michaela felt she had "no choice but to respond," choosing her words with deliberate care. Fundamentalist Christians were well represented on both the MCNS and the new MAC—just to make sure, Michaela remarked dryly, that these

committees "don't go too left wing and violate Christian values." When Michaela called off Christmas celebrations across the district, a conservative religious leader advised her that she was in "violation of the law of God, undermining key moral principles." "Ah," she mused privately, "I thought more was involved than a few elves." But especially given the school's recent bout with adverse publicity, Michaela was well aware that such accusations could not be flicked aside with off-handed humor. Michaela's long-standing interest in multicultural education was tempered by a realistic sense of Riverdale's politics, and of the dispiriting exhaustion that comes with heated public controversy. Like her principal, she was committed but cautious, smoothing surfaces even as she sought to forge ahead.

The Advent of Cultural Issues

A member of the Cultural Issues team described Michaela as "the unifying factor" in the school's new array of diversity-awareness efforts, a bridge linking the course to "all these different facets that are going on in the school community." Although the course was mentioned frequently at various public forums, Michaela was quick to point out that it pre-dated last year's negative publicity, and had been shaped by several disparate impulses—that it was informed by vision, not defensive strategy.

Eager to transform what he regarded as a tradition-bound curriculum, the high school's principal had two years earlier arranged for a group of faculty to attend an integrated curriculum conference (Beane, 1997), charging them with developing a model course that would cut across traditional fields of study. He left the theme and content up to them, asking only that they agree to pilot the course and talk it up among the faculty. Michaela quickly emerged as a leader in this effort, inviting several colleagues with backgrounds in art, social studies, and English to join her in developing and piloting the new curriculum. A seasoned world traveler, Michaela had first imagined a course focusing on ethnic conflict, but quickly decided that the notion of a cultural "issue" would be "even more basic." She characterized a "cultural issue" as what one needs to wonder about and know in encountering a culture different from one's own, the kinds of concerns that might get a naive visitor into trouble. Michaela framed the controlling question in what she regarded as foundational terms: "What are the issues that impact people's relationships with each other? Period." The trimester-long course was developed and piloted soon after the conference, with team-taught units on Africa, India, Turkey, Japan, and the United States. The teachers spoke of the course as hard work but a solid success, and their principal said often that it was well deserving of a prestigious state award.

Before the course could be offered again, the high school found itself in the midst of television reporters inquiring about efforts to counter neo-Nazism on campus, and the Cultural Issues pilot was sometimes mentioned as a shining example of multicultural education efforts already in place. Meanwhile, Michaela underscored privately that the course had not been an attempt to fix anything, but simply an opportunity to try out new curricular approaches and work closely with colleagues. As she prepared to offer the course again—this time with Sam Hughes and Patti Wallace, Euro-American colleagues in social studies and art, respectively—Michaela again emphasized that the course should not be seen as a response to supposed bigotry. "I would be exaggerating to say there's a need [for such a course]" Michaela explained; "I just thought it was an opportunity for us to do something fun." Variously described as the "team idea generator," an "enzyme," and the "visionary," Michaela also served as the primary spokesperson for the group, both informally and at more public school events. Sam and Patti had both served on the Cultural Issues pilot team and weathered the crises of the year before, watching media interest dwindle as school officials described their successful interventions. All tended to downplay overt racism at the school, suggesting that ethnocentrism born of a relative lack of exposure to other cultures was the more prevalent syndrome. Seconding Michaela's belief that the school had become "greater than ever" in the face of adversity, Patti described the response to last year's incident as "a negative turned into a positive."

The course focused primarily on understanding cultural difference in distant lands, and the teachers were sometimes amazed that kids with little tolerance here in Riverdale did just fine with cultures on the other side of the globe. "The same kid who would have difficulty talking to a Methodist has no trouble relating to a Shinto who's worshipping a fox," Michaela said with a laugh. Their job here was to provide an "academically sound" experience, she added, to raise awareness rather than change minds. This insistence on emphasizing awareness over fundamentally changed beliefs "is why we stay out of trouble," she added. This was part of the reason they had decided early on to switch their initial focus from "ethnic conflict," she explained; "we didn't like the negative connotations of the title," Patti added. In Sam's ideal vision of the course, students would find themselves "opening up," to new situations, "not pushing away from it [but] feeling they can learn from it." Openness here meant acceptance of difference, not analysis of ethnic conflict or inequities. "The issue of equity and all of that is not really part of our course, and we have to constantly remember that," Michaela emphasized. During last year's controversy, a visiting multicultural educator had challenged the team on this count, wondering if the course was giving students "tools to

go forth and be better people, and deal better with race relations and things like that." Their actual goal, Michaela explained, was rather different:

> Our goal is to give you the tools to encounter other cultures and know what the issues are. We are not going the other step and saying, with that information here are the choices we want you to make. [Our] job is to make you aware so you make decisions based on knowledge, so if you choose to be offensive you knew it before you made the decision.

Exchange students and domestic ethnic minorities were encouraged to enroll in the course, resulting in a more diverse mix than one typically found in this school or community. Although the new section of the course was overwhelmingly white, among the 20 students were exchange students from Japan and Germany, the young man who had recently immigrated from India, a Native American boy (who dropped out of school during the period of data collection), and an African American girl (whose attendance became increasingly erratic). Michaela and Sam both worked regularly with students deemed high achievers, and they had recruited a number of their "talented and gifted" ("TAG") kids; with the exception of the boy from India, all were upper-middle class Euro-Americans. Roughly as many were Euro-American students deemed "average" or even "at risk," kids who sat together in a block of desks facing a contingent of the school's star pupils. Of the TAG students, only the young man from India occasionally sat on the "average" side of the room, commenting privately that he was glad for the contact with students he may not otherwise get to know.

While the teachers and their principal continued to speak of the course as a resounding success, it was often hard to know precisely how it was effective, for whom, or why. Several of the Euro-American students remarked that the course had sparked a desire for world travel, and when the school newspaper ran several stories about student trips to Europe, Michaela nodded approvingly, commenting "that's just what I'm trying to do here." An African American girl who had recently moved to Riverdale meanwhile spoke privately of her alienation from the course specifically and the school generally ("if I had a choice," she said, "I wouldn't be here"). Meanwhile, the class appeared to have little effect on the school's curriculum as a whole, eliciting a mixture of irritation and suspicion from a number of veteran teachers. "There's a certain amount of resentment," observed a teacher long active in efforts to promote curricular innovation. "I would say people don't see it as a valuable experience. We have very tradi-

tional teachers, very traditional methods, and they're not really willing to change, most of them." In any case, she added, what the team was doing or why "was never made very clear—or if it was, people weren't listening." Watching from afar, other faculty tended to dismiss the course as "cooking and crafts," oblivious to the deeper messages the team was trying to convey.

The curriculum focused on food, clothing, customs, religion, and a bit on literature. Several times over the term Sam and Michaela did prepare elaborate meals, while Patti engaged the students in international crafts such as Japanese calligraphy or African textile art. "This year there were many occasions in which it took all three of us doing things right," Michaela observed; "I think in particular of those mega-days in which we have cooking and art...I mean it's like for most people probably the last thing on earth they would ever plan, and the only reason it worked was that everybody had a piece that was crucial." Early on, students were introduced to the term "ethnocentrism," which became a kind of controlling theme—ethnocentrism as a habit of wrong-thinking one can gradually lose by learning strategies for framing useful questions and gathering information. The teachers employed the metaphor of cultural "sunglasses," suggesting that while students' native lenses would be with them always, they could gradually come to appreciate and experience other ways of seeing. Tolerance is key, they emphasized, since no lens is better than another, only different; indeed, to critique another culture here was to exhibit ethnocentric tendencies. Ethnic conflict was out, and openness was in—a determination complicated now and then by challenges that arose without warning, seeping through the most carefully laid plans.

Neutralizing "Cultural Issues"

Certainly the most striking silence in the Cultural Issues course was an abiding refusal to acknowledge or explore incidents of local bigotry and discrimination. As Michaela explained, an anti-racist agenda would have suggested an altogether different course and, we might surmise, a highly controversial one. But provocative moments loomed even here, in this benignly positive course with its global focus, its three teachers moving quickly to skirt potentially negative topics. While their caution was not without a larger logic, one wonders nonetheless about roads not taken. When touchy issues were silenced, we sensed lost opportunities for challenging and potentially useful conversations. We turn to three such silences in the course—around "cultural issues" as they relate to gender, sexual orientation, and social class.

"Multicultural/Non-Sexist": A Problematic Pairing?

The Cultural Issues course came up often at meetings of the district's Multicultural Advisory Council, a group that remained lively and provocative despite dwindling attendance (down from the prior year's high of around 30 to less than a dozen). Injecting an edge of controversy, a rabbi remarked at one meeting that what school leaders were calling "multicultural" concerns often got entangled with "murky" gender issues; looking to Michaela, he observed that her very title, with its multicultural/non-sexist pairing, could be seen as a contradiction in terms. What about the punishment of Iranian women who refuse to wear veils?, he asked. What about female circumcision in parts of Africa? What about cultures that tolerate spousal abuse? Michaela responded that the official school stand was to foster respect for people's constitutional right to a culturally different practice, not necessarily the practice itself. The rabbi shot back that no one should have a right to genital mutilation, that indeed the issues were "deeper" and "more complicated" than she was allowing. "Multicultural/non-sexist" is a fine banner, he remarked, but sometimes culture and gender equity are in direct conflict. Michaela fell uncharacteristically silent, and the group returned to its earlier focus, planning a community diversity fair featuring ethnic food and entertainment.

But in class two days later, gender equity and cultural tolerance were again placed in charged opposition. A guest speaker had stopped by, a young woman taking a brief break from her Peace Corps post in the Dominican Republic. In response to a question about gender equity, the speaker talked at length about machismo, domestic violence, and cat calls on the streets, her voice registering weary resignation. She recalled asking the young women why they didn't stay in school, why they didn't seem to care about pursuing professions. "That's hard," the speaker remarked, so many young girls dropping out, thinking they existed only to look pretty for men. After the guest speaker departed, Michaela remarked that ethnocentrism had been much in evidence in her discussion. "Gender was very important to her," she observed, "and that's very American."

A few days later, Michaela was faced yet again with the dilemma of what to say about cultural practices many Americans would consider sexist. Each summer she and her immediate family paid an extended visit to her Turkish in-laws, giving Michaela further experience with a different culture. In introducing a lecture on everyday life in Turkey, she acknowledged that she still saw her in-laws through the lens of a midwestern American, although "you start to see things with friendlier and friendlier eyes." Her perspective was a good bit friendlier, she added dryly, than that of their recent guest speaker.

The class sat in rapt attention as Michaela talked eagerly about family life in Turkey, showing slides of ordinary people going about

their daily business. Michaela explained that she had learned to become far less outspoken on her summer visits, noting in passing that most Turkish marriages are arranged, and in many families daughters-in-law are regularly beaten. This elicited audible gasps from some of the girls in the class, and a host of questions about treatment of women and marriage practices. Michaela explained that domestic abuse was common, adding that while she had tried to "buy in to what they do, this one is hard for me." In response to another question, she admitted that marriage between relatives was so pervasive that the Turkish word for mental retardation literally means "off-spring of cousins." When an amazed student asked why there wasn't an outcry against this kind of thing, Michaela talked of the Turkish conception of fate, finally throwing her hands up: "I don't know what to say," she admitted, "it's just one of those tragedies." Her students' attention never lapsed, but afterward Michaela was unsettled, feeling badly for going on about the children of first cousins and domestic violence. The hour had taken a "bizarre" turn, she observed, adding that while she didn't mind saying negative things, "this was getting outrageous." If a student had trouble with a culture that does not treat women as equals, Michaela explained on another occasion, the key would be developing an attitude of mind that suggests "this is an area that's really hard for me, and I'm thinking about *me* rather than *them*."

What About Homophobia?

Might attitudes toward sexual orientation suggest a set of "cultural issues"? Given the sketchy definition of "culture" that informed the course and ongoing debates concerning such inclusion, the question eludes simple answers. The need for attention to these attitudes was meanwhile cautiously acknowledged at Riverdale, and in some ways addressed. The two-day anti-bigotry workshops instituted the year before continued to be offered periodically, always featuring representatives of various ethnic and religious groups as well as at least one gay speaker. Parental dissatisfaction with this feature of the workshops was well known, and bubbled over when Michaela was asked to speak at a PTO meeting. Many of those present voiced concerns "about talking about homosexuality in schools," and one woman wanted to know "what homosexuality has to do with multicultural/non-sexist education." Michaela argued at length for "extending the boundaries of the kinds of diversity one is willing to accept," and reported to the team the next day that "it had gone well."

Cultural Issues students who had not previously attended the anti-bigotry workshop were required to do so as part of their work for the course. Sam explained that the workshops were "more focused on school climate than the Cultural Issues class," aimed at "alerting stu-

dents to diversity in the school." It seemed, however, that only so much climate-changing could be accomplished in two days. One student reported that after listening to a gay speaker, a young man sitting next to him remarked "I don't care, I still hate those people." Others remembered similar moments at earlier workshops, and privately expressed concerns about the enduring presence of homophobia. Another Cultural Issues student recalled a fellow participant leaving one of last year's workshops insisting "I still hate black people and I still hate homos." She worried in an interview about the continuing harassment of one of her good friends, an outspoken bisexual:

> My friend isn't real well liked at this school because she's a bisexual and she's very open about it. One of my neighbors was walking behind me after I got done talking to her earlier today, and he said, "you *like* that girl?" I said, "yes, she's my friend." And he said "I don't really like her," and I asked him why, and he said, "She's, you know, goes both ways." And I said, "well, have you ever sat down and talked to her?" He said no, and I go, "then how can you really say? She's different from you and that's why you don't like her." I was really sick of it.

When the topic of sexual orientation arose in Cultural Issues, it was always with a nod to how the anti-bigotry workshops had purportedly corrected students' homophobia. On one occasion, for instance, Michaela remarked in passing that Turkish men kiss one another in greeting, adding that she was glad the workshop training had "helped them not feel homophobic about this." Clearly the topic was not gone from Michaela's mind, and judging from these repeated reminders, she did not want it gone from students' minds, either, even if she felt compelled to cast it as a past-tense problem already solved.

Educators in conservative communities such as Riverdale tend to preempt touchy discussions concerning sexual orientation by quietly self-censoring (Casper & Schultz, 1999). While Michaela was willing to risk a little controversy when it came to the anti-bigotry workshops, she and other school leaders were considerably more cautious about course content. When someone at an MCNS committee meeting recommended a particular multicultural curriculum, a momentary hush fell over the group. Michaela tersely explained that a nearby district had recently adopted the entire package, including a sexual orientation component, and that a tsunami of controversy had ensued. "No one in Riverdale is talking about doing that now," she added firmly. Around this same time, Riverdale High's principal gingerly raised the issue of sexual orientation at a Multicultural Advisory Coun-

cil meeting. As reported in the meeting's minutes, the conversation was marked by reserve:

> [The principal] posed the question, "How does a school district interact with the community in such a way to avoid the controversy generated by the issues of homosexuality?" He did not pose the question because [the high school] is considering infusion of such issues; [it] is not considering such infusion. He simply wanted to hear the Council's opinions about how to process such potentially controversial topics.

In the "spirited" discussion that ensued, Council members spoke of the need for students to understand that "demeaning language and physical violence are outside the range of acceptable behavior"—but also for the district to "recognize the political realities of such controversial issues," and to "beware words which wave red flags, i.e. 'infusion.'"

The inclusion of sexual orientation in "multicultural" curricula is rife with controversy for a number of reasons we find quite valid. Some maintain that where such curricula try to do too much, little may in fact be accomplished (Derman-Sparks, 1998); and without careful and specific training for teachers, discussions of sexual orientation can go dangerously awry. Riverdale was clearly in need of broadly based anti-bias education—efforts best integrated throughout the school's activities and curricula, the multiple guises of bias and hate addressed at every available opportunity. But while keeping in mind the pitfalls of asking too much of a single course, we wonder why discussion of international religion, food, or marriage qualified as "cultural" here, while attitudes toward sexual orientation did not.

"How do we understand heterosexism?" asks Cornel West; "Why is it so deeply seated within our various cultures and civilizations? We could talk primarily about America, but we can talk globally as well" (1999/1995, p. 290). Materials intended for high-school age students have explored international attitudes toward sexual orientation in an accessible but well-researched manner (Jennings, 1994); meanwhile, interested teachers can now sample a growing array of scholarly works addressing gay rights from a global perspective (Adam et al., 1999; Stychin, 1998). Conceivably, the course might have introduced a topic of local concern from the safety of distance by considering how other parts of the world regard issues of sexual orientation. Such discussion might lead eventually to exploration of attitudes closer to home, and of how these concerns map onto the larger tendency "to associate persons who are different with degradation" (West, 1999/1995, p. 290).

Social Class: Difference—or Differential Opportunity?

Multicultural education has been critiqued for its generally inadequate attention to issues of social class (Sleeter, 1995)—concerns complexly interwoven with questions of power, race, and gender (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Brantlinger, 1993; Knapp & Woolverton, 1995). While the Cultural Issues course avoided the relationship between cultural identity and differences in socio-economic status, such relationships were everywhere apparent in this classroom and community—providing potential avenues for looking at how "cultural issues" were connected to patterns of privileging and de-privileging both internationally and locally.

Census data suggested scant poverty in Riverdale; in keeping with the town's predominately Euro-American demographics, most low-income households were white, while most people of color were middle class (although proportionately speaking, more people of color were poor than whites). These patterns played out rather differently in a neighboring urban district, where far greater numbers of students came from low-income homes, and race and social class were more closely linked. In its initial pilot run, course activities had included visits to a nearby high school that was predominately low-income and African American, but no such contact occurred this time. While students were required to attend ethnic events and talk with people of different backgrounds, they were not specifically encouraged to seek out less-privileged neighbors, whether in adjoining communities or within Riverdale's 11 square miles. There was little acknowledgment here of Riverdale's elite socioeconomic status, nor was there discussion of the logic by which some groups of people come to be more affluent than others. The foundations of social class are arguably both cultural and economic (Apple, 1978), but this was not among the "cultural issues" the course addressed.

Critical theorists have argued that schools reinforce traditional patterns of privilege, perpetuating a system of haves and have-nots through practices such as tracking that ensure differential patterns of achievement (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Knapp & Woolverton, 1995; Oakes et al., 1997). Cultural Issues, one of the school's more integrated courses, was comprised of two sides, both literally and figuratively—its cluster of affluent "talented and gifted" students gazing across a central aisle at a more ethnically and socioeconomically diverse group of "average" or "at risk" students. The teachers quickly recognized that this great divide was reflected in course grades as well—the expected cluster of As, but far more Ds and Fs than they would have liked, mostly for students whose participation was spotty. Michaela and Sam, who had long worked with the school's "gifted" students, noted privately that Patti was unaccustomed to teaching such bright kids and "probably found them intimidating." The achievements and

opportunities these students enjoyed were highlighted with pride, while the lower grades and uneven participation of the other students were described disparagingly, even when their only Native American student dropped out of school, and their only African American student's attendance became decidedly sporadic. The teachers embraced a meritocratic view of student success, a firm belief that hard work and innate intelligence would be rewarded. The globally well-documented link between academic achievement and socioeconomic status might have been usefully discussed here, but was not (Hurn, 1993; Knapp & Woolverton, 1995: Natriello et al., 1990).

As students gave their final reports on the last day of class, many of the TAG students spoke of their desire to continue foreign language study and to travel abroad—not, ostensibly, to spend time in nearby low-income communities. In the collages they displayed as they spoke, some had pasted exotic photos of distant lands, interspersed with foreign-seeming images gathered from magazines. A Japanese musician nestled between a monkey and a shark, BB King beside Gandhi. A "gifted" boy included a photo of a pregnant African woman dying of AIDS, remarking that "AIDS has become a cultural issue." There was no invitation to unpack the causes of the spread of AIDS, to explore the role of differential education and health care, how and why poor Africans were dying in such large numbers; there was no turning to AIDS statistics in the United States or in their own vicinity, no attempt to identify segments of the population most likely to die of the disease, or why. These students had developed a taste for world travel rather than social action, for acceptance rather than critique, for looking afar rather than examining inequities close to home. Absent a framework for exploring the more challenging aspects of diversity, they celebrated their waning ethnocentrism and left the course with a sense that "cultural issues" could be managed at the level of individual attitudes and interpersonal relationships.

"Cultural Issues" and the Culture of School

Although public scrutiny of Riverdale High School revealed an urgent need for multicultural education, teachers did not implement certain founding principles of the multicultural education movement, with its emphasis on critiquing inequities and sharing power (e.g. Banks, 1995, 1996, 1997; Gay, 1983; McIntyre, 1997; Sleeter, 1995, 1999). Teachers here did not frame the course to allow analysis of how difference often means economic inequality, leading historically to inter-ethnic tensions and violence. Students did not go into their community or school to encounter and resist sources or racism and discrimination. While the course was not ostensibly framed as a response to recent instances of bigotry in the school and community, one could

easily imagine how discussion of these incidents might have provided an opportunity to examine politically charged issues of cultural difference in the students' own worlds. But this was superseded by the very design of the course—and if the recent hate-literature episode came up periodically, the events of the prior year were treated as past-tense, as an isolated crisis that had left the school "better than ever." In their effort to produce a course school officials would deem successful, the teachers directed their gaze afar—where examination of "cultural issues" could become preparation for world travel, not uncomfortable study of how students' own privilege might come at the expense of less-privileged others.

Raymond Williams has pointed out that "culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language" (1983/1976, p. 87). Indeed, it was often difficult to know what rightfully constituted a "cultural issue" here, since the framing concept was at best vaguely defined and fraught with complexity. While "culture" was often depicted as something possessed by people far away, the course did involve a final movement back to the U.S. and an invitation to examine one's own cultural frame of reference. That the U.S. is a multicultural nation profoundly challenged by ethnic conflict was left unacknowledged; that such conflicts might be present in the students' own community was a possibility steadfastly avoided. Given a more politicized bent, the course's primarily global focus might have led effectively into an analysis of issues closer to home, but only through conscious intent and design (Ukpokodu, 1999), undergirded by the kinds of institutional and community support that encourage teachers to challenge and take risks.

Critics from within the field argue that if multicultural education is to serve as useful preparation for life in a diverse democracy, it must more consistently foreground the relation between cultural difference and patterns of privilege and oppression (Sleeter, 1995, 1999; McIntyre, 1997; Olneck, 1990). Where multicultural education is depoliticized, personal relationships and individual understandings tend to be emphasized over issues of power and inequity (Olneck, 1990; Sleeter, 1994). Whiteness—with its requisite implications of privileging and de-privileging—was certainly part of what these teachers and students might have explored more fully, a project that remains as difficult as it is imperative (e.g., Heath, 1995; McIntyre, 1997; Sleeter, 1994). We need to understand better the issues and complexities that arise where white teachers attempt to engage students in discussions of race—this even as scholars across a range of disciplines take up the project of "whiteness studies" (Fine et al., 1997, Hill, 1997; Ignatiev & Garvey, 1996; Kincheloe et al., 1998), and the challenge of developing white identities that incorporate awareness of oppression and an anti-racist commitment (Bowser & Hunt, 1996; Helms, 1990, 1992; Kivel,

1996; Lawrence & Tatum, 1997; Tatum, 1994). Shaped by the particularities of community and school tradition, real students, teachers, and administrators often present challenges that quietly counter the idealism of large-scale reform movements.

Students living in upper-middle class, predominantly Euro-American communities often grow up relatively unaware that there is anything unusual in their situations. For the "gifted" students in Cultural Issues, maintaining an economic and educational edge seemed a normal course of affairs. King (1991) calls this attitude "dysconscious" racism, defined as "an uncritical habit of mind . . .that justifies inequality and exploitation by accepting the existing order of things as given." For King, "uncritical ways of thinking about racial inequity accept certain culturally sanctioned assumptions, myths, and beliefs that justify the social and economic advantages white people have as a result of subordinating diverse others" (p. 135). While teacher collaboration is commonly cited as a means of rendering visible pedagogic blind spots, it can as well preserve silences of the kind we saw in Cultural Issues (Lipman, 1997)—as Sam, Patti, and Michaela bolstered one another's sense that their course was making a deep, lasting, and enlightening impression. To be sure, past and present students spoke of the course's positive effects—guiding some toward college majors in cultural anthropology, others to universities in diverse communities far from Riverdale, and many to a determination to see other parts of the world. But if the course altered individual paths, it did not appear to move students to work toward change in their school or community, or to see the need for such change.

The temptation to water down multicultural education—to embrace the benign rhetoric of what Stanley Fish (1998) has called "boutique multiculturalism"—is a much-observed phenomenon. School districts sometimes assume that multicultural education programs will automatically solve problems of school racism (Nieto, 1996), even where white teachers simply go through the motions, talking about difference in the abstract while avoiding critique of their own positions of privilege (McIntyre, 1997). White educators "tend not to associate multicultural education with social movements and power sharing," writes Christine Sleeter (1999, pp. 261-2), but, rather, to "appropriate its language and some of its practices in order to 'solve' racial issues without dismantling white dominance." Meanwhile, exploring whiteness holds its own dangers—as Kincheloe and Steinberg (1998) put it, of lapsing into "bourgeois self-indulgence," becoming a "psychologized attempt to 'feel good' about the angst of privilege" while losing sight of the challenges of anti-racist education and action (p. 26).

This was a course where touchy issues where silenced, whether white privilege and the genesis of bigotry, or more subtle concerns

that floated now and then through the rhetoric of celebration and tolerance. These silences proceeded by their own sturdy logic, and the will to break them was not readily available. Fresh efforts arguably need time to come into their own, and this was admittedly a young curriculum, still evolving as this school struggled back from embarrassment and controversy. It should be seen as little wonder that the course was marked by a pervasive search for safe ground, a consistent quieting of matters that might provoke further waves of complaint. Critiques of such efforts often regard the change process with a kind of tunnel vision: didn't teachers launder politics out of their curriculum, after all, stepping back when they could have plunged headlong into touchy discussions? It is tempting, too, to criticize the ways that this principal and staff were drawn to the typical school-reform rhetoric, with its lofty hopes, quick fixes, and inflated claims. Insisting that the school had been reborn as a still-better version of itself, they often seemed to diminish the unhappiness of students of color here, and all that their affluent students weren't learning about the world beyond their insular community.

