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THEORY & RESEARCH IN SOCIAL EDUCATION

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THEORY & RESEARCH

IN SOCIAL EDUCATION

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Carole Hahn

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Rethinking the Work of NCSS*

E. Wayne Ross
SUNY Binghamton

Considering the fact that our presidential elections have dragged on until at least the middle of the November, I thought I would begin my remarks today in an appropriate vein by talking a bit about presidential administrations in which the economy prospered and the stock market boomed, but the prosperity did not benefit all sections of the nation equally.

At first glance Calvin Coolidge and Bill Clinton seem to not share many of the same characteristics. The Republican Coolidge was a taciturn New Englander who took over Harding's scandal-ridden administration and restored integrity to the office of president. You know of course that "Silent Cal" was President of the United States from 1923-1929 and kept a deliberately low presidential profile—so low in fact that upon being informed of Coolidge's death, the famously sardonic Dorothy Parker asked "How can they tell?"

One of Coolidge's sayings was that "the business of America is business." Coolidge had unquestioning faith in the conservative business values of *laissez faire* and his public policies were aggressively pro-business. The prosperity of the 1920s was, however, decidedly uneven; some cities had unemployment rates surpassing 10 percent while industries such as coal mining remained depressed.

The Southern Democrat Clinton certainly contrasts with Coolidge on the issues of presidential scandal, integrity, and profile. I think I need not point out the particulars. Instead I want to highlight their shared belief that *what is good for business is good for America*.¹

Take for example Clinton's "New Markets Initiative" which he pitched in a tour of America's most economically devastated communities last year. His tour began in my family's home town deep in the heart of Appalachian coal country—Hazard, Kentucky—and he then went on to the Mississippi Delta, East St. Louis, the barrios of Phoenix, Watts, and Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota.

The symbolism of Clinton's tour was striking. Clinton is the first president since Lyndon Johnson to visit Appalachia—when in 1965

* This article is an annotated version of a keynote address delivered at the Council of State Social Studies Specialists (CS4) Annual Meeting, November 15, 2000, in San Antonio, TX. I would like to thank CS4, and particularly Mike Odom, for this opportunity.

LBJ launched his “war on poverty” in Hazard—and he is first president since Coolidge to pay an official visit to an Indian reservation.

Traveling with a bevy of bankers and corporate CEOs, at each stop Clinton commiserated with poverty-stricken and unemployed workers, but he was not offering a renewed war on poverty. A top White House economic adviser, Gene Sperling, chairman of the National Economic Council, declared that no one should confuse the Clinton anti-poverty tour with a return to 1960s liberalism. “This is not a matter of social justice, but of economics,” he said (McLaughlin, 1999).

Instead Clinton characterized these impoverished communities as the merely “unfinished business” of an otherwise universally prosperous nation. “I came here,” Clinton said in Kentucky, “in the hope that with the help of the business leaders here, we could say to every corporate leader in America: Take a look at investing in rural and inner-city America. It’s good for business, good for America’s growth, and it’s the right thing to do” (White House, 1999).

The basic premise of the “New Markets Initiative” is to urge corporate America to look upon Appalachia, rural Mississippi, Indian reservations, ghettos and barrios as it does the export-processing zones set up in Third World countries to exploit the cheap labor available there. As one local businessman in eastern Kentucky pleaded, “For the same reason industries are looking at Mexico, they need to look at us. We can provide it here” (McLaughlin, 1999).²

Clinton’s claim that the entire country, except for these “pockets of poverty” is enjoying remarkable prosperity is not supported by government data. For example, *The New York Times* reported last year that based on data from the Congressional Budget Office (Johnston, 1999):

- The gap between rich and poor has grown into an economic chasm so wide that the richest 2.7 million Americans, the top 1 percent, will have as many after-tax dollars to spend as the bottom 100 million. That ratio has more than doubled since 1977.
- Income disparity has grown so much that four out of five households are taking home a thinner slice of the economic pie today than in 1977.³
- Since 1993, the incomes of the richest Americans are rising twice as fast as those of the middle class.
- The average after-tax household income of the poorest one-fifth of American households has fallen 12 percent since 1977.

My point here is that despite claims of Coolidge and Clinton (and many others), which have been and continue to be uncritically echoed in the corporate media, what has been good for business has NOT been good for all Americans.⁴ We know what followed on the heels of the Coolidge administration in the 1930s and today—even though Wall Street is booming—the living standards of not only the poorest, but broad layers of working people are stagnant or declining.

How is it that Clinton could brazenly declare that the solution to mass poverty, deprivation, and hopelessness that plagues rural and inner-city America is more of the very system that created these circumstances (the social systems of private property, profits, and wages, e.g., capitalism)? It is because Clinton and the media who report on events like his “anti-poverty” tour work within a “doctrinal system” where questions that are embarrassing to the system are off-limits; information that is inconvenient is suppressed.

By now I’m sure you’re asking yourself, “What has this got to do with NCSS?” Well, a lot. The point is that there is often a serious disconnect between what the government (or professional organizations like NCSS) advocate for and the real needs of society—the collective good. And much of what government advocates for, though wrapped in the rhetoric of the collective good, is an effort to protect the dominant interests of those wealthy few who control the government. When social studies education fails to challenge the current doctrinal system—which might be described as the rule of private power through state capitalism—it functions to justify and perpetuate that system and the inequities and injustices it necessarily creates.

So in posing the question of “how do we build on the work of NCSS?”—the theme of this session, we must be careful to not confuse what serves the narrow interests of NCSS and its members and the broader interests of students, their parents, and the vast majority of the public. How are we to avoid functioning as commissars—the “bought priesthood” (Bakunin) or “specialized few” (Walter Lippman)—in the service of elite interests against the interests of the vast majority of citizens? The first step is this effort must be to critically examine the ways in which NCSS acts; social studies teachers—and teacher educators—teach; and researchers’ investigations are affected by the doctrinal system in place in our society today.

I would like to briefly identify three starting points for the re-examination of the work of NCSS: (1) NCSS and the teaching of democracy; (2) NCSS and the advancement of civil rights; (3) NCSS and academic freedom.

Social Studies Education and Teaching Democracy

Donaldo Macedo (2000) recently argued that schools in so-called free and open societies face paradoxical tensions: on one hand they

are charged with the responsibility of teaching the virtues of democracy and on the other they are complicit with the inherent hypocrisy of contemporary democracies.

Democracy as a term is used in schools and society today refers to what Noam Chomsky describes as:

A system of government in which elite elements based in the business community control the state by virtue of their dominance of the private society, while the population observes quietly. So understood, democracy is a system of elite decision making and public ratification... Correspondingly, popular involvement in the formation of public policy is considered a serious threat. (Chomsky 1987, p. 6)

For example, in social studies classes, “exercising your right to vote” is taught as the primary manifestation of good citizenship; this, along with understanding the procedural aspects of government is the primary focus of citizenship education today. Preparing youth so that they possess the knowledge, values, and skills needed for active participation in society, the consensus goal of social studies, is defined in relation to the “given” nature of capitalist democracy. Rarely are students asked to consider questions such as: What do we mean by democracy? What kind of democracy do we want? What is the function of education and the communications media in a democratic society?

Teaching citizenship based on capitalist democracy and proceduralism leaves little room for individuals or groups to exercise direct political action and the bounds of the expressible are limited. Citizens can vote, lobby, exercise free speech and assembly rights, but as far as governing is concerned, they are primarily spectators. Traditional social studies instruction (TSSI) preserves strict boundaries around the operative conceptions of democracy and citizenship in our society. In this sense, as I argue in *Democratic Social Education* (Hursh & Ross, 2000) TSSI is a critical element within an ideological system (perpetuated by the education system writ large as well as the media and the political system) constructed to ensure that the population remains passive, ignorant, and apathetic (Chomsky, 1987).

While voting and elections are not to be taken lightly—as recent events highlight—it is important that we are not diverted from the fact that by the time folks get a chance to vote the serious issues are already decided. (That’s why over half of the people in the US are non-voters.)

Rather than focus on voting we might measure the level of democracy in our society (as well as our efforts to achieve the primary

stated purpose of NCSS⁵) by the extent of public participation in policy-making, particularly on issues of communication (mass media).

Robert McChesney (in his book *Corporate Media and the Threat to Democracy*) makes this argument quite clearly and with reference to strong empirical evidence. McChesney points out that participatory self-government—democracy—works best when at least three criteria are met:

1. There are no significant disparities in economic wealth and property ownership across the society. Such disparities undermine the ability of citizens to act as equals.
2. There is a sense of community and a notion that an individual's well-being is determined to no small extent by the community's well-being. This provides democratic political culture with a substance that cannot exist if everyone is simply out to advance narrowly defined interests.
3. Democracy requires that there be an effective system of political communication, broadly drawing people meaningfully into the polity. Without this political debates can scarcely address the central issues of power and resource allocation that must be at the heart of public deliberation about democracy.

What can we conclude about the state of democracy in the US using these as criteria? How would social studies teaching, learning, and curriculum change if we adopted these criteria to judge our success as educators for democracy?

Rather than launching a public relations campaign⁶ to convince critics that social studies is not "soft" and "without content," NCSS resources should be focused on making social studies education an instrument advancing a democratic political culture in which ALL citizens have the opportunity to act as equals; where the public has the means to participate in a meaningful way in the management of its own affairs; and the means of information is open and free.⁷

NCSS and Civil Rights

The history of NCSS's record in support civil rights has been described as "negligent at best and indifferent at worst" (Nelson & Fernekes, 1996, p. 96). In assessing the role of civil rights in the work of NCSS from 1945-1950, Jack Nelson and Bill Fernekes had this to say:

Despite the visibility of increased civil rights momentum during Truman's Fair Deal, social action by African Americans that challenged segregation and discrimination in government policies and a series of NAACP legal challenges to segregation in public facilities there is little evidence that NCSS viewed civil rights as a central concern...(pp. 96-97)

They note that editorial pieces about civil rights and race relations seldom appeared in *Social Education* from 1950-1965, and not until 1969 did *Social Education* directly address the civil rights movement. In summing up the evidence from a review of the historical record of NCSS in the second half of the 20th century, Nelson and Fernekes conclude that

NCSS largely ignored the civil rights movement and in the process demonstrated indifference toward a social crisis of immense significance, one that challenged the very basis of democratic institutions and posed difficult questions for educators who daily had to confront the gap between stated ideals and social experience. (Nelson & Fernekes, 1992, pp. 96, 98)

Unfortunately that pattern of paralysis, if not hostility, to taking stands in support of civil and human rights has continued in recent years—most clearly over events that had their genesis at the NCSS annual meeting in 1994. NCSS officials encouraged the arrest and trial of a Sam Diener, teacher member of NCSS, for peacefully leafleting against the militarization of schools at an NCSS annual meeting function in Phoenix—an action supported by the NCSS Board of Directors and House of Delegates (see Fleury, 1998; Hursh, 1998). In addition, it was in Phoenix that the debate around the politics of social education exploded, with CUFA's vote to boycott Anaheim as an annual meeting site in response to the racist and xenophobic California Proposition 187. At the annual meeting in Cincinnati, the Executive Director of NCSS, Martharose Laffey, told the membership of CUFA that such trivial issues as racism and national chauvinism should not divert NCSS's mission to provide professional development to teachers. CUFA then reserved itself, rescinding its vote to take action against Proposition 187.

Despite the failure of the effort to stop CUFA and NCSS from meeting in California as a show of solidarity with immigrant groups and a statement of commitment to social justice—a step that was taken by a number of professional education associations—in its wake CUFA established a Social Justice and Diversity Committee and NCSS signed on with the Association of Teacher Educators to a Task Force on Social

Justice in Teacher Education.⁸ These actions, however, fall short of defining a distinctly different direction for an organization whose members remain overwhelmingly white and whose record on civil rights is embarrassing.

NCSS and Academic Freedom

In assessing NCSS's responses to social crises, Nelson and Fernekes (1996) document the organization's inconsistent defense of a broadly defined view of academic freedom. For example, in 1946 NCSS clearly rejected restrictions on the freedom to learn in its adoption of a resolution that stated, in part that:

learning can be free only when schools and teachers are free to teach the truth, to discuss all social and political and organizations, and when school programs are not burdened by the intrusion of the propaganda of pressure groups. (Cited in Nelson & Fernekes, p. 94)

NCSS also expressed its concern that teachers not be hindered by school boards or the public from exercising their complete freedom in political and social conduct. Nelson and Fernekes report that in the anti-Communist hysteria of the late 1940s, as the federal government began to implement measures designed to restrict the activities of "subversive" organizations and individuals, NCSS supported the maintenance of academic freedom, bucking the trend in public education.⁹

Nelson and Fernekes document the shift of tone by 1950 as the editor of *Social Education* increasingly aligned himself with anti-Communist sentiments and note that despite repeated resolutions in support of academic freedom, the editorial perspective (which was embraced by some of the resolutions on academic freedom) took the politically correct view that "communists in the classroom" is unacceptable, "no matter the cost to freedom of inquiry" (Nelson & Fernekes, p. 95). It is "abundantly clear," Nelson and Fernekes conclude, "that NCSS failed to sustain a position on academic freedom ideals" (p. 96).

Today academic freedom is most directly threatened by standards-based educational reforms (SBER), which have been embraced by NCSS and virtually every other professional education association as well as the teacher unions, the National Governors Association, and the major lobbies for corporate interests (e.g., the United States Chamber of Commerce, The Business Roundtable, etc.). SBER is an effort on the part of some official body—a governmental agency (like the US Department of Education) or a professional education association (like the NCSS) to define and establish a holistic system of pedagogical purpose (like *Goals 2000*), content selection (like curriculum standards), teaching methodology (like the promotion of phonics), and

assessment (like state mandated tests). These intents combine such that: (1) the various components of classroom practice are interrelated and mutually reinforcing to the extent they each coalesce around the others, and (2) performance is completely subsumed by the assessment component which serves as the indicator of relative success or failure (see Vinson & Ross, in press).¹⁰

SBER constructs teachers as conduits of standardized curriculum delivered in standardized ways, all of which are determined by others, who are very distant from the particular circumstances of classrooms, schools, and neighborhoods. A fundamental assumption of SBER is that deciding what should be taught is an unsuitable responsibility for teachers. Ironically, or perhaps not, standardized curriculum and high stakes testing directly contradict efforts, such as shared decision making, to make schools more democratic, responsive to local needs, and supportive of teacher development and reflective practice. If NCSS is to have a strong stand on academic freedom, then we must reject SBER and the high-stakes testing that comes with it. High-stakes tests (like the TAAS here in Texas) take time away from instruction; these tests are not accurate measures of educational quality (test scores are more closely linked to parental income than anything else); and high-stakes tests represent an assault on academic freedom by forcing their way into the classroom in an attempt to regulate knowledge—what is known, and how people come to know it. To this end you may want to closely examine a resolution against high-stakes testing that is to be introduced to the NCSS House of Delegates this week (see Appendix for draft resolution).

Yet another step to take this week would be for all of us to critically examine why NCSS would choose to give Gary Nash, the author of the National History Standards, the Defense of Academic Freedom Award. Not only has Nash authored documents that serve to undercut the academic freedom of social studies teachers, he backed down to conservative political interests to rewrite them, and throughout the process he systematically excluded feminist and left scholars. Further he has support high-stakes standardized exams. Nash is not a fighter for academic freedom. He is, rather, a fighter for the domination of classrooms by knowledge regulated by the exams his standards necessarily created. Gary Nash has not suffered, not stood up to power, and not sacrificed a thing on behalf of anyone but himself. It is unconscionable to choose to give Nash an award that purports to be everything he is not.

Conclusion

As the work of contemporary scholars both outside (e.g., Chomsky, McChesney, and James Loewen) and inside NCSS (e.g., Rich

Gibson, David Hursh, Kevin Vinson, Susan Noffke, and Steve Fleury) indicates, much of what goes on in schools today is done to keep people isolated from real issues and from each other. Schools in general, and social studies education in particular, have been used to socialize people to support the interests of those who have wealth and power. "Because they don't teach the truth about the world," Chomsky argues, "schools have to rely on beating students over the head with propaganda about democracy" (p. 16).

As individuals and as an organization we need to take a risk, to go beyond what Edward Said (1994) calls the "easy certainties" provided us by our background, language, and nationality that often shield us from the reality of others. We need to appropriate a language of critique and take bold stands against social injustice and the pretense of objectivity that is used as a means to distort and misinform in the service of the doctrinal system (Chomsky, 2000). As Noam Chomsky asserts.

It is the intellectual responsibility of teachers—or any honest person, for that matter—to try and tell the truth. That is surely uncontroversial. It is a moral imperative to find out and tell the truth as best one can, about things that matter, to the right audience. It is a waste of time to speak truth to power....One should seek an audience that matters. In teaching, it is the students. They should not be seen merely as an audience but as part of a community of common concern in which one hopes to participate constructively. We should be speaking not *to* but *with*. That is second nature to any good teacher, and it should be to any writer and intellectual as well. A good teacher knows that the best way to help students learn is to allow them to find the truth by themselves. (Chomsky, 2000, pp. 20-21)

Appendix

The draft resolution presented at NCSS House of Delegates, November 2000. (This resolution was defeated by the NCSS House of Delegates at their annual meeting in San Antonio, November 2000, however, the CUFA membership endorsed the same resolution, amended to reference CUFA, without dissent, at their meeting in San Antonio.)

Oppose High Stakes Standardized Tests!

Whereas high stakes standardized tests represent a powerful intrusion into America's classrooms, often taking up as much as 30% of teacher time,

And whereas the tests pretend that one standard fits all, when one standard does not fit all,

And whereas these tests measure, for the most part, parental income and race, and are therefore instruments which build racism and anti-working class sentiment—against the interest of most teachers and their students,

And whereas these tests deepen the segregation of children within and between school systems, a move that is not in the interests of most people in the US,

And whereas the tests set up a false employer-employees relationship between teachers and students which damages honest exchanges in the classroom,

And whereas we have seen repeatedly that the exams are unprofessionally scored, for example in New York where thousands of students were unnecessarily ordered to summer school on the grounds of incorrect test results,

And whereas the tests create an atmosphere that pits students against students and teachers against teachers and school systems against school systems in a mad scramble for financial rewards, and to avoid financial retribution,

And whereas the tests have been used to unjustly fire and discipline teachers throughout the country,

And whereas the exams represent an assault on academic freedom by forcing their way into the classroom in an attempt to regulate knowledge, what is known and how people come to know it,

And whereas the tests foment an atmosphere of greed, fear, and hysteria, none of which contributes to learning,

And whereas the high-stakes test pretend to neutrality but are deeply partisan in content.,

And whereas the tests become commodities for opportunists whose interests are profits, not the best interests of children,

Be it therefore resolved that the National Council for the Social Studies join with the National Council of Teachers of English, the International Reading Association, and the American Educational Research Association in supporting long-term authentic assessment, opposing all high-stakes standardized examinations such as but not limited to the SAT9 in California, the Michigan MEAP, the Texas TAAS, and the New York Regents Exam.

Notes

¹ I realize that Democrats have not traditionally been seen as the party of business, but the “New Democrats” who Clinton and the Democratic Leadership Council have succeeded in fashioning and their neoliberal “Third Way” economic policies share much with the Republicans of our and Coolidge’s eras.

² At the heart of the new-markets initiative is a 25 per cent tax credit for investments in community banks and financial institutions that target the poor. The plan would also establish a new investment program coupling public and private loans (Kettle, 1999).

³ But among the most prosperous one-fifth of Americans households, or about 54 million people, whose share of the national income grew, that fatter slice of the pie was not sliced evenly. More than 90 percent of the increase is going to the richest 1 percent of households, which this year will average \$515,600 in after-tax income, up from \$234,700 in 1977 (Johnston, 1999).

⁴ The Conference Board—an organization devoted to the promotion of global business—released a report in June 2000, which asked the question “Does a Rising Tide Lift All Boats?” (Barrington, 2000). The report concludes that America’s full-time working poor reap limited gains in the new economy. The Conference Board reports that the poverty rate among fulltime, year-round workers has actually increased since

1973. Further, despite the 25% increase in Gross Domestic Product between 1986 and 1998, the poverty rate among these workers actually increased by 7.4% during this period. The report also concludes that ethnic minority full-time workers experience higher poverty rates and greater volatility than similar white workers.

⁵ The primary stated purpose of NCSS is "to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world" (NCSS, 1992).

⁶ NCSS launches public relations campaign: "Today's social studies...creating effective citizens. (2000, Fall). *Leadership Link*, p. 1, 6.

⁷ McChesney's (and Chomsky's) critique of the current doctrinal system is part of a long-standing tradition of thought in the US. John Dewey was also very concerned about the issues McChesney highlights (see *The Public and Its Problems*, for example). Dewey and another "relic of the Enlightenment classical liberal tradition" Thomas Jefferson, opposed the rule of the "wise" (e.g., Jeffersonian aristocrats). And Dewey clearly stated that "politics is the shadow cast on society by big business" and so long as this is so, "attenuation of the shadow will not change the substance." Chomsky points out that in the 1920s, Dewey argued that this shadow must be removed not only because of its domination of the political arena, but because the institutions of private power (like the mass media) undermine democracy and freedom. Dewey said "Power today resides in control of the means of production, exchange, publicity, transportation and communication. Whoever owns them rules the life of the country" even if democratic forms remain. Dewey went on to argue that "business for private profit through private control of banking, land, industry reinforced by command of the press, press agents and other means of publicity and propaganda" is the system of actual power, the sources of coercion and control that must be undone before we can talk seriously about democracy and freedom (Dewey quotes cited in Chomsky 2000).

⁸ For more on the response of CUFA and NCSS to Proposition 187 and the Anaheim boycott effort see: Ross, 1999.

⁹ Nelson and Fernekes note that in 1948 NCSS adopted five resolutions addressing issues of academic freedom: opposing loyalty oaths and loyalty probes; condemning censorship of school materials; and supporting the rights of teachers to join organizations of their choice.

¹⁰ In the face of great enthusiasm for SBER and high stakes testing there is a growing resistance movement. This resistance, like the support for SBER, comes in a variety of forms and is fueled by the energies of parents, students, teachers, advocacy groups, and a handful of academics. The resistance to SBER is based on three quite distinct arguments: (1) a technical one—the tests are technically flawed or inappropriately used; (2) a psychological one—SBER's reliance on external motivation is counterproductive and will lead to lower levels of achievement and disempowerment for teachers; and (3) a social critique of testing—testing is a social practice which promotes corporate interests and anti-democratic, anti-community values (see Mathison, Ross, & Vinson, in press; Ross, 1997; Vinson, Gibson, & Ross, in press).