While we, too, wish that the course had taken up local inequities, moving beyond silences to discussion of the more charged aspects of diversity, we think it important to acknowledge all that militated against such an approach. Designing and teaching a course such as Cultural Issues is a formidable feat, leaving little energy for fielding a firestorm of parental and administrative objections. A more political approach would have required community and administrative support, and there was little evidence that such openness truly existed. District administrators, though eager to respond to overtly racist incidents, were even more eager to talk up the district's stellar academic track record, to preserve the elite reputation this Euro-American district had so long enjoyed. The community was by all accounts strongly conservative, and while a few activists argued the need for a more transformative version of multicultural education, theirs did not appear to be a widespread hunger. Given the power of the traditions that shaped this place, a more politically charged approach would be no small challenge, the job of preparing the ground far more ambitious than designing and teaching a particular course. In this school bent on returning to normalcy, how to convince a critical mass that the normalcy they sought was perhaps not altogether desirable? How to make room for innovation in ways that would not incite overwhelming controversy? Veterans all, these teachers knew that conservative, affluent parents held great power here, their authority a tacit presence throughout the process of planning and implementing this new curriculum (Kohn, 1998).

The tendency to blame teachers has a long tradition in educational research. While we are troubled by the silences in this course on

Cultural Issues, we regard such narrow blame-placing as inadequately conceived and ultimately unhelpful. The obstacles to implementing multicultural education rest not only in teachers' attitudes and understandings, but in schools and communities that often strongly resist efforts at fundamental change. Michaela, with her long-standing interest in multicultural education and abundant training in guiding the change process, came to the Cultural Issues course determined to take incremental steps, consciously deciding to step back from a more politicized, anti-racist approach. We may find this disappointing, but we must also comprehend its logic. The story of Cultural Issues suggests the need to cast our nets more broadly in advocating the implementation of such curricula and understanding the real-life obstacles teachers so often face. Despite all that has been written about the difficulties of the change process (Evans, 1996; Fullan, 1991/1982, 1993; Sarason, 1971/1996), district administrators and educational reformers alike cling to the notions that substantive change can happen quickly, and that where it falls short of our expectations, teachers rather than whole systems are rightful targets of blame.

As our exploration of this course in "Cultural Issues" suggests, the forces that block candid discussion are far from trivial, often deeply ingrained in students' and teachers' own psyches, as well as in the institutions and communities where teaching and learning take place. Clearly, scholars need to complicate their prescriptions for multicultural education by conducting research on the particularities of community, school, administrative leadership, and the development and implementation of new curricula. Informed discussions of productive multicultural education must acknowledge and recognize obstacles to change (some obvious, many more subtle) that frustrate teachers' and students' attention to difference, to relationships across traditional boundaries of difference, and to the challenge of transforming structures of inequality.[1]

Note

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Reading Authorship Into Texts

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Abstract

Textbooks are a central feature of social studies classrooms. Within these books are many kinds of "texts," such as paragraphs and chapters, titles and sub-headings, pictures and charts, captions and labels, end of chapter questions, classification schemes, and so on. Students can be taught various ways to "read" this complex montage of texts, including readings that make authorship more visible and open to critical question. This article provides eight concepts borrowed from selected cultural studies literature, together with illustrative sets of questions, for interpreting authorship of texts: representation, the gaze, voice, intertextuality, absence, authority, mediation, and reflexivity. Selected examples are taken from social studies textbooks used in the Canadian province of British Columbia.

Textbooks are the pervasive and *de facto* curricula that define the scope, boundaries, and sequencing for subject matter. Not surprisingly, their superficial coverage of large amounts of compressed content is sometimes blamed for students' misconceptions, discouragement, and disinterest—what Perkins (1992) calls "fragile knowledge." My purpose is not to criticize the quality of textbooks, but to suggest possibilities for engaging students in more thoughtful readings of those books already used in classrooms. The key is the *reading*.

There is more to reading than initially meets the eye. Young people learn from experience that books are sources of uncontested information, repositories of answers to be mined under the guidance of end-of-chapter questions or worksheets. In what Apple refers to as a "dominant reading of a text, one accepts the messages at face value" (1993: 61), on the assumption that it speaks an intrinsic and singular meaning authoritatively and straightforwardly to the careful listener, and that the primary purpose of reading is to receive this truth by locating the right information, transmitting it into one's notebook, and then giving the 'facts' back on demand (on the test or assigned task) with minimal distortion. Reading takes on a different character, though, if one accepts the premise that "the meaning of a text is not necessarily intrinsic to it.... there is not 'one text,' but many. Any text is open to

multiple readings" (1993: 60) as various purposes and questions are brought to the task. Rather than passively receiving the 'given' interpretation, readers may question, dispute, or even reject what they read, thereby repositioning themselves as agents in relation to the text. In short, reading can be an active process with many possibilities. This essay suggests that, if given appropriate tools, students can question and critique the texts around which classroom practices are organized.

Shifting the focus from the text to the reading is not new. Cultural studies has for decades encouraged multiple approaches to reading within the humanities and social sciences[1] and has recently informed social education (e.g., Segall, 1999b). This literature reminds us that texts are "authored" and "interpreted," and that part of engaging them in classrooms is to make the practices of authorship and reading more visible and open to critical question. "Authorship" rather than "author" is used here because the former does not focus narrowly on de-contextualized individuals apart from the broader social/political/economic practices that are also a part of authorship. Texts are produced out of, and are positioned within, complex sets of relationships and processes (e.g., of publishing, marketing, consuming, reading, etc.) in particular times and places (Hall, 1993), and are not, therefore, to be read as "fully self-contained and independent entities, knowable apart from their own time and the time of their recovery" (Nelson et al., 1992: 14). But problematizing authorship and interpretation requires sets of concepts that can be infused into classroom discussions. My purpose is to suggest some concepts to help students make the processes of authorship more visible.

This article focuses on eight overlapping concepts borrowed from cultural studies—representation, the gaze, voice, absence, intertextuality, authority, mediation, and reflexivity—for illustrating how authorship can be problematized. Although many other concepts could also have been identified here,[2] the purpose is not to argue for a comprehensive set of concepts (there can be no such list), but to claim that student learning and interest may be enhanced by occasionally turning the focus of reading back on the practices of authorship and reading.

Each of the following sections briefly introduces a concept, suggests a set of general questions that apply the concept, and provides an example from social studies textbooks used in the Canadian province of British Columbia. Although the eight sections overlap each other rather than being distinct, each one highlights particular aspects of a text's authorship. The movement of the illustrative questions starts with the *text* ("What is it depicting?") and moves to inferences about *authorship* ("What does this depiction imply about the social practices and relations that produced this text, and about the commitments, perspectives, and locations of those involved in this production?") and

its *social context* ("What does the depiction suggest about broader social values and assumptions in that time and place?"); that is, what may it tell about the *observed*, the *observer*, and the *social conditions* that made this text acceptable for its producers and audiences. My point here is not to undermine students' confidence in texts, but to encourage multiple readings and more thoughtfulness when interpreting the world through texts.

Given the title and subject matter of this article, I need to situate myself in relation to social education and cultural studies. I am a former social studies and English teacher (grades 7-12) whose current work with pre-service and in-service teachers focuses in part on the various ways in which classroom practices (texts) can be examined (read). If (as I believe) one of the major purposes of social education is to help students acquire rich conceptual tools for thoughtfully reading their cultural world and acting within it, then selected lenses borrowed from the broad field of cultural studies should be taken seriously by social educators. Although cultural studies comprise a diverse literature across a number of disciplines and intellectual traditions, one of its foci is on critiquing the construction, interpretation, communication, mediation, politics, and uses of "texts," where "texts" broadly include social practices and products of various kinds (from art to architecture, wrestling to disciplinary boundaries). Such writers question how the practices, products, and effects of textual constructions privilege taken-for-granted assumptions about authorship, knowledge, and power, and their orientation is towards more local, multivocal, open-ended, and reflexive interpretations of texts. I am not suggesting that social education be turned into cultural studies; rather, selected ideas have merit for helping students read and critique the many "texts" of their social world. Within my work in social education, the relevant intellectual stances come primarily, but not exclusively, from cultural theorists within the broad Birmingham tradition (Hall 1992)—such as Stuart Hall, Lawrence Grossberg, Henry Giroux, and others—whose roots are more in the sociology of knowledge or critical theory than the French poststructuralists. Hall's (1997) work on the cultural practices of representation, for instance, is so applicable for interpreting the characterizations of peoples, places, events and issues within social studies textbooks and materials.

Representation: Partial Descriptions

> It is participants in a culture who give meaning to people, objects and events. Things 'in themselves' rarely if ever have any one, single, fixed and unchanging meaning.... In part, we give things meaning by how we represent them—the words we use about them, the stories we tell

about them, the images of them we produce, the emotions we associate with them, the ways we classify and conceptualize them, the values we place on them. (Hall, 1997, p. 3).

Textbooks comprise a complex system of representation for producing meanings about peoples, places, events, issues, and objects, conveyed through the selection and organization of multiple *texts* (paragraphs, chapters; chapter titles, sub-headings; pictures, diagrams, charts, cartoons; captions, labels, sidebars; end of chapter questions, classification schemes, etc.). These various mini-texts are interpreted through classroom discussions, worksheets, homework assignments, and examinations. Rarely, though, are students asked to consider how these texts "re-present rather than present reality; [how] they provide packaged images of the world rather than the world itself" (Segall, 1997: 238).

Focusing on the representational practices used by authors to produce and convey meanings can enhance reading. Creating a text involves complex choices about what ideas and perspectives to include and exclude, what and whose stories to tell, and how to put them all together to achieve a relatively smooth and believable presentation. "Every choice—to show this rather than that, to show this in relation to that, to say this about that—is a choice about how to represent 'other cultures' [events, issues, places, objects]; and each choice has consequences both for *what* meanings are produced and for *how* meaning is produced " (Hall, 1997: 8). Inevitably every choice both opens and closes possibilities for understanding; certain meanings are encouraged and others are foreclosed. But as long as these selective judgments and emphases remain unrecognized, students read texts as non-problematic 'tellings' of the way things are or happened, not realizing that representations are 'made' and not 'given,' particular as opposed to universal, perspectivable rather than a gods-eye-view, partial instead of complete. An account is then accepted as *the* story rather than one of many possibilities produced in particular times and places.

Representations are also "partial" in another sense: they may be favorably inclined to some social interests and agendas rather than others because choices involve pre-judgments (prejudices)—prior commitments, assumptions, preferences—that are themselves socially located. Denzin and Lincoln remind us that any observation "is always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race and ethnicity. There are ... only observations [representations] socially situated in the worlds of the observer and the observed" (1994: 12). This gives rise to questions of what/whose interests may be served, neglected, or even negated through a text's representation.

This partialness (in the sense of both incompleteness and bias) suggests that it is not sufficient to read texts as sources of information without also asking what these accounts reveal about the practices of authorship. Text and authorship are inseparable. When writers and artists summarize huge swaths of history, draw generalizations and conclusions, and communicate what they think is important, this is not the output of some mechanical process but of deliberation based upon assumptions, choices, judgments, and world view, and situated in a time and place. Representations are 'made' in social locations, and can be read in ways that allow the contexts and processes of authoring to peek through. A travel account, for example, describes much more than a 'place'; it also implicates the traveler's interests, curiosities, priorities, sensibilities, fears, longings, and stereotypes, which in turn tell us about the writer's cultural and political milieu, and his or her assumptions regarding the expectations of audiences. In an imagined discussion with Marco Polo, the Khublai Khan insightfully suggested:

> "There is still one of which you never speak."
> Marco Polo bowed his head.
> "Venice," the Khan said.
> Marco smiled, "What else do you believe I have been talking to you about?"
> The emperor did not turn a hair. "And yet I have never heard you mention that name."
> And Polo said: "Every time I describe a city I am saying something about Venice." (Spence in Judd, 1998, p. D18).

Travelers speak from autobiographically informed locations, their own experienced Venice. As a further example, the representations produced through museum displays rest on historically and culturally situated assumptions, values, motivations, and institutional practices; curators, Lidchi (1997) comments,

> do not simply issue objective descriptions or form logical assemblages; they generate representations and attribute value and meaning in line with certain perspectives and classificatory schemas which are historically specific.... the meaning of objects is neither natural nor fixed, it is culturally constructed and changes from one historical context to another. (pp. 160, 168)

Similarly, the practices that result in research-based knowledge in the social sciences are "always situated in a context. The products of research are human understandings that are specific to a particular time,

place, set of operations, display of results, and, ultimately, view of the world. Knowledge does not exist in a vacuum" (Locke, Silverman, & Spirduso, 1998, p. 87). At times, therefore, it may be helpful to read *what* is said as influenced from *where* and *how* it was produced.

Representations are selective, rest on implied values and unstated preconceptions, are produced from within particular social experiences, and cannot claim universality. This is why students need to read authorship. The following sequence of questions, although illustrative only, moves students from reading the *content* of a text (#1) to inferences about the practices of *authorship* (#2) and their broader social *contexts* (#3):

1. What is the text purporting to depict? What do you think the author/artist wanted readers to understand, value, or celebrate through this depiction?

2. What might this account tell us about the social commitments (values, assumptions, interests) and locations (social class, role status, group memberships) underlying this authorship? In what ways might these factors have played into the text?

3. In what ways might this text have served a set of broader social goals, issues, or interests? Is there any evidence to suggest whose views are advanced, experiences are celebrated, benefits are legitimized, or ways of life are favored? What may this imply about the social attitudes and prevailing conditions that made this work acceptable (or contested) in that time and place? That is, in what sense might this representation be partial (incomplete or biased)?

In a grade eight textbook, a chapter on the Song period of Chinese history includes a painting of a street and market scene busy with people engaged in their various daily endeavors. The caption reads: "This famous painting is called *Spring Festival Along the River*. This picture, by the twelfth-century artist Zhang Zeduan, shows everyday life in amazing detail. How many activities can you identify in the scene? Based on this picture, what do you think Song society was like?" (Cranny, 1998b: 410). Although this caption encourages a closer inferential reading, it accepts rather than challenges representation, by treating the painting as if it were a snapshot of 'the facts' or a privileged window into that society and historical period. But representations and language do not mirror reality so much as shape meanings through the assumed categories; the painter's choices of what to include and

exclude, and what to emphasize and de-emphasize, also speak deeply to the process and context of authorship. If reading is to be more than instrumental, then it also ought to inquire into the assumptions and values that give a text its point of view, selectivity, and social location.

The following seven overlapping concepts speak to more specific aspects of, and practices within, this first broad concept of representation.

The Gaze: Positioning the Reader

> Although his British forces were victorious, General James Wolfe was mortally wounded on the Plains of Abraham. Study this illustration [The Death of General Wolfe]. Was the artist sympathetic to the British, or not? Explain your answer (Bowers & Garrod, 1987: 4; grade 10).

A more specific reading strategy is to make visible the meaning and effects of the "gaze" implicit within a representation. This metaphor refers to the implied attitude, value stance, or power relationship towards the people, place or event depicted. Post-colonial critics, for example, have analyzed the "colonial gaze" towards colonized subjects evident within the literature, film, mass media, or political practices of a dominant culture, thereby making explicit the assumptions and stereotypes that underpin and naturalize imperialist power and projects (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 1995; Said, 1979; Singh, 1995; Willinsky, 1998).

Questions can be raised about the effects of the attitudes evidenced within the narratives, visuals, captions, or end-of-chapter questions. The point is not to be cynical about authorship, but more importantly, to recognize and make the implied attitude explicit and open to scrutiny, and where appropriate, to discuss the consequences of assuming a particular gaze. One way to read a visual and verbal representation is to describe the attitudes that it conveys about its subject:

1. What gaze is implicit within this text (e.g., photo, painting, paragraph)? For example, is the implied attitude, value stance, or power relationship:

Eurocentric?	stereotypical?	(un)sympathetic?
patriarchal?	paternalistic?	(dis)approving?
ethnocentric?	exploitive?	romanticized?
provincial?	voyeuristic?	(non)supportive?
sexist?	arrogant?	(dis)respectful?
classist?	demeaning?	(non)empathetic?
nationalistic?	simplistic?	an objectification?

2. What elements of this text provide evidence for this gaze?

3. What might these inferences tell us about the author's assumptions, values, commitments, stereotypes or social locations through which this text was produced?

4. What are the effects of this gaze upon the reading?

5. What alternative gazes could be brought? In what specific ways would this text have to be changed to suggest these alternatives?[3]

Some textbooks, when presenting a visual illustration that contains an obvious gaze, do raise the first question in the visual's caption. But this does little more than caution the reader when leaders are glorified, events are romanticized, actions are cast as heroic, and places are mythologized. Here is an example from a grade ten textbook of drawing attention to an implied gaze: "This illustration of "The Boston Massacre" was drawn by Paul Revere, the American revolutionary, from reports of the incident. How did Revere portray the British in the picture?" (Bowers & Garrod, 1987: 10).[4] The following caption, however, goes somewhat further by shifting from the first question to the second, thereby reading the gaze more thoughtfully: "This engraving depicts the expulsion of the Jewish people from Spain. Can you determine how the artist viewed this event? *What elements* of the engraving guided your answer?" (Cranny, 1998b: 321; emphasis added; grade eight).[5] Use of the third question moves the reader to the practices through which the text was produced: "This painting of the Palace at Versailles, by Pierre Patel, is so realistic that it resembles a photograph. *Why* might the painter have *simulated an aerial view* of the palace and its surroundings?" (Cranny, 1998a: 62; emphasis added; grade nine). Although readers are here alerted to the artists' gazes, these are not explored further in terms of the power relations inherent in these attitudes or what may be implied about the artists themselves, such as their social locations and ideological commitments.

Voice: Who Speaks, and About/For/With/To/As Whom?

> ...students [should] engage in examining what underlies a text—the subtext—and consider who has the power to name the world: Who gets to tell the stories (or histories) of our times? Which stories are chosen over others? How are those stories told? Who benefits from the telling of such stories? Who does not? (Segall, 1997, p. 238).

The metaphor of voice is pertinent because much of social education's content speaks about/for/with/as/to other people; it reminds us that a text is always a speaking from somewhere, and that questions can be raised about who it is that speaks, about what, how, under what conditions, and with what effects (Alcoff, 1991).

Although textbooks usually carry one overwhelming voice, they may soften this dominance and appear less univocal by including selected dissonant interpretations. Such practices invoke a sense of openness to other perspectives through displaying, for example, a range of poems, photos, paintings, excerpts from letters and speeches, interviews, and eyewitness accounts; this polyvocality has the effect of acknowledging the possibility for many legitimate interpretations. A relevant focus for reading these representations is to recognize whose voice is speaking, when, and in what way:

1. Whose voice is dominant? Should this dominance be questioned? Why or why not?

2. Who else was selected to speak for this group, event, issue, or place? For what purposes might they have been selected, in what ways are they allowed to speak, and about what?

3. Who may have been excluded, and what might be some reasons?

Challenging a dominant and authoritative voice is to recognize that texts do more than convey the 'facts.' They also represent power to privilege certain voices and experiences in constituting (i.e., selecting, framing, and speaking) the 'facts.'

Another way to recognize the significance and effects of voice is to reframe a text from a different perspective (e.g., a different role, social location, ideological position, experience, time period) or to compare voices across competing accounts (Case, 1997:144). For example:

1. If this representation were to be recast from the standpoint of those represented, do you think they would represent themselves in this way? How might they represent the author's group?

2. Compare two (or more) accounts from different textbooks or other sources. Whose voice infuses or underlies the representation in each account? What evidence

is there that the perspectives are in agreement or differ?

When presented with Paul Revere's engraving of the Boston Massacre in which British troops fired on unarmed people, grade nine students are not only informed by the caption that "It appeared in a pro-American broadside, *The Boston Gazette*," but are also asked "How might a loyalist broadside report the same event?" (Cranny, 1998a: 304). Through perspective reversal and comparisons, they come to recognize how voice is embedded within accounts of other people and places, and that these accounts are not transparent reflections of the world, but constructed from experiences, assumptions, and values particular to times and places.

Voice and power are inseparable. This opens up further avenues for reading texts beyond recognizing whose voices are present. "In any storytelling context," says Punch (1998: 223), "the voices are differentiated and stratified... narratives are therefore social constructions located within power structures and social milieus." There is an implied relationship between the speaker and that which is spoken about. Illustrative is Ellsworth's (1994: 105) suggestion that texts may "tell stories 'as,' 'about,' 'to,' 'for,' 'with,' and 'at' our own and other social and cultural groups. Each of these orientations between the teller of the story and the subjects of the story enacts a particular social and political relationship that profoundly affects the meanings that will be constructed by listeners." One or more of these relationships, for example, may be evident in a text's portrayal of people and place:

- Speaking *about* consists of descriptions and characterizations that may too easily be passed off as neutral or disinterested portraits, and imply that the speaker has sufficient warrant to make these claims based upon some special expertise, experience, or knowledge.

- Speaking *for* (on behalf of) is a power position whose advocacy relationship and authorization should not be taken-for-granted: is the author a member of this group, an inhabitant of this place, or a participant in this event? in what sense might he or she be a legitimate spokesperson for others?

- Speaking *with* suggests an empathetic and supportive relationship of "coming along side of," a thoughtful attempt to gain consensus of another's point of view, experience, or location. This stance is based on shared

commitments, similar experiences, or a sense of solidarity.

- Speaking *to* or *at* others tells them what should be believed or done. Although the tone may be subtle or overtly 'preachy,' low-key or strident, the intention is to privilege and impose a particular message.

- Speaking *as* a member of one's own group or *from* one's location has a form of authority based upon the assumed richness of first-hand experience.

Given these illustrative relationships, a part of reading voice may include questions such as:

1. "What relations of speaking "to," "for," "about," "with," and/or "as" are set up between this [text] and its readers...? " (Ellsworth, 1994, p. 107). What evidence suggests one or more of these relationships?

2. What may be the effect of a particular relationship upon a reader's interpretations of this subject matter?

Such questions encourage deeper sensitivity of who gets to speak and when, how the use of voice has consequences for portraying and understanding others, and how that speaking may be infused with implicit perspectives and assumed power.

Absences: The Said and the Not-Said

> ...what is absent from a text is as significant as what is present. (Fiske, 1990, p. 96).
>
> ...all texts are a double articulation of discourses and non-discourses, that is, the said and the non-said. (Hayward, 19996, p. 19).

Representations can at times be understood more fully by reading their gaps and what is left out. Sometimes what is present points to an absence, what is fore grounded suggests an exclusion, what is said implies a silence.[6] Representations shape meanings through what is depicted and what is unstated (e.g., assumed values, ideologies, power relationships; historically situated discourses of race, gender, progress). "For silences are as informative as are the utterances sur-

rounding them," says Segall (1999a: 258), if we recognize that "the former always works with, through, and against the latter to educate." Two history textbooks illustrate this point. When one grade eight book reproduces a painting of an aboriginal trapper bargaining with two European traders over the worth of his furs, the caption provides an apparently neutral description: "In the Trading Room. A Native person has brought furs to the French at a trading post to trade for European goods" (Clark & McKay, 1992, p. 28), thereby focusing readers on the surface details of the portrayed event. Another textbook includes a similar picture with the same elements (e.g., two traders and one trapper; furs; a trading room whose shelves are filled with trade goods), but the caption is metonymic by pointing students to that which is not depicted: "This painting is titled "Dickering with the Factor" and it illustrates the relationship between the Native peoples and the fur traders. Which group benefited the most from trading?" (Bowers & Garrod, 1987: 126; grade ten). Both visuals can be read against the background of unequal power relationships that give greater texture to the notion of "bargaining"; within the visuals themselves are evidences of unequal power in the bargaining that evoke larger narratives of imperialism and colonialism. The absences—those things left untold or unquestioned—sometimes need to be made audible or brought into view.

At times it is appropriate for students to read the absences—to critique a representation for what it does not say or says minimally—in order to understand more fully what is said:

1. What is this text representing?

2. What incidents, or whose stories and viewpoints, appear to be 'missing'?

3. "Can you accept these omissions as culturally valid?" (Corcoran, 1994: 17). Why or why not? What other information/context/voices/perspectives may be necessary for deepening understanding?

4. Whose interests or what purposes may be served by this absence or exclusion?

5. What evidence from the text may be helpful to explain this omission? Might it suggest something about the author's commitments, social location, or what he or she takes deeply for granted? Is a meta-narrative implied by the text?

The following and seemingly straightforward paragraph gives grade eleven students the stripped-down chronological 'facts' and 'story' about the achievement of 'universal' suffrage over the past century in one Canadian province:

> In the late 1800's, only white males over 21 who were Canadian citizens and owned property were *allowed* to vote. White women *gained* the right to vote in 1917, after a hard *struggle*. Native people and Chinese immigrants were *excluded* from voting in provincial elections by an Act of the provincial legislature during its first session in 1875. Around the turn of the century, voting rights were also *denied* to citizens of Japanese and East Indian origin. The right to vote was finally *granted* to Native people and citizens of Chinese and East Indian origin in 1947. Canadians of Japanese descent were not *granted* the right to vote until 1949. The voting age was *lowered* from 21 to 19 in 1979, in order to *enable* more young people to participate in the democratic process. Today, anyone meeting the age, citizenship, and residency requirements of the Provincial Elections Act is *entitled* to register and vote in provincial elections. (Bartlett et al., 1989, p. 180; emphasis added).

Note how this account suggests an unrelenting, and largely unproblematic, triumph of linear progress and political inclusiveness over time, but this seamless chronicle begs questions about what social arrangements normalized exclusions at different times, and about the struggles that resulted in change. The word "struggle" occurs once in the story, and many of the verbs (e.g., allowed, gained, excluded, granted, denied, lowered, enabled, entitled) speak to power. To make sense, this apparently neutral and clean mini-story requires some nod to the over sighted and messy details of hard-won social reform. Otherwise, as a national political commentator reminds us, "lots of things get forgotten; many [people], for instance, think achievements like public health care and education, unemployment insurance or union rights, simply happened. Easy come, easy go. They aren't aware of the fights earlier generations... had to wage.... But most such liberties were won because of the needs and efforts of the powerless, and against the instincts and efforts of the mighty" (Salutin, 1998, p. A17). Questioning absence interrupts the taken-for-grantedness of the dominant text and allows for richer readings. When alternative or excluded perspectives are sought, or as marginalized views are brought alongside the singular story of a text, new meanings are encouraged, and students begin to realize how absences may be working in subtle ways to protect privilege and marginalize opposition.