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Learning History In School: The Impact Of Course Work And Instructional Practices On Achievement*

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Abstract.

The connection between high school courses and student knowledge on standardized tests has seldom been studied in social studies fields—and almost never on a national basis and with a wide range of statistical controls. We look at the relationship between course work in U.S. history and performance on the 1994 National Assessment of Educational Progress (utilizing the 1994 High School Transcript Study to measure course enrollments). We find that students who take more and higher-level course work, who reported greater emphasis on a broad array of historical topics, and who experienced more “active” instruction performed better on the NAEP test even after adjusting for numerous student and family characteristics. The findings provide support both for increasing the amount of history course work and for enlightened instructional practices.

A critical task performed by our nation’s schools is to establish and sustain an informed citizenry that will not only work to support our democratic system, but will also work to promote the ideals of human possibility both individually and communally. Among other things, then, a good school would be one in which its students are afforded ample opportunity to develop, as Jefferson (1779) wrote, “...knowledge of those facts, which history exhibiteth, that, possessed thereby of the experience of other ages and countries, they may be enabled to know ambition under all its shapes, and prompt to exert their natural powers to defeat [tyranny’s] purposes.” Or, in the more

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prosaic words of Goals 2000, good schools will teach students “to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship...”

Currently, students in the United States show a surprising lack of understanding of, even passing knowledge of, the nation’s history. Recent examinations of the history achievement of high school seniors reveal that few are able to place significant dates accurately, identify key figures in America’s past, or trace the historical evolution of critical developments in our nation’s history (Ravitch & Finn, 1987; Ravitch, 1995; Beatty, et al., 1996). As a result, history, along with almost all other subjects, has witnessed the development of state and (voluntary) national standards, along with numerous related efforts, all intended to improve students’ performance on these types of tests (*National Standards for History* 1996; Kendall and Marzano, 1999). These efforts, described more completely below, variously target the number of years of history students are to take, the content of courses taught in history, and the type of instruction—tasks, delivery of information, and assessment—used in history courses.

This study focuses broadly on instruction related to the social aspects of society and governance as outlined by Jefferson and in the recent Goals 2000. Concerns over American’s low levels of political knowledge (Morin, 1995; Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1995), alleged lack of social capital (Putnam, 2000), visibly increased political cynicism and condemnation of political institutions (Nye, Zelikow, & King, 1997), and youths’ lack of interest in public affairs (Astin, et al., 1997, 28, 45, 57; Bennett & Rademacher, 1997) have led to repeated calls for greater attention to education in broad areas of the social studies. Our study addresses only a small piece of these much larger questions, but it will serve to heighten the relationship between national subject-matter assessments and significant societal concerns. In doing so, we hope that it will not only offer specific insights into this larger realm but that it will demonstrate another way in which nationwide assessments contribute to the national dialogue over the quality of the American educational system, as well as possible ways of improving it.

Background

Connecting Course Work to Test Performance

If what is *learned* in school is at all related to what is *taught* in school, that relationship should be captured in the extent to which one’s exposure to content in a given curriculum leads to successful performance of skills or display of knowledge in that area. From a policy perspective, researchers have approached this relationship in calling students’ course work exposure a measure of their “opportunity to learn” in school (Gamoran, 1986). The idea that different stu-

dents have different “opportunities” to learn material was first developed by educators faced with the task of explaining why students in the United States differed in their achievement on the International Education Association’s 1964 assessment in mathematics (Husén, 1967; McDonnell, 1995; Dougherty, 1996). The main premise, that students can only learn material to which they are exposed, supports the central assumption that one attends school in order to be provided an opportunity to learn.

In the late 1980s, the concept of learning opportunities expanded in use to include not only differences in student achievement between countries (Keeves, 1992), but also differences between students in the same country attending different schools (Lee & Bryk, 1988; Lareau, 1987) or enrolled in different curricula (Westholm, Lindquist, & Niemi 1990), between students in the same school taking different classes (Oakes, 1985; Gamoran, 1987; Gamoran & Mare, 1989; Lee & Bryk, 1989; Chaney, Burgdorf, & Atash, 1997), and between students in the same classroom working in different groups (Gamoran, 1986; Hallinan, 1987, 1991). More recently, attention in high schools has shifted to what characteristics of the organizational structure of high schools contributes to providing or limiting students opportunity to learn, primarily in mathematics (Gamoran, Porter, Smithson, & White, 1997) and English (Gamoran, Nystrand, Berends, & LePore, 1995). In general, in any circumstance in which two students have different exposure to the curriculum, resulting performance differences may be at least in part attributed to their different “opportunity” to learn the relevant material.

In the study of American high school achievement, research findings have been relatively persuasive on this point. Many studies over the past 15 years confirm that overall horizontal curriculum differentiation—as in the “tracking” of students into college-preparatory, general, and vocational curriculum paths—shows a consistent advantage of college-preparatory over general, and both over vocational, course work in students’ performance on reading and mathematics tests of achievement (for an overview of this research, see Lee, Bryk, & Smith, 1993). In addition, extensive studies of vertical curriculum differentiation—as in divisions of topics into basic, average, and advanced—demonstrate significant performance advantage related to students’ access to advanced course work in both mathematics and science, even after taking other background differences into account (Garet & Delaney, 1988; Lee, Smith, & Croninger, 1995; Chaney, et al., 1997). In both of these curricular domains, the connection between students’ opportunity to learn (as observed through course-taking) and their knowledge (as observed through standardized testing) has been clearly demonstrated. However, little attention has typically been paid to other

areas of the high school curriculum beyond simple bivariate comparisons (for an exception, see Niemi & Junn, 1998).

Reforms Targeting History Achievement

In drawing this connection between course-taking and achievement, one can identify three different approaches to school reform, each of which attempts to improve students' assessed performance on standardized tests of knowledge. At the broadest level, one finds graduation requirements concerning numbers of courses one must take or general subject-matter the curriculum must cover. In the high school itself, curriculum reform tends to focus on the content of courses or course sequences. Finally, in the classroom, reform addresses instructional methods and access to auxiliary information. We briefly discuss each approach.

Reform through requirements. The growing concern over national standards for high school graduation is founded on two basic premises: (1) more courses/hours will translate into more learning; and (2) students will only take more courses when forced. Both of these premises must, however, be carefully scrutinized. Research examining the impact of increased graduation requirements in different content areas has found a mixed bag when it comes to performance on standardized tests. On the one hand, it appears that students who attend schools that require more course work do take more of those courses (Powell, Farrar, & Cohen, 1985; Porter, 1994). On the other hand, it is not clear that these students do much better on tests of knowledge purported to be taught in those courses (Chaney, et al., 1997). Further, there has been some research to indicate that increased graduation requirements may contribute to increased student dropout levels (McDill, Natriello, & Pallas, 1986; Wehlage, 1989). In general, the link between more hours spent on a subject and higher levels of knowledge about that subject appears to be mediated by the content of the course itself and the manner with which the content is delivered. However, to date, almost no research has empirically tested this connection as a mediated relationship, clarifying what part of the overall impact of course taking functions directly and what part operates indirectly through other correlates of more advanced course work. We intend to do so here.

Reform through course content. Focus on the effects of specific courses is another standard approach to reforming schools to improve achievement. Indeed, over the past decade there has been growing concern over what content (and in particular what culture's history) *should* be taught in school (Ravitch, 1995; Cornbleth, 1998). While increased emphasis on multicultural perspectives encourages courses in diverse ethnic history, others concerned with national identity emphasize content that provides a broad overview of central events and

views. Most often the evaluation of the effect of course content on achievement is done on a small scale (Litt, 1963; Gehrke, Knapp, & Sirotnik, 1992), frequently with respect to innovative courses or innovative teaching methods (e.g., Patrick, 1972; Jenness, 1990; Thornton, 1991; Avery, et al., 1992). While often insightful, such evaluations are subject to the criticism that they are fraught with “Hawthorne” effects because of the special enthusiasm brought to the courses in their initial “run-through” (by all teachers) or because they are taught by especially creative or adept teachers for their trial runs. Moreover, small-scale evaluations do not readily lend themselves to generalization to a wide range of teachers, students, communities, and other widely varying circumstances. It is critical to augment this body of knowledge with a broader examination of the relationship between different content coverage and achievement, which is what we attempt to do here.

Reform through instruction methods. A third common approach to improving achievement scores focuses on instructional methods. Whatever the content, it is argued, learning can be enhanced if more active approaches, requiring more student talk, reading, and writing, are used (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995). This research often examines the use of higher order thinking skills in the classroom, particularly those used in writing and analyzing text. There is strong evidence supporting achievement gains relating to use of these techniques (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995). However, researchers have seldom examined whether it is instruction alone or a combination of extended content with active instruction that enhances student performance on standardized assessments. Although all we have available here concerning instruction are students’ reports of types of activities conducted in history classes, these offer us a base for beginning to examine possible connections.

Research Questions

We organize our investigations around four related research questions. With each question, we pose hypotheses about the results we expect based on theory and evidence from the literature cited above.

Research Question 1: Number of Courses and Achievement

Do students who take more history courses perform better on the standardized assessment used by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)?¹ We hypothesize that there will be an overall positive relationship between number of courses taken and student performance. However, this relationship may be reduced or even com-

pletely eliminated after taking into account course content and instructional differences.

Research Question 2: Course Content and Achievement

Do students who take broad survey courses perform better than those who take classes devoted to diverse or specific topics in history? We hypothesize that the depth of knowledge gained in topic-specific courses may not translate as well to a broad, standardized assessment as the knowledge gained in general and generic-content courses. However, there is evidence to point in either direction for this question, particularly in comparing ethnic differences in performance on standardized assessments (Jencks, 1998).

Research Question 3: Instructional Methods and Achievement

Do students who take courses involving more active and extensive writing and text analysis perform better on standardized assessments? We hypothesize that students who are trained in more extensive and higher-order thinking in history will have learned the content better and will thus perform better on standardized tests, such as NAEP, that combine multiple choice questions and constructed response items.

Research Question 4: Combined Effects of Number of Courses, Content, Instruction on History Achievement

In what way do number of courses, content differences, and instructional differences work with or against each other to influence student achievement? Which type of difference is most strongly tied to student performance? We hypothesize that the effects of the three factors will be significantly modified when taken in tandem and that instructional differences, being the most closely linked to the learning process, will have the greatest impact on student performance on the NAEP test.

Methods

The research questions are straightforward, but any attempt to answer them requires a test that is adequate on both substantive and technical grounds and, ideally, has been given to a meaningful population (see description of data below). Proper analysis also requires controls for a variety of potentially confounding factors, including student demographics, family background, and the student's own behavior and academic background. All of these factors are related to student performance in history and other subjects (e.g., Beatty, et al., 1996), and many are related to course-taking in history and govern-

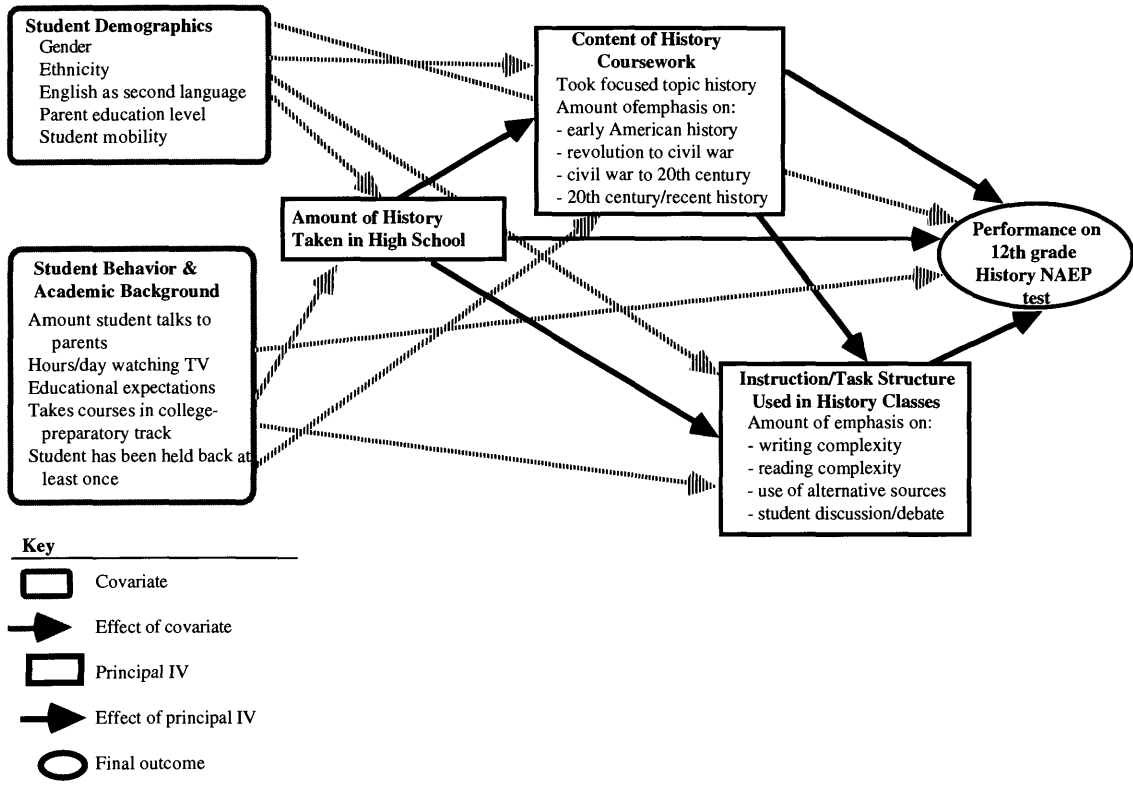


Figure 1. Conceptual Model Guiding Analysis

ment classes (Legum, et al., 1998; Niemi and Smith, 2001), thus possibly leading to spurious results unless adequately accounted for.

The model we use takes into account the effects of student demographics, family characteristics, and student behavior and academic background on each of the key independent variables as well as their direct effects on history achievement (Figure 1). The critical focus—shown in the figure with solid lines—is on the effects of the number of semesters of history and their level (amount/level), the content emphasis of courses taken (type), and the instructional approaches used in these courses (instruction) on overall history achievement as well as on achievement as measured by four subscales formed from the NAEP assessment items.

Data

Our ex-post facto study makes use of two major studies conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics. First is the 1994 National Assessment of Educational Progress in U.S. history (Beatty, et al., 1996). Like all of the national assessments, the 1994 history test was given to a nationally representative sample of public and nonpublic school students in grades 4, 8, and 12.² We limit our analysis to the 12th grade portion, believing that the widespread, traditional 11th grade history course would provide the best basis for detecting course effects.

The test itself—the only ongoing, nationwide assessment of student achievement—was completely redesigned for 1994.³ While no test is above criticism, the history assessment has a number of important features, including: a) it was organized around three concepts (major themes of, chronological periods of, and ways of knowing and thinking about U.S. history) instead of simply a chronological timeline; b) it included a variety of question types (multiple choice, short constructed response items, and extended constructed response items)⁴; c) it made use of both primary and secondary source material; and d) it was designed so as to avoid testing isolated items (by including two or three items pertaining to a particular stimulus or issue and by using “theme blocks” focused on a single issue). In addition, the test was constructed so as to yield an overall score as well as scores on four subscales (see the description below of outcome measures).⁵ Sample questions are given in Beatty, et al., (1996); all public release items are available on-line on the website of the National Center for Education Statistics (specifically, at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/sampleq/94hist12.pdf>).

A history background questionnaire, filled out by students as part of the Assessment, provides information about all three of the principal independent variables. For course taking itself, however, much more reliable data is available in the 1994 High School Tran-

script Study (HSTS).⁶ For the HSTS, a nationally representative sample largely overlapping with the NAEP sample was selected, and students' transcripts were obtained. Using the *Classification of Secondary School Courses*; courses were coded into some 16 categories and 85 subcategories using the Secondary School Taxonomy (SST). In the history area, this allows us to distinguish between general and specialized courses as well as to determine the amount and type of history course work taken by each student. In addition, the transcript study includes the student's grade point average in 9th grade. After deleting cases with missing data, 4,465 students had data available from both the NAEP and HSTS studies, and they form the base for our analysis.

Table 1 shows descriptive information for all measures used in the analyses. Reflecting the changing demographics of the American population, 23 percent of the students are Hispanic or African American, and 26 percent have non-native English speaking parents. As for the parents, they have "some" college education, on average. According to students, they discuss school work with someone at home relatively frequently (several times a week or more). The large portion of students who are a year or more older than their on-grade cohort (4%) corresponds fairly closely with estimates of the amount of grade-retention in U.S. schools. Interestingly, 14 percent of the students in this sample report having changed high schools at least once.

Measures

Critical predictors. We consider the relationship to student achievement in history of three distinct characteristics of the history curriculum, characteristics that reflect the three reform approaches described above. First, in order to explore the impact of course-taking as such, we created a variable measuring the amount and level of U.S. history taken. Using the HSTS data, we divided students into four groups scored as follows: 0 = no U.S. history or only remedial history; 1 = less than one year of regular U.S. history; 2 = one year of regular U.S. history; 3 = one year of honors or AP U.S. history.⁷ The distribution of students on this variable is shown in Table 1.⁸

The second characteristic, tapping the breadth of content to which students were exposed, utilizes two measures. The first, again based on the HSTS data, captures whether each course focused on a single era in U.S. history or was a broad survey course. It is coded as a dichotomous measure (yes=1). A fifth of the students had taken a focused course. The second measure is based on students' answers to the question: "Since the beginning of 9th grade, how much have you studied the following periods of United States history?" Students were asked whether they had studied each of four historical periods "a lot," "some," or "not at all." From their responses, we created a single, ad-

Table 1

Descriptive Information on All Measures Used in Analysis		
Measure	Percent/Mean	sd
<i>Student Demographics</i>		
Student is female	51.0%	
Student is Latino	10.3%	
Student is African-American	13.0%	
<i>Family Characteristics</i>		
Parents non-English speaking	26.3%	
Years of parent education (highest parent)	14.05	1.99
<i>Student/family Behavior</i>		
Hours/day watching TV	2.72	1.74
Times/month student discusses school work at home	18.26	8.72
<i>Academic Background</i>		
Student changed high schools	14.3%	
Student is old for grade level (retained)	3.6%	
Student is in college preparatory track	26.8%	
Student plans four-year college after high school	55.4%	
Student grade point average (9 th grade)	1.77	.76
<i>History Curriculum Variables</i>		
Amount/level of US history taken by student		
No U.S. history or only remedial history	12.4%	
One year of regular US history ^a	76.7%	
One year of honors or AP US history	10.9%	
Student took focused US history course	20.9%	
Amount of topic coverage in US history	.005	.98
Use of active instruction in history ^b	.017	.74
<i>History Achievement Scales</i>		
Overall composite	285	33
Democracy subscale	285	44
Culture subscale	284	26
Technology subscale	286	29
World relations subscale	287	37

Note: Amount/level of US history taken and whether the student took a focused history course are from the Transcript Study; all other measures are from NAEP. N = 4,465.

^aIncluded here are a small number of students who had less than one year of regular history.

^bThis measure is z-scored for the full NAEP sample.

Sources: 1994 High School Transcript Study; 1994 National Assessment of Educational Progress (history).

ditive measure denoting the amount of content coverage (with a high score indicating greater coverage). This scale was then z-scored.

The third characteristic, targeting the instruction used in history classes, is measured through student reports of the different instructional methods used in their classes.⁹ Research conducted on the validity of survey data to examine instructional practices shows mixed results, but tends to suggest that students (particularly older students) are a better source of information about what actually occurs in a classroom than are teachers (though both are less desirable than formal observation), provided the questions target concrete activities and not general philosophy of learning (Henke, Chen, & Goldman, 1999; Mayer, 1999). Four instructional domains emerged from initial analysis—writing complexity, reading depth,¹⁰ use of extensive student discussion, and use of learning tools beyond traditional textbook materials. Figure 2 shows the percentage of students who reported doing each item, for each scale, “about every day.” In the figure, the items are ordered from most common to least common for each scale. Classrooms that have greater use of the less common practices are aligned with the theoretical description of “active” instruction in history described earlier. Each domain functions as a continuum in instructional approach (as determined by Rasch analysis), so that the scaling of each of the different items reflects a single linear scale.¹¹ For example, the scale constructed on writing complexity uses all items concerning type of writing activity done in history and arranges them in a continuum from very limited directed responses (fill-in-the-blank answers) to very complex independent responses (essays over five pages long). From these scales, we constructed a composite of instructional approach for which high scores indicate instruction that uses complex writing, detailed reading from original sources, extensive student discussion, and extensive use of learning technology. Because the units of the combination of scales are measured in logits, which are not readily interpretable, the resulting composite is z-scored, making the units of analysis anchored around the mean, with “1” representing one standard deviation.

Covariates. We control for a wide variety of student characteristics. These include personal attributes, family interaction, and in- and out-of-school factors. All of the background characteristics are known to correlate with history achievement (Beatty, et al., 1996), perhaps because of their relationship to student interest, motivation, and encouragement. The academic background variables are included in an effort to control for students’ overall academic achievement and, to some extent, for their innate abilities as well. While the list of available factors never covers everything that one would like, inclusion of numerous attributes that encompass the individual, home, and school environments goes a long way toward controlling for the multiplicity

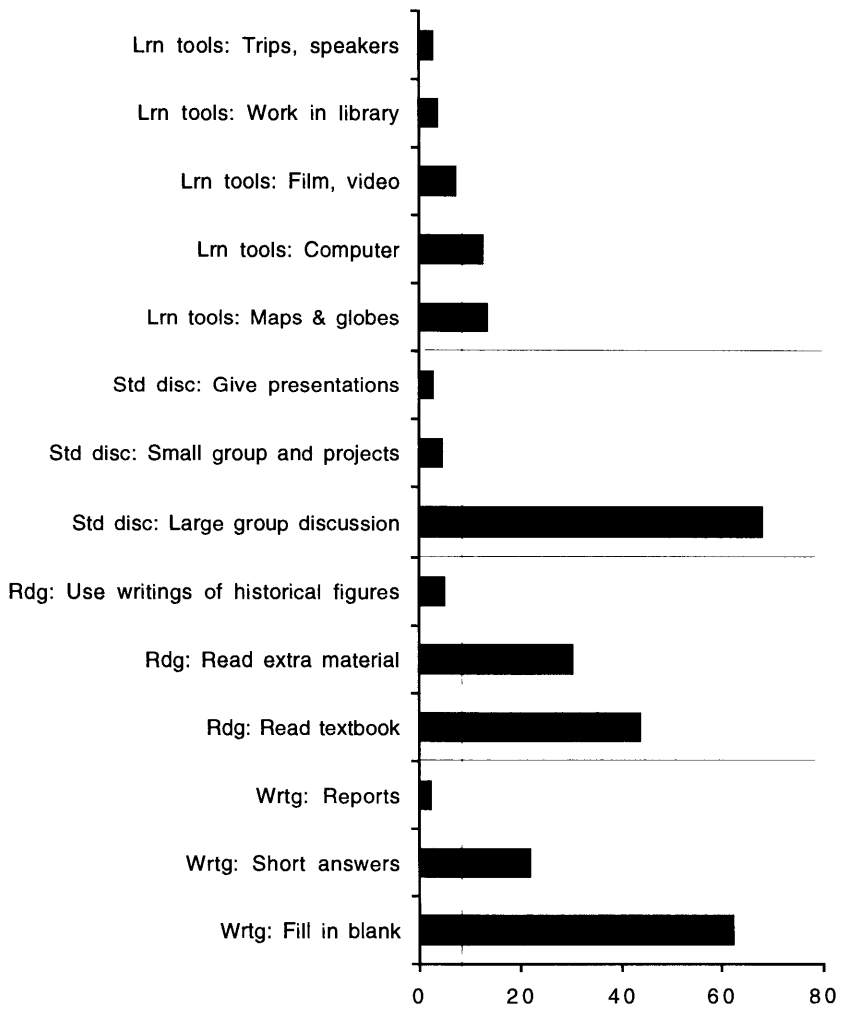


Figure 2. Frequency of Instructional Practices Relating to Writing Complexity, Reading Depth, Use of Extensive Student Discussion, and Use of Learning Tools

of factors that are likely to affect student achievement apart from the history curriculum itself.

Outcome measures. We test for the effects of history courses, content, and instruction on the NAEP overall achievement scale and on four NAEP subscales. The subscales assess knowledge of the development of American democracy (Democracy), the interaction of people and cultures in America (Culture), American economic and technological developments (Technology), and the shaping of American foreign policy (World Relations). All scale scores are based on a scale ranging from 0 to 500. Average scores for the students used in this study were 285 for the overall achievement scale, and 285, 284, 286, and 287, respectively, for the four subscales. As in other NAEP assessments, a spiral-BIB design was used. That is, the entire assessment was designed to take well over two hours to complete; each student was given only a portion of the assessment, which took approximately fifty minutes. Items were then combined into a single overall scale and the four subscales using models based on item response theory. Each of the scores cited matches or is within one point of the value for the overall NAEP sample.¹²

Analytic Approach

Our analyses draw together students' backgrounds as well as their course taking to determine the possibility of nested, indirect, or suppressed relationships between background and curriculum factors and student achievement. While each curriculum measure is first explored by itself, the analysis brings all of the factors together in a multivariate regression using a path analytic structure to better understand the relationships. Path analysis uses regression methods in a sequential manner, first predicting the external or "exogenous" variables on intermediary predictors (amount of history, type of course, content coverage, and instruction), then examining the combined effects of these predictors on achievement. This process allows one to examine the mediated impact on intermediary predictors on the final achievement outcome. The final model is a multiple regression estimating the effects of all predictors and confounding factors on the different achievement outcomes.

Results

Effects of Student and Family Characteristics on History Achievement

The focus of this study is on the scope and methods of teaching history, but as noted, it is imperative that we control for a variety of student and family characteristics. It is worthwhile to note the impact of these characteristics on the history achievement scales before moving on to the effects of the history curriculum, partly for their own

sake but also to indicate the extent to which the later analysis avoids falsely attributing background effects to the curriculum. With this in mind, Table 2 shows the results from a regression of the five separate history scales on student and family characteristics. Each column corresponds to a different performance score outcome.

Many interesting, if largely expected, observations emerge from these relationships, including the troubling finding that race, ethnicity, and aspects of social class are strongly related to students' performance in history. African-American and Hispanic students do worse in U.S. history, and students with non-English speaking parents do slightly worse, even after taking other ethnic and status covariates into account. Students whose parents have higher education do better in history in all areas. Gender is also related to history knowledge, though with differing patterns. Girls do better than boys in one area—knowledge of culture. In knowledge of world relations, girls do much worse than boys—a difference of about 1/5 of a standard deviation lower.¹³ On the overall scale, as well as in knowledge of democracy and technology, girls performed somewhat worse than boys.¹⁴

Students who spend more time talking to their parents about school have consistently higher test scores, while students who spend more time per day watching television have lower scores. Interestingly, changing high schools is a "risk" factor associated with lower achievement, even after taking all other covariates into account. The two strongest predictors of history achievement in this model are closely linked to course-taking itself—taking courses in the college-preparatory track and having plans for college after high school. And finally, as expected, the student's performance earlier in school (9th grade GPA) is strongly related to achievement.

From our present perspective, in which these factors are of interest mainly as control variables, what is most significant is that these relationships are largely consistent across history scales and that they are unchanged when we include the history curriculum factors. There are only three exceptions. First, as noted, the effects of gender differ across the history scales. The differences are not large, but they accord with expectations based on stereotypical interests of girls versus boys, and they are the only variable for which the relationship to history achievement is both "positive" and "negative." Second, apart from demographics, knowledge of world relations is least (or tied for least) strongly related to all of the independent variables. Correspondingly, the goodness of fit measure is slightly lower for this scale than for the others. Even heavy television use is less strongly (though still negatively) related to knowledge of this area. These weaker relationships, along with the fact that the questions on this scale refer in part to contemporary events, suggests that students may be picking up knowledge about them outside of the school.¹⁵ Finally, as we shall see shortly,

Table 2

	<i>NAEP subscales</i>				
	Overall	Democracy	Culture	Technology	World Relations
<i>Student Demographics</i>					
Student is female	-.08	-.07	.04	-.04	-.21
Student is Latino	-.09	-.09	-.09	-.08	-.09
Student is African-American	-.17	-.13	-.14	-.19	-.20
<i>Family Characteristics</i>					
Parents non-English speaking	-.04	-.05	-.04	-.04	-.01*
Years of parent education	.14	.14	.14	.13	.13
<i>Student/family Behavior</i>					
Times/mo. student discusses school work	.09	.08	.10	.09	.08
Hours/day watching TV	-.08	-.09	-.08	-.09	-.05
<i>Academic Background</i>					
Student changed high schools	-.08	-.08	-.09	-.06	-.06
Student is old for grade level (retained)	-.07	-.06	-.08	-.07	-.05
Student is in college preparatory track	.21	.21	.22	.20	.20
Student plans 4-year college after HS	.20	.19	.19	.21	.18
Grade point average	.12	.13	.10	.11	.10
Adjusted R ²	.37	.36	.36	.36	.34

Note: Entries are standardized regression coefficients. All entries, except as noted by *, are significant at the .01 level or below. $N = 4,465$.

the apparent impact of being in the college-preparatory track and of having plans for college declines somewhat once specific history curriculum factors are included in the model, indicative of the overlap between general and specific course-taking patterns.

Impact of Course Work, Content Emphasis, and Instructional Methods on Achievement

Relationships between history curriculum variables and history achievement are shown in Table 3. We show only the coefficients for the curriculum measures, but each regression contained all the covariates listed in Table 2, thereby controlling for the student and family characteristics discussed above. In sections I-III of the table,

we show the effect of each curriculum measure unadjusted for the others. In section IV, all three measures are included together.

Note first that curricular effects appear to function largely independently of one another, as the coefficients change in size only slightly when included one at a time or altogether in the model. Also note that curricular effects are nearly identical for each of the history scales, with the single exception that instructional emphasis has a slightly lower impact on knowledge of world relations.

All of the curriculum measures, save one, contributed to improved history performance. It is notable, first, that history course work per se is linked to higher performance. Even after controlling for the students' perceptions of the breadth of their topical coverage of history and the nature of classroom instruction, having had additional course work leads to higher assessment scores. Having had honors or AP history is especially likely to boost one's assessment scores, but having a standard course contributes to knowledge as well.¹⁶ In short, the overall positive relationship between number of courses taken and student performance is *not* eliminated after taking into account course content and instructional differences. A relationship exists between opportunity to learn, as reflected in course work, and student achievement in history, as it is in other curricular domains.

Not only is course work, per se, important, but so is breadth of coverage in those courses. The more students reported having covered historical topics, the higher they scored on the assessment. It is worth noting that the questions about coverage were framed in terms of chronology—i.e., “the period before 1815,” “the period between 1815 and 1865,” and so on. Though we do not wish to make too much of the exact items—since the validity of student reports about coverage can surely be questioned—this suggests that greater attention simply to the progression of historical events leads to increased test scores, even on a test constructed only partially with chronology in mind.¹⁷

Adding to this conclusion is that the only curriculum measure that was not significant contrasted students taking narrowly focused history courses to those taking a broader survey course. Having a topical course in preference to (or sometimes in addition to) a survey course failed to raise students' scores. A possible explanation is that many high school students have only a tenuous grasp of history (Ravitch & Finn 1987), making it more difficult to understand historical themes that might depart from strict chronology. Alternatively, low levels of students knowledge make the teaching of chronology all the more meaningful. Of course, it should be noted that topical courses did not lower scores on the assessment either. More study of history, whether broad or focused, seems to contribute to student knowledge.

The strongest effect of the history curriculum is tied to the nature of instruction. Methods that involve the increased use of com-

Table 3

	NAEP subscales				World Relations
	Overall	Democracy	Culture	Technology	
<i>History course work</i>					
Amount/level of U.S. history taken by student	.11	.12	.10	.10	.11
Adjusted R ²	.38	.37	.37	.37	.35
<i>Breadth of history coverage</i>					
Student took focused US history course	.01	.00	.02	.00	.00
Amount of topic coverage in US history	.23	.22	.23	.20	.22
Adjusted R ²	.42	.40	.41	.40	.39
<i>Instructional methods in history</i>					
Use of active instruction in history	.38	.38	.38	.37	.33
Adjusted R ²	.49	.48	.49	.48	.44
<i>Course work/breadth/instruction</i>					
Amount/level of U.S. history taken by student	.07	.08	.05	.06	.07
Student took focused US history course	.02	.01	.02	.01	.01
Amount of topic coverage in US history	.19	.19	.19	.17	.19
Use of active instruction in history	.35	.35	.36	.35	.31
Adjusted R ²	.53	.52	.52	.51	.48

Note: Entries are standardized regression coefficients. Each section is a separate regression analysis; each regression includes all student and family characteristics listed in Table 2. Coefficients for focused history are not statistically significant. All other entries are significant at the .001 level or below. $N = 4,465$.

plex writing tasks, in-depth reading, extensive use of student discussion, and use of learning tools, are strongly related to higher student scores. This result is all the more interesting when combined with the finding about kinds of coverage. One might argue that students need to learn facts—the chronology of history—and that reading from a textbook, drilling, and testing should suffice. “Active” instruction might be useful for other kinds of subjects (e.g., civics; Niemi & Junn 1998, chapters 4, 6), but not for history. The present findings belie such an argument. In history as well as elsewhere, active involvement promotes student achievement.

Overall, the impact of curriculum measures on history achievement is considerable. One indication is the substantial increase in the goodness of fit (R^2) compared to its value when only student and family characteristics were included.¹⁸ More directly, the coefficients indicate that curriculum measures contribute as much as two-thirds of a standard deviation to overall student scores (about 22 points on the NAEP scale). This result compares favorably with the effects of students' personal and family backgrounds, including such important variables as parents' education and the school track in which the student is situated. The amount and level of history a student takes, the breadth of coverage in those courses, and, especially, the approach used by the teachers, are major predictors of student performance.

Path Analysis Results

The path analysis investigates the ways in which these different approaches to improving history scores operate in an inter-related fashion. In addition, it allows one to examine the ways in which background characteristics may relate to achievement differences indirectly, through differences in exposure to amount of history, type of course work, and type of instruction. The results of this investigation are shown in Table 4. Each column in this table is a separate regression analysis, using the variable identified at the top of the column as the dependent variable.

The first column shows the relationship between various background characteristics and the amount/level of history taken by each student. Not surprisingly, being in the academic or college-preparatory track in high school and planning on attendance at a four-year college are the strongest predictors of taking more history. Beyond this relationship, most associations between student background and course-taking are small. African-American students and those with non-English-speaking parents take slightly less history than white students, as do students who watch a great deal of television. In general, these relationships indicate that some degree of background differentiation occurs in student opportunity for learning about history.

The second and third columns use the content of the course as outcomes. The only characteristic associated with taking a topic-focused course was the amount/level of history taken, and that only weakly. However, the more history taken, the more coverage students receive of the various topics. Parents' education and the amount the student talks to parents are also relatively strong predictors of this measure; these may be more indicative of what students remember having covered than of actual differences in their classes. Beyond these relationships, girls, minority students, and students from non-English-speaking homes experience less coverage, as do students who change high schools at least once.

Table 4

Results from Path Analysis Investigating Inter-Related Effects on History Achievement

Variable	Amount/ level of US history	Took a focused history course	Amount of content coverage	Active instruction
Student is female	.01	-.01	-.05*	.05*
Student is Latino	-.01	.02	-.04*	-.06*
Student is African-American	-.03	.02	-.03*	-.11*
Parents non-English speaking	-.05*	.02	-.04*	-.06*
Years of parent education	.01	-.01	.05*	.07*
Times/mo. student discusses school	-.02	-.01	.12*	.00
Hours /day watching TV	-.04*	-.01	-.01	-.06*
Student changed high schools	-.01	-.01	-.05*	-.07*
Student is old for grade level	-.01	.01	.01	-.06*
Student is in academic track	.12*	.00	.06*	.09*
Student plans four-year college	.07*	-.03	.05*	.06*
Grade point average	.10*	.00	.01	.11*
Amount/level of U.S. history taken		-.05*	.08*	.07*
Took a focused U.S. history course				-.01
Amount of content coverage				.08*
Use of active instruction in history				
Adjusted R^2	.06	.00	.06	.14

Note: Entries are standardized regression coefficients. Each column is a separate regression analysis, with the column header as the outcome. $N = 4,465$.

* $p < .05$

The fourth column in this table shows the combination of factors associated with students experiencing more active history instruction in the classroom. Students who have taken more history also report higher levels of this instructional approach in their history courses. In addition, students in an academic track and students planning to attend a four-year college report more contact with this type of instruction. Students who have changed high schools and students who have been retained report less experience with active instruction. Finally, students with more educated parents have greater exposure while Hispanic, African-American, and students of non-English speaking parents have less exposure to active instruction.

In general, the patterns observed between background characteristics and achievement also operate through students' different experiences in history courses. They emerge in the amount/level of history taken, in the amount of coverage of historical topics, and most importantly in students' experience with the type of instruction that contributes most to higher performance on such tests. In addition, it is clear that these effects, while operating essentially independently on achievement, connect with each other as well. It is difficult to establish a genuine causal direction in these relationships. For example, students who have exposure to more active instruction may be more inclined to take additional course work in history; or it could be that students who take more course work have a better chance to experience more advanced teaching methods in history. Whichever the causal connection, the combination of the different factors appears to work toward improved history achievement.

Significance

We framed this study to examine different methods commonly used to target the problem of low performance in history. We found that students who take more courses and more advanced courses perform better even after adjusting for a variety of student and family characteristics. We also found that while there was no performance difference associated with taking narrowly focused compared to broad survey courses, students who reported more extensive emphasis on a number of topics in history performed better on all achievement scales. Finally, we found that students who experienced instruction that used more primary reading sources, required more and longer writing tasks, engaged students in active discussion, and utilized learning tools beyond simple textbooks did much better on these achievement scales.

In addition, when examined in combination, each effect appears to hold an independent relationship to achievement, with the greatest advantage working through instruction. This finding indicates that the different approaches to improving test scores in history function

best when combined. However, if faced with a choice of only one “solution” to raise history scores, it is clear that instructional changes have the most powerful relationship to student performance. This finding is particularly striking given that the format of these tests only partially parallels the task structure implied by longer in-depth reading, writing, and discussion. Thus, it is not simply a matter of students having had “practice” with the task format of the tests, but instead suggests that this type of instruction helps students learn more history in response to any type of task.

While we find achievement differences related to each of these areas, it is important ultimately to keep in mind the meaning of this difference in the larger context of student learning. Standardized assessments can mask real actual student knowledge, particularly in schools where the curriculum does not match the content of the test (Smith, Smith, & Bryk, 1998). However, it is also true that schools are increasingly being held to accountability requirements based in the use of exactly these types of assessments (Dorn, 1998; Mendro, 1998). Thus, uncovering relationships that might be targeted through school reform could have important consequences. A performance increase of a third of a standard deviation, for example, corresponds to moving from the 50th to the 75th percentile.

Our work, along with parallel work using an earlier civics NAEP (Niemi & Junn, 1998), thus confirm that opportunity to learn, as represented by course work taken, along with various other aspects of courses and of the school, contribute meaningfully to increased levels of social studies knowledge among high school seniors. Having support for this basic point, future studies can more confidently strive both to increase the amount of social studies taken and to promote the kinds of classes and classrooms that provide the greatest contribution to student achievement.

Notes

¹ A description and justification for use of this test is given below.

² The sample for the main assessment, used here, was a complex, multistage sample designed to be representative of the student population in U.S. schools in grades 4, 8, and 12. There was an oversampling of nonpublic schools and of public schools with moderate or high enrollment of black or Hispanic students in order to increase the reliability of estimates for these groups. Weights corrected for this oversampling. Weights were adjusted to account for nonresponse and then further adjusted by poststratification procedures to ensure that sample proportions matched population estimates given by the Census Bureau for race, ethnicity, geographic region, and age. For details of the sampling procedure, see Allen, et al. (1996, chs. 3, 10).

³ The framework guiding the test construction, as well as the specific items, were developed through an elaborate consensus process involving a large number of individuals and groups. For details on all aspects of the test, see Allen, et al. (1996).

⁴ At the 12th grade, there were 103, 33, and 19 items, respectively, of the three types. About 60 percent of the assessment time was spent on constructed response items.

⁵NAEP reports make use of highly controversial “achievement levels” that divide students into below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced categories, but we use the original scores, avoiding the problem of categorization. The test was often criticized as being too difficult, in part because it was meant to test what students should know about history, not simply what they have learned in courses as currently taught (NAEP U.S. History Consensus Project, n.d., 7). Even if true, however, our use of the assessment is appropriate inasmuch as the difficulty level affects average scores but does not by itself alter the relationship between test scores and independent variables.

⁶In NAEP, students were asked whether they had taken a United States history course in grades 9-11 and whether they were taking one “now.” A recent study comparing their responses and their high school transcripts showed that students frequently misreported their course work, failing to report courses taken as well as reporting courses when none appeared on their transcript. In addition, non-U.S. history classes were not distinguished from U.S. history classes, and a question about Advanced Placement was misunderstood (Niemi & Smith, 1999). While the possibility exists of some recording or classification errors in coding courses listed on a student’s transcript, considerable care was taken to assure a complete and accurate data set (see Legum, et al., 1998, 1-8).

⁷Remedial courses included those explicitly labeled as such along with courses listed as 7th and 8th grade history. “Regular” courses are those that are not labeled as remedial or honors or AP. Students in any of the categories may have taken courses in world or non-U.S. history.

⁸Ideally, it would be useful to code this variable more finely—especially to separate out those with no history from those with remedial history and to distinguish between those with local honors and AP courses. However, there were too few cases to do so. At the top end, extremely few students took more than a year of history without having a specialized course (accounted for by the next variable) or an honors/AP class. At the bottom end, there were few cases, and we were also concerned about unusual circumstances that might account for the absence of a regular history course and might not be adequately accounted for by our other control variables.

⁹Given that high school students may take multiple classes in a given subject, NAEP questions about instruction are not about a specific class but rather about “when you study history” in school.

¹⁰Reading depth does not include measures concerning the amount of homework done or pages read for school. These items appear in a different section of the survey and do not specify history. In addition, analyses done on homework in other contexts (such as NELS:88) show a non-linear relationship with achievement due to the fact that both good and poor students tend to do a great deal of it. These items were therefore not used in this study.

¹¹Rasch analysis provides a measure, along with person-level and item-level fit statistics that is linearly scaled. The measure utilizes logit units, estimating for each person their position along a linear continuum from very “simple” or common instructional practices to those that are unusual or uncommon. Thus each measure identifies how complex the specific context is in which instruction occurs. Secondary analysis through factor analysis shows that these four contexts covary significantly, forming one overall instructional scale (for example, the smallest correlation is between student discussion and use of tools, $r=.72$). Thus, use of each individual scale as a separate predictor, while theoretically appealing, is prohibitive analytically in that their collinearity eliminates the effects of each individual scale.

¹²For details of the scoring procedures, including tests of goodness of fit of specific items, see Allen, et al. (1996, chs. 11, 13).

¹³We use the language of size of effect related to standard deviation difference suggested by Black (1999).

¹⁴The finding that girls demonstrate less knowledge of world relations is consistent with Niemi and Junn’s (1998, 106-107) finding that girls scored slightly lower, on average, on questions about war and foreign affairs in the 1988 civics assessment.

¹⁵ In a similar vein, Niemi and Junn (1998, ch. 2) found that students' knowledge of citizens' rights was especially high, in part because of their contemporary nature and their direct relevance to students. In a similar vein, Niemi and Junn (1998, ch. 2) found that students' knowledge of citizens' rights was especially high, in part because of their contemporary nature and their direct relevance to students.

¹⁶ Logically, it might be thought that students with no formal U.S. history course work had little or no coverage of various historical periods, leading to a very high correlation between the variables tapping amount/level of history and amount of topic coverage and thus confounding their effects. Several factors work against this. First, the lowest category on the amount/level variable includes students who had course work in U.S. history, though at a remedial level. Second, it is likely that students had some coverage of U.S. history in non-history courses— especially government classes. Finally, it should be recalled that the amount/level variable comes from the HSTS; students sometimes reported that they had U.S. history course work (and therefore varying amounts of topical coverage) even though the HSTS showed no history course. Unraveling the discrepancies between HSTS and students' reports of course work is beyond the scope of this paper.