> Synoptic texts...do more, however, than simply represent or capture the field as it exists at the time the text was written. Synoptic texts also articulate that field and help determine what in the field is important. In shedding light on some areas of the field to the exclusion of others, they often present a part of the field as the whole field. In representing the field in a particular way they inadvertently give the impression that the field is their articulation of it. (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1996, p. 11).

Narratives are not simple retellings of external events, but constitute realities in and of themselves whose authority is construed for the reader. Rhetorical devices keep the 'naturalness' or 'givenness' of these storylines going. Such devices may include, for example, the use of captions, questions, titles and sub-titles, metaphors and analogies, footnotes, the over generalized "we" or "they" (e.g., Americans, First Nations, Third World), inset primary documents, or any other strategy designed to keep the story compelling and seamless, and hence unquestioned. Reproductions of photographs and historical paintings may be used to make the story persuasive and believable by rendering events visually present, confirming their authenticity and implying that they happened in the way the text suggests.

Steedman argues that one of the most compelling devices in the historian's rhetorical repertoire is to:

> present a plot that seemingly had to be shaped in a particular way, according to what the documents used for its composition authorized, or what they forbade: [the author] can always present herself as the invisible servant of her material, merely uncovering what already lies there, waiting to be told. It is as well that readers are alerted to the fact that the historian is able in this way to appropriate to herself the most massive authority as a narrator. (1992, p. 613).

Social studies textbooks commonly present storylines of 'inevitable progress' in which the future builds on the past and morally surpasses it, where the world of today is a better place to live than the worlds of other times, places and peoples (Clark, 1996). For example, the growth metaphor inherent in the title *A Nation Unfolding*—in which the nation is born, overcomes the struggles of youth, and matures through hardship to become more wise and just—reinforces this one-way direction of inherent improvement that keeps unfolding over time, as if accord-

ing to a natural biological blueprint (Eaton & Newman, 1994; grade eleven). Various devices are used to emphasize the storyline: unit and chapter titles ("Laying the Foundations," "A Nation Emerges," "Coming of Age," "The Dawning of a New Era."), picture captions that reinforce growth and progress ("Almost every Canadian was buying a motor car in the 1920s. Closed cars and better roads paved the way for luxury motoring"), and a chronological organization of the linear story through the decades (From "Confederation" to "Entering the Twenty-first Century").[7]

But honesty requires that students do at times question the storyline, thereby subverting the devices or practices by which authority is maintained, for history never has a single plot or one moral agenda, and is never completed. "The written history is a story," says Steedman, "that can only be told by the implicit understanding that things are not over, that the story isn't finished, can never be finished, for some new item of information may alter the account that has been given" (1992: 614). There is no narrative closure except as authors attempt to impose it, and as readers accept this attempt as legitimate.

It is sometimes important, therefore, to shift the question from "what does this text mean?" to "how does it come to have a meaning?" (Segall, 1997: 231). This can be done in part by focusing on a text's rhetorical devices, by making students aware of how these practices keep the storyline smooth and unquestioned:

1. What storyline is here assumed or promoted?

2. What rhetorical devices are used to persuade readers of the storyline?

3. Why do you think this narrative has been privileged?

4. Has the text directly/indirectly helped readers to question the storyline?

5. What other storylines could be possible?

Such questioning teaches students that destabilizing a text's authority is at times a legitimate part of reading critically. In this way storylines come to be seen as selectively constructed and rhetorically legitimized rather than accepted as 'natural.'

Even the bland and neutral writing style typical of many textbooks can have the effect of presenting an unproblematic reality, as if the authors were merely reporting or commenting apart from any acknowledged point of view. The seemingly sensible or objective presentation protects authorship from scrutiny, and may encourage na-

ive interpretations where reading becomes little more than "a passive and uncomplicated reception of the truth, facts, or reality that some authoritative figure has discovered; [and where teaching] is merely the straightforward reproduction of the preexisting truth that has been uncomplicatedly received" through the reading (Schwartz, 1989: 61-62). The result is that the important choices made by authors, and hence their power, remain hidden or are assumed to rest on commonsense.

Intertextuality: Parts and the Whole

> Some texts are "founded on the synthesis of word and image into composite meanings that exceed what can be achieved with words or images alone" (Poyner, 1998, p. B7).

Textbooks are a montage, a meeting place of mini-texts—such as pictures, labels, paragraphs, questions, titles, charts, etc.—brought together as a complex representational system in which each piece provides context for the others (Lidchi, 1997: 174). Pictures, for instance, are not just adornments that make written accounts more appealing and interesting; they supplement, reinforce, or counter the word, may powerfully focus interpretation of an entire chapter, and are often remembered long after the word is forgotten.[8] How readers make sense of any one text is influenced in part by its relationship to other texts. In other words, meanings are not fixed within the pieces, but depend upon how the pieces work together or play off each other when read; it is through these *juxtapositions* that more layered and even enigmatic meanings arise. One strategy for reading, then, is to examine how the arrangements work to suggest and constrain meanings.

Although texts may be arranged to reinforce a desired storyline or representation, they are not all afforded equal status. Some components within a chapter may be given dominance through size, color and location as a way to influence the textual interplay for readers. The following is illustrative, then, of how students could be asked to reconsider a chapter:

1. Identify the various texts used in this chapter or on this page (e.g., paragraphs, visuals, captions, sidebars, titles, headings, questions).

2. How are these pieces positioned with each other? (e.g., spatial juxtaposition, such as together/apart; sequenc-

ing, such as first/last; relative prominence, such as size, shading or coloring)

3. In what ways might your understandings of a particular text, as well as your interpretations of the chapter's storyline, be influenced by these relationships? How do they work together to suggest or constrain meaning?

4. How could these texts be repositioned to suggest or support different interpretations or storylines?

Visual images are commonly anchored with words to make them less ambiguous and to limit their range of possible meanings; often a caption didactically points out 'what is going on,' in an attempt to channel the reader's interpretations and reinforce authority, although at times the caption may be in tension with the very image it is designed to control. Words and images may or may not work together very well. A chapter title, a set of paragraphs, and a visual illustration may complement or contradict one another, reinforce or subvert the chapter's storyline, or suggest new or divergent interpretations. For example, the theme of 'exploring/opening' announced by a chapter title "Exploring and Opening the West" is reinforced on the same page by a painting of the Hudson's Bay Company steamship SS Beaver anchored off Fort Victoria (on the British colony of Vancouver Island) in 1846; however, potential dissonance is also introduced on the same page by the chapter's first sub-title "Aboriginal Peoples: The First Canadians" and the three opening sentences: "The first people to make North America their permanent home were aboriginal peoples. By the time Europeans arrived in the sixteenth century, aboriginal peoples had been in Canada for 10, 000 years. They had developed their own distinct cultures" (Cruxton & Wilson, 1997: 60; grade eleven). The next thirteen pages proceed to tell students with maps, pictures, charts, and words how richly these aboriginal peoples explored and inhabited this place called "the West," followed by an account of how Europeans then came along and "opened" it. The intertextual ambiguity and irony set up by the two titles and their accompanying texts can be read and explored with students.

Mediation: Information Transmission as Transformation

> Our knowledge of contemporary society is to a large extent mediated to us by documents of various kinds...Factual statements in documentary form, whether as news, data, information or the like, stand in for an ac-

> tuality, which is not directly accessible. Socially organized practices of reporting and recording work upon what actually happens or has happened to create a reality in documentary form... (Smith, 1974, p. 257).

Very little of what we know about the broader world is the result of our direct encounters with its peoples, places, events, and times. Rather, we experience ready-made and second-hand representations through texts from many sources. With all of his Victorian sensibilities, Paul Kane, one of the founders of Canadian art and the country's most famous painter-explorer, produced hundreds of sketches and watercolors "documenting" aboriginal life, imperialist activities, and environmental features during his travels across western Canada in the 1840s (Harper, 1971). When back in his Toronto studio in 1846, he used the sketches to synthesize grand and imaginary oils that, if less 'accurate' or 'documentary,' were tailored for public consumption and the tastes of his benefactors. Initial field observations were mediated and transformed in various ways en route to their final representations, and according to an arts critic commenting on the Kane collection housed at the Royal Ontario Museum, one "can't help feeling uncomfortable with the exoticism that went with the record collecting—as with all the other attempts to catalogue the human curiosities of Queen Victoria's far-flung empire. We're glad that Kane risked life and limb to document the vanishing ways of native Canadians, but we sure wish that what he came back with didn't feel quite so much like Audubon's book of birds" (Gopnik, 1998, p. A15). The very process of producing and transmitting information was, for Kane, a series of transformations. His texts were produced through a process of intermediate steps over time and space, from first-hand experiences to sketches and notes, through various compositions and media, and finally to the framed saleable products.

Representations do not innocently transmit ideas to readers. Punch (1998, p. 231) makes this point well:

> All documentary sources are the result of human activity, produced on the basis of certain ideas, theories or commonly accepted, taken-for-granted principles, and these are always located within the constraints of particular social, historical or administrative conditions and structures.... Words and their meanings depend on where they are used, by whom, and to whom... meaning varies according to social and institutional setting. Therefore documents and texts studied in isolation from their social context are deprived of their real meaning. Thus an under-

standing of the social production and context of the document affects its interpretation.

Information and its meanings are mediated through the very practices of amassing and putting them together, and this transformation largely remains invisible within a completed text. Even the author's choice of a medium—whether photograph, e-mail, video, painting, chalkboard—shapes and constrains the information. "To transmit," says Debray (1996, p. 46), "is to organize, and to organize [is] to hierarchize... to exclude and subordinate." Student interpretations of text need to recognize that the transmitted information was selected, organized, edited, and packaged in a time and place and for a purpose, and that this mediation process created the text. Reading, therefore, can focus on the ways in which information may have been mediated:

1. Is there any direct and indirect evidence in the text itself about how the information may have been mediated and transformed in the process of producing this text?

2. How might the very choice of medium (e.g., narrative, pictorial, numerical presentations) have shaped the transmitted information? How could it influence readers' interpretations? What other meaning(s) can be given to this text?

3. Would these interpretations of the information remain constant over time and across readers? Why or why not?

Particularly important for students to read in this way are images of peoples, places, and events painted by artists who were removed in time and place. Such representations are commonly used in textbooks to enhance a topic's immediacy and accessibility. But students are misled to the extent that they take these as 'records' rather than transformations mediated by their creators' values and purposes, assumptions about audience, choice of media, and other practices involved in composing the text. Gracing the cover of a student textbook is a romanticized painting of two late eighteenth century British naval ships anchored in a cove on the west coast, and surrounded by seven canoes filled with aboriginal peoples (Conner & Bethune-Johnson, 1984); unless students checked the credit page, however, they would not realize that the artist was not an 'eyewitness' to that event one foggy morning, but was separated from his subject by two centuries! What then does such a picture signify? It is not an unmediated

picture and impartial 'history' so much as a deliberate construction of meaning. The dominance of the naval ships, flags, and uniforms, and the arrangement and relative emphasis given to the picture's constituent elements, strongly suggest what the artist was celebrating. But depending upon the viewer's social location, ideology, and historical time, this representation may connote the glory of imperial conquest; the arrogance of European power and exploration; ethnocentric parochialism and sentimentalism; the process of decimating an indigenous group; and so on. It could be read in many ways. The text suggests contingent meanings, and over time interpretations change, not necessarily replacing former ones as in a linear sequence, but superimposing themselves to form more complex or multi-layered sets of meanings (Lawrence, 1997).

Reflexivity: Reading Author and Reader

> Reflexivity asks us to problematize the assumption that the analyst [author, reader] stands in a disengaged relationship to the world...[and] to explore the consequences of challenging the assumption that the analyst [author, reader] enjoys a privileged position vis-à-vis the subjects and objects which come under the authorial gaze. (Woolgar, 1992, p. 334).

Cultural studies are characterized by an epistemological self-consciousness that makes authors and readers uncomfortable about taking themselves for granted. "Although many complex factors influence the knowledge that is created by an individual or group, including the actuality of what occurred, the knowledge that people create is heavily influenced by their interpretations of their experiences and their positions within particular social, economic, and political systems and structures of society," argues Banks (1993, p. 5), but unfortunately authors and readers are often "unaware of how their personal experiences and positions within society influence the knowledge they produce." Reflexivity is evident as authors help readers recognize and query authorship, and as readers in turn recognize their own active role in interpreting texts.

Authors do at times purposely subvert (and even thereby strengthen) their own authority by providing insight into how they constructed and mediated the story, and by encouraging readers to counter it. A well-known Canadian historian cleverly warned his readers in the Foreword to a grade eleven textbook that: "Like experience, collecting and understanding history is a very personal matter. However scholarly and objective an historian may claim to be, all knowledge and its interpretation is filtered through an author's experience

and prejudices. Recognizing that fact may be the beginning of disillusionment; it should be the beginning of wisdom" (Morton, 1988). This provocative claim frames the entire textbook and, if taken seriously by author and reader, has the potential to encourage deeper readings of history and its representations. Ironically, though, the book does little to make authorship visible, thereby leaving students to figure out for themselves how this professional historian's experiences and prejudices were at work. In effect, the story could be read as if it were 'natural,' were authorship played little significance to the story itself. By contrast, Eaton and Newman's (1992) grade ten textbook included inserted poetry and short vignettes by aboriginal authors to help students question the story that the "unfolding of a nation" brought inevitable betterment to all of its citizens; use of these counter-stories reminds readers of the influence of social locations in writing and reading.

1. How has the author made some of his or her choices, values, and assumptions visible?

2. In what ways does the author's use (or lack of use) of reflexive devices influence your reading of the text and your understanding of authorship?

Although texts position their readers, there is also the other side of the coin in that readers interpret texts in ways not anticipated by authors. The focus of reflexivity also has to be on the student who, like all of us, reads through her own pre-understandings and experiences. As texts are read, they become not 'things' but relationships, where meaning resides in the interaction between text and reader. "The message is ultimately shaped by the ear that hears it," says Judd (1998: D18), and this suggests that there is never one interpretation, but many depending upon what readers bring to the text; at times, therefore, it is desirable to turn the question from the text to its readers, examining how interpretations were achieved, and rendering one's own meaning-making practices more visible and accountable. Corcoran (1994: 17) challenges students, for example, to consider the following: "What aspects of your age, sex, race, or family background [beliefs, commitments] would help explain why you reacted to the text that way? ... What aspects of your gender, race, or class [or experiences, values] make these memories or attitudes difficult for [or acceptable to] you?" It is not enough to ask students to question what is written, take positions pro and con on issues, and provide good reasons for their judgments, without also helping them recognize that such analyses and judgments are themselves socially and politically located. The reflexive move is an acknowledgment that knowers are implicated in their

knowing, that documents only speak through interpreters, and that interpretation also points back to the interpreter:

1. Why do you accept and/or question this particular representation of other peoples, places, or events?

2. What might your interpretation imply about what you bring to this reading? (e.g., what commitments or social values? implied criteria for judging? assumed experiences or metanarratives?) To what extent are you taking your own experiences, tradition, role, or social location as normative, and unreflectively reading them into this text?

The purpose is not merely to be more tolerant of pluralistic interpretations, but to become more reflective in a critical sense of what text and interpreter take for granted.

Conclusion

> Students should be given opportunities to investigate and determine how cultural assumptions, frames of references, perspectives, and the biases within a discipline [or any social location] influence the ways the knowledge [text] is constructed.... An important goal... is to transform the school curriculum so that students not only learn the knowledge that has been constructed by others, but learn how to critically analyze the knowledge [text] they master and how to construct their own interpretations of the past, present, and future. (Banks, 1993, pps. 11-12).

Why problematize authorship and teach students to critically interpret the montage of pictures, charts, captions, and paragraphs within their social studies books? The answer is that textbooks are a massive fact of classrooms and often constitute the curriculum. Young people learn early that these artifacts "transmit" information deemed important by adults, but rarely are students explicitly taught to notice how the means of transmission also shape that information in significant ways, or to position texts within larger cultural practices, political relations, and social issues. Occasionally students need opportunity to take authorship and interpretation seriously in their reading and studying of the social. Such opportunity is not a peripheral add-on to the crowded social studies agenda, but central to it; we participate in a social world that is continuously authored and interpreted over time through multiple practices, and it needs to be read as such.

Reflective and critical readings matter because embedded in the social practices of producing and reading texts are assumptions, values, and storylines that position readers to engage the world in taken-for-granted and unquestioned ways, and that do not serve the interests of all groups evenly. By encouraging students at times to question what is often sacrosanct in classrooms, we are also encouraging them to extend their critique more broadly to the terrain of their everyday lives, to see that social texts of various kinds are authored, and that meanings and effects change across context and time. Learning to critically read the texts of the classroom, and by extension the texts of the broader popular culture and mass media, is a task of citizenship education.

The suggestions in this article for reading authorship are based upon a normative assumption about reading: it is a relationship between text and reader in which neither one has exclusive authority to define meaning. The amount of authority that each has in this relationship varies, depending in part upon the ways in which the text positions the reader and what she brings to it. Meaning does not arise from the text or reader alone. Both "have a voice," says Hunsberger (1989, p. 119), and can be thought of as engaging in a dialogue in which "At its best, the reader 'listens' attentively to the voice of the text; considers the ideas, characters, or language being presented; and in turn responds to the text... and in the encounter, the interpretation is formed.... The dialogue will naturally vary from more heated to cooler, from more intense to more distant, depending on the readers' degree of agreement and involvement with the text." Turning monologues into dialogues requires students who have a sense of agency when confronted with text, who learn to read actively by questioning the practices of both authorship and readership. To do so, however, they need to be taught how to take charge of their reading and to be accountable for it within the classroom community of interpreters.[9]

But the everyday experiences of students provide neither sufficient distance nor richness of ideas for questioning authorship and the processes writers use to make the world seamless. They cannot be expected to subject what they read and their own readings to sophisticated scrutiny unless they have access to exemplars. This is why more thoughtful readings require deliberate efforts on the part of teachers to push beyond the assumed classroom consensus by raising questions through which students can interpret texts critically and imaginatively. The literature of cultural studies provides vantage points for doing this in the classroom, of which the eight concepts discussed in this article are suggestive rather than comprehensive. They are illustrative starting points, and many other concepts are possible. As long as these tools (or any others) are not taken for granted, they can be used to encourage more productive readings.

New tools, however, always bring their own baggage to the student-text encounter. At some point during classroom discussion, attention also needs to be turned on the adopted lens: In what ways do these concepts help and hinder our engagement with this text? What may be some consequences of allowing ourselves to be focused in this direction? What issues are highlighted and neglected? What other concepts may also be useful here? Students can judge the productiveness of the concepts by the quality of the conversation between reader and text that are made possible.[10]

Notes

[1] For example, see Blundell, Shepherd, and Taylor (1993), During (1993), Giroux (1992, 1994), Grossberg et al. (1992), Hall (1997), Lutz and Collins (1993), McCarthy and Crichlow (1993).

[2] Other relevant concepts from various traditions within cultural studies for understanding "reading" may include discourse, positionality, cultural poetics, textual authority, master narratives, otherness, identity, and power.

[3] These questions do not imply one particular reading, but encourage multiple readings that are more inclusive of various perspectives.

[4] Another caption example: "An artist's view of Thomas Scott's execution. What impression does this picture give of the execution? Do you think it was drawn by a supporter or opponent of Riel?" (Cruxtan & Wilson, 1997: 107; grade ten).

[5] "These women and children are picking hops, which are used in the making of beer. This pattern of work gangs, consisting of women and their children, was a feature of English life throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Do you think that this is an accurate portrayal, or an idealized one? *Why or why not?*" (Cranny, 1998a: 152; emphasis added; grade nine).

[6] I deliberately use "absences" here because the term allows for various possibilities: omission, silence, exclusion, marginalization, erasure, avoidance. Although usage of these terms is by no means interchangeable across the cultural studies literature, my point is that students can question what may have been left out of the text. Regardless of whether the absences are the result of an active silencing, unrecognized excluding, or a willful blindness, an effect upon readers is that some perspectives and events have been included for consideration and others excluded. Sometimes the consequences of absences may be important for students' understandings of an event, issue, place, or group.

[7] Similarly, Clark and McKay use the device of pictorial overviews for each of the eleven chapters of *Canada Revisited* (1992; grade nine), showing the major steps and the inevitable cumulative progress from "The First People (up to the 1400s)" through the centuries culminating in "The Nation Has Growing Pains (1873-1911)."

[8] Bruner muses that "the most powerful technique for arousing one of those action-related modes of dealing with the world [i.e., interpretation] is through depiction: using a Willy Horton, or a Biafran baby with a belly distended from kwashiorkor. For images are not only prototypes of categories, but also stopped action frames in narratives. When human action finally achieves its representation in words, it is not in a universal and timeless formula that it is expressed but in a story—a story about actions taken, procedures followed, and the rest" (1996: 158).

[9] All interpretations are not equally as compelling. Interpreters are accountable for their interpretations within a community whose members share similar purposes and assumptions. The notion of the classroom as an "interpretive community" is beyond the scope of this article. See Fish (1980) and Hunsberger (1989).

[10] These concepts can also be extended to reading the statements of students and teacher during classroom discussions, the organization of classroom experiences, as well as to critiquing this article.

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Issues-Centered Instruction in the Elementary Social Studies Classroom

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Abstract

There is discussion in the literature on issues-centered education about the desirability and feasibility of using issues-centered approaches in elementary classrooms. This article describes the experience of three 5-6th grade elementary teachers and their students with a social studies unit taught using the Engle-Ochoa Decision-Making model. The teachers and students' reactions are described and analyzed. The authors conclude with a discussion about how issues-centered education can work in elementary classrooms and suggest some topics social studies educators should discuss with their pre-service and in-service teachers as they prepare them for teaching with issues-centered approaches.

Introduction

A long tradition in social studies education advocates classroom teaching of an issues-centered curriculum (Evans, 1987, 1989a, 1989b, 1997; Stanley & Nelson, 1994; Nelson, 1996; Wraga, 1998, 1999). This tradition affirms that issues-centered instruction "rests on the necessity of preparing citizens to participate in the democratic decision-making processes within a pluralistic society" (Hahn, 1991, p. 420). The influence of issues-centered models on instruction has been primarily in secondary education. But, the feasibility and desirability of using issues-centered models with elementary and adolescent students has been debated. Schneider (1995) has suggested the possibility of "both cognitive dissonance and emotional stress" if elementary students engage in issues-centered approaches. Yet Schneider sees "need for discussion of the matter, including examples of the kinds of issues and how they are to be approached, or at least references to research

and practice that demonstrate the capacity of very young children to engage successfully in" issues-centered instruction (1995, p. 276).

This study uses naturalistic case study methodology to examine the experiences of three elementary teachers and their fifth/sixth grade students during a unit using the Engle and Ochoa (1988) Decision-Making model of issues-centered education. The study will focus on (1) how the teachers developed, implemented, and assessed the issues-centered units, and (2) how the students understood and reacted to a social studies unit using issues-centered instruction. The first part of the article discusses social studies textbooks and research that promotes an issues-centered approach in the elementary grades.

Issues-Centered Approach In The Elementary Grades

There is little research support for an issues-centered approach in elementary social studies education beyond selected elementary social studies texts and at least two research studies.

Elementary Social Studies Textbooks

This section investigates a historical selection of six elementary social studies textbooks that support issues-centered instruction.

Kaltsounis (1969) argues in his textbook that a realistic social studies program that deals honestly with contemporary society must include controversial issues at each elementary level, despite some occasional harshness. He believes that young children are constantly exposed to harsh realities facing their families, communities and the world at large. Instead of avoiding children's curiosity and concerns, elementary social studies teachers should take the time to discuss and design curriculum based on the concerns affecting the students and their communities.

In her textbook, Skeel (1970) cautiously recommends teaching issues in the elementary social studies. For her the major purpose for an issues-centered approach is to provide opportunities for students to develop "the habit of approaching an issue with an open mind, securing the facts on all sides, and then making a decision if necessary" (p. 119). However, she argues that certain social issues may be too harsh or not appropriate for young minds and should be reserved for secondary schools. She does not delineate appropriate or inappropriate issues but recommends discretion when selecting social issues for young people. Children who have sufficient background experience to thoroughly and critically understand the issue will the become better informed, thoughtful citizens by studying social issues.

Lee (1974) claims that schools interfere with students' rights and opportunities to participate intellectually in the classroom. Lee argues, "It seems reasonable to assert that a child growing up in the United

States today should know something of the long-term issues facing his nation and the world in which that nation exists" (p. 134). Students' day-to-day experiences are a rich source of data concerning issues such as poverty, population, ecology, violence, minorities, race, gender. Yet teachers often fail to consider such experiences. Lee strongly suggests that teachers base their social studies curriculum on local as well as national issues. He suggest three criteria for choosing particular social issues for elementary social studies classrooms: (1) specifications of the course of study, (2) availability of materials to be read, and (3) teachers' knowledge and judgments of what students ought to know.

Olner (1976) devotes an entire chapter in her textbook to social issues as an organizational framework for social studies curricula based on values systems. She argues:

> [p]erhaps the most compelling reason for the early introduction of social issues is their inevitable influence on basic social attitudes. Evidence suggests that children develop attitudinal postures quite early in life. While many factors influence these postures, cognition plays an important part. In depriving children of knowledge of social issues, we do not fail to contribute to the formulation of values regarding these issues. Instead, we help produce an *inadequate* formulation based on insufficient information.
>
> A peaceful future community requires the solution of the broad social problems that threaten human life. High-level cognitive skills and appropriate attitudes are essential. The elementary school has an important contribution to make toward their development. (p. 150)

Servey (1981) provides a comprehensive rationale for teaching controversial issues in the elementary classroom. He begins by accusing elementary educators of sometimes imitating the apathy of general society toward social issues which tear at the fabric of American society. "[I]f there is [to be] any real hope for the future, it lies in helping children become interested in controversial issues and learning how to deal with them" (p. 280). To prepare elementary students to be active participants in human affairs, controversial issues are essential in the instructional program in social studies. An issues-centered approach provides realistic opportunities for students to discover the relevancy of social studies learning to their own lives; helps them to learn how to cope with a controversial issue; teaches them to consider

inevitable value conflicts; and helps them become aware of themselves as persons while dealing with controversial issues.

Marsh (1987) recommends giving elementary students every opportunity to study controversial issues, especially within their communities. He believes students should be treated as citizens and should be given the responsibility to resolve social issues to improve their community and the wider society. He acknowledges the constraints against teaching social issues in the elementary schools: cautious or rigid departmental policy, community sensitivity toward religious or political beliefs, and issues relating to sex or relating to a war in which the student's home country is presently engaged. The two overriding constraints are the lack of knowledge and emotional maturity of students, and the limitations in the knowledge and skills of teachers. Marsh claims that these constraints can usually be overcome if teachers become creative and use instructional treatments with the capacity of correcting students' immaturity and lack of knowledge.

These social studies textbook authors argue for an issues-centered approach to social studies instruction. They assert that elementary students are citizens and thus should be actively involved in studying and preparing to resolve the social ills that affect them, their local community, and their nation. Some authors caution that some issues, though important, may not be appropriate for young children: too harsh for young minds; too controversial for the school, the community, or departmental policy; or too dependent on a knowledge base or emotional maturity students may not possess. The authors, however, believe that the biggest deterrent to issues-centered instruction for elementary students is the teachers themselves. They suggest that teachers need to include social issues arising from or suggested by the day-to-day experiences of the students. Teachers must become knowledgeable about the issues and design lessons to help students develop the knowledge, the thinking skills, and the emotional maturity to study them.

Research Studies

Wright and Simon (1976) studied the effects of an issues-centered instructional approach in reducing the mind set of indifference of sixth grade students regarding the social issue of water pollution. The instructional approach (Simon, 1970) is a sequence of seven steps designed to encourage students to investigate serious social issues and to propose resolvable courses of action. The distinguishing feature of the model is that it

> relies on a hypothesis as to the desirability and feasibility of taking action on a policy making "should" question which is of immediate concern to students. Testing the

> hypothesis requires the use of a representative sample of data pertinent to the problem, and the classification of purported evidence into desirable (D) and undesirable (UD) as well as feasible (F) and infeasible (IF) categories. The "survival" goal (human and ecological survival and the physical and psychological well-being of individuals) is used as the criterion for classifying purported evidence into the D and UD categories. Criteria for classifying purported evidence into the F and IF categories include cost, legality, available time, past successes/failure, public and private attitudes, technology, existing relevant policies, and the availability of human resources, social processes and structures. (Wright & Simon, 1976, p. 298)

The entire sixth grade population from four schools (248 children) were randomly assigned to one of four groups. The test was to identify the children's attitude towards the desirability and feasibility of taking action to control water pollution in Canada. The instrument used included two articles on water pollution combined into one document and paraphrased to a grade 6 reading level. The document was judged "to say that action to control water pollution in Canada was neither desirable nor feasible." Group 1 was asked to simply read the instrument and draw conclusions from the reading concerning the desirability, undesirability, feasibility, and infeasibility of taking action on the problem. Group 2 received the reading instrument along with a classification format chart. The reading was divided into fourteen individual statements placed vertically on the chart. Each statement was followed horizontally by four categories: D, UD, F, IF. Students were given instruction only on the criteria of the two categories F and IF. They were asked to read and make a decision whether to take action on each of the statements according to the four categories. Group 3 was given the same instrument and chart as Group 2, but was instructed on the criteria of all four categories prior to making decisions on the fourteen statements. Group 4 was given a similar chart with additional clarifications. Written above the chart was the question "Should more action be taken to control water pollution in Canada?" In addition to the fourteen statements and the four categories, two new questions were added. The first new question read "Would survival be helped (1) or hindered (2)? Write 1 or 2 wherever a check mark appears in the D or UD column." The second new question read "Is action D, UD, F, or IF? Write D, UD, F, or IF." Students were given a 45 minute training program in using the Simon classification procedure and on the importance of "survival" followed by applied practice on the categories. And finally, prior to the adminis-

tration of the test instrument students were given an exercise on a different social problem to give them additional practice.

Using three quantitative tests-chi-square test, three-way ANOVA, and Scheffé test-to analyze the data, only Group 4 showed any statistically significant reduction of student indifference ($p = .001$) on the issue of water pollution or increase in student willingness ($p = .01$) to take action on the issue. The findings suggested to the researchers that the Simon instructional approach can help reduce student indifference about social issues and help increase student willingness to take action to improve social conditions, but that training in the application of the instructional approach appears to be necessary to producing this change, and that six graders are able to effectively study social issues.

Parker, McDaniel, and Valencia (1991) implemented a series of direct instruction lessons on thinking critically along with procedural prompting (scaffolding) as a means for helping sixth-grade students to think critically on public issues. Students in two groups were then asked to write a critical essay on a given public issue. One group was instructed in dialogical thinking, a line of reasoning that explores different points of view, including one's own, and examines the reasoning behind positions of a controversial, public issue. The goal changes from defending a particular view to developing a standard of truth and goodness by exploring and building an understanding of the issue. The unit of instruction consisted of six lessons giving students opportunities to learn and apply the principal strategies of dialogical thinking: supporting argument, counter argument, empathic counter argument, relevant counter argument and dialogical conclusion. Each lesson lasted 65 minutes. The unit was taught over a three-week period.

The second group received no instruction. On the day before the essay task, a teacher prompted the students on the vocabulary that would be used in the instructions of the upcoming essay and instructed them to use what knowledge and skills they already possessed to do their best. The entire prompting took ten minutes.

When the essays were scored, the two groups performed nearly equally in constructing and interrogating positions on public controversies. These test findings suggests that many sixth-graders may already know how to reason dialogically and need only proper instructional environments, not enabling instruction, to challenge them to increase mature reasoning and thoughtful learning. The authors state:

> This study suggests that 6th grade students may be capable of responding to the intellectual demands of an issues-oriented curriculum. The task for teachers may be different, however, from implementing bottom-up instruc-

> tion related to each sort of thinking relevant to issue-oriented discourse. It may well be more a matter of providing an engaging curriculum, along with prompts and procedural supports, thus *apprenticing* them into issue-oriented discourse. This involves modeling, to be sure, but also reminding and exhorting students to clarify an issue before latching onto a position, and taking the other side of the case before drawing a conclusion; directing them to write dialogical, not one-sided, analyses of issues; and making available to them multiple accounts of events. (p. 44)

Although research on issues-centered instruction in the elementary grades is somewhat meager, some elementary social studies textbook authors and Wright and Simon and Parker, McDaniel, and Valencia's studies suggest that elementary students can and should study issues.

> An issues-focused instruction can provide opportunities for children to work with others, learn how to handle conflict, solve problems, develop concern for others, and interact with value issues that they encounter daily in their environment. These experiences will permit children to become reflective citizens who understand their world, who can make rational decisions, and who will be humane, participating members of society. (Skeel, 1996, pp. 230-231)

Implementation of an issues-centered approach in the elementary classroom appears to require a high-interest instructional environment, appropriate content regarding a controversial issue, and a methodology emphasizing student direct participation. Students, therefore, should be actively engaged in identifying the issue; identifying possible alternative positions; devising a plan of research; gathering, organizing, and interpreting information; evaluating and clarifying values which underlie alternative positions; constructing reasoned and well grounded arguments; making a decision on a defensible position; planing and taking action on the decision; and evaluating the process, the decision, and the action. The textbooks and the research studies also argue that teachers must guide and prompt students as they progress along in their study of an issue. Thus teachers must become familiar with the knowledge and processes involved with the issue being studied in order to know when to and when not to guide and prompt students. Also teachers need to help students feel comfortable with the ambiguity of not finding the "right" answer.

Although, elementary students appear capable of understanding and acting on issues pertinent to their lives, little actual research supports those claims. Also little research describes the role of teachers in the issues-centered process. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to focus on an elementary social studies curriculum experience using a particular issues-centered instructional model as developed, implemented, and assessed by three social studies teachers and to examine how it was experienced and understood by their students.

Research Procedures

The Purpose of The Study

The purpose of this study is to provide a description and an analysis of the use of an issues-centered instruction model in three fifth-sixth grade social studies classrooms. The central question that guided the study was "what does issues-centered instruction look like in the elementary social studies classroom?" The following sub-questions specifically guided the study, "Were the three teachers able to organize the curriculum and implement the instructional strategies as suggested by the model?" and "What meaning did the students give to the curriculum and the instructional strategies?"

Subjects And Setting

Three first-year teachers volunteered to participate in this study in response to a proposal sent to a school district in the Intermountain West. The majority of the district's teachers showed little interest in participating in the study. The three teachers who did volunteer were female and European American, ranging in age from 23 to 26 years old. All three had graduated from a university near the district with degrees in Elementary Education. Their degree program had consisted of a number of general course requirements followed by content method courses and student teaching. In the area of social science, the three teachers had taken a required course entitled "American Heritage" and an elective course "Introduction to Geography." In their Elementary Education major, they had been enrolled in a two-credit hour social studies methods course. Their total program included approximately 28 hours of course work.

At the time of this study, conducted during the month of March, all had been teaching for six months. All three had been hired to teach a composite fifth-sixth grade social studies course that was characteristic of the district. Only one of the three new teachers was enthusiastic about teaching social studies. The other two new teachers were more interested in teaching English and mathematics respectively. One wanted to teach the lower grades rather than fifth or sixth grade, be-

lieving she would feel more comfortable teaching young children. She was concerned that she might not be able to manage older children.

In their university social studies methods class, the teachers had been introduced to issues-centered instruction. As part of the course, they were required to design an issues-centered curriculum unit and, upon completion, to give a ten-minute presentation on their curriculum design. None of the three, during the first six months of their teaching assignment, used nor taught an issues-centered unit. The three young teachers' teaching styles imitated those of the older social studies staff: dominant use of the prescribed textbook, lecture and recitation, and worksheets.

The majority of the students from the three elementary schools in which the three teachers taught were European Americans from middle or upper-middle socioeconomic backgrounds. A number of their parents held college degrees and had jobs in professional or managerial fields. Attending the three schools was a very small population of Hispanic students who lived in a public housing project and came from a poor or working class socioeconomic background. Many of their parents were immigrants with little education and limited knowledge of English who were seasonally employed picking fruit in the local orchards. The three schools had won a number of awards, both state and district, for their academic and cultural achievements. State and district tests indicated that most of the students were considered to be average to above average academically.

Issues-Centered Instructional Model

Throughout the years, a number of models have been designed to study social and political issues (Evans & Saxe, 1996). For this study, the Decision Making model," developed by Shirley H. Engle and Anna S. Ochoa, was used. This curriculum orientation is intended to provide students with a conceptual framework emphasizing skills of discussion and critical analysis of events and public disagreements that can be transferred to other issues and situations which students will encounter later in their lives. Students should also become aware that issues are created from human interests, expectations, and values held by various groups. The curriculum project provides students with opportunities to gain an understanding of the society in which they live through active discussion of its major social conflicts. The project also allows students to accept, reject, or modify their positions on based on their own critical judgment without some authority, no matter how respectable, making a decision for them. It also encourage students to acquire those skills necessary for analysis, discussion, and resolution of conflicts or issues such as recognizing and defining problems, gathering and organizing information, discriminating between facts and

opinions, discussing differing viewpoints, and evaluating possible courses of action.

Each of the teachers was given a copy of Engle and Ochoa's (1988) book *Education For Democratic Citizenship: Decision Making In The Social Studies*, which presents an issues-centered instructional model.[1] Under the direction of the authors, the volunteer teachers read the book and discussed the curriculum model, its practice, and various activities for implementing it with fifth/sixth grade students. Next the teachers were instructed to design a curriculum and instruction unit to be implemented in their respective classes. The three teachers were to follow each step of the model, yet adapt it to their instructional experience any way they wanted in order to make the experience as meaningful as possible both to themselves and to their students. The units were designed by the teachers without help from each other or from the authors. The instructional process took two weeks.

Data Collection and Analysis

Triangulated data for this study consisted of observers' notes, transcribed interviews, daily log entries, reaction papers, and documents collected in the field. We conducted classroom observations of every lesson of the issues-centered instructional units of the three teachers, taking field notes of how the teachers presented their lessons and how the students engaged in the various activities. These observations lead to a number of structured interviews with both the teachers and the students. Prior to observing each lesson, we interviewed the teachers, asking them to describe the purposes and format of the lesson we were about to see. With the completion of each lesson, we asked the teachers to comment on their perceptions of the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the lesson and its effects on their students. Throughout the study we conducted informal interviews with the teachers, and at the end of the study we held a structured interview with each teacher to reflect on the merits of their units and their issued-centered instruction. We held structured interviews at the end of each lesson and at the end of the study with individual, and small groups of students to sample what they had experienced and learned. Teachers also conducted and recorded daily interviews of a sampling of their students. Both the teachers and students kept daily logs of their experiences. The teachers recorded their reflections about the teaching of their units. All students were required during the last five minutes of each class to write in their logs about the following questions: What did I do today during the lesson? What did I learn today during the lesson? and What were my feelings about the lesson? Concluding reaction papers to the entire teaching experience were also required of the three teachers and each student. We made copies of all daily lesson plans, acquired all materials the teachers had distributed during

class, and collected any daily artifacts created and written by the teachers and by the students that related to the unit plan.

We used a number of activities to analyze the data in order (1) to build three case studies demonstrating the use of the Engle and Ochoa issues-centered model, (2) to determine if the three teachers were able to organize and implement the model, and (3) to find what meanings the students gave to the instructional experience. To build and rebuild the case studies, we used a number of analytical activities. First, we developed a flow chart matrix to determine the chronology of events, actions, and related statements. Second, we used a critical incident chart to list those events considered critical or decisive during the teaching of the units. Third, we developed a coding schema to be used before and during analysis to identify, compare, and contrast the data and organize it into meaningful descriptions and patterns. Fourth, we used an ongoing method known as the saturation process (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to alternate between data collection and data analysis: data were continually collected, identified, coded, compared/contrasted, arranged, reinforced, and modified into emerging categories and patterns. And fifth, as the attributes of the case studies were being generated, we presented information periodically to the three teachers to check for any conflicts related to themselves, their students, others, and to the events that took place both in and out of the classroom. Next, we used the instructional phases and steps that make up the Engle and Ochoa model as a framework to determine if the three teachers were able to organize and implement the instructional model. Using the same five analytical activities above, we were able to code all teacher-related data, resulting in a set of descriptive patterns that fit within the Engle and Ochoa framework in order to identify whether and how the three teachers were able to use the issues-centered instructional model. Lastly, using cross-case comparisons that involved analysis of student-related data, we were able to identify a set of descriptive examples of meanings students gave to the instructional experience.

Findings: The Case Studies

Teacher 1: Ms. Clark[2]

Ms. Clark taught a fifth/sixth grade social studies class of 21 students: 20 European Americans and one Hispanic American. For seven days, her class studied the issue of a young girl not saluting the American flag during class because of religious beliefs.

Day 1. The objective for the first day's lesson was to help the students understand what constitutes a controversial issue or social problem. Ms. Clark began the lesson with a general question: "Does any one in class know what a controversial issues is?" One student

responded that it is "something that people do not agree on and that it has two or more sides to it." Ms. Clark acknowledged the response as a correct answer, then asked the rest of the class if they understood what had been stated. There were a number of short vocal affirmations and affirmative head nods. Ms. Clark asked for examples of what a controversial issue might be. Two students provided examples: homelessness and pollution.

Next, to help the class understand better what the term *controversial issue* means, Ms. Clark read two books about the same events involving the same four characters, each book portraying a different version about how the events took place. The first book she read to the class was the story of the *Three Little Pigs* by James Marshall (1989). After reading the book, Ms. Clark asked one student what the story was about, and the student readily responded, "The story of the three little pigs and the wolf trying to eat them."

Ms. Clark then read a second book, *The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs by A. Wolf* written by Jon Scieszka (1989). After reading the story, Ms. Clark asked the class what this story was about. "The wolf said he didn't do it," said one student.

Another clarified, "The wolf said it was all a accident ."

"It appears there might be a problem with the two different stories about the same event. What might be the problem, Ren?"

"The wolf claims he is not guilty. And the pigs said he was guilty."

Ms. Clark explained, "We now have an issue. A problem that has two different sides to it. What are the two sides?"

As Ms. Clark lifted the *Three Little Pigs* book into the air with her right hand, a student volunteered "The three little pigs said the wolf did all of these bad things."

When Ms. Clark lifted *The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs* into the air with her left hand, another student responded, "The wolf claims he was innocent, that the three pigs made all of this up."

Ms. Clark introduced the next activity by writing on the chalkboard "Is the wolf telling the truth?" Next she divided the class into four groups; three groups of five students, one group of six: two groups defended the wolf's position; the other two groups defended the three little pigs. Each group had five minutes to discuss and prove their point of view. Each group was to appoint a scribe, discuss the two stories, come up with evidence to defend the group's position, and then have the scribe present a short summary to the whole class. The teacher walked from group to group to help if needed.

After the five minutes, each scribe presented the group's points of evidence. One group supporting the wolf claimed that he was innocent and did not do the damage to all of the pigs' houses because the three pigs were just that, three little pigs, and pigs do not take care of their own places, thus causing the messes themselves; pigs needed

to blame someone for their messiness, so they picked the wolf. The second group supporting the wolf claimed that Walt Disney had made a movie portraying the three little pigs as the good guys, thus making it hard for the wolf to get fair treatment. One group supporting the pigs' story claimed that the damage done was too much for pigs to make. They were too little. Only someone big like the wolf could have done it. The second group supporting the pigs stated that pigs are peaceful. Wolves are mean. The wolf was making up his story so he wouldn't get in trouble. One student from the first two groups stated, "The pigs could be making up their story, too. They didn't want to get in trouble."

The lesson concluded with Ms. Clark asking, "After reading these two books, what is an issue?" Student responses included a variety of insights:

"An issue is an interesting problem that has two different sides to it. Both might be true."

"There are at least two sides to a story and you should listen to all of those sides before you make up your mind."

"I learned that the word *issue* means that a problem has a least two different sides to it and that there are people who are on all of the sides because they think they are true and important. I believed that some people are guilty while others might be innocent of what is said about them."

"You have to find the facts. An issue is a special problem that has many sides to it. A side is something someone believes is true, and someone else may have a different side, and that may also be true. People don't always agree on everything."

Day 2. Ms. Clark began the lesson with a question: "What did we talk about yesterday?" the students responded that they had studied what an issue was, considering the story of the Three Little Pigs.

Ms. Clark then introduced the next activity by stating, "Now that you know what an issue is, we are going to study a real issue that can affect every one of you." Ms. Clark told the class that they were about to study an important issue about how religious beliefs could conflict with an everyday school activity that almost all students participate in. The class would study this issue in small groups, each group trying to find a solution to the dilemma. During the group activity, each person in each of the groups would have the right to his/her opinion and belief, and the students could change their minds and revise their decisions as the activity went on. She gave further instructions on how she would interact with each group encouraging participation, and asking questions to probe and clarify their ideas.

After dividing the class into three groups, each with seven students, Ms. Clark gave each group copies of a case study entitled "The Flag Salute Problem" (Shaver & Larkins, 1973), describing a female

student who did not want to stand to salute the flag because of religious beliefs but was forced by the teacher to do so. After reading the case study with the students following along, Ms. Clark asked what seemed to be the problem. The class replied that the girl would not stand for the flag salute because of religious reasons, but the teacher thought the girl was wrong and not patriotic. "What do you think the girl should do? Should we not pledge allegiance to the flag?" Ms. Clark queried. There were a number of responses: "Everyone should pledge the flag because it is about our country"; "We should be able to pledge the flag if we want to but those who can't or don't want to don't have to do it as long as they are quiet"; "It was all right not to pledge the flag if someone is tired that day"; "It is OK not to pledge the flag if your church says no, but you should stand with the others out of respect for America."

Ms. Clark asked the students if they thought it would be all right to refuse to do something if one's religious beliefs were against it. A number of students responded "yes." "Like what," Ms. Clark probed. Student responses included the following:

> "If someone ask you to smoke and you don't want to because of your religious beliefs."
>
> "Someone wants you to play on Sunday when you are supposed to be in church."
>
> "If someone wants to watch a "R" rated movie and you know you aren't supposed to."
>
> "If your friends tell a dirty joke, and you know you are not supposed to listen because your Pastor says its not good to tell dirty jokes."

Next, Ms. Clark asked the students what they would do if the school or the teacher asked them to do something that was against their religious beliefs. Some students appeared to be somewhat bewildered and answered that they were not sure what they should do. Others didn't think the things they did in school made them disobey any of their religious beliefs. Some concluded that if the teacher told them to do something, they had better do it. One student claimed, "If your religion says that you don't have to do it, then you should not be forced to do something you don't want to do." Ms. Clark noted, "It appears we have a problem here. Some of you disagree with the girl, and others of you agree with her. So for the rest of the class time I want you in your groups to reread the story and answer this question that I am going to write on the board. I will give you the rest of today's

class and most of tomorrow's class to find out your answers to the problem. Tomorrow will be a short day." Ms. Clark wrote on the chalkboard "What should be done if a student refuses to stand for the flag salute because of religious beliefs?" She then told the class that they should try to find out as much information as they could and suggested that they look in the back of their textbooks at the *Constitution* and read the First Amendment describing religious freedom. Also during recess, lunch, or after school, or for homework they might want to go to the library and look up religious freedom in the encyclopedia and find out any information there that might help them to make a decision about the problem.

With about 15 minutes left in class, Ms. Clark turned the balance of class time over to group activity, while she went from group to group helping the groups to organize information and use decision making skills. She guided group discussion by asking questions such as "What does this mean?" "Why is that so?" "What if that hadn't happened?" "What should be done? "How do you know this is accurate?" "What reasons can you give for your belief?"

Day 3. Day 3 was a short, 30-minute day. Before turning time over to the group activity, Ms. Clark said on the next day each group was to be ready to present in class their solutions to the problem. On this day, each group was to create a "solution page," on which they would write down as many solutions as they could think of based on each member's beliefs. Next they would determine what consequences might occur if each of the solutions were tried in class. Then they were to cross off any solution that the group believed would be impossible to carry out. Finally they were to discuss the balance of the solutions until one solution was left that the group could generally agree on as the best solution. Next each group would write up a short position paper on "Why our group believes this is the best solution" and "What effects this solution might have on the student, the student's parents, the classroom teacher, and the student's classmates?"

About five minutes before class ended, Ms. Clark interrupted the group activity. For homework, she asked each student to write a personal, one-page position paper on the solution that his/her group had decided on. She told the students to write down the information they would need for their papers. She gave them the following prompts: "Do you agree with that solution? If so, why? If not, why not? If you agree with your group's decision, determine what consequences you think the solution would have on the student, the student's parents, the classroom teacher, and the student's classmates. If you disagree with your group's decision on the solution, decide on your own solution, decide why you would choose it, and then determine what consequences your solution would have on the student, the student's parents, the classroom teacher, and the student's class-

mates." The students were reminded of the basics of writing—correct periods, commas, capital words, complete sentences, and paragraphs. They were told they would be graded on both content and grammar. These papers would be due after the presentation of each group's findings the next day.

Day 4. Ms. Clark began the class by asking each group to send one member to the chalkboard to write the group's solution on the board followed by the pros and cons they had determined for that solution. After the scribe of each group had written, the chalk board looked like this:

SOLUTIONS

Group 1 ***Do Something Else While Sitting During The Pledge***	*Group 2* ***Stand And Not Say Pledge***	*Group 3* ***Go In The Hall***
Pro:		
-least amount of disruption	*-no disruption at all*	*-she doesn't have to say or hear*
- student's rights are observed	*-classmates wouldn't know*	
- Mom and Dad would be happy	*-all would stand*	
Con:		
-classmates may not like someone doing something different	*-would the student reall stand?*	*-cause disruption to leave every day*
	-may still violate her rights	
- may distract those saying pledge	*-students might find out*	*-can't monitor the hall*
- she would hear it and make faces		

Each group then had five minutes to present their solution, why they chose it, and its possible consequences as determined by group members.

After the three group presentations, Ms. Clark introduced the next activity by telling the class that they would have an informal vote on the three presented solutions. Each student was to vote according to his or her own beliefs. Ten students voted for Solution 1, four for Solution 2, and four for Solution 3. Three students wanted to vote for a Solution 4, which was not put on the chalkboard: that the student should be required to stand and pledge the flag like everybody else. They argued their position, stating that the girl lived in America and should be proud to be an American and that her religious freedoms were given to her by the Constitution. Some of the other students countered with the argument that the reason why

America is great is because people have the freedom to do about anything they want, and the Constitution allows people to believe what they want. They claimed that the girl could still be a proud American without saluting the flag because America allows her to refuse to do something she doesn't want to do. Ms. Clark then asked the class if there are some things we have to do even if we don't like them. One student said yes, that his dad says he hates paying taxes, but the law makes him do it or he will go to jail. Another student stated that there are a few things we do have to do even if we don't like them in order to make the country a better place for all to live. She then gave the example of speed limits helping people to be safe.

Ms. Clark instructed the students to turn in their personal position papers before the bell rang. She would read them and turn them back the next day.

Before the students left, Ms. Clark introduced one additional activity. She wanted each student to write down the four solutions to the flag salute problem that were discussed in class. The students were then to go home and interview their parents about the "The Flag Salute" issue. They were to ask their parents to read the case study, present to them the four solutions, and find out what their parents thought would be the best solution and why. Each student was to write a one-page paper based on the parent interview. Tomorrow the class would report their findings.

Day 5. Ms. Clark passed back the students' papers. She announced that the papers were well written both in content and mechanics. She was impressed at how the students presented their positions and were able to defend their positions by presenting the positive and negative consequences.

She began the day's activities by asking the students what their parents had said about the "Flag Salute" and how their parents would resolve the problem. The discussion revealed that two general solutions had been offered by the parents. Nineteen of the families believed that the girl should just sit at her desk and do something else quietly while the rest of the class stood and said the pledge. They believed she had the right of her religious convictions to do so Two families (one the family of a student who had voted for Solution 2) believed that the girl should at least stand to show respect for the flag even though she should not be required to say the pledge.

Ms. Clark was somewhat surprised at the overwhelming support of Solution 1. After a brief and lively discussion of why the students thought their parents were right, Ms. Clark had the students turn in the parents' position papers.