¹⁷ As noted in the *History Report Card*, "four historical themes are the core organizing structure of the framework... to ensure that all major branches of historical study were covered..." (Beatty, et al., 1996, 3). However, it was also the case that eight periods "provide chronological structure for many of the issues included in the four themes" (4).

¹⁸ The R^2 is acceptable given the ex-post facto analysis design, though indicating that a good deal of the variation in achievement is unaccounted for.

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Missing in Interaction: Diversity, Narrative, and Critical Multicultural Social Studies

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Abstract

This article examines the production of historical knowledge in elementary and middle school classrooms. Drawing on an analysis of two qualitative case studies of the curriculum in use, the author argues that efforts to create narratives that embody diversity are flawed, due to their failure to represent the interactions between diverse groups and whites in US history. Because diverse groups and whites are "missing in interaction," school-based historical knowledge is a poor resource for enabling students to develop a discourse of contemporary race and ethnic relations that addresses institutional racism, structural inequality, and power. The author concludes by arguing that a critical multicultural social studies must focus on the actions and interactions between diverse groups to make visible power relations in US history and society.

Many scholars and educators view social studies education as a potential vehicle for social change, a space in which students can learn the knowledge and tools they will need to be effective and critical citizens in US society (Banks, 1997; Cherryholmes, 1996; Evans, 1996; Marker & Mehlinger, 1992; Ross & Hursh, 2000; Saxe, 1992; Thornton, 1994). In recent years, debates over creating inclusive history-social studies curricula that embodies the presence of diverse groups in US history have become increasingly contentious (cf. Apple, 1993; Banks, 1995; Bloom, 1987; Cheney, 1995; Gitlin, 1995; Levine, 1996; McLaren, 1997; Nash, Crabtree, and Dunn, 1997; Schlesinger, 1992; Sleeter, 1995; Sleeter & McLaren, 1991). Amid this debate between opponents and proponents of multicultural curriculum there has developed division among proponents of multicultural education, with critical multiculturalists accusing liberal multiculturalists of ignoring issues of institutional racism, structural inequality, and power in US society (Jackson & Solis, 1995; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; McCarthy, 1998; McCarthy & Willis, 1995; McLaren, 1997).

While academic and public debate has continued, many elementary and secondary teachers have revised their social studies curriculum to recognize racial and ethnic diversity in US history and society. Scholarly investigations of these practices would do much to inform the debate surrounding multicultural reform in social studies. Scholars have noted that there has been relatively little ethnographic research in social studies classrooms over the past decade to draw upon (Brophy, 1990; Downey, 1996; Downey & Levstik, 1991; Marker & Mehlinger, 1992), although recent case studies of history teaching (Brophy & VanSledright, 1997; Thornton, 1993; Wineburg & Wilson, 1988) have begun to address this problem. But especially in regards to the creation of multicultural histories of the United States and the world, we still know relatively little about multicultural social studies curriculum as enacted in schools and classrooms. How are racial and ethnic groups represented in the curriculum in use? What narratives of race and ethnic relations are constructed in classrooms? Does school knowledge prepare students for social critique and active citizenship in our increasingly diverse society? These questions are still difficult to answer with any certainty.

This article is concerned with the way school knowledge structures students' public discourse on social, cultural, and political issues. In what follows, I examine how the knowledge of Martin Luther King Jr.'s experiences of segregation in the South, and of Native Americans in Colonial history, serve as cultural resources which structure students' discourse on race and ethnic relations in the United States. Through an analysis of the curriculum in use in elementary and middle school classrooms, I argue that diverse groups, including whites, are "missing in interaction." That is, missing in the curriculum are meaningful representations of the actions and interactions of diverse groups as agents, actors, and subjects in US history and society. Because diverse groups are missing in interaction in the social studies curriculum, school knowledge is a poor resource for enabling students to develop a discourse of contemporary race and ethnic relations that moves beyond psychological understandings of racism to structural understandings of racism. As such, school knowledge provides an inadequate foundation for realizing a critical social studies education that will prepare students for active citizenship in our diverse society.

The Politics of Historical Representation

A variety of scholars working in history, social studies, and education have attempted to move beyond debates over historical accuracy and significance by focusing on issues of interpretation and representation in history (Cohen, 1994; Cronon, 1992; Levstik & Barton, 1997; Kammen, 1991; Seixas, 1994; Trouillot, 1995; Wishart, 1997). His-

torical narratives always involve interpretation, and always necessitate decisions regarding how to represent historical figures and events, including judgments concerning the significance of specific historical figures and events, what events to “grasp together” (Wertsch, 1999), and how to grasp them together, into coherent narratives of the past. History is not a “found reality” but a socially and culturally constructed reality, a form of cultural politics (Apple, 1993).

While this cultural politics has been evident in recent debates over history-social studies curriculum and the development of national standards for history-social studies (Nash et al, 1997), we know much less about the cultural politics involved in the interpretation and representation of history in actual classrooms. The majority of research conducted in history-social studies has focused on content analyses of the formal curriculum, especially textbooks (cf. Fitzgerald, 1980; Lowen, 1995) or interviews and experiments with students to gain insight into their historical reasoning, understanding, and knowledge (cf. Barton & Levstik, 1996; Brophy et al., 1993; Epstein, 1994; Levstik & Barton, 1996; McKeown & Beck, 1990, 1994; Seixas, 1993; Wertsch, 1999; Wineburg, 1991. Also see Bohan & Davis, 1998, for a study of student teachers’ historical thinking). Few studies have employed an ethnographic approach to observe the curriculum in use in actual classrooms to analyze the factors that mediate teachers’ and students’ construction of historical knowledge. How teachers and students use textbooks and other curriculum, as well as popular materials such as news magazines and film, to represent the past in lessons and activities is an empirical question. An ethnographic approach is particularly useful in revealing the social and cultural politics involved in the use of curricular materials in the construction of school-based historical knowledge.

Ethnographic studies of the curriculum in use and school knowledge have demonstrated that the formal content of the curriculum does not dictate the knowledge constructed by teachers and students in classrooms. The construction of knowledge in schools and classrooms is mediated by the organizational forms of schooling (McNeil, 1986), school culture (Page, 1991), teacher expectations (Keddie, 1971), and popular cultural knowledge (Wills, 1994, 1996). Scholars in education (Apple, 1993; Luke, de Castell & Luke, 1983; Stray, 1994) and others interested in the use of cultural texts in the construction of meaning (Fish, 1980; Griswold, 1987; Liebes & Katz, 1990; Press, 1991; Radway, 1984; Shively, 1992) have argued that readers are not passive consumers of fixed meanings which are located in texts. Rather, readers are active participants in the construction of textual meaning. Meaning does not reside in texts, but in the interaction between the symbolic resources of texts and their readers in specific social, historical, and institutional settings. As such, the meaning of curricular con-

tent is a social accomplishment, and school knowledge is produced in the interaction between teachers, students, and curriculum. What counts as a multicultural social studies curriculum, therefore, and the value of this knowledge for students as social and political actors, is best investigated through an ethnographic case study of the curriculum in use.

Methodology

Data from two qualitative case studies conducted in elementary school and middle school classrooms informs the analysis of the curriculum in use in this article. The elementary school data come from a pilot study, conducted between January and April, 1999, which examined the lessons and activities surrounding the remembrance and celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday in elementary schools in the Rochester, New York area. I observed two second grade suburban classrooms, one fourth grade suburban classroom, and one urban elementary school assembly put on by the student body in celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday. This pilot study involved regular non-participant observation and videotaping of classroom lessons and activities, transcription of the audio portion of videotapes for analysis of classroom discourse, formal interviews with teachers, individual students and groups of students, and the collection and analysis of student work and curricular materials.

The middle school data come from a case study conducted at one suburban middle school in San Diego, California. From September 1991 through June 1992, I conducted regular non-participant observations in three eighth grade US history classrooms and videotaped classroom lessons and activities, generating a total of 130 videotaped observations. The audio portion of these videotapes was then transcribed for analysis of classroom discourse, with particular attention to privileged representations of different racial and ethnic groups, their situation in specific periods and events in US history, and how race and ethnic relations were represented in historical narratives. These data were supplemented by formal and informal interviews with teachers and students, the collection and analysis of student work throughout the ten month study, content analysis of the students' textbooks and other curriculum used, and the analysis of brief narratives of US history written by students specifically for this research.

In both case studies extensive non-participant observation, interviews with teachers and students, microanalysis of classroom discourse, and content analysis of curricular materials and student work allowed me to document and analyze the representation of racial and ethnic groups in US history, with particular attention to the representation and narration of race and ethnic relations. Analysis of these

data allowed me to: 1) document how teachers and students used a variety of curricular and popular materials to include diverse racial and ethnic groups in the social studies curriculum, 2) document how narratives of race and ethnic relations were constructed in these classrooms, and 3) understand the consequences of the knowledge produced in preparing students to critically examine issues of discrimination, inequality, and injustice in US history and society.

In the following sections I will discuss and examine the curriculum in use in elementary and middle school classrooms to demonstrate how the curriculum fails to meaningfully represent the interactions between diverse groups in US history and society.

Martin Luther King, Jr. and Segregation in the South

How do narratives of Dr. King's life in a segregated South fail to represent the interactions between blacks and whites during this period in US history? In this section I examine the curriculum in use in two suburban second grade classrooms. I argue that the representation of segregation in children's literature, and the teacher's focus on exploring the thoughts and feelings of young Martin Luther King, Jr. as he experienced discrimination in a segregated South, effectively removes or silences whites as active participants in history and society.

During a period of two weeks surrounding the annual King holiday, Janice and Susan (all names are pseudonyms) had their students learn about the Underground Railroad and Martin Luther King, Jr. These teachers used the Underground Railroad as a transition (albeit a weak one, which they jokingly admitted) from a unit on astronomy (follow the Drinking Gourd to freedom) to a small unit on Martin Luther King, Jr. The curriculum during this two week period included reading books to their students on the Underground Railroad and Martin Luther King, Jr., completing a packet of worksheets on the Drinking Gourd and one on Dr. King, and the creation of a "Peace Puzzle" which was hung on a bulletin board in the hallway outside their classrooms. Janice and Susan combined their classes each morning for story time, in which Janice or Susan would read a story to their students. In what follows I analyze the representation of segregation in *Young Martin's Promise* (1993) and Janice's discussion of this book with the students.

Young Martin's Promise is the story of young Martin Luther King, Jr., and his slow awakening to the existence of segregation and his experiences with discrimination as a child, experiences which would, according to the story, motivate his efforts to end segregation as an adult. Two events stand out in the story. In the first event, Martin's white friends tell him that they have been told by their parents that

they cannot play with him anymore because he is black. This upsets Martin and results in his mother telling him about segregation. The second event is a trip to the shoe store with his father. After taking seats in the front of the store Martin and his father are told they must take seats in the rear of the store because, as the white clerk tells them, "that is the only place we serve black people" (1993, p. 19). Martin is upset and confused by this incident, and this time it is Martin's father who talks to him about segregation.

Kohl (1994) has noted the passive description of segregation in children's literature about Rosa Parks, and this is also evident in *Young Martin's Promise*. Segregation is described passively, without agency, and whites' investment in segregation and participation in segregating Southern society is obscured. For example, when young Martin first becomes aware of segregation after his white friends tell him they can no longer play with him, his mother notes that it is the law that says that whites and blacks could not be together in some places. After young Martin and his father leave the shoe store, refusing to take seats in the rear of the store as the clerk demanded, he is confused about what had happened and why the clerk had been angry. Martin's father explains that this was part of segregation, not a law but a custom, and that "[m]any white people did not expect to sit with black people when they shopped" (1993, p. 23). Young Martin vows to help his father fight against segregation, and he concludes that while the white boys who used to be his friends might have to accept segregation, he did not. The story ends by noting that because of Martin Luther King, Jr., "and others like him," the segregation laws and customs were changed.

This representation of segregation obscures white participation in segregating Southern society and makes invisible the white investment in segregation. Segregation is the result of laws and customs, but not, apparently, the active participation of whites in specific practices which denied blacks access to equal services and opportunities. It's not that white people did not *want* to sit with black people when they shopped, but that they did not *expect* to. Whites did not *support* segregation, but simply *accepted* segregation. The ownership of segregation is unclear in this story, and an understanding of segregation as an interactional accomplishment that required the participation of whites is silenced.

But, returning to the central argument of this article, aren't whites, and blacks, represented as actors in this narrative? Aren't the interactions between whites and blacks evident in this story? I would argue that these are incomplete narratives of race relations because they focus on the meaningful actions of African Americans while presenting the discriminatory actions of whites, but not the meanings behind these actions. Whites are not fully realized social actors because their ac-

tions are never made meaningful, their motivations are never clear. What had happened in the shoe store, Martin wonders, "why was the clerk mad if they hadn't done anything wrong?" (1993, p. 22). Martin's father answers segregation, in this case not a law but a custom, but this does more to mystify (McNeil, 1986) than explain the clerk's behavior. African Americans in these stories are fully realized human beings, with thoughts, feelings, and clear motivations for their actions, while whites are not. The interactions between blacks and whites are not authentic, not fully meaningful, because the subjectivity of whites is missing, their reasons and objectives for segregating blacks from whites in Southern society remain unspoken.

The silencing of the subjectivity of whites in Southern society, while, at least trying, to understand the subjectivity and meaningful actions of African Americans, is evident in Janice's discussion of *Young Martin's Promise* with her students. The objective of this discussion is to help students understand and identify with the thoughts and feelings of young Martin as he learns about segregation and experiences discrimination. For example, after reading that Martin's white friends were not on the school bus on Martin's first day of school, and that all the children on the bus were black, Janice asks her students "why do you think that happened?" Emily responds that "white people thought that black people were worse, and they couldn't do everything," and that's why they went to different schools. Emily's response hints at some understanding of some whites' belief in the inferiority of blacks. But rather than pursue this topic, Janice responds by redirecting her students' attention to a different issue: "I want you to think about how Martin might have felt when he got on the bus that first day. How do you think he felt?" Throughout this conversation, and those on other days with both Janice and Susan, the focus is on understanding the subjectivity of young Martin or, in the stories of the Underground Railroad, African American slaves, and not exploring the subjectivity of whites.

This silencing of white subjectivity while giving voice to black subjectivity is clear in the discussion of the shoe store incident. Janice reads:

Martin ran over to the shoe store where he saw a pair he liked. They went inside and sat in the first empty seats they saw. The seats were near the front window, and Martin could see the shoes he wanted. A young clerk came up to them.

"I'll be happy to wait on you if you'll just move to those seats in the rear," the clerk said in a low voice.

"There's nothing wrong with these seats," Martin's father said. "We are quite comfortable here."

"Sorry," said the clerk," but you will have to move to the rear of the store."

"We'll either buy shoes sitting here," Martin's father said, "or we won't buy shoes at all."

"Stop being so high and mighty!" the clerk said angrily. "That is the only place we serve black people."

After reading this passage Janice asked her students "How do you think Martin and his father felt?" Students respond "annoyed," "discouraged," and "sad." One female student declares that making them sit in the rear of the store was "cruel," and she adds that "I bet back there they had crappy shoes, for the black people." Janice summarizes by stating that this doesn't seem fair to the students, and it didn't seem fair to Martin and his father either, and notes that it made them feel bad because some people weren't asked to move. She continues reading:

Martin looked up at his father. Why was the man yelling at them? Why was he angry? All they wanted to do was buy a pair of shoes. Then Martin's father took his hand, and they walked out of the store - without buying the shoes.

Janice asks "why do you think they did that?" One male student responds "They were like, they were like, 'if you're gonna be like that then you're not gonna get any money from us.' There were, there were shoes they wanted but they're not taking them 'cause they're mean."

These brief excerpts demonstrate the work being done in these classrooms to give voice to the subjectivity of young Martin and, by extension, African Americans living in segregated Southern society. This emphasis, in fact, is consistent with one of the main themes of the year in these classrooms, conflict resolution, and makes the silencing of white subjectivity all the more apparent. Susan explained the process of conflict resolution in an interview with me:

First you ask, what the problem is, then you listen to what each side has to say. And you brainstorm solutions and then you chose what's, what would be a good resolution and then you do it. So, we've kind of tied that in to that's a better way to solve problems and that you can make changes you can work together and, cooperate and it should be fair. I think, all of those things have kind of melded a little in their minds.

For Janice and Susan, the story of Martin Luther King, Jr. is one of peaceful change, and the lesson is that conflicts can be resolved when people work together. This theme was also evident in the "Peace Puzzle" their students made, which consisted of each student writing what he or she would do to make their life more peaceful or something they could do to promote peace on a piece of construction paper. These were then put together to create a large puzzle, to demonstrate what can be accomplished when everyone works together.

What is ironic in Susan's description of conflict resolution — "you listen to what each side has to say" — is that in the narrative of King's life the white voice never gets to have its say, whether it is the pro-segregation white voice or the pro-desegregation white voice. It is the failure to explore the subjectivity of whites that leaves them missing in interaction in the narrative, and makes this an inadequate representation of race relations during this period. While the black opposition to segregation is audible and understandable, the white investment in segregation is silenced and inexplicable.

Why is the absence of the white voice and white subjectivity so significant? Recent theory and research concerning diversity, multicultural education, and race and racism, has shifted focus from the "problem" of blacks and other people of color to the problem of whiteness and white privilege in US society (Jackson & Solis, 1995; McCarthy, 1998; McCarthy & Crichlow, 1993; McLaren, 1997). For example, Lipsitz (1998) theorizes that whites have a "possessive investment in whiteness," due to the "cash value" of whiteness in US society. It is whiteness that "accounts for advantages that come to individuals through profits made from housing secured in discriminatory markets, through the unequal educations allocated to children of different races, through insider networks that channel employment opportunities to the relatives and friends of those who have profited most from present and past racial discrimination, and especially through intergenerational transfers of inherited wealth that pass on the spoils of discrimination to succeeding generations" (1998, p. vii). Whiteness, as an identity, provides whites with resources, power, and opportunities that are not available to people of color.

It is this possessive investment in whiteness, and the value of white identity in Southern society, that is rendered invisible in the King narrative by ignoring white subjectivity and white agency in segregation. By focusing almost exclusively on the thoughts and feelings of young Martin as he experiences discrimination in a segregated society, the curriculum in use silences the perspectives of whites, fails to interrogate the meanings behind their actions, and obscures white agency in structuring and maintaining a system of privilege and power. Because of this, whites are missing in interaction, and the representation of race relations in the curriculum provides poor resources for

students in understanding racism and inequality in contemporary US society.

Cultural Difference in Colonial America

In this section, I examine the curriculum in use in one teacher's US history classroom as she attempts to enrich the curriculum by including Native Americans in a unit on colonial America. I argue that the focus on exploring the cultural differences between Native Americans and whites evident in lessons and activities is at the expense of constructing meaningful representations of the interactions and relations between whites and Native Americans during this period.

Judy was particularly interested in finding ways to include Native Americans and African Americans in the history curriculum. She was also interested in providing her students with knowledge that would enable them to address contemporary race relations in the United States and engage issues of inequality, economic opportunity, and civil rights for African Americans. I have discussed Judy's classroom and curriculum in relation to African Americans elsewhere (Wills, 1996). In this paper I want to focus specifically on Judy's effort to include Native Americans in the curriculum during the study of the colonial period in US history.

Finding less information than she thought was appropriate on Native Americans during the colonial period in her students' textbook, *A More Perfect Union* (1991), Judy decided to spend three weeks supplementing the textbook with additional reading, research, and cooperative group activities. Judy had her students read Conrad Richter's *The Light in the Forest* (1953), a novel about True Son, a white child abducted in a raid and raised by the Delaware Indians, who is later forcibly returned to his white family. This novel provided material for a number of class discussions and an essay assignment. Students researched Native American tribes who lived in the Eastern Woodlands during the Colonial period and then constructed "Fact or Fiction" books on each tribe. The format of these books was to ask a specific question about a Native American tribe on one page ("Fact or Fiction: the Mohawk Indians lived in teepees"), then answer the question on the following page (Fiction: "Mohawks lived in houses made out of frameworks of twigs covered with long sheets of elm tree bark. Not teepees"). Finally, Judy's students participated in a number of group activities concerning the colonial period and events leading up to the Revolutionary War, including a role-playing activity which addressed multiple perspectives on events leading up to the Revolutionary War. In this section, I want to focus on two representative class discussions and a role-playing activity which typify the approach to creating a more inclusive Colonial history in Judy's classroom.

The focus in class discussions and activities during this three week period emphasized the cultural differences between whites and Native Americans, and how culture determined these groups' views of the world and perspectives on historical events. For example, in one discussion of "point of view" Judy asked her students to discuss how True Son, having been raised as a Delaware Indian, would see Fort Pitt as compared to a white settler (Fort Pitt was where True Son was taken to be returned to his white family). What developed was the construction of a list of differences in the viewpoints of Native Americans and white settlers, with Native Americans viewing Fort Pitt as an "ugly," "treeless" "prison," and white settlers viewing the fort as a "home" in which they were "safe" from Indian attacks.

In another discussion in which the issue of stereotyping arose, Judy asked her students to imagine what they would do if they were in True Son's position, that is, return to their white families or remain with the Delaware. Again, the discussion led to the construction of additional differences between Native Americans and whites. Native Americans are "better people," "religious," "sacred," "carry on traditions," and have "better moral values" when compared to whites. Whites are "kind of jerks" who "take over" and "control" the land, while Native Americans "adapt to the land" and "preserve" the land. This discussion concluded when one boy noted that Native Americans would take care of a mentally disabled person, they would be "really nice" to him and try to "help him learn," while whites would simply put this person in an institution.

These discussions of point of view and stereotyping, and the students' research on the cultures of different Native American tribes during the colonial period, are directed towards constituting knowledge of the distinct culture(s) of Native Americans, and the differences between the cultures of whites and Native Americans. But what remains invisible are the interactions between whites and Native Americans during the colonial period, interactions that are, in fact, present in *The Light in the Forest*, where Native Americans and white settlers are continually in conflict with one another, but not pursued in the curriculum. In this instance, the study of culture becomes a substitute for the study of history and society, of social life between and among diverse groups (Wills & Mehan, in press). If school knowledge is a cultural resource that students can utilize to make sense of the history of race and ethnic relations and inequality in US history and society, then the usefulness of this knowledge is limited.

The essentialized cultural differences constructed in class discussions represent the conflict between whites and Native Americans in US history as a clash of two opposing and incompatible structures (because culture is represented as fixed and static, not a process but an object that groups possess). That is, the conflict between whites

and Native Americans is represented as a cultural conflict, rather than differences in the power of whites and Native Americans to realize their interests during the colonial period and beyond. This is not to say that culture (understood in non-essentialist terms) is not an important force in history and society. Rather, it is to argue that culture is important in its role as a resource in structuring social action, in influencing the actions and interactions between whites and Native Americans in US history. The primary focus should be on social interaction, on society, and not on the cultures of distinct groups.

Diverse Perspectives on Colonial History

In addition to student research and class discussions of cultural differences, Judy's students engaged in a role playing activity which dealt with diverse perspectives on events leading up to the Revolutionary War. A discussion of the Boston Tea Party is particularly instructive. Small groups of students were assigned to role play important historical figures such as King George (the British perspective), Samuel Adams (a radical patriot), John Dickinson (a moderate colonist), Abigail Adams (a female colonist), Logan (an Iroquois Indian, representing the Native American perspective), and Crispus Attucks (an African American). After reading information on their individual, the students were asked to comment on the Boston Tea Party from their perspective. Specifically, they were to address how they felt about what happened in this event, and what they thought about the actions of the men in this significant historical event.

What is significant about this activity is that while it is focused on specific historical events, it is not directed at constituting the actions and interactions of diverse groups in these events. Instead, the activity is about generating "culturally informed commentaries" on these events from the individual representatives of diverse groups. For example, the group representing Logan, when asked to comment on the Boston Tea Party – "from your perspective, how do you feel about what's happening" — complains about the colonists dressing up like Indians. The Crispus Attucks group is asked what they think about this event, "from an African American patriotic standpoint," and how they think this will affect other African Americans in the colonies. In addition to joking that they don't have an answer because they are dead (killed in the Boston Massacre, which was discussed earlier in this class period), they conclude that the colonists will have to pay more money for their tea.

Both Logan and Attucks' responses stand in stark contrast to the response of the Sam Adams group, who declare that "we did the right thing. We showed England that we weren't going to stand around and let them push us around." While Adams gets to speak as a par-

ticipant in history, Logan and Attucks are confined to a different role, one of cultural representative. This activity, while ostensibly about exploring colonial history, continues the focus on establishing cultural differences that characterizes the curriculum on Native Americans in colonial America in Judy's classroom. What this activity fails to do is to represent the interactions between diverse groups in history, an approach that would lay the foundation for a critical multicultural social studies by providing students with a history of race and ethnic relations in the United States, knowledge that could inform their discourse on contemporary race and ethnic relations.

As Trouillot notes, "any historical narrative is a particular bundle of silences" (1995, p. 27). Here, silences regarding the participation of African Americans and Native Americans in US history are enforced through the selection of historical events to include in the curriculum. These silences render invisible the actions of African Americans and Native Americans in US history and their interactions with whites and other groups in colonial society. Given the focus on cultural difference and point of view evident in the curriculum in use in Judy's classroom, school knowledge is an adequate resource for constituting diverse individuals and groups as cultural commentators, and maybe, at times, as cultural actors. But the curriculum is inadequate for constituting diverse groups as social actors and agents, actors and interactors in history and society who are located within social and economic structures.

Representing the Interactions of Diverse Groups in US History

If what are missing in the social studies curriculum are meaningful representations of the actions and interactions of diverse groups as agents, actors, and subjects in history, what would it mean to teach about interactions and how might one do it? In calling for studying the interactions between diverse groups in history and society, I have in mind focusing on the face-to-face interactions between diverse groups, but doing so in ways that situate these interactions within cultural systems and social, economic, and political structures. The task is to help students understand how culture and social structure orient and constrain the actions of diverse groups in history, and one way to do this is by exploring the meanings of face-to-face interactions in specific events. Teachers and students would work at making face-to-face interactions sensible and understandable from the participants' points of view, viewpoints informed but not determined by their culture and location in the social structure. By developing a more complex understanding of face-to-face interactions, and the contexts in which they occur, the curriculum in use can promote an under-

standing of racism and discrimination as a social and cultural accomplishment, rather than an individual or psychological phenomenon.

Returning to the reading and discussion of *Young Martin's Promise* in Janice's classroom, what would an alternative approach that explored the meanings of interactions between diverse groups look like? In the shoe store incident, in addition to exploring the thoughts and feelings that informed the response of Martin's father to the clerk's demand that they take seats in the rear of the store, Janice could also lead her students in an exploration of the meaning of the clerk's actions. How is the clerk's reaction to Martin and his father, not as an individual but rather as a white man, "sensible" and understandable in the segregated South of the 1930s and 1940s? Does the clerk believe in the racial inferiority of African Americans, a not uncommon position among whites during this period in US history (suggested by his admonition that Martin's father "stop being so high and mighty")? Or is he simply enforcing a social convention, one that he may or may not personally believe? What would be the consequences if he allowed Martin and his father to purchase shoes in the front of the store? Would white patrons be offended? Would they discontinue shopping at this store? Would there be additional, social consequences for the clerk?

A curriculum focused on the interactions between diverse groups would pursue this line of inquiry, attempting to understand and explain discrimination in face-to-face interactions between blacks and whites. But it is important to note that to do this well means providing students with a rich understanding of the context in which these face-to-face interactions occurred. That is, students will need more than a superficial understanding of the historical context, including the cultural conventions and social and economic structures of Southern society during this period. Without a rich understanding of the context in which these face-to-face interactions occurred students will be unable to render sensible and meaningful the actions and interactions of the participants in these historical events and situations. Consequently, this approach to social studies is labor intensive for teachers and students, spending less time on the personal stories of great individuals and more time on reconstructing the social and cultural worlds in which great individuals — and ordinary people — acted and interacted in the past.

Through this approach to social studies students can begin to see how culture and social structure informed and constrained the actions and interactions of Martin's father and the clerk, representing Martin's father and the clerk as participants in a social system. Students will come to understand the struggle for civil rights as challenging a social, economic, and political system which was structured to secure white privilege at the expense of African Americans, not to mention cultural conventions, values, and beliefs which communi-

cated the inferiority of blacks to whites and blacks. By making visible the sociocultural context which informed these fact-to-face interactions, school knowledge can provide a foundation for helping students understand how the practices of individuals and groups create and maintain cultural conventions, social structures, and institutional arrangements which segregate, discriminate, and distribute power and resources in society according to race.

Revisiting Judy's efforts to include diverse groups in colonial history, how could she have done things differently to better teach about the interactions between diverse groups and whites during the colonial period? The first step is to recognize the fundamental problems with these lessons and activities: they are about culture, not history, and they continue to focus on "important" historical events as defined by the privileged, Eurocentric narrative of US history. Constituting the distinct cultures and cultural differences between Native Americans and whites during the colonial period, and asking individuals to speak as "cultural commentators" on the actions of others (i.e. white males) in historical events, substitutes for the study of the interactions of diverse groups and whites in history. As such, teaching about interactions, exploring the meanings of face-to-face interactions between diverse groups in historical events, requires a primary focus on history and society, not culture, and the selection of events in which diverse individuals and groups played meaningful roles as actors and interactors.

What would this mean in terms of revising, for example, the multiple perspectives activity about the Boston Tea Party? The first impulse is to "save" these traditional events, to tinker with them until they reflect the goals of the approach I am advocating, but that does little to disrupt the privileged, Eurocentric narrative of US history. What would make a difference would be to select alternative events or structure conversations around different themes or issues that include diverse individuals and groups as actors and interactors in US history. For example, why not organize these conversations under the narrative of the struggle to achieve the ideals of liberty, equality, and equal justice? Under this new narrative it might be sensible to have Samuel Adams, as a white radical patriot, converse with Crispus Attucks, an African American who supported the colonists' break with England, and with Thomas Peters, an African American who chose to side with the British (Nash, 1986) about what is in the best interests of African Americans. Who should African Americans align themselves with in this conflict? Which side represents liberty and equality for African Americans?

This conversation, unlike the activity on the Boston Tea Party, situates all groups as active participants in history, members of a shared social space, whose actions and interactions constituted the history of

this period. An additional bonus is that this conversation would also demonstrate to students the diversity of opinion within racial and ethnic groups, countering the essentialized constructions of culture evident in Judy's students' work on Native Americans. African American positions on the growing conflict between the colonies and the British were not uniform, and they fought on both sides in the Revolutionary War, something that remains unsaid and invisible in this Judy's classroom.

Again, this alternative approach would require spending more time learning about the historical context, including the economic and political situation of diverse groups during the colonial period. Without additional information about colonial society students are not only unable to speak meaningfully about the actions and interactions of diverse groups during this period, but they are also unable to situate these groups within the structure of colonial society. But without doing this, it is difficult to understand the power relations that existed within colonial society and in relation to various Native peoples. It did make a difference to the colonists whether or not African Americans and Native Americans supported the British, the colonists, or remained neutral, during the Revolutionary War.

Finally, asking the right questions is key in successfully constituting diverse groups as sociocultural actors in history. Rather than asking "how do you feel about what is happening in this event" a question that positions individuals and groups as cultural commentators, a better question is "why did you act as you did in this event?" a question that positions individuals and groups as actors and interactors in history. Pursuing this line of inquiry illuminates how culture mediates social action — how did they read the situation? what were their goals? what values do these goals represent? how did they understand and interpret the actions of other participants? — and the constraints of social structure — where are they located in colonial society? what options or courses of action were open to them? what were the costs of action? of inaction? Again, the task is to make the actions and the interactions of the participants sensible and understandable by acknowledging the role of culture and social structure in orienting and constraining social action.

Missing in Interaction: Race and Ethnic Relations and Critical Social Studies

In *Educating Citizens in a Multicultural Society*, James Banks argues that

We need to conceptualize history and the civic education curriculum in ways that will enable students to acquire a

comprehensive view of people of color and their interactions with mainstream groups. This comprehensive view would describe people of color as institutional builders who had efficacy and who were shapers of their own destinies (1997, p. 9).

What are missing in the social studies curriculum are meaningful representations of the actions and interactions of diverse groups and individuals as agents, actors, and subject in US history and society. As is evident in the curriculum examined in this article, representations of race and ethnic relations, rich accounts of the interactions between people of color and mainstream groups, are difficult to find. Opponents of multicultural education might argue that this is an accurate representation of US history, which is largely the story of Whites, but recent revisionist histories (cf. Nash, 1992; Takaki, 1993) indicate the hollowness of this claim, and have illustrated the interactions of diverse peoples in US history.

Assuming that racism, discrimination, inequality, and injustice are interactional accomplishments, and not simply the "automatic outcome" of conflict between different cultures or the constraints of "agentless" laws, customs, and traditions, then the social studies curriculum provides few resources with which students can think critically about these realities. The social studies curriculum outfits students to think about how culture makes individuals and groups think one way rather than another, laying the foundation for a psychological understanding of racism and discrimination (Sleeter, 1993). Individuals, lacking adequate knowledge of diverse cultural groups, exhibit racist attitudes and beliefs that result in individual acts of racism and discrimination. The solution to this problem suggests liberal approaches to multicultural education, such as improving communication among different ethnic groups to promote cultural understanding, or "building bridges" (Sleeter & Grant, 1988) between diverse groups to reduce antagonism between groups. The problem is with individuals, whose racist attitudes, values, and beliefs must be changed through education.

Liberal approaches to multicultural education have been criticized by advocates of more critical approaches to multicultural education (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995; Jackson and Solis, 1995; McCarthy, 1998; McCarthy and Crichlow, 1993; McCarthy and Willis, 1995; McLaren, 1997), mainly for ignoring the unequal distribution of power and resources in society, failing to challenge the exploitive structure of society, and for ignoring the economic, political and cultural power of whiteness. This structural, rather than psychological, understanding of racism is a crucial component of a critical multicultural social studies education, one that will better prepare students for ac-

tive citizenship in our diverse society. But the failure to represent the interactions of diverse groups in US history and society undermines any effort to realize such a critical multicultural social studies curriculum. School knowledge, by structuring students' public discourse around culture and agentless laws and customs, renders invisible the activities and practices of individuals and groups that have created social structures and institutional practices which segregate, discriminate, and distribute power and resources in society according to race, ethnicity, and class. You cannot realize a critical multicultural social studies, focused on the distribution of power and resources, White privilege, structured inequality, and institutional racism without a history of race and ethnic relations; it is out of the interactions, conflicts, and quarrels between people of color and mainstream groups that the historical present was constituted.

If race and ethnic relations are about power relations, grounded in social structure and institutional practices, and not simply about cultural differences or abstract laws or customs, then the curriculum in use must focus on the interactions between diverse groups to make power visible. A critical multicultural social studies must make visible power relations in US history and society. It must help students recognize the role of culture as a resource in structuring, but not determining, social action. It must help students realize diverse individuals and groups as actors and agents in society, and understand how the politics of identity enables and constrains access to power and resources necessary to realize one's interests in opposition to others.

Revising the social studies curriculum to focus on the interactions of diverse groups and the history of race and ethnic relations would enable students to develop a discourse of contemporary race and ethnic relations that would go beyond psychological to structural understandings of racism and discrimination. This would provide students with an alternative to "White guilt" by enabling them to recognize their participation and investment in a system of privilege and power based on the value of whiteness in US society. The target would then be the structural arrangements of society and institutional practices which perpetuate discrimination and inequality in US society, not the racist attitudes, beliefs, and values of individuals. This would provide a location and identity from which white students could actively work for social change, and a new goal and focus for the social studies curriculum.

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It's Just the Facts, Or Is It? The Relationship Between Teachers' Practices and Students' Understandings of History

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Abstract

In this paper, I use classroom observations of two high school social studies teachers' units on the civil rights movement in the United States and interviews with students in each class to explore the relationship between teachers' practices and students' understandings of history. Drawing on the literature on students' historical understanding, I focus on three dimensions of historical thinking: historical knowledge, significance, and empathy. My analysis suggests that, while there is not sufficient evidence to support a causal relationship, the data do suggest a correlation, points of coherence, if you will, between each teacher's practices and the views their students construct of history in general, and of the U.S. civil rights era in particular.

Social studies education, a field once dominated by conceptual and theoretical work is seeing a growth spurt of empirical study. That research falls out roughly into two camps: One looks at what children know and how they learn; the other looks at teachers' subject matter knowledge and their classroom practices. Rarely do those interests intersect, however, for few researchers look at the relationship between teachers' instruction and students' understandings of subjects like history.

Those researchers interested in student learning tend to emphasize how children make sense of history (Barton, 1995; Barton & Levstik, 1996; Epstein, 1998; McKeown & Beck, 1994; Seixas, 1994, 1996; VanSledright & Brophy, 1992), how they read texts (McKinney & Jones, 1993; VanSledright & Kelly, 1995; Wineburg, 1991), where their ideas about history come from (Barton, 1995; Epstein, 1998; Seixas, 1993; VanSledright & Brophy, 1992), and the nature of their historical thinking (Holt, 1990; Leinhardt, 1994; Spoehr & Spoehr, 1994).

Researchers looking into teachers' instruction tend to focus on the differences in pedagogical approaches (Evans, 1990; VanSledright

& Brophy, 1995), the relationship between teachers' subject matter knowledge and their instructional representations (Cornbleth, 1998; Wilson, 1990; Wineburg & Wilson, 1991; Yeager & Davis, 1996), the use of alternative pedagogies (Bickmore, 1993; Gabella, 1994), the use of textbooks (Kon, 1995; Stake & Easley, 1978), influences on teachers' content and instructional decisions (Evans, 1990; Grant, 1996; McCutcheon, 1981; Romanowski, 1996; Sturtevant, 1996), and how teachers make sense of changes in educational policy (Grant, 1996, 1997b).

This research on students and teachers brings a much needed empirical focus to a field long content to theorize. There is much more to do, however, for one quickly realizes that there are very few studies (e.g., Evans, 1988; Leinhardt, 1994; Thornton, 1988; VanSledright, 1995b, 1996) that explore the intersection of teachers' practices and students' understandings. Reform documents like the *National Standards for United States History* (National Center for History in the Schools, 1994) offer suggestions about ideas and activities that teachers might employ. Absent from virtually all reforms, however, is any real sense of how teachers and students *together* negotiate the complex terrain of historical understanding (Grant, 1995, 1997c).

In this paper, I use classroom observations of two high school social studies teachers' units on the civil rights movement in the United States and interviews with students in each class to explore the relationship between teachers' practices and students' understandings of history. Drawing on the literature on students' historical understanding, I focus on three dimensions of historical thinking: historical knowledge, significance, and empathy. My analysis suggests that, while there is insufficient evidence to support a causal relationship, the data do suggest a correlation, points of coherence, if you will, between each teacher's practices and the views their students construct of history in general, and of the U.S. civil rights era in particular.

The Study

The setting for this study is in the classrooms of two social studies teachers who teach in the same suburban high school. The Westwood school district is located in a middle to upper-middle class, predominately white, suburban area in western New York state. Most Westwood students go on to post-secondary education, and many attend elite, private colleges and universities.

The Participants

The two teachers, Linda Strait and George Blair, were born and raised in the general area, but neither grew up in the Westwood district. Strait is an African American woman in her mid-40s. She holds

bachelors and masters degrees in American history. Strait has taught for five years, all at Westwood High, following an earlier career as a librarian. George Blair is a European American male in his early 50s. He also holds bachelors and masters degrees in American history, with an additional masters degree in social studies education. At Westwood High for 13 years, Blair also has taught middle schoolers over his 25 year career.

Strait was part of an earlier purposeful sample (Seidman, 1998) of urban and suburban teachers who were identified by district curriculum coordinators as taking an innovative approach to the teaching of social studies. Over the course of two years, I observed four different classroom units and formally interviewed her eight times. During the second year, I became interested in studying her colleague, Blair, whom Strait described as “a total opposite from me.” Intrigued by this description, I discovered that, while the two teachers shared several surface similarities, such as their academic backgrounds, the types of students they taught, the school context, and the presence of a high-stakes state-level test, they constructed radically different instructional practices. Since relatively few studies (e.g., Thornton, 1988) examine teachers’ practices in the same school context, I approached Blair and secured his permission to observe three of his classroom units and interview him a total of six times during the second year of my work at Westwood. While Strait’s participation came about through purposeful sampling, Blair’s participation is an example of convenience sampling, where the focus is on developing an information rich sample (Patton, 1990) and one that Stake (1994) characterizes as abundant in opportunities to learn about a social phenomenon.

Data Collection

Observations and interviews provided the bulk of the data collected. While I observed and interviewed each teacher on a number of occasions, for this paper, I focus on unit common to both teachers, in this case, the U.S. civil rights movement. I observed each class period the material was taught (two for Blair; eight for Strait) and took field notes using a semi-structured field guide. I looked specifically at teacher and student interactions, instructional representations of the content, student engagement with the ideas and activities, curriculum materials used, and references to the state Regents test.

I interviewed each teacher twice. The first interview consisted of questions related to the teachers’ knowledge and interpretation of the state social studies framework (e.g., when and how they learned about the framework, how they interpreted the import of the policy) and if and how their classroom practices have changed over time (e.g., changes in instruction, curriculum materials, classroom assessments). The second interview focused on the civil rights unit. Here, I asked

how the teachers decided what to teach, how they decided to structure their units, what they hoped students would learn, and how, if at all, their teaching of this unit was different from the previous year's. All interviews were audio-taped and transcribed.

After observing the units, I interviewed a total of seven students, four from Blair's class and three from Strait's. (A fourth student from Strait's class decided not to participate.) The students were selected by the two teachers based on my general request for students representing a range of academic abilities and interest in the subject matter. As will become evident, the students' interest in the subject matter varied considerably. In terms of ethnicity and academics, however, the students selected were much more alike than different. First, the seven students (four female; three male) were all European-Americans. Second, six of the seven students had average grades in the 90s, while one had grades in the 80s. (See p. 81-82 for descriptions of the students.)

Each student interview lasted approximately 30 minutes and covered a range of topics. Using a semi-structured interview guide, I explored the students' understandings of the civil rights unit just taught, their view of history as school subject, and the sources of their ideas. I also asked how the instruction they received in their U. S. history class compared with that in previous social studies classes and with their current English and mathematics classes. Each interview was recorded and transcribed.

Data Analysis

My analysis reflects the interpretative tradition within qualitative research (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Erickson, 1992). That stance highlights the importance of context and the multiple ways individuals construct meaning. All data are also analyzed using a constant comparative method (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Glaser, 1978). That approach assumes that data collection and analysis are recursive, one informing the other throughout the course of the study.

I began my analysis by reviewing the classroom field notes and teacher interviews to construct a sense of each teacher's approach toward teaching civil rights. As I coded that data, I focused on categories such as instructional strategies and representations, curriculum materials and assessments, interactions between teacher and students and among students, and references to state testing. For a theoretical framework, I initially used Evans' (1990) categories of storyteller, scientific historian, relativist/reformer, cosmic philosopher, and eclectic to analyze the emerging patterns. Evans' storyteller depiction seemed a good fit for George Blair, although as will become clear, I believe Blair is "master storyteller." Strait's teaching seemed to fit less well

with Evans' categories. I entertained Leinhardt's (1994) category of artistic director, but that too seemed a poor fit. I settled on the language of "master arranger" based on Strait's capacity for managing a wide array of instructional venues. (For more on these two teachers' practices, see Grant, 1997a, in press).

When I turned to the student interview transcripts, I initially reviewed them with four broad topic headings in mind: 1) students' perceptions of the civil rights movement, 2) their views of history as a subject matter, 3) the nature of the classroom instruction they experienced in their U.S. history class, and in their English and mathematics classes, and 4) the influences (e.g., school, family, friends, media) on their views. From that broad review, I developed numerous coding categories under each topic. For example, under the heading, "views of history," I included separate codes for historical knowledge as fact and interpretation, historical agency and empathy, connections between past and present and between the past and students' lives, student interest and curiosity, multiple perspectives, and historical judgment.