With about 20 minutes left in class, Ms. Clark divided the class into three even groups different than the original three groups. Each group was to prepare for the next day a five-minute skit that would

demonstrate the flag issue and their solution to it. Every member of the group must have a part in the skit. The groups would have the balance of the class that day and the beginnings of the next class to work on the skit. To help the groups with their skits and to help them to stay on task, she would go from group to group.

Day 6. At the beginning of class, Ms. Clark had the groups continue working on their skits. The groups were given an additional 20 minutes to finish their skits and prepare themselves to present them to the rest of the class. She added that the principal would be coming in to watch the skits. Ms. Clark then went from group to group to help the students finalize their skits.

After about 20 minutes, Ms. Clark oriented the class to the activity: Each group would present their five minute skit, followed by a short discussion of what the class as a whole thought of the skit and the solution presented. Each group then presented a short skit of the young girl not saluting the flag due to religious beliefs, all portraying the same solution the majority of the students had chosen: The student should just sit at her desk and do something else quietly while the rest of the class stood and said the pledge. The discussions following the skits were very short because the class as whole felt that the issue was well presented in each group skit and that the solution was obviously one of choice.

Mr. [Principal] told the students that he had enjoyed each of the skits and thought the students had done well at representing the issue and suggesting a solution. He agreed with the single solution presented in all three skits and told the students that if he had a student at school who had religious beliefs like not saluting the flag, he would think of other positive activities for the student to do so that he or she would not be embarrassed by and could live with it comfortably. The students seemed to have enjoyed his comments.

Day 7. Day 7 was a short, 30-minute day. This was the last day for the issues-centered unit. Ms. Clark began the class with a debriefing activity for the unit by asking the students what the flag salute issue meant to them. The student responses included the following positions: Some people have different opinions than other people and that is OK; people don't have the right to take away other people's religious beliefs; it is OK if some students don't pledge the flag if they don't want to because of something they believe is right or wrong. One student still insisted that "everyone living in America who is supposed to be an American should stand up during a pledge of allegiance to the flag of this country." Four students began to harass the dissenting student because of his statement when Ms. Clark stepped in and reminded the class that they had just stated that it was OK to have a different opinion then the rest of the class. The offending students apologized and said, "That's right."

Ms. Clark then concluded the unit by telling the students what she thought about the Flag Salute story. At first when she read it she was outraged. The girl could at least have stood to show respect to those who had fought and died for this country in order to gain freedom, even freedom to believe what one chooses. Also Ms. Clark felt the girl should have stood up because she was a citizen of the United States. Ms. Clark then began to realize that those who wrote and signed the Constitution had provided that people, all people, could choose what to believe and could worship freely. This freedom is one of the main reasons why so many people have come to this country. "I am sad that she does not want to stand," Ms. Clark explained. "But if her religion tells her that standing and pledging allegiance to the flag is worshipping idols, I have to respect her for that, and as a teacher I would allow her to stay in her seat. My freedom to do what I want means a great deal to me, and I should respect those whose beliefs are different, and I should give them the same freedoms I want for myself." Ms. Clark asked if the students had any questions on how she believed. There were none. She then told the class how proud she was of them because of their hard work in trying to solve a very important issue: An issue that they would come across again in their life time.

Teacher 2: Ms. Moore

Ms. Moore taught a fifth/sixth grade social studies class of 25 European American students. For three days the class would study the issue of seating charts designed by the teacher vs. students being able to choose where they would like to sit in class. The students chose the topic of study.

Day 1. Ms. Moore began the unit by reading to the class *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss. She asked the class if the story described a problem. They answered yes. When she asked what the problem was, the students replied that some people want to destroy the trees for money while others want to protect the trees. Ms. Moore asked how many sides or points of view are represented in this problem. When the students answered two, Ms. Moore explained that when a problem exists there are usually at least two, sometimes more, different opinions on how to solve it. A problem that has two or more opinions on a possible solution is called an *issue*. She then asked four students to explain the word *issue* using *The Lorax* as an example. The four students' responses were very similar: "An issue is a problem that has two sides, like in the story there are these trees and one side wants to cut them down and the other side wants to save them."

Ms. Moore then explained that for the next three days the class was going to study an issue of their choice in order to practice decision-making skills. She introduced the unit by instructing the class that for the next five minutes they were to brainstorm issues or prob-

lems they thought were important to them, and she would write the issues on the chalkboard. After a five minute brainstorm, the list looked like this:

fighting	*bad language*	*get out of school earlier*
time to play on the "big toy" [name for the gymnastic apparatus on the school playground]		
gangs	*seating charts*	*lunch food*
vandalism	*graffiti*	*homework over the holidays*
candy in class	*wearing hats in school*	*having to go to recorders*

Ms. Moore then divided up the class into five small groups and gave them five minutes to come up with one issue that the group would like to work on for this unit. Two of the groups want to work on seating charts; one group chose graffiti; one other group decided on candy in class; and the last group wanted to consider wearing hats in school. Ms. Moore listed the four choices on the chalkboard in order for the class to vote on the issue that the whole class would find the most interesting to study. Eighteen students voted for the seating chart issue, five for graffiti, and two for candy in the classroom. Ms. Moore stated the class would study teacher-made seating charts. She ended the class by instructing the students to come prepared the next day to discuss why seating charts were an issue in the school and with the class and to "be prepared to present what it is that you want to happen with seating charts and what would be the consequences, positive or negative, of doing what you want."

Day 2. Ms. Moore began class by reviewing with the students what it was that they had done yesterday in social studies. Two students talked about the book *The Lorax*, three students defined the word *issue*, and a few students talked about coming up with a number of issues, putting them on the chalkboard, and voting to find one the class wanted to study.

Ms. Moore introduced the next activity by having the class form the original small groups. She wrote on the chalkboard questions for each group to answer:

What is the problem?
[clarified as "what does seating charts and sitting were you want mean to you and what would it mean to the teacher?"]

How many sides are represented in the issue?
[clarified as "what do you think now would be two sides to this issue?"]

When the students responded that the two sides were what the students want and what the teacher wants, Ms. Moore responded, "That would seem right to me. Is this issue important?" She then turned ten minutes over to the small groups to discuss possible answers to the two questions.

It was evident that some groups worked more efficiently than others. Two groups seemed to have trouble getting on task. Ms. Moore resolved the problem quickly by becoming involved in conversations with the two groups. Both quickly settled down and appeared to be on task. There seemed to be a lot of discussion in the groups. All of the groups eventually assigned a member to be a scribe and take notes on what they were going to present.

After the ten minutes, Ms. Moore had the groups present their discussions. The issue was whether or not seating charts designed by teachers were fair to students. There were two positions to the problem: The kids' position (e.g., they wanted to sit wherever they wanted in class) and the teacher's position (e.g., kids should sit in the order that the teacher wanted them to). As the groups presented, Ms. Moore wrote their positions on the chalkboard under *KIDS* and *TEACHER*. The students gave the following reasons for being allowed to sit where they wanted to:

1. It makes kids happier and want to be in school.
2. It allows kids to sit next to their friends.
3. Some kids like to sit in the front and some in the back because it is more comfortable.
4. It is stupid to have assigned seats.
5. Kids should have at least one day to sit next to their friends.
6. Kids would not talk and be good if they could choose their seats.

The students then gave the following reasons why the teacher would want a seating chart:

1. Kids don't do their work.
2. They talk too much.
3. They get in fights.
4. It is easier for the teacher to keep everyone good.
5. It helps the teacher to know your name.
6. It keeps the teacher from being mad at you and giving you homework.
7. It shows respect to the teacher.
   [One student blurted out, "But having our own seats shows the teacher has respect for us."]
8. Seating charts help us learn and not talk and makes us pay attention.
9. If everyone got to sit by who you want to, there would be total chaos.

After the group presentations, Ms. Moore commented that it looked like that there were more important reasons for keeping a seating chart than for allowing students to sit anywhere they wanted to. Some of the male students groaned. Ms. Moore continued by asking two questions: "How many of you think seating charts are needed by teachers?" (ten hands went up) and "How many of you think students should sit where they want to?" (thirteen hands went up). One student had abstained. Asked why, he stated, "It doesn't matter what we think or do, teachers are not going to let us do what we want." Ms. Moore smiled and stated, "Let's see what happens."

Then Ms. Moore assigned the groups to come up with an "operational statement": a statement specifying how students wanted to implement the freedom to choose their own seats in class. The operational statement, sometimes called a hypothesis, helps to guide the discussion as participants either specifically agree or disagree with the statement. The groups were given five minutes. When each group was finished framing their statement, they were to send a scribe to write it on the chalkboard. Representatives from the five groups wrote the following statements:

Teachers should let kids choose their own seating.
Kids should sit next to their friends if they are quiet.
Kids should earn where we sit.
Teachers and the class can decide how to make the chart.
Kids should have a special day to sit where they want.

Ms. Moore had the class discuss and vote on which operational statement they wanted to use to guide the rest of the lessons. After about five minutes of discussion—mostly arguing who had the best statement—the class voted on "Kids should earn where we sit." Ms. Moore

modified the statement by writing on the chalkboard, "We should earn where we sit."

Ms. Moore stated that on the next day the first part of class would be used to determine possible consequences of the operational statement by looking at the *desirability* and the *feasibility* of trying to implement a policy of having students earn the right to sit wherever they like. Then Ms. Clark wrote *desirability* and *feasibility* on the chalkboard. Ms. Moore asked if everyone knew what the two terms mean. She then stated that *desirability* means that you really want to do this, and *feasibility* means that you can do it because you have the money or the time to do it. You may want to do something, you have the desire; but you might not be able to do it because of some reason, like no money, so it is not feasible. Ms. Moore then asked if every one understood what she meant. There were a number of affirmative nods.

She then gave a homework assignment to interview two people: a parent and one other person, maybe a neighbor or a student from another class or school, asking what the interviewee thought of the statement and of the *desirability* and *feasibility* of making it actually happen.

Before the class ended, one student asked, "If we do a good job on this, are you going to let us choose our own seats?" "That is a good question," answered Ms. Moore. "We will see about it, tomorrow. It partly depends on how you do your interviews to see if these people can help us decide."

Day 3. Ms. Moore began class by having the students present the information they had found in their interviews. Most of the parents thought it was important that the students have the choice of where they should sit. One parent thought it was a good idea because the teacher could use the seating privilege as leverage to keep the students quiet and learning. If they did not behave appropriately, the teacher could then put the students into a seating chart. Teacher interviews varied in the opinions expressed. One teacher thought the proposed choice was a good idea because he thought that kids would behave better, and he wanted to see how Ms. Moore was going to do it. "If it looks like it works well in Ms. Moore's class, I might try it." The other four teachers interviewed thought it would be disastrous because of the noise factor. Student interviews also produced varied results. Six students thought it would be a bad idea. "I don't think it would work because everyone will be too noisy." Two kids said it "would suck," and another said it "was too stupid to do." However, the remaining eighteen students thought it was a great idea, and one student hoped that Ms. Moore could work it out "so that other teachers can see her example and maybe let us sit were we want to."

Then Ms. Moore had the class look at the chalkboard where she had pasted a large sheet of butcher paper with a chart that she had

prepared before class. At the top of the chart was written in large caps "WE CAN EARN WHERE WE SIT." Below, horizontally across the paper were written "Desirable," "Undesirable," "Feasible," and "Not Feasible," with three large blocks for each of the four categories running horizontally across under the labels. Ms. Moore then told the class that yesterday they had discussed the meanings of *desirable* and *feasible* and asked if everyone knew what the other two terms, *undesirable* and *not feasible* meant. Again there were a number of affirmative nods and a few "yes's."

Next, Ms. Moore had each group make a smaller chart similar to the one on the chalkboard to have the students determine if the operation statement or hypothesis "We can earn where we sit" was *desirable* or *undesirable* and *feasible* or *not feasible*. Each group had five minutes to fill in their own charts. "Include information from the various interviews as well as your own beliefs," Ms. Moore instructed the students.

After the allotted five minutes, the groups reported their findings as Ms. Moore wrote them on the large chart:

Responses to *desirable*:
People won't talk.
Kids won't sit next to friends.
Seating charts are not friendly.
Would be quiet for the teacher.
Would feel comfortable with friends.

Responses to *undesirable*:
Kids won't get work done.
Sometimes, seating charts help you get work done and not talk.

Responses to *feasible*:
Would work if both student and friend don't talk.
One section is seated [sic] chart and the other sit wherever.
We have to earn to sit wherever.
Kids won't talk to friends.

Responses to *not feasible*:
Kids want to talk more with their friends.
Kids won't listen.
One would talk too much.
Some would want a seating chart.

Ms. Moore explained, "Now that we have analyzed the data and have given support to why or why not we should do anything about this issue, it is time to vote on whether you think 'We can earn where we sit' is desirable to do or undesirable and whether your position is feasible or not feasible. Are you ready to vote? Those of you who think this is a desirable position and something you want to try in this classroom, vote now." All 24 students voted. Ms. Moore remarked, "I guess

that no one will vote for *undesirable*, am I right?" Not one student put up his or her hand. "O.K., next, how many of you think this is a feasible operation in this class?" To this question 20 students put up their hands. "Then, there must be some of you who don't think this will work in the class. Who are you?" At this, 4 hands went up.

"Well, let us look at the votes," Ms. Moore continued, "all 24 of you think this would be a great idea to try in class. And 20 of you think it will work. Well, as your teacher who uses a seating chart, I am willing to give you a try in earning where you want to sit. So what do you think we should do next?" One student put up her hand. "Ashley?" "Ms. Moore, I think we need to decide if there should be some rules that we and you need to live by."

Ms. Moore responded, "I think that would be a great idea. So let me put up another piece of paper so that we can make some rules telling how we can earn the right to sit where we want. Let us decide together what those rules would be."

The class, after much discussion and some urging from Ms. Moore, came up with four rules:

1. We will pay attention in class.
2. We will do our work.
3. We will use our twelve inch whispers (a rule developed by the teacher at the beginning of the school year by which if students had to talk to a neighbor it would be short and in whisper form)
4. If someone at my table or next to me is not obeying the rules, I will remind him or her to do better.

Ms. Moore tacked the butcher paper with the rules to the front wall of the classroom. "O.K., if you promise to follow these rules, I will, starting tomorrow, allow you to sit where you want to. But remember, you have to keep earning that right every day. If you can't, I will make a new seating chart. What do you say?" The class was excited. "One more thing," Ms. Moore cautioned, " first come, first to choose his or her seat. There will be no arguing about that, O.K.?" There were a number of "yes's", "uh-huh" responses, and some affirmative nods. The unit was finished.

Postscript. A week following this last day of the unit, Ms. Moore had the students discuss how the seating experience was going. The students thought it was going well. The students were impressed that any teacher would listen to their desires. They thought it was still a neat idea. Ms. Moore agreed. For the balance of the term, Ms. Moore allowed students to continue sitting where they wanted. It was not always easy to maintain the control that she desired, but she felt that

the experience of allowing students to make some of their own rules was a very valuable lesson and that most of the disturbances were very minor in comparison. She felt that the lack of a seating chart did not hamper the class work.

Teacher 3: Ms. Donaldson

Ms. Donaldson taught a fifth/sixth grade social studies class of 27 European American students. For three days, her class studied a local problem involving a Jewish high school student who was suing her high school and her choral teacher for allowing Christian songs to be sung in a public school setting.

Day 1. Ms. Donaldson introduced the unit with the question "What is an issue?" There were about four responses, students noting that an issue is "sort of some kind of problem." Ms. Donaldson affirmed the answers, then added that an issue is indeed a problem that usually has at least two different sides from which it can be viewed and solved. She then asked the question, "Have you ever had a problem in your house with your mom or dad when they have one opinion on how to solve the problem and you have a different approach?" There were some affirmative nods, and one student volunteered, "Yeah, kind of like cleaning up your room. Your parents want you to keep it always clean, and you think its OK to be messy because it's neat and it's no big deal." Ms. Donaldson commented that that was probably a major issue or problem that most of the kids had to deal with many times a week. There was a small chorus of "Yes." Ms. Donaldson then asked, "What are some other issues that we deal with or that you have seen?" Student responses included problems with brothers and sisters, school lunch, gangs, graffiti, cleaning up the school grounds, too much homework. When she asked why these were issues, the students replied that the teacher or someone else has one opinion on what to do about the problem and the kids have another. Ms. Donaldson asked who was right, and one student stated, "Well, sometimes the other people and sometimes we are." Ms. Donaldson continued by asking the students if they could identify some issues in the news? One student said his dad thought the biggest problem in the news was too many taxes. Another reported his parents thought the biggest problem was President Clinton and the Democrats. Another said her dad didn't like the government telling him how to shoot his guns.

Ms. Donaldson then asked, "Has anyone heard of Rachel Bauchman?" A number of students said that they had. "What did she do?" asked the teacher.

"She was singing in a high school choir, and she didn't like the songs they were singing."

"She is different in her religion, and she didn't like to sing Christian songs."

"She was singing at her high school graduation, and the other kids made fun of her because she has a different religion by singing some Christmas songs."

Ms. Donaldson said that most of those facts are true. Rachel Bauchman was a high school student in the tenth grade at West High School in Salt Lake City. She belonged to the Jewish religion, which believes in God as a Supreme Being and Jesus Christ as a prophet and only as a man. She sang in the school's choir. The choir director was a Christian, and he had his class, most of whom were Christians, sing Christian songs. He even had the choir go on a tour which included some Christian churches where the choir sang to church members. Rachel thought that singing these songs and especially going to Christian churches was in violation of her religious rights that are protected by the Constitution of the United States. According to the Constitution religious activities can not be done at school. Rachel and her parents believed that singing Christian songs should not be included in those activities. The Utah State Supreme Court agreed with Rachel and told the school that they could not sing any religious songs of any kind in the choir or at school functions. This caused the students and the parents at West High School to be angry both at the court's decision and at Rachel for causing what they thought to be trouble. To make matters worse, at the schools' graduation it was tradition to have the choir sing a religious song entitled "The Lord Bless You And Keep You." Also at the conclusion of graduation the entire graduating class and audience would sing "Friends," a song that contained a religious reference. The Supreme Court told the school and the choir that they could not sing either song. During the graduation, the choir did not sing the religious song. However, when the principal stood up to continue the graduation ceremonies, there was a chorus of boos from parents and students. Then one of the graduates, a young man, jumped from his chair that was on the stage behind the principal, ran to the front of the stage and lead the audience and the graduates in singing "Friends." The principal tried to stop the singing but he did not succeed. Rachel Bauchman, who was only a sophomore but was in the choir during graduation, walked out and later sued the school for violating her religious rights and violating the court order. Ms. Donaldson stated that for the next three days, the class would determine if Rachel Bauchman or the school was right about singing religious songs in a public school.

Ms. Donaldson then introduced the next activity telling the students that they were going to watch a video about Rachel Bauchman. Filmed in Salt Lake City, it presents both sides of the issue. "Now watch carefully because I have some questions to ask you after the

video." Ms. Donaldson instructed. She then wrote the following questions on the chalkboard:

What is the issue?
What are the two different sides?
Who do you think is right? Why?

After the 15-minute video, Ms. Donaldson asked the students the questions written. Responses showed the students had watched and listened carefully:

What is the issue?
"Her religious rights were violated."
"The teacher has the right to decide what he should teach."
"The principal should have stopped the singing."
"The students were in the majority and they could sing their song if they wanted to."

What are the two different sides? (actually five sides were brought up)
Rachel Bauchman: Her religious rights were violated.
The court: They ruled singing religious songs was against the law.
The choir teacher: He makes the decisions on what to teach.
The other students: The majority wanted to sing the song.
The Principal: He was caught in the middle but must keep the law.

Who was right?
Rachel was right; her religious views should be respected (15 students).
The students were right, they were the majority: "We have been taught that the majority always wins in this country;" three students supported the court's ruling, "the court's ruling is the law and we should obey the law" (8 students). One student claimed he didn't "think anything."

With time running out, Ms. Donaldson asked the eight students who thought the majority of the students were right, "Do you think the majority should always be right? Think about that and ask your parents." Then turning to the rest of the class, Ms. Donaldson gave the following instructions, "Go home and ask your parents their feelings about this issue, and begin coming up with what you think would be the best way to solve this problem."

Day 2. Ms. Donaldson began class asking if any of the students had talked to their parents about the issue of Rachel Bauchman. About half the students put up their hands. Their responses were varied:

"My mom and dad thought Rachel was right in suing the school so that her religious beliefs could be protected."

"My parents think that Rachel was too uptight about what happened. She knew she was going to a school that had a major religious tradition, and she should have compromised, and the school should have sung their song."

"My dad thought the courts should have stayed out of the problem and let the principal decide because that was his job."

"My mom never heard of the case. She doesn't let us watch much TV in our family."

"My dad and mom said that the school should have been able to sing their song, but the choir teacher did not have the right to teach only Christian songs."

Ms. Donaldson said, "It looks like there are a number of different opinions about this problem. To show you that this problem concerns not only Utah but the entire country, here is an article about Rachel Bauchman and her suit against West High in the national paper *USA Today*." She read the headline "Jewish Teen Stands Against Utah Choir's Christian Tone" (Stone, 1995). Ms. Donaldson then said, "What we are going to do now is have you write a letter to the editor of the *Deseret News* (a local newspaper) about your feelings about this problem. Does anyone know what a letter to the editor is?" Most of the students nodded or said "yes." To show students an example, Ms. Donaldson then read a published letter to the editor about Rachel Bauchman.

After reading the letter, Ms. Donaldson told the class that during the balance of class time each student was to write a letter to the editor stating his or her opinion about the Rachel Bauchman case. The letters would be due at the end of class. To help students with writing their letters, Ms. Donaldson put up the following "cluster" diagram on the chalkboard:

Why?
What should be done now?

Why?
What happened?

Rachel Bauchman

What I would have done.
Why?

What I think.
Why?

During the balance of the class time, the students wrote their letters. Prior to the bell, Ms. Donaldson called for and collected the letters.

Day 3. The day's lesson was very short. Ms. Donaldson returned the students' letters with grammatical corrections. She asked the students to pair off and trade their letters. Each student was to read the partner's letter and ask these questions: "Is it an opinion supported by facts?" "Does it make sense?" "Can you understand it?" The pairs were to return each other's letter and discuss these questions.

This activity lasted about eight minutes. Ms. Donaldson ended the unit by having the students rewrite the letters using the correct grammar and spelling that she had suggested and consider any comments their partners had made on the paper. After about fifteen minutes of silent writing, the students turned in their letters. This concluded the unit.

Findings: The Teachers

In this section, we will use the steps of the Engle-Ochoa model as a framework to determine if the three teachers were able to implement the model.

Phase 1: Classroom Environment and Teacher Preparation

Ms. Clark. The objective for the first day lesson was to develop a classroom environment to help students to feel comfortable with the upcoming unit. Clark believed it was important for her students to understand the word *issue* in order to have an operational understanding of the upcoming lessons and experiences. She did this in a number of ways. First, at the beginning of the unit she drew students into a familiar story, *The Three Pigs*, to provide them with a vivid example of an *issue*. The reading of the story and the question-answer activity that accompanied the reading was intended to prepare and motivate students for the balance of the issues-centered unit. Second, Clark used an interactive instructional methodology to promote the desired environment for her forthcoming lessons and for students' future experiences. The first activity involved using questions-and-answers in a fairly successful attempt to find out what students knew about issues and have them develop a mind set about issues. She continued this development with the reading and question-answering activities centered around the two children's books. Next, she surprised the students by having them divide into small groups to resolve the dilemma that came from the reading of the two books. (They had not previously had this kind of activity.) In small group discussion, each group came to some consensus on who was telling the truth. In five minutes, an appointed scribe reported each group's findings. Clark concluded her class with a question-answer activity, again asking the question that she had used at the beginning of class: "What is an issue?" Student responses were many, with better insights. Class ended.

In an interview before class, Clark expressed concern about how the first lesson would turn out. She kept saying that neither she nor her students had ever done an issues-centered unit, and she believed it was doomed for failure. This belief was based on "the difficulty the students would have adjusting from reading the book and answering the questions at the end of a chapter to discovering their own ideas and opinions by questions, discussion, and research." This realization convinced her that a simple introductory lesson would be necessary to create an "alternative atmosphere" before "any type of issue was approached."

After class, she talked philosophically about what it was that she wanted to accomplish in this and future lessons in her issues-centered unit:

> I wanted to create the kind of atmosphere in my classroom where each student could come to their own personal decision. There is more than one side to this situation, but each child needs to make up their own mind. If it is always the teacher or the parent making the decisions for them, then they might find the urge to experiment with things that might do them harm, just to see what would happen. I want to try and avoid this in the long run by having both sides presented now in their youth and giving them the choice in a safe environment.

She was very happy how well her class went. She was surprised at the positive responses of her students in all of the class activities, especially the small group discussion. She had been somewhat anxious putting students in small groups, fearing students would misbehave. For that reason, she intentionally kept the small group activity to five minutes. She also was very concerned with class-time. When class began, she became concerned that there were not enough activities to keep the students "busy." However, as the lesson progressed she couldn't believe the "active student involvement." She was "surprised" by this involvement for two reasons: first, how it took up so much time, and second, how responsive and energetic the students were learning "knowledge" from each other. And, this "student involvement" required "*fewer* but more engaging instructional activities."

Ms. Moore. For about fifteen minutes at the beginning of her first lesson, Moore was trying to develop an open environment for students to be able to engage themselves in a number of activities in order to resolve an issue of their choice. The introductory activity was designed to introduce and engage students in learning of the definition of *issues*. Moore read a children's book, *The Lorax*, and followed

with a variety of questions to actively involve the students in the presented problem. Many students made positive responses. After the question-answer activity, Moore gave a short definition of the word *issues*, then concluded this portion of the activity by having four students explain what the word *issues* means, using an example from the reading.

Before class, Moore expressed her concern both about the unit and about the students' involvement. She had not done much preparation. She was going to allow her students to discuss the *issues* and then have them choose an issue that interested them. She was very anxious about whether she should have chosen the topic and studied it in advance "to ensure that the students would be occupied during class time." She was also concerned about "the difficulty the students would have adjusting from reading the book and answering the questions at the end of a chapter to discovering their own ideas and opinions by questions, discussion, and research." Moore was skeptical that her students would be capable, mentally or socially, "to do these lessons."

After the lesson, she was "very surprised" at how many students were involved in the question-answer activity about the problem presented in the book. She liked the responses of the four students on the definition of *issues*. However, as the next lesson quickly followed, she wasn't sure how many students understood the definition. She felt she should have "spent some more time developing additional activities to help all the students to understand what an *issue* is."

Ms. Donaldson. Donaldson spent the first ten minutes of class trying to develop an open environment. She began with a question-answer activity on defining *issue*, then conducted a second question-answer activity about issues that arise in the students' homes. This discussion brought out a number of lively responses. In a third question-answer activity, Donaldson wanted to know what kinds of issues the children were surround by each day. This activity provided Donaldson an opportunity to know if the students understood the term *issues*. In a fourth question-answer activity, she asked the students if they could identify issues in the everyday news. Only a few could. This aspect of the unit was then completed.

As she was being interviewed, Donaldson commented how tough she had found it to design a unit. She wasn't used to developing lesson plans a day at a time. "It was tough to take the model and write the lesson plans for the week It's tough to know how much time it's going to take and also how the class will respond to something so holistic." She strongly believed that the model is geared for older students and, therefore, would be "very difficult for fifth-sixth graders to do." "Because the students were completely unfamiliar with this type of format, and it is geared towards older students, some of

the branches of these steps were simplified." She was very concerned about the abilities of her students to accomplish the activities described in the model. She was annoyed that we had not spent more time preparing her and the other two teachers. "I would have liked to have seen the model taught before I taught my unit. I think it would have been helpful, so I would have known what to expect more than I did."

After the lesson, Donaldson seemed to be more relaxed. She liked how she began the unit with a number of question-answer activities. She felt this kind of activity "gave control over the students and the students have an opportunity to share their ideas and opinions." She believed that the series of questions-and-answers set a foundation for the rest of the unit. "The first day we discussed what an issue is. Since this was a new way of thinking and presentation for them, I thought it was necessary to set a foundation. I asked, "Does anyone know what an issue is?" I received many responses. I stressed that an issue has two sides."

Phase 2: Orientation to the Problem Area—Introduction

Ms. Clark. Clark introduced the issue to be studied by telling the class that they were about to study an issue of religious belief in conflict with an activity her students were involved in everyday. She gave instructions on how the class was to proceed in studying the issue: Students would work in small groups in order to resolve the dilemma, and she would keep them on task, interact with them, and guide them until resolution. Next, she divided the class into three equal groups and gave each student a copy of the issue to be studied. Asking the students to read along, Clark read the story that presented the issue.

Clark claimed that this was a very easy step. What she was looking for was an activity to prepare the students to accept the problem. "During this step the basic guidelines on how the students were to conduct themselves were presented. With these simple guidelines the students felt somewhat secure as the project began. It became obvious that the students would have to make adjustments from their usual methods of learning, a textbook and questions at the end of a chapter, to issue-centered instruction."

Ms. Moore. Moore explained to her class that over the next three days they were going to study an issue of their choice. She had the whole class do a brainstorming activity that produced a number of issues of interest to the students. These issues were written on the chalkboard. Moore divided the class into five small groups and instructed them to decide which of the issues the group wanted to study. Four issues were presented and voted on by the class, and one was chosen. Before class ended, Moore told the students to be prepared the next day to present and defend their positions.

Moore felt that the students seemed to enjoy participating in the activities. Many of the students were discussing and debating the various issues that had been put on the chalkboard. However, Moore had two concerns about teaching this step: (1) on the students' ability to work in small groups, and (2) the choice of the issue.

> Today I divided the class up into small groups and had them pick and discuss an issue of their choice. This activity was a little different from anything they had done before. I don't know if they have ever worked in small groups before. It appeared to be a positive experience for them, they enjoyed it. There were a few students who didn't like the activities and seem frustrated during the small group activity. I am a little concerned about them.

She was also concerned about how the issue was chosen. She felt that by allowing the students to choose their own issue she had lost some control of the classroom. "I think one of the first things I would do differently is pick the issue myself. I think if I had picked something, I could have done a better job researching the unit and would have been more prepared." However, she did like how the students went about deciding the issue that interested them the most, despite a few who were mad at the end because their issue wasn't chosen. "There are advantages to having the kids pick it though: it is more personal to them."

Ms. Donaldson. Donaldson began this stage of her unit with two question-answer activities about a young woman whose religious beliefs were in conflict with practices in the school she attended. Donaldson gave a short explanation of what had happened to the young lady. Then Donaldson told the students that they were going to study and identify the events that made up the young woman's story.

Donaldson stated that she had identified and defined the issue for the students to study. "I chose this problem because I felt it was applicable to the students' lives (how they would deal with Christmas/religious music and learning) and something that is a big question for the government. The issue of church vs. state is an interesting and exciting one that I thought they would enjoy."

Phase 3: Preliminary Discussion—Identifying and Defining the Problem

Ms. Clark. After Clark had read the story that described the issue, she had a question-answer activity that led to a number of students providing mixed reactions to the issue being studied. Then Clark lead a discussion with the students about what they would do if their religious beliefs were violated. The discussion ended with the ques-

tion-answer activity having the students determine whose side in the issue they thought at the time was right. Clark gave a homework assignment to do research on the topic. For the last fifteen minutes of class she had the students return to their small groups and discuss a number of questions about the issue that needed resolution.

Clark was very nervous about presenting the issue to the students. She believed that her lesson was "too loose" and "very sloppy." The sequence of activities felt convoluted, not building well on one another. She was concerned about some of her students who seemed to be confused about the entire exercise. She needed to watch them for further confusion in order to help them. She was hoping that her next lessons "would be better in sequencing the activities." She felt exhausted.

Ms. Moore. Moore began the class with small groups responding to two questions about the student chosen issue. Two of the groups were off-task, but Moore quickly intervened and resolved the problem. After ten minutes, a scribe from each group wrote the various responses on the chalkboard. A short discussion followed with the teacher asking for a vote on the two positions, a vote which ended in almost a tie. Next, the groups came up with operational statements representing how they viewed the situation. Moore liked the way the lesson was going. There was a lot of student participation.

> So all of that went all right, but then came the disaster. I divided my class into small groups. I gave each group a problem to solve. WRONG!!!!! I don't think any of the groups actually came up with anything. One of the groups couldn't decide who would write, another group had one person who specifically would say a bad choice and was upset when his group didn't agree. I was going to have them share their answer, but no one would listen to the other groups. It was frustrating! One consolation was that they had rarely, if ever, worked in groups before. This could account for some of their lack of cooperation.
>
> Two groups were particularly bad. Before I went any further, I decided I needed to set the expectations for the discussions. To start off with, I made it very clear that this was a special privilege to be able to have a discussion like this and that if anyone abused it by talking while someone else was or getting too loud or upset with each other that we would immediately pull out the social studies books and begin working silently from them. I think that caught their eyes immediately and they knew that I meant business.

Ms. Donaldson. Toward the end of the first day of the unit activity, Donaldson's students were to answer three questions related to the issue by watching a short video that presented both sides. Answering the questions and having them written on the chalkboard was a very successful activity. Fifteen of her students believed the young girl's rights had been violated. Next, Donaldson gave a homework assignment in which the students were to ask their parents what they thought about the issue.

Donaldson liked the idea of the video activity because it gave both sides of the issue her students were studying. However, "some of the students were not as excited as others. I think they were nervous because they didn't know a lot about the topic." She was anxious about the homework assignment. She hoped the students would do the assignment because the activities for the next day depended on the information the students gathered.

Phase 4: Discussion—Using Probing Questions

Ms. Clark. On the second day of the unit, Clark demonstrated her use of probing questions. After reading the case study, she began a question-answer activity related to its content that included questions causing the students to provide longer and more meaningful responses. A second question-answer activity followed, having the students describe how they would feel if their religious beliefs were violated. On day four, another lively discussion took place about the solutions to the case study, based on the probing questions that Clark had asked of her students.

Clark was enthusiastic about asking probing questions. She wrote examples of such questions in her lesson plans:

> What does this mean? (Definitional)
> Why is that so? (Evidential)
> What if that hadn't happen? (Speculative)
> What should be done? (Policy)
> How do you know that is accurate? (Evidential)
> What reasons can you give for your belief? (Evidential)

She expressed a strong belief in probing questions: "By constantly asking these questions, I was able to accurately determine what the students were understanding and learning."

Ms. Moore. Moore did not have any consistent large group discussions. Most discussions occurred in the small groups. Moore explained that she was never much of a questioner. She preferred for the students to discuss in small groups and then present their findings to the class. She felt like she could thus avoid losing control:

> One thing that I think really worked after some guidance from me was allowing students to work with their peers. It was refreshing to see that the students expressed themselves with conviction in their small groups. They enjoyed the interaction. Also this gave students a lot of freedom; it told them that I trusted them—an important aspect, I think, of teaching social studies.

Ms. Donaldson. During day one, Donaldson did a number of question-answer activities to help students discover what they believed about religious beliefs vs. state operations. The one activity, viewing the video and responding to three vital questions, seemed to fall into the category of probing questions.

Donaldson was positive about her ability to ask not only probing questions but good probing questions. She claimed that throughout the entire lesson she was asking such questions. "Throughout the unit, questions were asked concerning feelings, ideas, solutions, etc. Not only did we define the problem, but we constantly discussed why they believed in what they did." Although the evidence indicates that Donaldson did ask a number of questions, most were on the first day of the activity. Donaldson has some strong convictions about probing questions:

> Questions that are open-ended do not have predetermined answers and therefore require the students to consider possibilities, weigh the appropriateness and likelihood of solutions, and actually think for themselves. The best part of the questions is that there isn't a "right" answer. Students can begin to discuss things in a risk-free environment without worrying that they will give the wrong answer and not please the teacher.

Phase 4: Discussion—Identifying Value Assumptions

Ms. Clark. Clark used a number of activities to engage her students in identifying and analyzing values. During whole class discussions students had to analyze their own religious beliefs and the beliefs of those in the presented problem, and, later on into the unit they had to decide on a solution to the presented problem. Other activities that Clark used included written assignments to present and justify individual student and parental positions; small group activities to discuss and to brainstorm solutions for the problem; an assignment to interview parents about their thinking on the issue; and student voting on and defense of their positions.

Clark had some apprehension about this step. As she began to prepare the unit, she wasn't sure what "value assumptions" are or how to go about helping students to analyze them. One of the reasons that she chose the case study she used in her unit was because she believed that it would bring out the students' own beliefs and would invoke some "heated" discussion. She also believed that this step would help students to "understand how to deal with the conflicts which may arise." Even though she wanted "some heated discussions," she also wanted a safe and open environment so that students would not yell or say "nasty things to each other...The easiest way I found was to make simple guidelines for the group to follow. These included respecting others, participating with the group, and listening to the other students' ideas. These simple instructions saved quite a few groups from constant bickering."

Ms. Moore. Moore had her students identifying, defending, changing, and resolving value questions as early as the first activity of her unit, as students were given the opportunity to choose their own issue to study. After the issue was chosen, the balance of the time was spent on activities that caused the students to look at their own and others' belief systems in trying to resolve the dilemma. These activities included whole class discussion, small group assignments, and interviews of parents, other teachers and students. The "desirable and feasible" activity, in part, also had students analyzing values.

Moore felt that this step was well received by most of her students. She did have a couple of students who had voted for a different issue "get mad and did not participate much afterwards despite me trying to encourage them." She believed that she gave "enough freedom" for the students to " present and argue their beliefs." Even though she had had mixed feelings about allowing her students to choose their own issue, she was satisfied it did allow students the opportunity to express their feeling about the one chosen. She was surprised "at how many parents thought it was all right to allow students enough freedom to sit where they wanted to. I thought the parents would want some type of control system."

Ms. Donaldson. Donaldson's unit also seemed to have students examining value assumptions and belief systems. Although her activities were limited, her students were involved in her lessons. This active involvement might have been due to the topic being in the news and well known to the students. It had been one of the main news stories presented by the local media. The two activities that seem to support identification of value assumptions were the first question-answer activity that helped to develop an open class atmosphere but had nothing to do with the topic, and the parent interviews, by which the students discussed the topic with their parents. The next day they returned to class and presented their findings. Donaldson, however,

did little with the information, merely having the students report what they had discussed with their parents.

Donaldson believed that her activities provided her students with opportunities "to see there are no cut and dry answers. Each side did what they did because of certain beliefs and reasons." She also believed that it was the responsibility of the students to make their own choices about the topic with limited teacher help. The teacher should

> provide the activities for the students to identify whatever values are in the topic and conflict with their values, focus on them, work to change or keep one's beliefs...It is [then] up to each student, after the discussion of these beliefs and reasons, to decide what they would have done had they been in the situation and who they believe did the appropriate thing. This is where the agree/disagree factor comes in. These feelings are recorded in their letters-to-the-editor.

Phase 4: Discussion—Identifying Alternatives and Predicting Consequences

Ms. Clark. On day three of her unit, Clark had her students in three small groups make decisions on what they believed was the right way to resolve the issue. She instructed the students to discuss the alternatives and consequences to their decisions. On day four, an appointed scribe from each group wrote the group's solution on the chalkboard.

Clark claimed that her students "really enjoyed this part of the unit. Most groups were able to come up with reasonable solutions to their issue." However, she felt some of the individuals in the groups didn't prepare as well as they should. Their comments were very shallow. Other students did "fairly well." She believed that more time spent gathering and studying information about the issue would have solved this problem. "It would have been more beneficial if they could have researched in the public library for another week before presenting the results."

Ms. Moore. Moore put her class into small groups in which they were to resolve the problem. The first group discussion activity allowed students to come up with reasons to solve the problem. Next each group had to come up with an operational statement to frame the next group activity. Moore then introduced the "desirable and feasible" activity in which each group was to make a chart with the words "desirable-undesirable" and "feasible-not feasible." The groups were to consider these words as consequential categories when they discussed their operational statements. After the allotted time, a member

of each group showed Moore the information on the group's chart, which she recorded on a large "desirable and feasible" chart.

Moore liked this part of the activity, as it allowed her students to make some "deep decisions." When asked about how she came up with the "desirable and feasible" activity, Moore explained when she was designing her unit she had found this activity in an old social studies manual in the library, by Frank Simon (1970), entitled *A Reconstructive Approach To Problem-Solving In The Social Studies.*

Ms. Donaldson. Donaldson had some question-answer activities that gave her students opportunities to discuss alternative solutions for the problem. There was little evidence of her having the students discuss any consequences to those alternatives. Donaldson also had the students toward the end of her unit write letters to the editor. Before the writing, she wrote on the chalkboard a "cluster" diagram to help the students write. In the diagram were questions that called for students to think about alternative solutions and their consequences when making a decision on what they were to write.

Donaldson considered this a strong part of her lesson, allowing students to come up with alternative solutions. "What could Rachel have done differently? What could the school board have done to prevent the problem? What could the choir director have changed? Why do you think they didn't choose one of those alternatives?" She also believed this to be an important step in the lives of her students. "It is important in the discussion to emphasize that a possibility or alternative is not necessarily agreeable, but should nonetheless be discussed." She admitted that her class hadn't discussed too many consequences of the various alternative "due to the little time I had for this unit. That is one of the most frustrating parts about doing this because I am always racing against the clock."

Phase 4: Discussion—Reaching and Justifying a Decision

Ms. Clark. Clark's class was divided into a set of three equal groups different from the earlier group composition. Their assignment was to take the solution they had chosen and make it into a five-minute skit, justifying their position. Clark thought that doing skits on the various solutions would be an enjoyable way to end the unit. She felt that the skits were very successful, possibly because the students knew that the principal was going to visit the class especially to see the skits.

Ms. Moore. Moore provided a number of activities to allow her students to resolve the problem and make their own decisions on how classroom seating could be conducted and managed by the students rather than the teacher in the future. Moore was excited about how her students presented their findings and made the decision. "The funny thing about teaching fifth and sixth graders is that they all gen-

erally stick together on their opinions in class. I believe the decision they have made as a class will last the balance of the school year."

Ms. Donaldson. Donaldson ended her unit by having her students choose and justify a particular position and write letters-to-the-editor of a local newspaper. She collected, corrected, and returned the letters the next day, but she did not encourage the students to send the letters. Donaldson thought this was a good way to end her unit. "Each student came up with what he/she thought was the best decision. This decision was explained and justified with facts in a letter written to the editor of a local newspaper."

Concluding Remarks about Teaching the Unit

Ms. Clark. I thought this model was quite easy to follow, but I did not go into each little step in each phase. I took the general phrase and worked it into what I was planning to do for the unit, and it all worked out nicely. I personally think this is a wonderful way to teach social studies. The students really enjoyed this activity because they were allowed to talk and get a little bit noisy in trying to figure out what they thought about the situations I gave them. I was impressed for the most part on how well they were able to work together and try to come up with the answers as a group. I heard a lot of good discussions going on, and I was pleased with how the entire activity went. A lot of these students rarely get to work in an entire group like this, so I was glad they were able to handle it in a fairly decent manner. They were able to discuss many of the topics we had gone over previously in other discussions to help them come to a conclusion which was what I was looking for. It made me realize the importance of letting students work together in teams because as they get older it is how real life is, working with the people at your job to solve problems together.

I think this model is a great way to start teaching valuable issues in a classroom. I am grateful to have been able to teach this unit using this model because I learned a lot about the students and myself as a teacher.

Ms. Moore. I have mixed feelings about my experience teaching an issues-centered unit in social studies. At times the students responded in remarkable ways, and other times I felt like I was reaching no one. I tried to adapt the Decision-Making model to fit the needs of my students.

With hindsight I can see that my brilliant plan to allow the students to choose their own issue backfired on me. I think that if I had come in and told them an issue there would have been less confusion and more cooperation. Instead, I got complaints like "I didn't agree to this issue," and "I don't even like the topic we chose." When some of the students vocalized their opposition to studying an issue, more joined their ranks. Before long it seemed like half the class was battling with me. I believe that had I controlled the environment more I would have had better control of the classroom.

I also learned one must prepare her students from the beginning of the year for activities of this nature. The kids in the classroom did not know how to think for themselves. This was another reason [the unit] was not as big of a success as I had hoped it would be. If I would have had more time to work with the kids and teach them how to work in these types of groups and with these types of questions, I think they would have been more apt to handle it. Therefore, next time, I will begin with short mini-lessons and group activities to ease the class into this type of thinking. This type of thinking is so beneficial to students and will help them the rest of their lives. If I can teach my students how to solve problems for themselves, how to think for themselves, and most importantly, that they can make a difference, I know I have taught them something that will benefit them for the rest of their lives.

Ms. Donaldson. In reflecting upon the unit, there are some things that didn't work out the way I had hoped. Circumstances did not lend themselves well to success because of the limited time-frame. Because I chose the issue, some of the students were not interested in it. Had there been more time, it would have been more beneficial, I am sure, to have the students choose group issues. When they choose for themselves, they can take ownership and more interest in learning. Because of the time, I wasn't able to give the test at the end or the journal for the second day. I decided the letters to the editor would have to do.

Even if there had been time for reflection on the students' part, I wonder if writing their opinions over and over again would get redundant. It seems that many of them

got bored with the issue rather quickly, and some were not excited at all. I'm sure part of that has to do with my inexperience in asking effective questions. It is a difficult thing to learn how to lead discussions. It is something a methods class cannot teach you. It always seems the same students are the ones doing all the talking, and the others just sit back and ride on their shirttails. How do you get the others to participate without putting them on the spot? Even with good open-ended questions and participating students, they often don't know how to think. They have been involved in a system of numbers and dates and memorization and 'knowledge.' In their eyes this stuff is so off-the-wall that it isn't important. I don't know that they are mature enough to realize that decisions like this one will affect their lives in the public school system and society in general. They are capable of identifying with people involved and even asking themselves who they believe was right. Anyone can do that. But how does it apply to them? How do they think one side was more justified? These are higher-level questions that eleven and twelve year-olds have never been asked before in a social studies class, or school in general for that matter.

There are many benefits of this type of instruction. If it is taught well and applied to the lives of students, they become more aware and school becomes a place where they can learn about life. I do believe, however, that history needs to be taught. I wish there were a way to incorporate this type of discussion and learning with history. It seems the model was more directed toward problems now in society. These are important to discuss, but I don't feel it is in anyone's best interest to do that all year. At the same time, students will get confused if you leap from issues to a history book every three weeks. I would like to see a book written on how to teach history from an issues-centered approach. I am more interested in making history come alive for these kids than I am for talking only about today. Some day perhaps there will be a happy medium.

Findings: The Students

The students in the three classes seemed to enjoy an issues-centered approach. From the experiences, they learned important social studies lessons: decision making, voting, problem solving, develop-

ing empathy by listening to others even when disagreeing, implementing solutions to problem issues through actual participation, and viewing themselves as potential agents of change.

Of Ms. Clark's 21 students, 20 felt that they had learned a lot about the issue of flag saluting and religious beliefs. All of the 20 students mentioned that it is very important to salute the flag out of respect for the men and women who have gone to war and sacrificed their lives for the freedoms that Americans enjoy. Comments from 19 of the students showed that they felt it equally important that people should respect the religious beliefs of other people, even if the religious belief might be unpopular with fellow students, the teacher, and other people like parents. The students considered it important to show equal respect for the flag and for other people's beliefs. Some of the students said it is important not to force people to do something if they don't want to do it or force them to belong to some organization or religion they don't believe in. A number of students commented that the First Amendment of the Constitution protects all people in their religious beliefs and that everyone in the country should understand that there are things some people will do or will not do because of those beliefs. The Constitution protects the people and their religious beliefs from government control. Two students commented that if the schools do not allow students to follow their beliefs, and if they force students to do things in school that are against those beliefs, "they might go to court and probably get in big trouble." One student suggested that if a student has a religious belief that does not allow him or her to participate in school activities, that student may want to go to a private school. One student disagreed with the other nineteen and maintained that if a student goes to school, she or he should be made to stand and pledge the flag as an American because good men and women have died for the flag. Only one student, Manual, claimed that he learned absolutely nothing in the entire unit. Ms. Clark explained in the beginning that Manual spoke little English.

Of the 21 students, 4 did not like doing the unit. Manual claimed, "I would not like to do this unit again because we did this every day," and "No, I would not want to do this because I do not like it!" Two of the other students did not like the unit; they found it boring because of doing the same thing every day. One student claimed the unit was too much work and too hard to do. Brad, who Ms. Clark claimed did not like group work, stated that he disliked working in groups because no one listened to him, and the entire unit did not mean anything to him because he disliked issues. Brad felt that instead of group work the teacher should make the students do silent or out-loud reading because that was more fun than doing group work or skits. One student made the comment that she did not ever want to do another issue unit because "I got enough issuing out of this unit."

However, the 17 remaining students enjoyed the unit. Every one of them would like to do other units similar to the Flag Salute unit. These students seemed to enjoy many of the activities. Their comments indicated that they enjoyed learning issues and taking sides; voting on what they believed was important; doing and watching the skits; solving important problems and finding solutions; working in groups and sharing ideas with others; studying problems to help students understand "better things to do in life;" thinking about problems that can affect "me" and others in "our lives"; participating in discussions and debates; studying the problem of the flag salute; finding clues and doing research; listening to other people's ideas; being creative; listening to the teacher giving her position; and being a lawyer and able to prove and disprove points and positions. One student said what she liked most about the unit was the way in which the teacher made it fun and exciting by creating an environment to let her and the rest of the class learn some very important social studies. Another student said he liked the unit because it was not like the rest of the year when they were reading the book and answering questions about boring U. S. history. Many of the 17 students claimed they thought the unit was simply fun to do. "This lesson meant a lot to me because I learned so much about issues. I think issues are fun to learn about. There are so many issues happening around the world. They are all fun to learn about." One student stated that she liked doing the issue, but in the future she suggested that the issue or problem should deal with "something real that affected the community in which all of the students lived. This would be more meaningful to everyone."

Many of Ms. Moore's students commented that they "had learned a lot of things in this lesson." Issues are arguments or problems that have at least two different sides or opinions, both of which may be good or bad, depending on the desirability and feasibility of the sides. They all commented on the issue of seating charts and decided that for the class there were at least four sides to this issue: (1) the students, for the most part, want the opportunity to sit where they want during class; (2) some students thought seating charts are important because they control the behavior of the students; (3) most teachers like seating charts to help students "not to talk and make noise"; and (4) many parents think that it is a good idea to allow their children to select their own seats in class. The students were excited that they could choose their own topic and make decisions on how to carry out the topic of choice. They liked the idea of taking responsibility for their own decisions. One student commented, "We accomplished something the students liked. We decided we can sit by friends if we earn it, and if we talk too much we have to go back to our old seats."

Most of the students seemed to like many of the activities, especially discussions, group work, debates, and the experience of actu-

ally planning and carrying out a decision. Most of the students mentioned that the unit was fun to do and they would like to do another one just like it. Only two students said anything negative about the experience. One thought it was "too dumb" and "took too much work." Another claimed that this was the "dumbest project I ever did, and [I] never want to do another issues lesson again." She wanted to read more American history rather than do issue units. She especially did not like doing group work because her group "buddies were too dumb to learn anything."

Many of Ms. Donaldson's students' reactions to her unit came from the writing activity—letters to the editor. From these letters one can find what the students learned and how they felt about what they did during the unit. Most of the students seemed to have understood what Ms. Donaldson was having them do. From reading their short reaction papers of about two sentences each, it appears that most of the students seemed to have liked the activity. One student wrote, "I really liked this lesson a lot because I could try to figure out this big problem that involves a lot of thinking, so I like it!" Another wrote, "We saw that a girl stood up for her rights. I think that we were learning so if we get in issues like this, we will know what to do." However, four students made it clear that they did not like the activity and had not learned very much. Their comments included the following:

"I do not care too much for this lesson."
"This was kind of a big nothing."
"I don't care about the issue or the lesson very much."
"What are my feelings toward the issue and the lesson—
I don't know and I don't care."

From students' interviews and their letters-to-the-editor, it appears that most of Ms. Donaldson's students understood what an issue is and that the lessons were about the conflict between Rachel Bauchman, with the support of the courts, and the choir and members of the West High School graduating class over singing religious songs. They understood that singing Christian songs might have been somewhat sensitive to Rachel because of her Jewish faith. Most students sympathized with Rachel and her beliefs. However, most of the students believed that she should not have sued the school, and that the students should have been allowed to sing their traditional graduation song. But most of the students believed religious songs should not be sung since this is against the law of the courts and violates the First Amendment protecting religious values and beliefs. Other students wanted the school and the choir to sing songs that Rachel would have liked to have sung in order to balance out religious songs to make everyone happy.