With a long list of coding categories, I then chunked up the data in order to compare students' ideas generally, and by teacher. This approach provided a wealth of interpretative possibilities. To manage these possibilities and to begin framing my analysis of the student data, I considered Seixas' (1996) categorization of historical understanding which focuses on issues of significance, epistemology and evidence, continuity and change, progress and decline, empathy and moral judgment, and historical agency. I also considered the dimensions of historical thinking described by the National Center for History in the Schools (1994) which include chronological thinking, historical comprehension, historical analysis and interpretation, historical research capabilities, and historical issues-analysis and decision-making. Had I decided to write a paper focused exclusively on the students' historical thinking, I might have used either of these two conceptual frameworks. The task of trying to describe and capture the relationship between two teachers' instructional practices *and* their students' understandings of history, however, meant some hard analytic choices. In the end, I decided to highlight three elements of historical thinking which surfaced most prominently in the student interview transcripts. One of those elements is *historical knowledge*, by which I mean how students perceive the outcomes of historical inquiry. The distinction that surfaced revolved around history as a set of undisputed facts versus history as a set of complex and tentative interpretations. The second element is *significance*. Here, I focused on the connections students see or not between the past and present, and between the past and their lives today. The third element is *empathy*, which includes the notion of understanding multiple perspectives on

peoples' actions and on historical events and the ability to take an empathic stance. Deeper descriptions of each dimension of historical thinking develop in the coming sections.

In the process of comparing the teacher and student data, I determined that Strait's students tended to hold more thoughtful, sophisticated, and nuanced views of history than Blair's students did, and I concluded that, while a causal relationship could not be established, a strong correlation emerged between each teacher's instructional practice and their students' perspectives on history.

The Classroom Context: Two Teachers, Two Pedagogical Approaches

In earlier work on these two teachers, I looked at the influence of their views of subject matter and learners on their instructional practices (Grant, 1997a) and the relationship between their instruction and the state Regents test (Grant, in press). Here, I expand that work by exploring the relationship between each teacher's instruction and the sense his or her students make of history as a field of inquiry.

Before sketching the findings, let me describe the units taught and the pedagogy practiced. George Blair and Linda Strait have similar academic backgrounds, work in the same school, express similar attitudes about the importance of teaching about civil rights, and prepare their students to take the same state Regents examination. Yet, the units they taught could hardly have been more different.

George Blair: Master Storyteller

When I asked George Blair if I could observe his unit on the civil rights movement, he explained that he does not do "a unit as such." Instead, he addresses civil rights issues and events as they occur in the chronological order his textbook presents. He invited me to sit in on his Eisenhower unit because the beginnings of the civil rights movement would surface in his lecture.

After the students settled into their seats and he made some school-related announcements, Blair launches into the Eisenhower unit by comparing Dwight Eisenhower with his opponent in the 1952 and 1956 presidential elections, Adlai Stevenson. Blair's introductory remarks focus on the contrast between Eisenhower, "the hero of World War II," and Stevenson, who "was considered an egghead...you call them nerds today..." Blair then offers a glimpse into the master or framing narrative of this unit: Dwight Eisenhower's negotiation of foreign and domestic policy dilemmas:

Eisenhower was conservative....But it will blow up in his face....He made several appointments to the Supreme Court, but one at least is very liberal...and (emphatically)

that shocks the hell out of Eisenhower....Remember there was tremendous pressure...very serious things happen and early on in Eisenhower's presidency....He's hit in the face with the Brown decision....Eisenhower disagrees, but he has to enforce it and he does...and there is a serious confrontation in the South....

Eisenhower also confronts the Soviets....(dramatically) We hate the Soviet Union, we fear the Soviet Union....We've got the H-bomb, but we're scared as hell. So the foreign policy John Foster Dulles comes up with...[is] a sad state of affairs....It's called massive retaliation...[and it means] any aggression by the Communists and we would retaliate with everything we have, massively, with everything we have....

With that set-up, Blair begins a lecture on US foreign policy:

Now the book doesn't tell you this....In the 1956 Hungarian Revolution...the Hungarians ask for our help and we don't give it to them....(incredulously; loudly) Massive retaliation? We aren't going to retaliate at all! It's just sword rattling and it doesn't make any sense. We're not going to blow up the world. Who're we trying to kid?....Massive retaliation; but we can't do that....Massive retaliation...what sense does that make? (quietly) But it shows how afraid we really are....

John Foster Dulles uses the idea of brinkmanship...pushing the Soviets to the brink of war....But how far can you push?....The Soviets do the same thing....Much of the Cold War, we push and push and push...as far as we possibly can and there's tension, and stress, and anxiety. There's not a lot of fighting, but there's a helluva lot of tension, stress, and anxiety. (A student, David, asks, "Were any shots fired?") Yes...Korea, Vietnam...between the US and the USSR? No...they never attack one another directly....

In the quotations above, and in each of the classroom units I observed, several elements of Blair's narrative instructional style surface. The story he constructs is rooted in standard historical fare: personalities (Dwight Eisenhower, John Foster Dulles), policies (massive retaliation, brinkmanship), and events (Cold War, Hungarian Revolution). He occasionally refers to a point listed on the overhead notes; his stories always contain factual elements represented in those notes. But Blair goes beyond simply reiterating these ideas. Instead, his fo-

cus on individuals' actions and his use of various oratorical means (e.g., vocal inflection, emotion, personal reflection, rhetorical questions) builds a dramatic story of tension and fear between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. And like most storytellers, Blair delivers the Cold War as a monologue, punctuated only once by a student question.¹

It is hard to tell what sense students are making of all this. All seem intent on copying the outline notes displayed on the overhead projector; few ever look up at Blair or respond overtly to his lecture. It is difficult to imagine, however, that they are not caught up in the story he tells.

Day two of the Eisenhower unit begins with Blair briefly describing the U.S. and U.S.S.R. summits. He then shifts to domestic policy. Following the overhead notes, he quickly reviews government policies toward farming such as the Benson Agricultural Act, which encouraged farmers to produce less, and because he has apparently talked about this before, the McCarthy hearings. Blair then announces that the class will go on to "some more interesting things"—civil rights:

Now we move on to some more interesting things....I remember a lot of this...this is the beginning of the serious civil rights....Now you remember Plessy v. Ferguson of 1896. We did that. Plessy v. Ferguson sets up the idea that the South can segregate blacks and whites as long as the facilities are equal....I told you this even though the book doesn't....In economic terms the South couldn't afford two systems....It was too costly....

The issue is going to come up again....Several decisions will be made [around] equal rights for the black population....In 1953, Eisenhower appoints a new chief justice...and it was not a popular choice....Earl Warren was not a great jurist....He was a politician in California, not an academic in constitutional law. When he goes to Washington, he was ignored by some of FDR's appointees [to the Supreme Court]....[He was] ignored, snubbed...(dramatically) and he will change the court to this very day. Warren has a philosophical idea called judicial activism...the process of allowing the Supreme Court to make decisions to help out social issues....This is the first time the court ever did this and (solemnly) it will change the court forever....Warren is a liberal and he will make several major decisions...[for example] the 1954 Topeka, Kansas...Brown v. the Board of Education....

Topeka...had separate black and white schools as all the South did. The Browns wanted to send their daughter to the white school....They can't...so they go to court. The NAACP supported them....The case was presented to the Supreme Court by a lawyer, Thurgood Marshall...[who asks himself] what kind of case can we come up with to stop segregation in schools? Now I've mentioned this before....After much planning, Marshall puts together a defense based on social and psychological evidence. He argued that segregation was hurting black kids....He puts the case together [so that it was] not an issue of constitutionality though Marshall cited the 14th amendment. But the evidence was psychological and social, not legal....And the Supreme Court accepts the argument....The Brown decision overturns Plessy....Brown says that schools, when they segregate, do harm to the black population and segregation must end...(voice rising) and it starts the major movement toward civil rights in the south that continues to today....

After that decision, the South refuses to integrate schools....Little Rock in 1957 is the test...(dramatically) God, I remember this on TV, too, kids....Seven to eight black children try to integrate Central high school....They're prevented....(incredulously) Orval Faubus, the Governor, refuses to allow the black kids into the school....He sends in the National Guard to prevent them....Eisenhower notified Faubus of the Brown decision....And even though Eisenhower doesn't like the Brown decision...he thought the court overstepped their bounds...But he knows he must enforce the decision....So he sends in the paratroopers, active military...there were more soldiers than students....And they escort the students to class for two years....

(Quietly) One of the young ladies recently published a book...and she talks about the threats on her life....The threats to her life were unbelievable....[She talked about how] the black community took the kids away every summer and put them with black families around the country....This woman lived with a doctor in Los Angeles....She told stories of kids kicking her and pushing her down stairs....(Softly) And when I read this, tears came to my eyes....Man's inhumanity to man....

Blair pauses, walks over to the overhead projector, puts up the next set of his hand-written notes, and then walks back to the right-hand corner of the room. He continues in more matter-of-fact tone, but his voice gradually grows louder and his tone more insistent:

I don't think we need to spend a lot of time on Rosa Parks....Civil rights just gets going and going and going....Rosa Parks was just a plain, simple lady....She refused to give her seat up to a white man....When the buses were busy, blacks had to move to the back of the bus....Rosa Parks refuses and when push comes to shove, she's arrested....The ultimate threat to blacks was "Don't you know your place?" (Sadly) I know you don't identify with this and I'm glad you can't....[There were so many] gutsy folks...moving toward civil rights...and I hope some day we'll have true civil rights....

(Loudly) What happens? A Baptist minister by the name of Martin Luther King comes to Alabama....He goes on TV [and] says the city will desegregate mass transit or blacks will use their most important weapon, the boycott. They will boycott until integration....In just less than a year, representatives from the bus system and the government negotiate with blacks and the buses will be desegregated....Blacks will no longer ride in the back of the bus....Blacks were poor so they had to use mass transit....When they didn't use the buses, the companies ran in the red....

(Softly) As I say these things, things go through my mind....Very big things. This was a very painful time for both the black and white population....This was not trite, it was earth shattering....I know I'm going through these things quickly, but they are not trite....

That said, Blair ended the focus on civil rights and he returned briefly to foreign policy (i.e., more talk about John Foster Dulles and massive retaliation, an analogy between the Hungarian Revolution and Tiananmen Square, and the creation of Israel and tensions in the Middle East).

In his presentation of civil rights, Blair uses the same elements of storytelling that surface in his earlier account of the Cold War. First, his story is faithful to the facts (e.g., the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, the confrontation at Little Rock, Rosa Parks' action, Martin Luther King's involvement in the bus boycott) and to a focus on indi-

viduals' actions and experiences, including his own. Second, the facts serve as the threads with which he weaves a dramatic account of black and white tensions, resolutions, and more tensions. His considerable rhetorical skills convey both the anxiety of the times and the struggles of individual actors. His is a masterful performance.

The approach Blair takes in this unit and in all of the others I observed reflects what many social studies educators advocate, teaching ideas—in this case, civil rights—in the context of the times. This approach makes sense as no era is reducible to a single focus. Civil rights is an important piece of understanding the 1950s, but so too is understanding the relationship between the U.S. and the former U.S.S.R. So while some may argue that civil rights gets lost in Blair's master narrative about the Eisenhower era, others may argue with equal conviction that he is serving the goal of a more comprehensive history. By highlighting the Eisenhower presidency, Blair links all the ideas and issues discussed within a common framework. He might have framed an extended teaching unit around any of several big issues, civil rights being just one of them. Likewise, Blair might have taken any of a number of different instructional stances toward this material (Evans, 1990; Leinhardt, 1994; VanSledright & Brophy, 1995). Blair seems to understand these choices, but as a "visible" teacher (Wineburg & Wilson, 1991), he is confident when he asserts that his narrative approach "fits me."

Linda Strait: Master Arranger

Unlike her colleague, Linda Strait crafts all of her instruction into topical units. Earlier in the year, for example, I observed her unit on immigration; other units I saw units included Reconstruction and World War II. Each of these units draws direction from various sources: her college notes, the New York state eleventh grade social studies syllabus, various curriculum materials, and her own reading. While her textbook figures into this mixture, it drives neither her planning nor her instruction. Her units are a complex whole with various instructional activities and experiences designed to provide multiple opportunities for students to engage the ideas and emotions of the times.

While George Blair spreads civil rights out over several textbook chapters, Linda Strait designs her to last eight class periods. Briefly, the instruction maps out this way:

Day 1: Videotape from the Southern Poverty Law Center entitled, "The Shadow of Hate," which described majority discrimination against several religious (Quakers, Baptists, Jews), racial (Native, African, and Asian Americans), and ethnic groups (Irish Catholics, Mexican Americans).

Following the videotape, Strait solicits written reactions from the class.

Day 2: Small group activity where students discuss and list their reactions to the videotape on large pieces of chart paper. Strait later displays each chart on the back wall. At the end of the period, she distributes a feature article on school desegregation from *Time* magazine (April 18, 1995).

Day 3: Based on the previous night's reading, Strait gives students practice quiz which asks them to categorize nine statements as either an instance of civil rights or civil liberties.² Strait then reviews part one³ of the notes she prepares and distributes for each unit.

Day 4: Videotape from the Southern Poverty Law Center, "A Time for Justice," which chronicles the civil rights movement for African Americans. At the end of the video, Strait poses four questions for discussion the next day. The questions are: 1) What were the goals of the movement; 2) What were the strategies of movement participants; 3) Why did the movement succeed; and, 4) Given the chance to participate in any of the events of this movement, which events would you participate in and why?

Day 5: Roundtable discussion of the four questions posed the previous day. Strait then introduces an activity that would take up the rest of this class and all the next day's. The assignment calls for students to imagine that they are living in the early 1950s and that a local skating rink owner refuses to admit minority customers. In small groups, students are to create a strategy for winning access to the rink by listing their reasons, methods, and arguments on a worksheet Strait supplied.

Day 6: Simulation where Strait portrays the skating rink operator and responds as students, in their groups, make their cases.

Day 7: Review of part two of the notes⁴ and a practice session devoted to writing essays culled from previous eleventh grade Regents tests.

Day 8: Review of the practice essays. Strait then rearranges student desks into a large circle and leads the class in an

oral reading of a handout entitled, "Forty Lives for Freedom," a list she prepared of individuals who had lost their lives to the cause of civil rights. Each student reads one person's name and the circumstances of his or her death.⁵ Strait then distributes and reviews a handout entitled, "Hate Crimes (Summer, 1991)," a list of 13 crimes committed between June 4-August 31, 1991.⁶ Class ends with a slide/tape show Strait developed several years ago on Martin Luther King, Jr.⁷

This free-standing unit has several notable features. First, Strait constructs a distinct unit which spans time, circumstance, and groups. She emphasizes African American experiences, but more as a case in point than as the definitive civil rights group. Second, Strait employs a wide variety of activities in an instructional tour-de-force. Multiple learning opportunities arise—reading, writing, viewing, role-playing—each of which illuminates and complexifies the civil rights movement. Third, Strait expands the role of teacher. She plays the traditional roles of knowledge-giver (when she reviews unit notes) and knowledge-evaluator (when she scores the end-of-unit quizzes). Strait plays less traditional roles when she organizes students into small groups as a means of eliciting reactions to a videotape, and when she organizes the skating rink activity. Strait is not an "invisible" teacher who directs class from the sidelines (Wineburg & Wilson, 1991), instead she pushes against the traditional boundaries of teacher. Finally, Strait promotes an expansive view of the subject matter. She gives attention to the major actors and events of the civil rights movement. She also gives significant attention to lesser known people (the "Forty Lives for Freedom" list) and events (the "Hate Crimes" list). The two videotapes and the skating rink simulation seem particularly suited for bringing the civil rights movement down to a recognizable and empathic level. So while Strait teaches the standard political and economic fare, her unit highlights the ordinary lives represented in social history.

Many observers would applaud Strait's efforts. And they should, for there were several instances of powerful teaching and learning. Consider the example of the skating rink simulation.

The skating rink simulation. In the class period before the skating rink simulation, Linda Strait assigns students to five groups. She gives them 10 minutes to brainstorm reasons, methods, and arguments in order to persuade a white skating rink operator during the 1950s to rethink her policy of prohibiting entry to minority customers. As students discuss the task, Strait circulates, alternately listening to and commenting on their deliberations. Just before the bell, she informs the students that they would have six minutes to convince her (as the

skating rink operator) to change the policy during the simulation the next day.

The following day, students arrive to find one chair in the middle classroom and the remaining desks arranged around the room in five groups. After taking roll, Strait sits in the center chair, and announces it is time to start. A pattern develops where each group, in turn, walks over to Strait (who plays the rink operator role with passion and spirit), make their pitches, respond to Strait's questions and barbs, and then sit down. After the last group, Strait comments on the groups' various efforts. What follows are the interactions as two groups present their arguments, and Strait's closing comments:

The first group (Jerry, Sue, Linda, Rachel, and Terry—all white students) approach Strait. They do so sheepishly and hesitantly. Strait immediately launches into her character. "How did you folks get in here?" she demands.

Sue: "We want to skate."

Strait: "Sorry, whites only."

Jerry: "What's the difference?"

Strait: "That's the policy, that's always been the policy...in this town."

Jerry: "...that isn't fair..."

Linda: "You're going to lose customers."

Strait: "...no problem so far...you (pointing to Jerry; presuming he is white and the others are minorities) can skate, but they have to go."

Jerry: "We have no choice but to protest."

Rachel: "And we'll encourage our friends not to come."

Strait: "...I'm not too concerned...;As you can see, it's busy tonight..."

Jerry asks if the students can re-group and come back. Strait, still in character, asks him what he's talking about. He tries to explain that he's talking to Strait, the teacher.

Strait: "I own a skating rink. I don't know any teacher. (to Jerry) He can skate, but the rest of you got to get out of here."

Rachel: "If you don't let us skate, we're going to block the door."

Strait: "Well, that's fine. I'll just have you arrested....I suggest you leave or I'm going to call to get you removed from the premises."

As Jerry's group leaves, Ned, a member of the audience, calls out, "Man, this is impossible!" Back in their seats, the group huddles and returns for a second try. Terry says, "We have to emphasize that this is a racist facility." Strait shrugs, "It's no different from any other in this town."

* * * * *

The other groups follow. Most echo the arguments about fairness and the loss of business, and issue threats of ensuing protests. Some try to broker special times for minority skaters; others appeal to Strait's courage in breaking with tradition. The last group uses some of these appeals and adds one new one:

The final group (two white boys—Ben and Steve; two white girls—Melissa and Anna; and one Chinese American girl—Kim) approach Strait. She ignores them. Finally, *Melissa* says, "Excuse me." Strait looks up.

Ben: "We'd like to skate in your rink."

Strait: "You can skate, but the rest of you have to get out of here."

Ben: "What you're doing is unconstitutional."

Strait: "I know my constitution."

Steve: "If you're going to segregate..."

Strait: "Look, I'm not a lawyer, I'm a businesswoman....But there's no law in this town that says I can't just have whites."

Steve: "But if you kick us out, where can we go?"

Strait: "...not my problem. Find another place."

Anna: "It's our right to skate...Think of all the money you're losing."

Strait: "Well, it's about closing time...[this is a] teen curfew violation (Ned calls out: "There was no teen curfew in the rules!")...I need to be getting home...There's no law that says I have to let you in."

Kim: "Where are we supposed to go?"

Strait: "Go somewhere else."

Melissa: "If the movie theater let us in, would you let us in?"

Strait: "That's an interesting question."

Ben: "...are you thinking about it?"

Strait: "...but...[if I did that, then others would be] ready to lynch me. "

Steve: "...the minorities would stand up for you."

Kim: "...think about it, you're a female....How do you know that others wouldn't follow you?"

With that, Strait announces "Time's up." Jerry calls out, "That's the closest (to being convincing)." In the last few minutes, Strait thanks the students for their efforts and talks through some of the arguments made. "I do believe that two of you convinced me," she said, "...but I continued saying no....Two of you convinced me to think about changing my ways." The class explodes as students call for Strait to reveal which groups succeeded. After a pause, Strait extracts a promise that they will not tell succeeding classes, and then describes her thinking:

The last group....Being a woman hit my feminist side even though there wasn't a strong woman's movement in the 50s....The woman's movement picks up in the 60s....But it appealed to me even though there wasn't a feminist movement. I hadn't expected that. And Melissa's group convinced me...(Melissa had announced that she had skated before and that, unbeknownst to the operator, was of mixed race background). [Her background] was an interesting twist. It threw me off. The others were just making me mad...I didn't like the personal attacks...but you continued pressing (and that was good).

Jerry said, "We came back." "Yeah," said Strait, "But telling me I was losing business...wouldn't convince me." Strait then adds a final comment on playing her role. "I didn't like the feeling of being a racist," she said, "I was out of my element...But I realized I was doing pretty good (at rebutting the students' arguments) and that didn't make me feel very good either!" Several students nod in response.

This vignette illustrates several dimensions of Linda Strait's approach to teaching. First, it demonstrates Strait's impulse to go beyond traditional instructional methods. Students learned about arguments against segregation and methods of fighting it through the videotapes, their textbook readings, and the unit notes. Here, however, not only must they apply what they learned, but they must do so in very different context. Second, Strait wants to provide opportunities for her students to feel the emotions of an era as well as learn facts and concepts. She knows that, while many of her students might sympathize with the experiences of African Americans during this period, few may truly understand those experiences. She wants students to have an intellectual grasp of the era, but she wants them to have an experiential grasp as well. Third, Strait knows that there is power in students working together on challenging problems. There are no right answers in this exercise and Strait understands that students together

will struggle even more than they would if they participated in the activity as individuals.

Not all of Strait's activities were successful. Students' interest and involvement ebbed and flowed and sometimes, most often at the end of class, it faded into idleness and social chat. Those times stand out in large part, however, because they contrasted with the more frequent instances where students were actively engaged.

Teachers' Practices and Students' Understandings

As noted earlier, researchers have studied both teachers' practices and students' historical understandings, but rarely in conjunction. During the classroom observations of the respective civil rights units, I was struck by the different instructional choices the two teachers made and by the different instructional approaches they took. As I conducted interviews with students, however, I was struck by the very different ways students from each class talked about history. My impulse, then, was to explore the relationship between each teacher's classroom practice and the historical understandings of their respective students.

Let me be clear about this last point: I am not proposing that teachers' instruction *causes* their students to hold the views of history that they do. Teaching and learning are richly complex activities (Cohen, 1989; Dyson, 1999) that involve, among other things, the prior knowledge and experience teachers and students bring to class, the instructional representations of school subjects, the structural regularities of the classroom and school settings, as well as larger issues of race, class, and gender. Such factors influence, but do not control, the ideas and actions of classroom actors. Instead, teachers and students construct and co-construct a range of classroom realities, all of which may or may not have many similarities. Looking at students' views on history in light of their teachers' instructional practices, then, is less about drawing a direct connection between the two than it is about exploring points of coherence. In the sections that follow, I analyze those points of coherence by focusing on three elements: historical knowledge, significance, and empathy.

Before proceeding, let me introduce the students. The first four are from George Blair's class:

- *Alice* is a medium-height, thin girl with long, dark hair, who seems quiet and reserved. A Westwood native, she is a second generation Italian American. Alice's class average in U.S. History is in the 90s, but she said she has done better in past years.

- *Ann* began high school in a private school; this in her first year at Westwood High. A tall girl with a serious countenance, Ann belongs to the Westwood chapter of Amnesty International. Although she reports not liking social studies, she holds a high 90s average in Blair's class.
- *Bill* has always attended Westwood schools. A lacrosse player, he is average height, muscular, and soft-spoken. Like Ann, he has a class average in the high 90s.
- *Kate* plays on the girls' varsity basketball team. Tall and thin, with a nervous giggle, Kate is a Westwood native. Her class average is in the low to mid 90s.

The next three students are from Linda Strait's class:

- *James* is a Westwood native with a medium-build, a quiet air, and glasses. He says little during class discussions, but he participates frequently in small group situations. Although he has a mid-90s average, James describes himself as a "plugger."
- *Melissa*, also a Westwood native, is of medium-build. She describes herself as a political liberal. In class, she speaks often and articulately. She reports her class average as being in the 90s.
- *Ned*, a hockey player, is a tall, athletic-looking boy who moved to Westwood from a first ring suburb when his mother remarried. Like Melissa, Ned makes frequent contributions to class discussions. He reports that his class average has slid into the 80s.

Before I draw the contrasts between Blair's and Strait's students, let me mention one important similarity: All seven students expressed a generally positive view of the United States and of their future lives. Even the student most critical of the U.S. record on civil rights, Melissa, said, "There have been a lot of success stories and...it's (the U.S.) a democracy and there's freedom and people have made it in America." Later, she added, "I still think America is a good country. I'm not going to move away because I don't like what we did in the past." Such sentiments are of little surprise since they correspond with recent research (Barton & Levstik, 1998; Epstein, 1998; Seixas, 1994; VanSledright, 1997) which suggests that, while students may be critical of U.S. history, they see that history largely in terms of progress, and they see a bright future for themselves.⁸

This similarity aside, it is the differences among the students that stand out, especially the differences around the students' views of his-

tory as a field of study and as an influence on their lives. These differences suggest that Strait's students hold views history that are consistently more thoughtful, nuanced, and complex than Blair's students do. Moreover, Strait's students seem to view history as a more vibrant and powerful influence on their lives than Blair's students do.

Historical Knowledge

While historians have long debated the relationship between objectivity and subjectivity (e.g., Carr, 1961; Novick, 1988), educators have been more concerned about the relationship between fact and interpretation.⁹ On the one side, some educators (e.g., Hirsch, 1987) argue for the primacy of objective facts, or what Green (1994) calls the "tradition of archivalism." The argument here is that interpretation is a meaningless exercise until one has accumulated all the relevant facts. On the other side of the argument are the proponents of meaning-centered approaches (e.g., Seixas, 1996; Wilson & Sykes, 1989). Here, the issue is not whether or not facts are important (they are!), but rather the idea that facts become meaningful only in service of interpretations.

Clearly, historical knowledge need not reduce simply to the fact-interpretation distinction. In the student interviews, however, a clear difference arose around the issue of what counts as knowing history. Blair's students' viewed historical knowledge as consisting entirely of facts about which there is no dispute. Strait's students, by contrast, tended to see historical knowledge as complex, tentative, and open to reinterpretation.

Blair's students: History as the facts. Blair's students see history primarily in terms of immutable facts. Ann said, "You know, when you're in a classroom like social studies or history, you just learn, like, basic facts....In history, it's just, like, plain facts, like, know this and know that, and, you know, I don't...feel anything."

Not only is history reduced to facts in these students' minds, but those facts represent a sense of inevitability, that history is a chronicle of what happened, and that it had to happen in fixed way. Alice explained, "In history, it's just, like, given to you, you know? This is your history, just learn it." Kate adds: "History's already set for you." Bill appreciates Blair's storytelling approach, and he points out that *he is able to "remember stuff, like from the beginning of the year."* In the end, however, he believes that history is a chronicle of inevitable and immutable facts, about which there is simply nothing to discuss: "It's like history is already made, you know what I mean? It's facts. So I don't know if there's much you could discuss."

To be fair, Blair's students did express some concern with and questions about elements of history. For example, Ann questioned the U.S. role vis-à-vis "underdeveloped countries or underprivileged" and

U.S. problems with, “like Asia and China.” Asked specifically about civil rights, however, all of Blair’s students said that what they learned in class echoed things they had learned before. Bill said, “I already knew about that (civil rights)...I mean, it was interesting to me, but I already, like, looked into the Civil Rights myself through other projects, like through English and stuff, and movies and other things.” Students noted that Blair’s coverage of civil rights was “more in depth” than previous teachers’ instruction, and they appreciated Blair’s stories about the era. Yet, none saw much of anything new or provocative in either the content or the stories.

Strait’s students: History as complex ideas. If Blair’s students see historical knowledge as a wall of facts, Strait’s students are more likely to see it as complex, tentative, and ambiguous. All talk about what they learned in Strait’s unit, but they also question what they know. Moreover, it seems no small observation that Strait’s students express these ideas in light of the civil rights unit whereas Blair’s students talk more globally.

James suggests he knows the facts around the civil rights movement in the U.S. when he notes, “I know there’s been discrimination against certain minority groups in the past...certain laws that have been passed, and cases in the Supreme Court.” He claims that much of what he knows comes from Strait’s instruction: “I knew discrimination, for example, existed, but I didn’t know it quite to the extent that I’ve learned about this year.” At the same time, James comes away from the unit uneasy about the juxtaposition of laws and court cases that presumably protect people’s rights and his sense that discrimination is a state of mind:

I don’t know. I know it’s difficult for people to...stop their discrimination based on laws. I mean, I know, traditionally certain groups have been discriminated against, and sometimes you just can’t prevent people from having their same...state of mind about these people.

Asked why he thinks this way, James said, “It’s just their values that they’ve been raised with, and after years and years of having similar values like that, it’s just very tough to change.” James’ struggle is a common one: Public sanctions may change some people’s actions, but will they change people’s hearts and minds?

Ned and Melissa also talk about learning new things through Strait’s unit. Like James, these students suggest that this new knowledge alternately promote new ways to think about civil rights and elevate new questions to which to wrestle. For Ned, the in-class activities raise ideas that “I never learned till...[now].” Asked how he makes sense of the unit, Ned offers a brief, but telling statement: “I

think that just the past couple of weeks has really turned my mind about stuff." It is hard to tell what this means for Ned is negotiating a range of new ideas most of which he had had only passing knowledge. Combined with his fledgling efforts to sort out his own responsibility, however, the notion that Strait's unit had "really turned my mind about stuff" suggests the possibility that Ned is thinking in new ways. Supporting this notion is Ned's comment that even armed with new knowledge, there is little inevitable about history. "I mean, not that it's totally going to solve it," he said, "but, just give you a different perspective on what it was like. Or it could worsen it. So you never know."

Ned credits Strait with helping him understand that historical events can be viewed from more than one perspective:

Yeah, I think she says an opinion and what, you know, what she feels and what she thinks, and I think she lets us do the same with what we think, and she takes both views into consideration, and she doesn't say, "Well, this is how it has to be, and this is how it should be." You know, she brings up a question, and she'll ask the class, and kids will say pretty much what they want to say. And she accepts what we say, and we accept what she says, and, we might have totally two different views, but you still have to take into consideration other people's...views of certain things.

From this quote, it is not clear that Ned understands that the views Strait and his peers offer likely fit within an enduring historical debate about how to interpret the U.S. civil rights movement.¹⁰ By honoring students' views alongside hers, however, Strait makes space for students to see that historical knowledge is tentative and arguable.

Strait's unit also seems to have pushed Melissa to a deeper sense of historical knowledge. Like her peers, Melissa claims she learned much that is new. She sees a sharp contrast between the surface coverage given to cultures in her tenth grade Global Studies class and the deeper study characteristic of Strait's U.S. history course. "I like [Strait's class] better because I learned more specifics about things," she said, "and that's the way I like it. I like specifics. I mean, generalizations are fine, but I like to know what's behind them and what makes them, you know, why can you make them generalizations." Questioning the relationship between generalizations and the evidence that supports them is a sophisticated insight. It suggests that Melissa senses the malleability of historical fact ("specifics") as one constructs interpretations ("generalizations"). As with Ned, we do not know how Mel-

issa makes sense of these ideas, but one senses the possibility of a complex view of historical knowledge.

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In one sense there is something of a paradox here for while Blair provides an interpretive frame, a "story well told," his students seem to miss this and to focus instead on the notion that history is simply a string of names, dates, and places. Researchers often fault narrative history for students' inability to appreciate the tentativeness of history because they fail to view history with a critical eye, and to understand what goes into constructing a narrative interpretation. Moreover, teaching history as a narrative seems to induce students into thinking of history primarily in terms of a straightforward story (Barton, 1997a, 1997b; Levstik, 1989, 1993, 1995; VanSledright & Brophy, 1992). While the first two concerns are probably true, the third seems not to be the case here. Blair's students say that he tells stories, but they fail to see the master narrative he creates.

There is much less sense of a narrative line in Linda Strait's teaching. By not providing a single interpretive frame, Strait may be allowing her students more latitude to not only construct their own interpretations, but also to see the possibility that historical knowledge is complex and tenuous, and that others might construct entirely different views of the same events.

Significance

What is historically significant is no less an issue for historians than it is for high school students (Seixas, 1994, 1997). The growth of social history, in particular, has pushed historians to confront questions about what counts as significant vis-à-vis historical actors and events (Novick, 1988). Students may be naive about the arguments in the history community, but their sense-making impulse enables their entree into discussions of historical significance (Barton & Levstik, 1998; Epstein, 1998; Seixas, 1994, 1997).

Researchers observe that students use a range of criteria to evaluate historical significance. Seixas (1994) finds that, among other things, the impact on the contemporary world, understanding of personal circumstances, potential for lessons learned, and extreme events or conditions figure prominently in students' constructions of significance. Barton and Levstik (1998) take a broader cut. Their investigation suggests that students' views of significance can be grouped into two primary strains: The "official" view the past as a legitimate, unifying, and progressive force, and the "vernacular" view that presents history in a more ambiguous and critical light.

Elements of both Seixas' and Barton and Levstik's findings figure into the interviews with the Westwood students. Two particular patterns of talk, however—the connection of past and present, and the connection between the past and students' lives today—surface throughout the interviews, and it is on those patterns that I focus in this section.

Connecting past and present. While both teachers' students see connections between the past and present, the connections Blair's students offer seem thin and weakly developed. Moreover, none of the connections they describe relate directly to Blair's course in general, or to the civil rights unit in particular. Instead, when his students see relationships between past and present events, they cite sources such as family, media, and other coursework, particularly in English. Strait's students see quantitatively more associations between past and present events. Even more striking, however, is the depth of their talk, and the clear connections they make back to Strait's instruction.

Asked about connections between past and present events, Blair's students often seem taken aback. All are able to make those connections, but the connections seem weak at best. For example, Kate's responses suggest that she has given little thought to any relationship between past and present. She said that she sometimes wonders "what it was like in the old days." The images she comes up with, however, are lifeless. "It's like a black and white movie," she said, "It wasn't color, or anything. [laughs] It just looks weird, and different." Asked what this means, she seems unsure. People in the past were "not so much [different] in, like, their ideas, probably, but, how they looked, how they dressed, and all that. I don't think—I mean, we've changed a lot, but...not too much."

By contrast, Alice sees a clearer, and more critical, connection between past and present America:

As we learn more about our history...the first images, it's like such a free and such a great place to be, and then, now that you really think about it, I mean, there are like terrible things about it, and different things that are bad in our society and stuff.

Asked for an example, Alice replies, "I don't know...greed and killing and...I mean, those would all just go on here." Beyond the fact that Alice offers one of the few critical points of view by a Blair student, what is most relevant is her attribution of this perspective: television. As evidenced in the description of his unit, Blair does not sugarcoat the U.S. history he teaches. Yet Alice's sense that her views are based in what she sees in television suggest that she sees little in Blair's teach-

ing that helps her connect past and present.

Similarly, Blair's class goes unmentioned when Bill talks about relationships between past and present. Instead, he cites the influence of experiences with family members and in his English classes. For example, his interest in the Depression era was nurtured by long conversations with his grandparents, who suggest that, among other things, he "should be grateful for what I have, and stuff like that." Bill not only sees a ribbon between past and present in family matters, but in his English class as well where he did a literature project on the Depression.

From these sources, Bill constructs a sense of how the past has influenced the present. Asked if people's lives during the Depression seem much different than those today, he explains:

Yeah, completely. To me it does, because...it seemed like it was a different like, completely different swing. Like after the Depression, we still basically have the same...like, we have all the aid coming to poverty stricken people like welfare, and everything like that. And before that, during the Depression there were so many people that were, like, suffering and they couldn't do anything about it and there was no, like, direct relief. Like today there is. Like if you're really, if you're, like, in the dumps, you can still look to the government for aid. And back then there was, like, many people that couldn't. So it seems like a completely different time. 'Cause like, nowadays, there's always a, like, a plan B for you. And back then, like, it was just all or nothing, in a way.

Some would argue that, while Bill's account is in rough accord with a traditional account of the Depression, his sense that a "plan B" exists today is naive. Perhaps. For the purposes of this paper, however, what seems interesting is that Bill attributes his conception of the relationship between the Depression and the 1990s not to his U.S. history course, but instead to family members and to his course experiences in English.

Ann is like her peers in that she draws on her English courses when she makes connections between past and present and that she makes no explicit mention of her experiences in Blair's course. Unlike her peers, however, Ann cites yet another source of influence: her work with Amnesty International. (More on this influence below.)

Linda Strait's students also make connections between past and present events in the context of their English classes. In striking contrast to Blair's students, however, all three of Strait's students make

thoughtful and textured connections in the context of the civil rights unit they have just studied.

James takes note of two comments Strait made in class. In the first, she proposes that people today are not being responsible for the misdeeds of their forebearers, unless they perpetuate them. Her second point connects the ill-treatment of African Americans in the 1950s and 60s with that of homosexuals today. Both points impress James:

...just not to make the same mistakes as our forefathers have made. That's the point she brought up in today's class....Basically, you know, think of everyone as equal, and like I said, not make those same mistakes in the past, the discrimination of the past. She also brought up one of the most...targeted groups now for discrimination are the homosexuals. And...the type of discrimination they face is similar to the type that blacks faced back in the mid-nineteen hundreds. She's trying to stress to us not to make that same mistake.

When James said later in the interview, "I like to think that's (discrimination) changing," we see some of the future hopefulness students routinely report (Barton & Levstik, 1998; Epstein, 1998; Seixas, 1994; VanSledright, 1997). Yet, James tempers his hopefulness with the very real possibility that "it's difficult for people to...stop their discrimination based on laws." Echoing the need to change both people's "hearts and minds" (Banks, 1994, p. 89), James points to the very real possibility that laws may not prevent "people from having their same...state of mind about these people (i.e., African Americans and homosexuals)."

Ned's hopefulness about the present seems naive when, early in the interview, he says, "I don't think anything like that (discrimination against African Americans) would happen again." As he continues to talk, however, he modifies that claim in a way that demonstrates a more thoughtful understanding of how past and present intersect:

I never thought that, I mean, the United States would ever let something like that happen, and just be so...racist. I think that's a lot of problems. I mean, blacks think that of whites, we (European Americans) think that of blacks, I mean, it's just...I think it's happened a lot more...as the years go on.

He then describes the impact that understanding the past has had on his sense of the present:

You know, that certain stuff's happened, but I've never seen it. I mean when you hear something, it's different than if you actually can see it, witness it....I wasn't there, but you saw the footage of it in the film (documentaries), and...I believe it....I think the kids should know, because I think that might be able to stop racism in the U.S. if they see that. I mean, not that it's totally going to solve it, but just give you a different perspective on what it was like.

Here, Ned tempers his earlier sense that discrimination would never "happen again." He sees powerful images in the documentaries shown in class, and he is convinced that they are not only accurate reflections of the times, but that they "might be able to stop racism in the U.S. if they (students) see that." Ned is not so naive as to think that images alone will help his peers to, at once, understand the past and change their behavior. As he said, "it's not totally going to solve it, but, just give you a different perspective on what it was like." Being able to hold a different perspective is often cited as a fundamental means of changing behavior (Banks, 1994) and so Ned nicely ties together knowledge of the past and possibilities for the present.

Melissa, too, holds a hopeful view of the present, although she tempers that view even more quickly and more directly than do her peers, James and Ned:

I'd say that there are opportunities. But it's not exactly as everyone else that sees it, I mean so many other foreign countries say, "Oh, we have to go to America, it's the land of the free," but it's really not everything it's cracked up to be because there are a lot of limitations....

Asked what those limitations might be, she continues:

I think there's definitely like the racism and prejudice. You know, there's still problems with the African Americans, minorities getting jobs, women getting jobs, getting equal paying jobs, and just some peoples' attitudes towards different people.

In these quotes, Melissa couples past problems of racism and prejudice with current problems. She recognizes that groups who have historically had problems cracking the U.S. economy continue to experience difficulties.

* * * * *

In Linda Strait's instruction, we see several instances where she makes explicit connections between the past and present. Some might argue, however, that those connections are weakened by the "trap" of lineality (National Center for History in the Schools, 1994). Lineality is the notion that present events can be improperly connected, in straight-line fashion, to the past. Expressed this way, lineality is aligned with the notion of presentism, which implies an over-reliance on the present as a means of interpreting the past (Rogers, 1987; Stern, 1994; VanSledright, 1998).¹¹

Evidence of lineality surfaces in the connection Strait makes (which James picks up on) that the experiences of African Americans in the 1950s and 60s are connected to those of homosexuals in the 1990s. Both groups have faced discrimination, but the different contexts of the times and the different social situations of each group undercut any direct correspondence between their experiences. Historians might decry such instances of presentism. Rogers (1987) notes, however, that strict avoidance of present-mindedness is probably impossible for teachers faced with the need to help their students construct a personal relevance to history.

George Blair avoids the trap of lineality in that he offers virtually no explicit connections between past and present. The one ostensible, but oblique, reference surfaces in his assertion that Chief Justice Earl Warren's actions "change the court forever." Blair's narrative of the civil rights movement within the context of Eisenhower's administration has the advantage of avoiding the presentism problem, but it runs up against a second trap, that of "inevitability" (National Center for History in the Schools, 1994). This trap manifests in the idea that historical events unfolded as they did in a natural, essentially predetermined fashion and that factors like human agency and chance do not influence the course of history. The decisions of historical actors do surface in Blair's narrative, but any sense that those decisions and their effects could have unfolded differently goes unexplored. Blair's instruction nicely ensconces students in the context of the times. Interviews with them, however, suggest that the past remains just the past.

Connection to students' lives. If one lens on significance is the relationship between past and present, another is the connection between the past and one's life. Here again, we see big differences between Strait's students and Blair's. Strait's students are more likely to see a connection between past and their lives today. More specifically, they see themselves as actors in their community, and they see the impact past civil rights battles have had on how they and others view the world today. Blair's students see virtually no impact of the past on their lives. This is not to say that they have no interest in the past, but one is struck by the sense that they see the study of history as irrel-

evant to the way they live their lives. Other factors—school activities, coursework, family—influence them; the study of history does not.

One of Blair's students, Ann, talks about her involvement in Amnesty International. Although it is not clear how directly she sees Amnesty's work in relation to her own life, Ann does take part in letter writing and awareness-raising campaigns. "We write to other countries," she said, "saying that they shouldn't, you know, do something to this person. We try to, like, get a better outcome, or try to persuade the person, the leader, to not do that." Ann's interest in Amnesty reflects her sense of America's responsibility to help others. "Well, since we're such a large, powerful country," she said, "I think we should get involved...in some matters...that help underdeveloped countries, or underprivileged."

Ann's work in Amnesty International marks her as distinct from her peers in this study, for only she is involved in any organized activity promoting a better world. Like most of her peers in Blair's class, however, her interest and involvement develop outside of his class. Ann makes no mention of any connection between course material and her life now.

Neither do Kate nor Alice. Kate even seems nonplused by the idea that history might be meaningful to her. "History's already set for you," she said, "I mean we're learning about stuff in the past." By contrast, English classes are sites where she and her classmates are pushed to read, think, and discuss not only the ideas and experiences represented in text, but also how those ideas and experiences relate to their own lives. "In English we're doing stuff in the present," she said, "talking about ourselves." Alice senses the importance of history, but that sense is nascent at best, and she flatly denies the import of Blair's instruction: "Listening to [Mr. Blair] doesn't do anything for me." Asked if she could imagine discussing ideas in history class as she has in English, she said:

Alice: Actually, yeah! You could do that. But...I don't know. Not in Mr. Blair's class, but...yeah, it might be easier to learn that way too if you had discussions on it, on what you thought about different things. Civil Rights, and your opinions, and stuff.

SG: Do you think there are things to discuss? In history?

Alice: Some things. Not a lot. Not as...I mean, like, English, there's more things to discuss, it seems. I don't know, history....

SG: I'm curious about why you say that.

Alice: I don't know. The way I, I knew my history, I, like, read the book, study it, memorize it, and, that's it. You

know? I don't, like, go searching for more information, and stuff.

Bill provides a more complicated story. More so than his classmates, Bill is interested in historical events and he senses that there is something important for him to know. Influenced, for example, by books he reads in English and by stories his grandparents tell, he professes an enduring interest in the Great Depression, and in topics like organized crime. Yet despite these sources, Bill sees only distance between the past and his own life:

I mean, I just can't picture like, being back then, like, how they were in the Depression. But when (his grandparents tell him about it), it really has no effect on me because I can't like, even picture that, you know what I mean? So, I think that's why I feel so separated from it, you know?

Bill is no apathetic teenager, living for MTV and the next party, but he struggles to see any connection between the story of America's past and his life. "Nothing's really happened that affected me," he explains, "I really don't feel as though I'm part of the country." Given that much of the history Bill has been taught is about people like him—white, male, and well-off—it is astounding to hear his claims of feeling disconnected from his past. Epstein (1998) and others (e.g., Barton & Levstik, 1998; VanSledright, 1995a) report that female and minority students see little of themselves in the textbooks and lessons taught in most U.S. history classrooms. Bill's assertion suggests that they may not be alone.