Discussion and Conclusion

After observing these three 5-6th grade teachers and their students, after interviewing the teachers and the students, and after examining teacher and students' logs and samples of lesson plans and student work, we found that the evidence supports the conclusion that issues-centered instruction can effectively take place in the elementary social studies classroom. In the cases described in this study, the quality and commitment to issues-centered instruction, using the Engle-Ochoa Decision-Making model, varied. The amount of instructional time and effort put into each issues-centered unit varied, much as it did in studies by Rossi (1995, 1998). Ms. Clark, who was excited about participating in this project, devoted seven instructional days to her issues-centered unit. In contrast, Ms. Moore and Ms. Donaldson's units lasted for only three days. Ms. Moore expressed concern over the students' abilities to participate in an issues-centered unit, and Ms. Donaldson questioned her own abilities to accomplish the activities suggested in the model. She was also apprehensive about what her principal might think if she knew Ms. Donaldson was using an issues-centered approach rather than a conventional Madeline Hunter approach.

While each teacher followed the general structure of the Engle-Ochoa model, each changed it to fit her needs and the needs of her students. Ms. Clark used versions of the *Three Little Pigs*, one side told by the pigs and the other side by the wolf to get at the concept of an issue. In examining "The Flag Salute Problem" (Shaver & Larkins, 1973), Ms. Clark referred her students to the *Constitution*, particularly the First Amendment. In subsequent lessons, she relied heavily on group work, had students write position papers, and finally had them create a five minute skit for the class.

Ms. Moore started a discussion about issues by reading *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss. For a teacher who said she had little training in issues-centered education, Ms. Moore showed her willingness to take a risk by letting the class decide on the issue to be studied. She later wished that she had selected the issue, but the unit went well anyway. After a full discussion, weighing the feasibility and desirability of having a seating chart vs. letting students sit where they choose, Ms. Moore's class voted on the issue. The class voted to not have a seating chart, and Ms. Moore agreed, although somewhat reluctantly, to follow the students' vote.

Ms. Donaldson was the most apprehensive teacher to participate in the project. She chose the issue of Rachel Bauchman, showing a short video and using an article about this case from *USA Today*. Ms. Donaldson used small group work only briefly as she was concerned about losing control of the class. She concluded the unit by having the

students write letters-to-the-editor of the local paper expressing their positions.

All three teachers, in their varying ways, generally followed the Engle-Ochoa Decision-Making model. Students in their classes defined what an issue is, identified and explored different sides of an issue, and made and defended their decisions about their respective issues. The results confirm and extend the findings of the studies of Wright and Simon (1976) and Parker, McDaniel, and Valencia's (1991) that 6th grade students are "capable of responding to the intellectual demands of an issues-centered curriculum" (p. 44).

The students felt that hey had "learned a lot" about issues and about the particular issue under discussion, and furthermore they had fun! Of Ms. Clark's 21 students, 17 said they enjoyed the unit. They liked learning issues and taking sides, voting on the issues, solving problems, working in a group, and doing and watching skits. Ms. Moore's class discovered that sometimes there are even more than two sides to an issue. They came up with four sides to question of whether they should have an assigned seating chart. Like Ms. Clark's students, they liked the discussions, group work, debates, and experience of planning and carrying out the decision. They thought it was fun and wanted to do another just like it. Some of Ms. Donaldson's students wrote about liking the unit and trying to figure out a problem. The students in this class did understand and admire Rachel Bauchman for taking her stand, even if most did not agree with her. Overall, these findings are consistent with Hahn's (1996a; 1996b) conclusions that students enjoy issues-centered lessons more than traditional instruction. In fact, when the students were getting a little "out of hand," Ms. Moore threatened to go back to the traditional way of teaching if the students did not behave.

It is important to note, however, that not all students enjoyed the units. Some tired of talking about issues, some thought the activities were just "dumb," and others did not like the group work involved in Ms. Clark's and Ms. Moore's units. Overall, however, most of the students seemed to enjoy the issues-centered approach over traditional social studies instruction.

Lessons for Social Studies Educators

Results of this study show that students enjoyed and learned from participating in issues-centered units. While these three teachers all successfully completed their units, they did not do so without some effort and doubt. What might these teachers tell social studies educators about teaching using an issues-centered approach?

1. The structure and process of the model are important. As Ms. Clark said, "I thought this model was quite easy to follow...I took the gen-

eral phase and worked it into what I was planning." Each teacher opened the unit with a discussion of what an issue is. They then proceeded to explore the relevant ideas at each stage of the model. Continually, the teachers responded with surprise at how the various phases of the model brought about positive responses in students. Ms. Clark was surprised at the responses of her students to the small group activities when they attempted to develop consensus on who was telling the truth—the pigs or the wolf. Before beginning her unit, Ms. Moore was concerned about the unit and the students' involvement in it, yet in Phase 2 she saw that the students were enjoying being actively involved in discussing and debating the various issues. During Phase 4, using probing questions, Ms. Donaldson "felt good" about her ability to ask good probing questions. Despite the teachers' apprehensions about their skills and abilities and about those of their students, the structure of the model helped the teachers proceed in a logical and systematic manner, leading the students to making informed and supported decisions about the issue under consideration.

2. *Teachers need to develop group process skills to successfully implement issues-centered instruction.* A better grounding in cooperative learning or group process skills would have helped these teachers more effectively implement their unit plans. Each did some group work during their unit, with differing degrees of confidence and skill. Ms. Clark and Ms. Moore willingly engaged their students in group work, yet were surprised at how well the group discussions developed. Ms. Donaldson did not do much group work and despite her good use of questioning, worried about and questioned her skill level. These three were beginning teachers; the teachers in Rossi's (1998) study were veteran teachers, and they too experienced difficulty in doing the group work well.

3. *Issues-centered approaches take time and energy.* In a traditional classroom, the Flag Salute Problem and the case of Rachel Bauchman could probably each be "covered" in one didactic lesson. The teacher could have listed the different sides of each issue and informed the students of the accepted answer. Engaging students in identifying problems, finding information, and making good supported decisions takes time. Those are processes that the teachers and the students in this study were not used to doing in their classes. Ms. Clark, for example, commented on the "the difficulty the students would have adjusting from reading the book and answering the questions at the end of a chapter to discovering their own ideas and opinions by asking questions, discussion, and research." Ms. Donaldson talked about how difficult she thought this approach would be for 5-6th graders, "because the students were completely unfamiliar with this type of format." An issues-centered approach takes more energy for the students as well as for the teachers. In the Phase of Identifying and De-

fining the Problem, Ms. Clark believed her lesson was "too loose" and "very sloppy." At the end of the day she felt exhausted. As social studies educators work with pre-service and in-service teachers, they need to prepare teachers for this reality and help them shift their prevailing instructional paradigms.

4. Teaching factual content is not the primary reason for adopting an issues-centered approach. The Engle-Ochoa Decision-Making model is intended to provide students with a conceptual framework that emphasizes the skills of discussion and critical analysis of public events and disagreements. The Decision-Making model is just one model advocated by those promoting issues-centered education. It is consistent with issues-centered education in that it seeks to prepare citizens to participate in democratic decision-making. In the three classrooms described in this project, the students clearly did engage in discussion and decision-making, and they expressed their pleasure in doing so and their desire to do more of it in their social studies classes.

The teachers worried about "teaching content." Ms. Donaldson, for example, did not see an issues-centered approach as a way of teaching history. She said, "I do believe, however, that history needs to be taught. I wish there were a way to incorporate this type of discussion and learning with history. It seems the model was more directed toward problems now in society." Perhaps the teachers could have extended their units and assigned students to look for historical precedents to support their positions. However, Ms. Clark referred students to the *Constitution*, and Ms. Donaldson had students read the newspaper to learn about the case of Rachel Bauchman. There may have been more teaching of content than the teachers realized. All of these units dealt with important Constitutional issues.

Conclusion

Finally, students in all of these classrooms seemed to learn from and enjoy studying issues through an issues-centered approach. Despite the positive comments, many surprising to the teachers, we wonder to what extent these three teachers will continue to use an issues-centered approach? Our guess is that Ms. Clark will continue to use the Decision-Making model in her classroom. Ms. Clark exhibits what Sears and Parsons (1991) call "critical thinking as an ethic." This project is an example of the disparity between social studies as advocated in the university and as practiced by teachers in schools. The authors, being university professors, advocated an issues-centered approach. The teachers had never used this approach until they participated in this project, even though they had all been taught by one of the authors in their undergraduate training.

Sears and Parsons (1991) suggest that the principles of critical thinking as an ethic include that critical thinking: requires an attitude

that knowledge is not fixed; there are no questions that cannot be asked; needs an awareness of and empathy for alternative world views; and a tolerance for ambiguity, and a sense of the complexity of human issues (p. 55-65). **Ms. Clark seems well on the way to developing this ethic. Reflecting after her** first lesson, Ms. Clark talked about what she wanted to accomplish in this and future lessons: "I wanted to create the kind of atmosphere in my classroom where each student could come to their own personal decision. There is more than one side to this situation, but each child needs to make up their own mind." The promise of issues-centered education is in helping the Ms. Clarks in our schools to continue developing the skills, attitudes, and supportive environment needed for "preparing citizens to participate in the democratic decision-making processes within a pluralistic society" (Hahn, 1991, p. 420).

Notes

[1] The following are the steps in the Engle and Ochoa (1988) Decision-making Model:

Phase 1: Classroom Environment and Teacher Preparation.

The teacher provides an open, safe, and informed learning environment for the free exchange of ideas and dialogue. "The discussion that is to take place can be restricted only by available evidence, reason, and democratic values" (Levitt & Longstreet, p. 147). The teacher must be informed about the topic to be studied and have sufficient preparation to guide students successfully through the study of the topic.

Phase 2: The Start of the Class—Orientation to the Problem Area.

Introduction. The teacher presents the issue to be studied and gives to students selected materials to begin the initial phase of study. These materials will suggest conflicts and controversy surrounding the contemporary or historical issue.

Phase 3: Preliminary Discussion

Identifying and Defining the Problem. Either as a whole class or in small groups, students continue to analyze the material given them, followed usually by a question/answer discussion limited to student perceptions of what the materials intend or imply. Students come to some agreement on the facts, definitions, and values perceived in the materials.

Phase 4: Discussion

Using Probing Questions. The teacher asks open-ended questions throughout the entire activity in order to trigger the reasoning processes and promote the serious thought of students, to probe their information to arrive at their own defensible answers, and to generally guide class discussion.

Identifying Value Assumptions. In an open-ended environment, the teacher uses selected methods to help students to examine their own and others' beliefs and values about the issue in question. Students are encouraged to probe value assumptions in presented materials, to compare those values with their own, to analyze similar value conflicts, and to bring in additional materials to support varied positions and solutions.

Identifying Alternatives and Predicting Consequences. The teacher has students begin to identify possible courses of action that will resolve the issues in question and to determine the probable consequences of each. Small groups are convened to discuss and defend their positions: to provide supportive facts, evidence, and values; and to engage in productive discussion challenging the other groups' positions. Competing and alternative courses of action are presented. Students attempt to determine the consequences of the courses of action and judge whether these are consistent with the system of values implicit in the issue and/or with the values held by members of the group.

Reaching and Justifying a Decision. On the basis of the activities carried out above, the teacher has the students rank and prioritize the possible positions in terms of the values they are trying to realize. Students decide through defending and challenging discussion whether or not to accept, reject, or modify the proposed solutions to resolve the issue. If a position is accepted by the class as a whole, the decision may be made to implement the proposed position. The teacher is to help and encourage students in finding ways to implement desired action. Students have the option to take part in any action.

[2] The names of the three teachers are pseudonyms.

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THEORY & RESEARCH IN SOCIAL EDUCATION

Response to Milson on Character Education

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This is not a standard review for an academic journal. To borrow from William Lloyd Garrison's editorial in the first issue of *The Liberator* (1831), "I am aware that many object to the severity of my language; but is there no cause for severity? I will be as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice. On this subject I do not wish to think, or speak, or write with moderation" (Seldes, 1966).

I am harsh because George W. Bush announced that he will emphasize morals as a cornerstone of his educational policy in his campaign for the presidency and I am frightened about what this means, especially after he opened his campaign during the South Carolina Republican primary by visiting Bob Jones University and endorsing the flying of a segregationist symbol over the statehouse. Bush wants children taught "eternal truths...to encourage clear instruction in right and wrong" and he has made three specific proposals to accomplish his goal. He wants teachers trained in character education, character-building programs in juvenile jails, and abstinence education. According to Bush, "My administration will elevate abstinence education from an afterthought to an urgent goal" (Excerpts from speech, 1999).

I am harsh because Bush is very clear—in fact much clearer than the author of "Social Studies Teacher Educators' Perspectives of Character Education"—about the meaning of character education. It is about eternal, essentially religious truths, a clear cut conception of right and wrong, preaching to captive audiences (either in schools or jails), and promoting sexual abstinence instead of helping teenagers learn to practice safer and more responsible sex.

As an initial reader of this paper for *Theory and Research in Social Education*, I strongly recommended against its publication. I am harsh because I believe it is an exercise in subterfuge, using an analysis of a largely meaningless survey of the attitudes of social studies educators about character education to legitimize and promote the agenda of conservative religious ideologues. After reading the final version of this paper, I agree with my original assessment.

The author, Andrew J. Milson of Northern Illinois University, opens by reporting, but not explaining, three aspects of the movement for expanded character education in public schools: (1) "Character education is increasingly receiving support among state govern-

ments, local school districts, and professional organizations"; (2) "Those promoting character education perceive an epidemic of irresponsibility and diminished civility in schools, as well as in society, and stress the importance of dedicated efforts to teach students the traits believed to promote good character"; and (3) "It is difficult to define character education, in part, because there is disagreement over the appropriate emphasis and scope of character education."

My translation of these statements is that the movement is largely political rather than educational, many of its champions would prefer to return to the mythical good-old-days when teachers and schools could somehow impose values on their students, and that advocates of character education have to keep their pronouncements general, because when they make specific proposals, people realize what they are talking about and reject their positions.

Professor Milson tries to justify the survey and his report by citing a National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) position paper calling for "a renewed effort by social studies educators, schools, and communities to teach civic virtue because a democratic system of government requires a virtuous citizenry." While the NCSS acknowledges that "the teaching of personal virtue is often a contribution to the development of civic virtue," it is referring to very general notions like responsibility, respect, civility, self-discipline, and maturity (National Council for the Social Studies, 1997). This is a far cry from social studies teachers preaching to students about personal morality.

While Professor Milson acknowledges there are differing voices in the discussion of character education and its implications for a democratic society, this study focuses on the ideas of two of the more conservative religious defenders of the movement, Thomas Likona and Edward Wynne. Four articles and one book by Likona are cited thirty-five times in the text and three articles by Wynne are cited fifteen times. Meanwhile philosophers long associated with efforts to promote democratic education and responsible citizenship, John Dewey, author of *Democracy and Education* (1916/1966), and Maxine Greene, author of *The Dialectic of Freedom* (1988), are never mentioned. A more accurate title for the survey and the study would be: Do social studies educators agree with Thomas Likona and Edward Wynne?

And what did the study discover? When asked to respond to broad generalities about the importance of character, people thought it was a good idea. When asked to respond to particular recommendations for character education, respondents were sharply divided about their merits. Everyone agreed that people should have good character, but there was no consensus about what good character means. Is this such a surprise? The problem is always in the details. According to the sixth commandment in the Judeo-Christian Old Testament, "Thou shall not kill." It is a clear, simple, absolute statement.

But what about a soldier during war? A case of self-defense? Execution for a capital crime? The termination of an unwanted pregnancy? Discuss the details and suddenly issues are much less clear and there is tremendous room for disagreement.

Other aspects of this study also require comment:

1. In his discussion of the limitations of the study, Professor Milson conceded that "(g)iven the lack of a clearly agreed upon definition for the term character education, it is *possible* that the respondents had somewhat differing interpretations of the topic under study. Respondents were not provided with a definition of character education because there was some concern that responses would be based on agreement or disagreement with the definition rather than with the larger issues under study" [italics added]. This is a powerful concession, one that undermines any legitimate purpose for the study. Neither the researcher nor the reader know what respondents were thinking because no effort was made to insure they were discussing the same thing.

2. Professor Milson goes to great lengths to present quantitative, apparently scientific, evidence. He has pages of analysis and graphs showing correlations for theme scales and subscales. The reality is they obfuscate rather than illuminate. Over and over again they illustrate the same point. Respondents agree with generalities, the "character education themes," not specifics—the substance of character education proposals. Fifty-two percent of the people agree that there is a moral crisis in society, but only 25% agree that morals in society are in rapid decline and only 36% believe that today's youth engage in immoral activities. Forty-six percent of the respondents did not want abstinence-based sex education included in a character education curriculum and 45.5% appear to even disagree with calling character education, character education.

3. When the mathematical "smoke and mirrors" act finally clears, Professor Milson is forced to conclude that there are "potential obstacles to widespread endorsement of character education among social studies teachers" and "it is dubious to suggest that these educators are truly supporting the same conception of character education." However, later, he somehow decides that "(t)he findings of this study are encouraging for those promoting character education."

4. Since, Professor Milson relies so heavily on the work of Thomas Likona to define character education, I think it is necessary to examine Likona's arguments in some detail. In the past, Likona and I have debated our ideas in *Educational Leadership* (Likona, 1993; Singer, 1994) and in *Phi Delta Kappan* (Likona, 1999; Likona, 2000; Singer, 2000).

Thomas Likona believes that the goal of public schools should be to build moral character and that this requires restoring "religion to its rightful place in the study of history and culture." He defines

moral character according to his personal religious prescriptions, what he calls "chastity education," and he uses character education as a forum to promote Roman Catholic religious beliefs about human sexuality, going so far as to equate healthy teenage sexual activity with drug abuse as high-risk, anti-social behavior. He charges, without supportive research, that sex education and condom availability programs have failed. I believe Likona's real concern is mandating the teaching of sexual abstinence in public schools. He recommends that public school students from religious backgrounds introduce into class discussion the question, "How does God intend for me to use the gift of my sexuality?", so that their teachers can explain to classes that "in the view of major world religions, God did not intend sex to be part of the relationship of unmarried people."

Likona also believes that public school teachers can present religious objections to same-sex relationships, while emphasizing that "tolerance" requires that "we must respect the dignity and human rights of all people," even though we do not approve of their "behavior choices." He wants public schools to "draw upon religion as a way to engage students in considering the question, Is there moral truth?" But given his arguments and his concern with "our culture's moral relativism," it is apparent to many educators that Likona already has an answer that he wants to promote—a religious version of knowledge based on faith and absolute received truth.

Voltaire discussed character (caractère) in his *Philosophical Dictionary*, first published in 1752. He told an allegory about an "old general of ninety who, when he encountered young officers who were making a disturbance with some girls, said to them in great anger: "Gentleman, is this the example I set you?" At best, if Thomas Likona, Andrew Milson and George W. Bush have their way, character education will be reduced to a bunch of middle aged social studies teachers beseeching teenagers to follow our current behavior practices and trying to get them to promise not to do the things that we did when we were their ages (Gay, 1962). At worst, it will become a weapon for right-wing ideologues who want use public education to insure social control. In neither case, will it contribute to the growth a of virtuous citizenry contemplated in the NCSS position paper.

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Seeking Thoughtful Dialogue on Character Education: A Rejoinder to Singer

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I appreciate Professor Singer's concerns regarding the character education movement. However, I find much of his critique to be flawed in that it is based on a misunderstanding of the purpose of my study as well as an apparent selective reading of the character education literature. I would like to clarify a few of the questions raised by his assertions.

1. Is my study an "exercise in subterfuge" with the intention of "promoting the agenda of conservative religious ideologues?" No. I do not know how Professor Singer came to the conclusion that I am involved in some vast, right-wing conspiracy. My intentions were actually much less extravagant. As a doctoral student at the University of Georgia, I became aware of a growing number of character education programs in Georgia public schools as well as increased rhetoric from the Georgia legislature regarding character education. I had some misgivings about the nature of character education as I witnessed it being practiced. As I watched teachers struggle to implement prescribed character education programs, I became interested in the role that teacher educators might play in guiding this movement toward worthwhile civic education goals rather than moralistic exhortations. Far from using the NCSS position statement to "justify" my study, I use it as a starting point in my line of inquiry. My fundamental question was "How do social studies teacher educators perceive this movement?" not "How can I trick all of these intelligent people into supporting the fundamentalist Christian agenda?"

2. Is character education intended to promote religion and conservatism? Singer invokes the current presidential candidacy of George W. Bush to argue that character education is on the agenda of the Republican Party and religious conservatives. He cites Bush's support of "abstinence education" and "essentially religious truths" as clear evidence of what character education means to George W. Bush. Is this what character education means to me? No. Is this how many others have defined character education in the literature? No. George W. Bush is not a spokesperson for the character education movement. His comments on the issue are as relevant as President Clinton's endorsement of character education in at least two State of the Union addresses.

Singer is correct in his observation that I drew from the writings of Thomas Lickona and Edward Wynne (as well as many others).

However, I read these authors not because they are "conservative religious defenders of the movement" but because they have written extensively on this topic and are typically identified with contemporary character education. The views that Singer ascribes to Thomas Lickona regarding a mission to "promote a religious version of knowledge based on faith and absolute received truth" are incongruous with my extensive reading of Lickona. An objective reading of Lickona's writings would reveal Singer's portrayal of Lickona to be distorted and unfair. Again, my purpose was not to promote Lickona's and Wynne's views, but to determine whether social studies teacher educators tended to agree with the central themes and propositions of the character education movement.

Singer's critique of character education seems to rest on two issues with which he disagrees: religion in public schools and abstinence-based sex education. The literature reveals that these issues are tangential at best to character education. In the end, these are "straw man" arguments that do not constitute evidence of a conservative or religious agenda lurking beneath the surface of the character education movement.

3. Do the results of this study "obfuscate rather than illuminate" the issue? Singer credits George W. Bush for clarity on the issue and perceives my treatment of character education as well as my study as obfuscation. A careful and objective reading of the literature on character education suggests a diverse and multi-faceted movement. It is precisely this complexity that is intriguing. Singer presents character education as a clearly defined movement with nefarious goals. I, like most others, have no such clear picture of character education. My survey of NCSS members, far from being a "smoke and mirrors" act, suggests that many social studies teacher educators also have a complex perception of character education. I have attempted to present these results as clearly as possible while acknowledging the complexity of the issue.

It seems that engaging in research and dialogue on this popular movement is appropriate. What seems inappropriate is silencing those who choose to conduct research on controversial topics. That Professor Singer's initial inclination was to recommend that my study not be published simply because he disagrees with parts of the character education movement is disturbing, indeed.

THEORY & RESEARCH IN SOCIAL EDUCATION

Mc-Education: Keeping the Kids on Track

Doug Selwyn
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I am a classroom teacher, college teacher (of teachers in training) and the step-parent of three now-grown children who went through the public school system. I have grave concerns about the impact that standardized testing has had on public education, on the public's perception of what education is (and should be), and on the students and teachers who struggle to make meaning and to find inspiration in classrooms across the country. Let me begin with a couple of stories.

My students and I made a presentation to the Seattle City Council last January as part of a larger project. Ours was one of four classrooms participating. Two of the others were from private schools and the fourth was a from a city magnet school for the most academically gifted students in the district. The presentations were instructive.

The students from the other classrooms handled the entire presentation. They spoke with authority, with confidence, and with skill. They knew they were well prepared, that they had something important to say, and that the city council members would take them seriously. They had worked with their teachers to prepare the presentations and did them well.

The students from my classroom were not ready to present on their own. Some of the reasons were simple logistics: we did not know we were going to present until two days before the meeting. But it would have taken much preparation time (that we could not afford) to have them both confident and able to fully present in that sort of setting. It was another world to them. They were in awe to simply walk into the city council chambers, much less to present in front of the council.

An outside observer would notice the disparity between what my students could do and the levels to which the other groups achieved. If there were a standardized measurement for success, our students would have scored much lower than did the others.

This meeting, fortunately, was not structured as a contest. Each student learned and experienced wonderful things. They learned from the architects with whom they worked, from their classmates, and from the other students presenting at the meeting. They created photo montages, designed ideal and realistic parks, addressed real neigh-

borhood problems, learned about map making and city planning, practiced (and performed) public speaking to a room full of adults and students, and learned to give and receive critique with grace and intelligence. They worked well with each other, showed appreciation for their own work and the work of others, and are now ready to take on new design projects of greater complexity.

A standardized assessment instrument would "judge" whether my students had acquitted themselves well at the council meeting, as compared with what other students would do. But it would miss their growth and learning, the excitement and challenge the experience engendered, and it would ignore the distance my students had traveled from their homes (in some of the poorest sections of Seattle) to the Seattle City Council chambers. A standardized test would have missed the absolute heart of the learning and experience for my students.

Last summer I was a part of a grant-funded project looking at the ways that standardized curriculum and standardized testing had influenced/affected the teaching of writing. Teachers selected students from their classes, collecting work samples, keeping reflective journals, and so on. I decided that my contribution to the project would be to ask the other teachers to compare their own assessment/experience of their students, as writers and as people, with the data provided by the standardized tests. I began to unofficially interview teachers (and to eavesdrop as they talked). Every teacher had moving stories to tell about the progress their students had made, and how that progress had failed to be reflected on the standardized tests. Many lamented the challenges their students overcame each day just to make it to school. Others reflected on the experience of taking a standardized test in what for many of their students is a second language. And all noted that there was nothing on the standardized tests addressing who the students were as people, how hard they had worked, or how much they had learned. The teachers were frustrated and angry, because the tests in no way reflected their work or the work of their students, and because the tests were becoming the rule and ruler of their educational lives.

Picture the K-12 educational experience as a journey akin to traveling the Oregon Trail in 1840. Students enter kindergarten in Independence, Missouri, and the plan is for them to exit in the Oregon Territory (at twelfth grade). The only thing that matters on this journey is whether they arrive at appointed checkpoints at the appointed times. Our directive (teacher as wagon master) is to make sure the wagons reach Colorado (for example) on a certain Tuesday in May.

There are many factors that are not considered as the wagons head west toward their appointment with the Colorado checkpoint:

Some students are rolling along in well-oiled wagons pulled by teams of healthy oxen, while others are pulling the wagons themselves.

Some are riding in wagons with only three rusted wheels, and some are walking. Some have twenty people in their wagons, including cousins, neighbors, grandchildren, or friends.

When those sitting at the checkpoints fill out their reports, they do not mention that some travelers started in Independence Missouri, some in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, some in chains on plantations in the south, and others from across the Atlantic. Or the Pacific.

No mention that some are choosing to take the northern route (or southern) that does not cross through Colorado.

No mention of those travelers who have no interest in ever setting foot in Colorado, for any reason.

And no mention that the ancestors of some travelers were not even allowed into some of the states on the route, or that some of those ancestors had been killed attempting the crossing (or attempting to remain in their homes as others crossed).

The reports note simply who came through the checkpoint, and when they arrived.

We educators are given conflicting sets of directions. We are cajoled and inspired by experts in the various disciplines to help our students to fully experience and understand the road they are traveling. We must begin with the first step of the journey, they say, wherever it is, and move at a pace appropriate to the conditions. We are encouraged to work with our students in various configurations, considering the ways that they learn, the experiences they have had, and the demands of the discipline; our work is to integrate the students and the curriculum. It is heady work and takes time.

And we have to arrive in Colorado by 4:00 on Tuesday. No excuses.

So, we learn how to move the oxen-drawn wagons along the dust filled roads, choking on the grooved footsteps of those in front and leaving a similar offering to those behind. The oxen mostly get there. Slowly. They are not given to angles or dimensions. They are true flatlanders.

But of course there are mountains in Colorado, and in Wyoming, which comes next. And winter. And storms of many sorts. Snow. Rain. "Tornadic activity," as one of our local t.v. weather people calls it. And then another checkpoint further down the road, with an expected arrival time based on making it to the previous one on time.

And to beat this metaphor even further into the ground, there is no mention of how this time on the road has been spent. Some groups stay the course, wheels in the grooves, leaving at dawn each day and coming to rest early each evening. They are focused on the path and on the clock. But there are other groups or wagonloads that make dif-

ferent choices. Some sit around the fire telling stories, or dancing and singing late into the night. Others might have stopped for a time to fight a fire, to help others who were stuck in the mud, to listen to a creek, or to taste strawberries. One family might have stayed for a time to nurse a sick child or to place a stone or word on a gravesite.

Let me give three personal examples. My stepson Noah would likely choose to stay in Missouri rather than to take the trip to Oregon. He would follow his passion to learn how to make wagons, and to design new and better ones. He would talk with other wagon makers, would spend time in their shops and would build his own forge in order to make new wagons or wagon parts. He would have no interest in going to Oregon by way of Colorado, or any other way, and certainly not by ox-drawn wagon. His pleasure and his deepest learning would come through his work in Independence, waving others off with a good meal and a well-functioning vehicle.

Josh my other stepson, would not tolerate even one day on the rutted trail, jammed tight with fellow travelers. He would head off into the foothills and perhaps further. He'd have no map except perhaps an "un-map" (to go where they aren't) and his curiosity. He would seek one or two others who chose not to place their wheels in the ruts, and go off to learn with them.

Rachelle, my stepdaughter would be in the last wagon, miles behind. She might be reading a book, or folk dancing, or talking with a friend about some problem she or her friend was having. She would discuss the proposed route with others on the train and maybe choose another path that was a better fit for the group. She would insist on taking the time to conduct meetings of the travelers, to make sure everyone was getting what they needed, and to make sure that they were known to each other. Or maybe she'd leave the wagon train for the summer to apprentice with a healer, or to learn more about how people she met on the trail live their lives.

None of my stepchildren (each very bright, each a profound learner) would reach Colorado by the appointed hour. The trail system only rewards those who keep up and on the path. It's a very primal and basic sorting mechanism; you're either on schedule or you're not. The quality of the trip is mostly inconsequential, and the reasons for the trip or for the particular route taken are beyond question or consideration.

But there **are** some very crucial questions about this trip we are on. Who makes the maps, and who decides the route? In what languages are the maps printed? Who decides on the particular checkpoints, and why are they afforded that right/assignment? Why are we heading to the Oregon territory to begin with? Why are we leaving where we were, and what have we learned from that experience? Are we allowed to learn as we travel, which might lead to our recon-

sidering our routes and pace? How are we affecting the land we are traveling through, and what of those people who choose to stay on route? Why are there checkpoints and why are they where they are? Enough.

I am sitting by a river, which is analogous to most classrooms. The building, the hallways, walls, chairs and desks, like the hills, rocks, and bank of the river are essentially the same from day to day (and year to year). The water flowing between the banks is completely new (as are the students with whom we work). What does that mean? The general appearance, flow, and route of the river seem essentially the same to us on the bank. The water keeps moving along in somewhat predictable patterns between the banks. But we also know that you can't ever step into that same river twice, to coin a phrase.

The kids with whom we work are each unique, and the particular mix of students in each class is unlike any other. Teachers know that we cannot assume that one lesson or approach will work the same way in different classes. Each group has its own personality, its own way of doing things, its own speed and rhythm of operation, its own needs. Teachers violate those rhythms and understandings to the detriment of everyone in the room.

Gareth Morgan, a sociologist in Toronto, wrote a book called *Images of Organization*, the basic thesis of which is that "our theories and explanations of organizational life are based on metaphors.... The use of metaphor implies a way of thinking and a way of seeing that pervade how we understand our world..." 12. He argues that the metaphors we use to talk about our organizations lead us to see them in narrow and incomplete ways, and blind us to the more complete picture.

For example, those who view their organizations as well-oiled machines tend to focus on a product. They are concerned with output, with efficiency, and with the replication of the process from "machine" to "machine." They approach the breakdown of any one piece of the system in the same way that they would approach the breakdown of a copy machine or a computer. They try to fix the breakdown cheaply and efficiently, or toss it and bring in a replacement part. The end product is what matters, and success is measured through charts, graphs, efficiency, and the ability to replicate the formula for success. Businesses don't worry about the social or emotional needs of its machines, and organizations viewed through the machine metaphor tend to spend little time worrying about the people within.

Morgan offers eight such metaphors, each representing a different approach to the organizations in which we work. Each metaphor is not only a way of seeing, but also a framework for action. It defines the field, the parameters, and the possible approaches one might take to interact with (and within) the organization. This has become of

paramount importance as we enter the new century under the watchful eyes of the business community.

With the business and financial communities becoming more involved in the education business, the way we see and talk about ourselves has changed (or certain aspects have taken a more prominent position). A recent Seattle School superintendent referred to schools as "achievement factories." He was hardly alone in using this kind of language, education as a business, with an emphasis on customer service and offering a good product.

Achievement factories are concerned with numbers of customers served, and are designed and fitted (theoretically) to produce graduates. It is important to operate at maximum efficiency and economy. It is Mc-Education.

Standards are developed to keep educators (and students) on a production schedule, and to require that the achievement factories keep the "products" moving through. Employees (teachers) stand at the ready, hairnets and rubber gloves in place to begin cooking when the bells ring. Each step along the line is timed, based on time-and-motion studies. Place the burger on the grill at first bell. Turn it when the next bell rings, then add a bun. A fourth bell brings forth the cheese, lettuce, and tomato. Fries, Coke (or Pepsi) and a special sauce complete the process.

Products that don't fit the machines are judged inferior, or in some way routed off the line. Other possible food choices are not an option. Success is measured by profits and efficiency, by billions served. Customers must be comfortable and safe, no surprises or unexpected events; you always know what you're getting, no matter where you are.

Every school and classroom is offering the same experience to each and every consumer at every moment. Teachers are given directives about what to teach, and handed classroom-based assessments in order to make sure they are traveling in the right direction at the right pace. Questions about how classroom based assessments can be district-wide, and prepared outside of our individual classrooms are pushed aside. And all this lead to the standardized tests all students will take.

The pressure on students, teachers and administrators is overwhelming, and increasing. There are ever more students to be served, and many come with desperate needs and challenges. There are many more people scrutinizing our product results. One size fits all, as they say, and the pressure is on to fit, or else you will be discarded, either to a re-tracking school situation, to an unsatisfactory evaluation (either as an administrator or a teacher), or to the streets.

When I look at my students I am amazed that they are always in class and so eager to learn. Many of them are caring for younger broth-

ers and sisters, translating for their parents, who speak only Spanish, or Vietnamese, or Laotian, and helping out with chores and the family business. They are studying in a foreign language, immersed in a foreign culture, and surrounded by an education system that does not value their brains, their kindness, their humor, their creativity, their beauty, or their effort. Only their test scores.

Many of them come from cultures with no written language, or from houses where no one else speaks English, where no books are read (both language and economics issues), where the things that are valued do not look like school. Their parents often aren't able to help with homework, aren't able to advocate for them with their teachers, the district, or the administrators. The entire family structure in many of the homes of my students has been turned upside down; the children are the ones most able to negotiate the new culture, and they often serve as translators and interpreters of this strange new world. Many parents feel lowered in status and importance. It is a painful process for many, and the families suffer.

I read my students' writing, talk with them on a daily basis, and have some sense of who they are after several months. I don't believe, even with this extended contact, that I can really appreciate what it is like to be from their cultures and situations and to try and make sense of school in Seattle, Washington. And if I can't really appreciate what this journey is about for my students, how can some rent-a-scorer in Iowa make that determination based on their work with a number two pencil?

These standardized tests adult-centered; they have nothing to do with children. They have sucked the air out of education. The Seattle district no longer has anyone heading social studies or art at the district level; those positions have been replaced by people whose job it is to help students to pass standards in reading, writing, and math. All moneys are being directed at those areas being assessed; if there is no test in an area, there will be no support. Workshop money has disappeared, and virtually every workshop offered by the district is related to meeting standards. We don't talk about what is good for children, or even how to coordinate our efforts based on who we are in the building. We talk about how we can raise our test scores.

States and central administrations do not offer much in the way of useful support while asking teachers to change the way we go about our work. And they most certainly don't address the fundamental societal issues of poverty, racism, or underemployment that are the realities for many of our families. They take no action in support of the increasing numbers of parents who must be out of the home working at low paying jobs instead of being with their children. And they most certainly don't challenge the validity, reliability, or relevancy of

the standardized tests we are using to assess what happens in our schools.

This standards movement seems to be serving the needs of those in power to justify their existence. It is driving creative and inspiring teachers either mad or elsewhere. It is encouraging the hiring of young teachers who will do what they are told, without question. It is encouraging school districts to sell their souls to testing companies that are only in it for the money. Money that could be serving the needs of the people in the school districts is going into developing tests, administering tests, scoring tests, re-scoring tests, preparing for tests, recovering from tests. My students took the Direct Writing Assessment last spring. They scored pretty well on the test, as did many others across the state. Then the state decided there was a problem in the scoring of the test. We got the re-scored test results in mid-November, some seven months after the test was administered (after my fifth graders had gone on to middle school). The writing scores were worse, and were now a concern. We are talking about the same pieces of writing. Why was this round of scoring any more accurate? What did any of it mean? How should it inform my teaching? What does it say to the children, the parents, and the community? No one ever bothered to tell us.

If the kids need more schooling, why rob them of that schooling through even more days of testing? My students spent more than two weeks taking the Washington Assessment of Student Learning last year, and this year there will be more. Considering test preparation, pre assessments and exercises, I will lose more than one month of teaching time this year. How can that possibly serve students? How can asking ten-year olds to take tests for fifteen days in a row possibly serve them?

So, how has standardized tests affected me? One way standardized tests have affected my teaching life is that I, my colleagues, and my students are operating in a climate of fear. Principals are given marching orders that center on raising test scores. They are put under enormous pressure to produce "academic widgets." They in turn pass this pressure on to their staffs; nothing that does not serve test scores is allowed or condoned. One must struggle to justify affective education or even excessive social studies behavior because they are not directly related to the students' performance on the standardized tests (which for the moment do not include social studies). The arts? Forget them, unless somehow they can help students to pass the test.

Some of the best and brightest teachers have left the profession because of their pain and anger at being forced to teach in ways they know to be misguided or harmful. They are unwilling to live out the charade that simply raising test scores means anything significant for their students. These are teachers who have very high expectations

and high standards for their students and themselves, but they arrive at these standards by knowing who their students are, by knowing their curriculum, and by assessing in meaningful and appropriate ways. These teachers are honest enough to say no to Mc-Education, and they have left.

Other teachers have allowed themselves to be twisted away from their child-centered approach to education. They are attempting to follow the standardized programs dictated by legislatures and district central offices. They are pretending to believe that all children should be at the same place at the same time, that there is something of value coming from this "one size fits all" approach. It has left them tired, cynical, and longing for early retirement.

It leaves me feeling more and more isolated, increasingly aware of the persistent clouds masking the sun and the longer fingers of ice reaching across the plains.

Parents are concerned because their children are not passing these tests, which have no meaning (except to indicate that their children are somehow substandard). My classroom parents are mostly from Asian or Hispanic cultures, and many of them cannot read English with much facility. These tests are foreign and frightening to them, and they are terrified that their children will be labeled failures. Their bright, beautiful, and creative children do not have the language base nor the cultural familiarity and clues to understand the questions and inferences of the tests. It is sad.

The standards movement has also had one other major impact. Millions of dollars of state and district money have gone into developing the standardized tests. Huge yearly outlays pay for training staff (to teach to the standards), administering, and scoring the tests. As a result there is much less money available for professional development in content areas. It's harder for teachers to take classes and workshops in their subject areas (science, social studies, language arts, reading, the arts). There is little or no money for either workshop registration or to pay for substitutes. Those teachers who attend often do so at their own expense, and are forced to use personal days or sick days to arrange for substitutes.

Finally, since each discipline area works in isolation and prepares what they consider to be an ideal program, there has been no thought or recognition given to the cumulative weight of all these distinct disciplines in the same school day. Each discipline expects full attention given daily, and that we carry out a comprehensive program of thoughtful study. That's fine, but when we are expected to do this in five, six, or seven disciplines, the kids and teachers are overwhelmed, and feel guilty from the first day. One of our teachers was feeling guilty during conference time for taking ten minutes in the middle of a twelve-hour day to grab a bite of dinner. There is never enough time,

never enough preparation, never enough time spent grading, and never enough individual attention given to each student. Can't be when there are long lines waiting to be served.

This standards movement is depressing to me because it pulls my energy and focus away from the children. The conversation moves from what is good for children to adult-centered issues; what makes it easy for us to administer and record, what makes us look good, what keeps us in power, what can we promise that sounds good to voters, what helps us to keep control. It is also depressing because it treats education as an isolated "machine" that needs to be fixed independent of the society in which it is seated. Education is an artifact, a symptom of the society in which it exists, and you can't really change it without changing the conditions around it. For example, students watch an average of more than forty hours of media each week (this included television, video games, videos, and movies). There is a limit to what schools can do if children are engulfed by media whose major purpose is to make money from them by appealing to their lowest common denominators, and which encourage them to assume they are not good enough the way they are.

This is a pretty grim picture. Fortunately, there are some of us who are still putting the kids at the center, still making whatever choices we can in favor of meaningful and joyful learning. It is in spite of what comes to us from administration, from legislators, from school boards. We spend time talking with parents about the testing, and helping them to help us to know who their children are, and how to do well by them as people and as learners (rather than as products or problems). We work together to support each other to do what we know (as professionals) to be the right thing. We place our focus where it belongs, on the children.

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THEORY & RESEARCH IN SOCIAL EDUCATION

Book Review

Niemi, Richard G., & Junn, Jane. (1998). *Civic Education: What Makes Students Learn.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 204 pp., $30.00. ISBN 0-3000-7247-3.

Review by PATRICIA AVERY, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 55455-0208.

Since the publication of the article "Political Socialization and the High School Civics Curriculum in the United States" in *the American Political Science Review* in 1968, the conventional wisdom has been that civics courses have little, if any, impact on students' political knowledge. The study's authors, Kenneth Langton and M. Kent Jennings, further suggested that to the degree that civics coursework *does* affect students' knowledge, it influences African Americans more than European Americans. This, the authors hypothesized, was because civics material was "redundant" for European Americans and new to many African Americans. In a secondary analysis of the 1988 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Civics Report Card data for high school seniors, Richard Niemi and Jane Junn offer convincing evidence to the contrary, specifically that civics coursework *does* have a positive impact on student knowledge, and that in the 1980s African American students were *less* influenced by the civics curriculum than European or Hispanic Americans. For students of political socialization and civic educators, this is an important challenge to what has been accepted truth by many scholars the past 30 years.

Why do the results of this recent study directly contradict the conclusions of the 1968 study? First, the primary purpose of the 150 multiple choice items on the NAEP was to assess students' political knowledge; in the Langton and Jennings study, political knowledge was one of many variables assessed, and measured by only six items. Second, the NAEP items were designed to test knowledge likely to be gained in the civics class; in the 1968 study, only two of the six items used to measure political knowledge were of the "structures and functions" type commonly addressed in civics classes. The remaining questions were about historical or current events. Most importantly, Niemi and Junn isolated three aspects of the coursework that are likely to influence civics knowledge—the amount and recency of coursework, the variety of topics addressed, and the discussion of current events. They find that the greater the amount and the more recent the civics coursework, the wider the range of topics discussed, and the more often current events are woven into the discussion, the higher stu-

dents' level of civic knowledge. These three school-related factors account for 11% of the difference between students' scores. This is a substantial influence, particularly in light of the longstanding belief that the civics curriculum has no effect on student knowledge.

Unlike many critiques of student achievement, Niemi and Junn's analysis focuses more on what our students know as opposed to what they don't know. They also provide a realistic assessment of gaps in student knowledge and how civic educators might address them. Not surprisingly, students know more about topics that they are likely to encounter both in and out of school, and those topics they perceive to be of direct relevance to their lives. For example, students are relatively well informed about the criminal and civil justice system, information they are likely to encounter on television as well as in civics/government courses that focus on the Constitution and Bill of Rights. What student, for example, hasn't heard the police read suspects their Miranda rights on television shows such *as NYPD Blue, Homicide: Life on the Streets,* or *Law and Order?* Attention to citizen rights is further reinforced in civics and government courses. High school seniors in this study also demonstrated a fair knowledge of the different responsibilities of local, state and national government. For example, they were well aware that the Constitution provides for the division of powers, and that the federal government has the power to make treaties. Additionally, from their own experiences students know that the state government issues car licenses.

The impact of the civics curriculum is particularly pronounced when it comes to questions about the "structures and functions" of government. These are issues unlikely to be addressed on television shows, or in daily conversation. Analyses of civics and government texts (Avery & Miller, 1998; People for the American Way, 1987) often point to the "structure and functions of government" as a dominant theme. (Many educators also criticize this focus as excessive, depicting it as a "safe" area of study allowing texts to avoid more controversial issues). Although students' knowledge varies widely depending on the item (e.g., 94% knew that a Presidential election is held every four years, whereas only 37% were aware that a Senator's term of office is six years), in general, high school seniors' knowledge of the basic structures and functions of government is good.

Students are less well informed about political parties and lobbying, different types of governments, and major democratic concepts, such as representative democracy. These are areas with which 18-year-olds are likely to have less direct contact, and less likely to have studied in school. Niemi and Junn suggest that students' limited knowledge of them reflects weaknesses of the civics curriculum. That is, traditional civics content devotes little attention to the beliefs of the

political parties, the role of political action committees in our society, or alternative forms of government.

In order to explain students' level of political knowledge, Niemi and Junn propose an "exposure-selection model." Simply put, students must be exposed to information (primarily through the civics curriculum, the media, home reading materials, discussions with parents) and then be motivated to select and retain the information (primarily an individual matter, influenced by student interest, desire to do well in school, etc.). Both exposure and selection are necessary for an increase in students' civic knowledge. Students may be interested in civic affairs, but if they are not exposed to relevant information, they cannot learn it. Similarly, students may be exposed to civic information, but if they do not choose to select it, they will not learn it.

Students less likely to be exposed to civics information in the home environment are those from single-parent homes (in which there are not two adults present to be overheard discussing politics), homes with few reading materials, homes in which English is not the primary language, and homes in which the parents have a low level of formal education. Excessive television viewing (more than four hours a day) is also associated with lower levels of knowledge, presumably because viewing prevents the student from doing other activities, including reading, studying and discussing civics material. Males score only slightly higher than females on the knowledge test, but the disparity between majority and minority students, particularly between European-American and African-American students, is cause for concern. Even after controlling for differences in home environment, African Americans score almost 10 percentage points below European Americans. On the bright side, Niemi and Junn note that studies of adults (see, for example, Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996) show the disparity between European and African Americans to be even wider, thus suggesting that schools may be narrowing the gap. But the difference among students is too wide, and needs to be addressed. Lack of interest is not an issue, because African Americans report slightly more interest in civics classes than their peers. Niemi and Junn suggest that African Americans may find material presented in traditional civics classes irrelevant to them, and therefore do not select the information for retention. There is some evidence to support this theory, because African Americans score relatively well on items related to race and discrimination.

Certain classroom instructional methods tend to be associated with higher or lower levels of political knowledge. Frequent discussion and analysis of reading material and of current events tend to be associated with the former. Conversely, students who report frequent (daily or weekly) testing and memorization of material tend to demonstrate lower levels of civic knowledge. Niemi and Junn note that

class discussions (as opposed to recitations) may help students find relevance in course material, thus increasing the likelihood that educational benefits will be more lasting.

Niemi and Junn's occasional critique of the 1988 NAEP items is almost as interesting as their primary analysis, and often serves to reinforce some of their findings. It is first important to understand that although NAEP items are not limited to what is actually taught in civics courses, it would serve little purpose to test students on knowledge they are unlikely to encounter in a civics class. NAEP items reflect information that a panel of experts believes students are or should be learning in civics class. To the extent that the 1988 NAEP items reflect current emphases in the civics curriculum, Niemi and Junn infer that relatively little time is devoted to topics such as comparative government, democratic theory, or political ideologies. Because these are areas students are less likely to encounter through media or everyday conversations, civics coursework could make an important contribution in developing students' knowledge in these areas. The relative lack of items related to ideology, political parties and lobbying lead the authors to conclude that students are "expected to know about government [structures and formal processes] but not about politics" (p. 35). Similarly, the few items on race and gender issues are presented without a sense of historical or political context. As Niemi and Junn note, for example, an item that asks whether voters must currently pay a poll tax requires no understanding of the way in which such taxes were once used to prevent African Americans from voting. (Ironically, but perhaps not surprisingly, some of the 1988 NAEP items do use ethnic names when describing a hypothetical scenario, e.g., "Juan".) But attention to the struggles of women and ethnic minorities for political power in the United States is virtually absent from the 1988 NAEP items.

The item developers seem to have taken great pains to avoid any controversial issues, and as a result, Niemi and Junn find the "questions bland and uninteresting and the information hard for students to remember" (p. 40). This characterization of the civics test items is sadly familiar. An analysis of civics texts conducted by People for the American Way (1987) concluded as follows:

> What is missing, in a word, is controversy. Eighty percent of the civics books and half of the government books minimize conflict and compromise. The dynamic sense of government and politics...is lost. (p. i)

This is important because other researchers have found that the discussion of controversial issues is related to both knowledge and attitudes (Hahn, 1998; Torney, Oppenheim & Hess, 1975).

Niemi and Junn offer several recommendations to educators and policymakers. Based on the belief that students will more likely learn and retain that which they perceive to be relevant and meaningful, they suggest a stronger emphasis on local government and current issues. They recognize the practical problems this recommendation presents for teachers. Instructional materials on local government and current issues are often not readily available and require greater teacher preparation time than reliance on the textbook. (High quality lesson plans for current events, however, are increasingly available on the Internet). Still, Niemi and Junn believe students are more likely to be motivated to learn about a topic when they see a connection between what is studied in class and their immediate world outside the classroom. The authors also recommend the civics curriculum include more content about women and minorities, in part because females and minority students will likely find such material of more relevance to them, but more importantly, because all students' knowledge of race and gender issues in the United States appears fairly fragile and superficial.

The authors also believe that the senior year of high school is the most appropriate year for civics or government courses, and note that their data show the amount and recency of civics coursework to be important predictors of political knowledge. They argue that information about the political sphere is of special interest to young people on the brink of adulthood. I am not convinced by the data Niemi and Junn present that high school seniors find civics information more relevant to their lives than do their counterparts. My guess is that students who are currently taking a particular course, be it civics or algebra, will score better on a test of the subject matter than students who completed the course a previous year. Still, twelfth grade may be particularly appropriate for civics instruction because after students graduate, the information they learned is likely to be reinforced as they interact more with governmental institutions.

Some will argue, not without merit, that whether students can identify the length of a Senator's term of office or recognize the state assembly as part of the legislative branch is hardly indicative of the quality of an active, participatory citizenry. Indeed, some of the NAEP items are so decontextualized as to be illustrative of the isolated bits of information many educators who teach for understanding eschew. But I think it would be a mistake to dismiss Niemi and Junn's overall findings as irrelevant or insignificant. In a national study of adult political knowledge and behavior, Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996) found knowledge of information similar to that tested in the 1988 NAEP study to be the single best predictor of political sophistication and involvement. They suggest that "a central resource for democratic participation is political information" (p. 5). The lower people's bank of infor-

mation, so to speak, the less likely they are to be able to access and effectively influence governmental structures. Of course, many well-informed citizens operate as political bystanders; but few politically active and effective citizens are without a basic level of civic knowledge. Delli Carpini and Keeter's analysis makes the disparity in political knowledge between European American students and Hispanic and African American students in the NAEP data cause for urgent concern. Fortunately for us, Niemi and Junn have not only identified the problem, but have offered some possible remedies (e.g., making more explicit connections between civics content and minority students' lives, integrating more current events into class discussions).

One of the consequences of the 1968 Langton and Jennings' finding of the "trivial" impact of the civics course on student political knowledge was a sudden halt to what had been a burgeoning interest in political socialization. In 1985, Timothy Cook made reference to the "bear market of political socialization research." Here's hoping that the Niemi and Junn's findings will rekindle an interest in political socialization and civic education among educational researchers, political scientists, and political psychologists.

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