In contrast to Blair's students, Strait's students see important connections between historical events and their current lives, they reference the civil rights unit as examples, and they use what they learned in class to talk about their lives in contexts outside of school.

One way James expresses a lived connection with the past is through his reaction to the documentaries shown in class. After recalling several scenes, he said, "It just makes me nauseous, some of what I see." James also cites the skating rink simulation as cause for reflection. In that exercise, he said, "we actually encountered somebody who discriminated against black, minority groups." Although he took only a small speaking part during his group's presentation, James claims that this kind of activity "got us more involved, [the activity] involved students more in actually learning about it."

Ned and Melissa also connect classroom ideas and experiences with incidents in their daily lives. For Ned, part of the connection he makes is that he simply did not understand the severity and the extent of racial discrimination:

...the fact that, how people, well, mostly the whites, were so against the blacks and how people were treated. Like, they beat them, and just the way they were treated and how they thought their rights were violated....The real issues showed....I never saw that 'till then. I never learned that 'till then. And a lot of kids in class were like that, too. They didn't know that. I got that just from talking to the kids.

Part of what grounds his understandings of the past for Ned is talking with classmates who were also taken aback by the documentary images shown. Where many students seem intent on forgetting their last lesson as soon as possible, Ned and his friends talk about the activities they experience in class.

This is no small point. Nor is Ned's insight into the different world he and his friends inhabit compared to those students in the nearby urban center. Westwood is a second-ring suburb. Ned moved to Westwood from a first-ring community four years ago. He understands, however, that a change of a few miles can mean a world of difference:

I grew up in Kastor, and I moved here, so there was a lot of blacks and Hispanics, and I grew up around that, so it didn't bother me at all. And then when I moved here, kids are like sort of iffy about...if you go in the city. They'd be like, "Oh, like that's some...like a different world" or something.

Ned is reluctant to disparage his new peers. At same time, however, Strait's civil rights unit reminds him of the "different world" in which he now lives. "I think both places are good," Ned explains, "but, I think, I wish kids that are here would go live where I was. And then I think they'd...see the same thing I would. Maybe they wouldn't, but, it's totally two different things...If people could only see it."

One other indication of the connection Ned makes between his experiences in Strait's class and his life is the firm, but complicated notion of where his responsibility as a human being lies. Asked what learning about the civil rights movement means for him, Ned explains:

I think that we are responsible that...to make sure something like that doesn't happen again, but...again, it could. Anything's possible, but, I don't think...I don't know what I'd do if that ever happened...or put in that situation, so I wouldn't know.

Here, Ned struggles. He perceives a collective responsibility “to make sure something like that doesn’t happen again” that he may not have felt before. Things get messy, however, when he considers his own part. Rather than put on a false bravado, he admits discomfort and uncertainty. What would he do if confronted with an ugly situation? It is no easy question for any of us to answer; recall that Strait describes her own struggles with the question. Ned may have no answer, but that he even entertains the question is noteworthy.

As with James and Ned, Melissa is moved and even angered by classroom experiences during Strait’s civil rights unit:

It kind of disappoints me that this country, in our Constitution is, you know, equal for everyone and they tried to be different from the other countries by not limiting anyone. And they were, you know, hypocritical, went back on their word and did destroy these people’s lives just because of their race and color.

Thinking about her own social relationships, Melissa translates the feelings arising from Strait’s class directly into her own experiences:

I have a lot of friends who are minorities and I see how they’re treated. And how, you know, it’s really uncomfortable for me when I go to their, when I like go to their family gatherings and they’ve got all Koreans there and I’m the only white person there. And I feel uncomfortable. I told my one friend that, and she said, “Well how do you think I feel everyday?” And I, you know, it just blew my mind. And then we started something about the civil rights movement and everything and I realized that our country is a little more backward than I thought.

The civil rights movement means more to Melissa than a set of past events. Her experiences in Strait’s class give her leverage on understanding not only her own experiences and how she feels about them, but also how others feel and experience the world.

Melissa knew something about social inequities before taking Strait’s class. Since the civil rights unit, however, she sees even more clearly that her race and social class provide privilege. She explains, “Me, being where I’m living now and, and the race I am, and you know, just this status that I, that my parents have given to me, it’s, I feel comfortable in America. I think that I’m probably a privileged American.”

Like Ned, Melissa is not sure where her responsibility lies. In class, she is a strong and vocal proponent of equity and justice. These themes surface in her interview as well, but her assurance is undercut when she talks about trying to negotiate the complex dynamics of race:

We [in Westwood] don't really have to deal with race issues that much. And I don't like to think that I'm racist. I really try, you know, but coming from Westwood I don't know how to deal with people....And it's kind of embarrassing to me, but I don't have like good public relations like that. I don't know how to act....And I kind of feel uncomfortable because I don't know how to deal with everything. I mean, I feel really secluded that I live in Westwood.

Melissa's discomfort dealing with people unlike herself is a remarkable admission, one that few European Americans make (McIntosh, 1992). Also interesting is the way Melissa uses the insights gained in class to help her think about her own position in her community. Her frank admissions about feeling "secluded" in the largely White world of Westwood and feeling "uncomfortable because I don't know how to deal with everything" suggest a sharp insight into the complex interaction between her life and the greater community. Melissa gives some credit for this insight to her parents, but she seems equally as indebted to Strait. "It kind of helped me this year, just being able to deal with her," she explained, "and the way that she (Strait) thinks and the way she presents things." Strait's civil rights unit has not given Melissa any easy answers. In fact, one could argue that Melissa is more disconcerted, more uncomfortable for having taken Strait's class. Yet, as psychologists (e.g., Nisbett & Ross, 1980) remind us, cognitive challenge is key to conceptual change.

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As the work by Seixas (1994) and others suggests, students may come at the notion of historical significance from several angles. Making connections between past and present events is one, but no less important is seeing a connection between one's own life and the past. This is no simple matter, however, for two complex issues surface across these student interviews. One is the notion of what it is that students connect to. Blair's students report that family stories, coursework in English, and school activities help them think about their lives. None cite the narrative history Blair presents as influential. That the females in Blair's class might feel this way is no particu-

lar surprise, for although women do appear in his narrative, the focus on political, economic, and international events, and on the roles that the largely male actors have played, is unlikely to appeal to the females in the class (Brophy & VanSledright, 1997; Fournier & Wineburg, 1997). More surprising is Bill's apparent ennui. Blair's version of U.S. history is replete with white, male characters, and yet Bill senses only distance between their lives and his own.

The distance Bill sees between the past and his life is even more interesting when considered in light of Strait's students' perceptions. Although to varying degrees, James, Ned, and Melissa each feel a connection to, in this case, the civil rights era. Just another piece of the backdrop of U.S. history for Blair's students, for Strait's students the civil rights movement becomes a useful lens on their lives.

This last point is interesting, in part, because it appears that Strait's unit provides students with an opportunity to juxtapose their own experiences, their "vernacular" history, with the "official" history of school curriculum and textbooks (Barton & Levstik, 1998). Non-majority students may be more likely to see how their and their families' histories vary from that generally taught in classrooms (Epstein, 1998; Seixas, 1994), yet each of Strait's European American students also sees discrepancies, if not between their lives and traditional views of America, then between different images of America.

Empathy

The third element of historical understanding I explore in this paper is empathy. Verducci (2000) finds that while a popular construct among theorists across the political spectrum, empathy is both widely defined and used.¹² Describing what she terms a "constellation of empathies," she constructs four categories of definitions: affective empathies (which includes aesthetic, sympathy, and compassion), cognitive empathies (which includes Freudian therapeutic and moral philosophical empathies), a complex of feeling and thinking empathies (which she defines largely in terms of contemporary therapeutic empathies), and epistemological empathies.

Writing in the context of history teaching and learning, Foster (1999) keys in on the qualities of empathy that suggest something of a cross between Verducci's cognitive and epistemological categories. Discounting affective notions of empathy, Foster notes that, contrary to popular sentiment, empathy is neither a synonym for sympathy or imagination¹³, nor is it the ability to see through the eyes of another. He argues that "historical empathy" encompasses six qualities: understanding and explaining why actors behaved as they did, appreciating the context of historical events, analysis and evaluation of historical evidence, appreciating the consequences of past actions, recognizing that the past differs from the present, and understanding

the complexity of human action. Foster's view is helpful, but seems less like a coherent view of empathy than a description of historical thinking generally (cf. National Center for History in the Schools, 1994).

Lee (1984) takes a narrower view. Focusing primarily on what Verducci (2000) terms affective empathy, Lee defines empathy alternately as a *power* (as in the ability to discern others' thoughts and feelings), as an *achievement* (as in the realization of understanding what others have believed, valued, or felt), as a *process* (as in the means by which we understand the actions of others), and as a *propensity* (as in a disposition to look for other perspectives on events). This last characteristic, Lee argues, is "an essential part of learning to think historically" (p. 90).

The notion of empathy as a disposition to imagine other perspectives surfaces most clearly in the student interviews for this study as both sets of students demonstrate an understanding of multiple perspectives. The key difference is that, while Blair's students do not demonstrate this ability in the context of the civil rights portion of their history class, Strait's students do.

Ann, one of Blair's students, suggests an understanding of different perspectives when she explains that her friends of "other races":

...might see...America differently 'cause...we're on kinda like different levels, maybe? You know...like I'm an American. She maybe came from a different country, but she's still a U.S. citizen, you know? But, you know she still has that, like, bind with her country. And I'm an American, so...we're just on different levels.

Although Ann does not believe that the differences she perceives "affect, like, anything," she implies that she and her friend may see the world differently.

The notion of multiple perspectives also surfaces when Ann talks about her English classes. In a course on African American literature, she found Richard Wright's *Black Boy*, "gave me insight on, like, their side." Ann developed more insights into African Americans' experiences when she read Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Are Watching God*. Moreover, in the classroom activities that followed, Ann came to see that her European American classmates also held a variety of views:

We had lots [of class discussion]. Like, we would read the chapter, and then we would write logs about them, like, how we saw something, or what we felt by it, and then we would get in the group and just talk about it. And like, you would hear other people's views, and you would say,

“Oh, I didn’t see it that way.” We would learn a lot more. It was helpful.

Ann sharply contrasts the insights she develops in English with what she perceives of as a lack of opportunity for insights in history:

You know, when you’re in a classroom like social studies or history, you just learn, like, basic facts. Like, yeah, they (African Americans) were discriminated against, yeah, they were not allowed here. But then with English, in the books, you learn, like, how they felt. Like, what they wanted to do, like how it hurt them, how it affected their lives and family. So, you could really feel for them. But in history, it’s just, like, plain facts, like, know this and know that.

Kate, Alice, and Bill’s empathic understandings echo Ann’s, especially the sense that they are more obvious in their English classes than in history. For example, Bill claims to have read a lot about civil rights and other historical topics in his English classes. What strikes him, however, is the fact that the characters he reads about breathe the same air he does. For example, in reference to *The Jungle*, Bill talks at length about the corruption of politics and society. As he continues, however, he focuses increasingly on the plight of the novel’s main character, Jurgis Rudkus:

Like, you were actually like able to sympathize with these people....It (*The Jungle*) focused on one guy and how he was, he would just lose his job one day, and he’d be working for a while, and then an accident would happen in the factory that was caused by, like, bad machinery, and he would be affected by it. But there was, like, no justice in it, you know what I mean? So he would lose his job again, and you were able to actually sympathize and see what it was like for these people, and, like, they were objects and not, like, human beings to these people, like the higher levels of employers. They were more objects. They didn’t care about the human beings, they care about money.

Like Ann, Bill senses that different actors hold different views. While one might argue that his contrast of workers and owners is simplistic, Bill clearly distinguishes between the actors’ competing perspectives. Also like Ann, Bill attributes that understanding primarily to his English class. George Blair covered the plight of European immigrants in cities like Chicago, but Bill’s sense of that coverage pales against the

experience of reading *The Jungle* in English class.

Linda Strait's students also report instances where they see multiple perspectives and feel empathic toward characters they encountered in their English classes. In contrast to their peers, however, Strait's students see multiple perspectives throughout the civil rights unit they studied. And even more importantly, Strait's students seem to draw inferences to their own lives.

Although empathy is considered a key element of historical understanding, James suggests this is no easy thing. The skating rink activity, he said, gave him a "good idea" of what life was like for minority citizens in the 1950s. Even so, James makes no assumption that this one exercise gives him license to fully know how people felt at the time. "It's hard to imagine what black people actually encountered," he said, "...and how degrading it must be....I couldn't imagine living [like that]." After a pause, James adds, "I don't know about you, but I'd be suicidal." While this comment might be dismissed as hyperbole, James's quiet and cautious demeanor during the interviews suggests that his conclusion represents a fledgling attempt to put himself in the shoes of another. His effort may be thin, but it may well represent an important step toward empathic thinking.

This empathic turn seems especially possible when we see how James contextualizes himself in the predominantly white Westwood community:

I suppose...that people that live in the cities would get a better idea than I would, just getting around...observing some of the things that might go on in society first hand...And I guess living in a suburban area, such as this one, I don't get that, that...some people living in the city of Buffalo, they might see more of what really goes on in society than I would.

Ned uses scenes from the civil rights documentaries to push his empathic thinking. Not only does he sense the possibility of different perspectives on these scenes, but he also tries to imagine white and black perspectives over time:

I think that if black people saw it—'cause I was thinking about this during the movie—if black people saw this, that mostly all the whites were beating on them, that they'd think that we were totally....I mean, if I were black and I saw that I'd be, I'd hold a grudge against the whites. I mean, I'm not saying I wouldn't like them, but...they did that to us. It'd be different if, you know, the blacks did

that to the whites...If I were white then I would...see it differently too.

This quote suggests a student struggling with some very complex ideas. Ned supposes that African Americans might respond differently to the video images than his largely European American classmates. He also hints at a sense of what the white antagonists felt at the time. Ned does not tell us if and/or how he resolves this tension. But by imagining his reactions from different perspectives, he suggests a substantive insight into empathic thinking.

So does Melissa. She credits several pieces of Strait's instruction—the videos, handouts, and skating rink simulation—with sensitizing her to “both sides” in the struggle over civil rights. “She (Strait) didn't blame anyone per se,” Melissa said, “she just showed us who did what, and she's pretty fair to everyone.” Melissa also credits Strait with helping her see herself in the context of a wider society:

I feel comfortable in America. I think that I'm probably...a privileged American. And if...I was another race or something I probably would see America totally differently. I think it's just how you are placed in life and somewhat what you make of it. But when you're born, you know, most people are born into something and there's some things you can do about it and some of it is just beyond control.

Here, Melissa points both to the notion of multiple perspectives and to the import of those perspectives for how she views her life. Born under different circumstances, Melissa senses the possibility that she might “see America totally differently.” What also seems interesting, however, is that Melissa is puzzling through the complex dynamics of birth and initiative. Many observers cast the disparities in American society as a case of either-or: Either one's position is determined by birth, or by one's own achievement. Melissa seems to see a middle ground where constraints like race, class, and gender matter, but matter in no exclusive or predetermined ways. Melissa's perspective is intellectually complex, and by avoiding a simplistic dichotomy, she holds a potentially powerful position from which to empathize with others.

* * * * *

George Blair's students see multiple perspectives, but they do not often center themselves within those perspectives, nor do they see anything in their history course that promotes alternative points of view. This is less surprising, however, if we credit Flavel's (1974)

distinction between the capacity to see multiple perspectives and the recognition of the need to do so. Blair's students seem not to see multiple perspectives in history (as opposed to in English) because they do not need to (McIntosh, 1992). Representing the common conclusion Blair's students project, Ann said, "History is just given to you. This is your history, just learn it."

Ann's perception is ironic, for while one might suppose that Blair's narrative style could lead to empathic responses with featured characters like Dwight Eisenhower, this does not seem to happen; in fact, only Bill ever mentioned Eisenhower. Strait's instruction, by contrast, is much less narrative and her students get nothing close to Blair's narrative focus on Eisenhower or any other historical actor. What they do get, however, is access to a series of different perspectives. They also get opportunities to try out a range of perspectives in public forums. It is not always clear what sense students make of these perspectives, but the comments of the students profiled here suggests that they sense the importance of understanding multiple perspectives and that this is more than an academic exercise.

Conclusions

Space and the limitations of my data prevent further examination of these students' perceptions of history. I argue, however, that the three elements of historical thinking explored above—historical knowledge, significance, and empathy—support my contention that, while Strait's and Blair's instructional practices may not cause their students' views of history, those practices figure prominently in explaining the differences across their students' views. I accept the argument that prior knowledge and experience influence students' views more than was once understood (Barton, 1995; Epstein, 1998; Seixas, 1994; VanSledright & Brophy, 1992). Nevertheless, the role of teachers' practices in shaping, supporting, and/or extending students' conceptions of history seems important to examine. There is little empirical work in this area and we do not understand this relationship well, but studies suggest that there is a connection (Evans, 1988; Leinhardt, 1994; VanSledright, 1995b, 1996).

If students are to see any value in the study of history, then how to engage their interest becomes a key question. Stories excite some, but as researchers (Barton, 1997a, 1997b; Levstik, 1989, 1993, 1995; VanSledright & Brophy, 1992) point out, stories or narrative history may not be enough. Blair's students are exposed to a seemingly coherent and engaging narrative of the beginnings of the civil rights movement. Yet neither that narrative, nor the ones that Blair presents in other units, seems to inspire students' engagement with or their understanding of history. Instead, the evidence that does exist for their

historical understanding comes from sources outside Blair's classroom—personal and school experiences, media, other coursework.

Some might argue that Blair's students have simply worked their history class learnings into a seamless web with their other learnings. And others might suggest that there is no reason to despair since Blair's students manifest a measure of historical understanding. Both these possibilities should be considered, but two considerations undercut them. One is the thinness of the historical understanding that Blair's students manifest. This is most obvious in their sense that history is simply a set of facts to be learned for school purposes, and in their seeming inability to see connections between the past and their lives today. Blair's students notice some connections between the past and present, and they seem generally cognizant of multiple perspectives and empathic thinking. In neither instance is their thinking particularly insightful, however. Moreover, when asked to attribute their ideas, they invariably cite influences other than Blair's history course.

But if they are developing a sense of history, do we need to worry about its source? I think so, for while experiences with the media, fiction, and family and friends are important, it is the thoughtful study of the past which provides a context in which to develop historical thinking skills and understanding (National Center for History in the Schools, 1994; Seixas, 1996). There is also the problem of the enduring perceptions of history. Put simply, if Blair's students' shallow sense of history continues unchallenged, their suspicion that history holds little value is likely to endure.

Linda Strait's students seem on firmer ground here. It is not clear that they hold any stronger sense of an overarching framework of understanding than Blair's students do. Neither is it clear that they are any better at historical skills such as evaluating evidence. What does seem clear, however, is that they consistently project a more thoughtful and substantive view of history than their peers in Blair's class do.

But let's be clear here: The fact that Strait spends considerably more time on civil rights than Blair does obviously figures into this differential. On reflection, however, this observation is not as simple as it seems.

First, we must recognize that Strait and Blair are making conscious choices about what content they emphasize and how they structure their teaching practices. Blair chooses to teach civil rights in the context of a larger narrative about the Eisenhower years, and he chooses to give the information to students in a purely lecture style. Strait's choices are dramatically different, and part of what makes the differences in their choices so interesting is that those choices emerge within the same social context of students, school norms, state curricula, and Regents testing. These factors, which many claim strongly

influence teachers' practices, seem to hold little sway here. The influences on their decisions are complex (Grant, 1996, 1997a, in press), but the fact that each teacher has the autonomy to make real decisions about content and pedagogy must not be missed.

And that leads to a second point: The kinds of decisions Blair and Strait make are qualitatively different. Strait's unit is decidedly broader, less story-like, and more experiential than Blair's. Her students read, write, listen, view, and interact in a range of instructional settings. This instructional diversity has its drawbacks in that observers may question whether one activity follows directly from the preceding one. At the same time, however, it is hard to ignore the sense that these activities are more intellectually open-ended than Blair's narratives. Strait's students may not always perceive this, but the comments of the students profiled here support the idea that history is by its nature complex, tenuous, and interpretable. Strait's students do not always know what to make of this ambiguity. What they do do, however, is use history as a way to make sense of their lives. Given the thin uses most students assign to history (Seixas, 1994; VanSledright, 1997), this is no small achievement.

Notes

¹ In fact, David's question is the only substantive question I have witnessed in the many times I have observed Blair's classroom.

² Statements included, "...a nine year old girl is not allowed to play on the school basketball team" and "...you are arrested for burning the U.S. flag." As Strait explained, the first is an example of civil rights in that it applies to conditions of race, gender, or age. The second is an example of civil liberties in that it refers to conditions intended by the Bill of Rights.

³ This set of notes (another set was distributed and discussed on day 7) consisted of the following elements: a) definitions of "civil rights" and "civil liberties"; and, b) a chronology of the civil rights movement with special attention to Harry Truman's "efforts" and the *Brown v. the Board of Education* decision. Also attached were some additional readings on the *Brown* decision, equal opportunity, and the *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* decision in 1971 which allowed the use of forced busing to end patterns of discrimination.

⁴ These notes included sections on the early philosophy of the civil rights movement, early leaders and activists, civil rights presidents, later philosophies, more "radical" leaders, assassinations, other civil rights movements (e.g., Women, Native Americans, Mexican Americans, and Handicapped/Disabled Persons), and Supreme Court cases.

⁵ For example, Rev. George Lee—killed for leading voter registration drive (Belzoni, Mississippi, 1955); Willie Edwards—killed by the Klan (Montgomery, Alabama, 1957); Paul Guihard—European reporter killed during the Ole Miss riot (Oxford, Mississippi, 1962); and Virgil Lamar Ware—youth killed during wave of racist violence (Birmingham, Alabama, 1963).

⁶ For example, Albuquerque, New Mexico (June 4, 1991)—A cross was burned on the lawn of a racially mixed family; Woodbridge, New Jersey (June 28, 1991)—Thirteen people were arrested for assaulting and harassing Asian Indians; Fullerton, California (July 7, 1991)—A Chinese American teenager was beaten unconscious by Skinheads.

Strait adapted the "Forty Lives" and "Hate Crimes" lists from materials she received from the Southern Poverty Law Center.

⁷ Strait had to be absent from school the next day. She prepared a 12 question, multiple-choice quiz to be administered that day. The questions ranged from definitional (e.g., Which action is the best example of civil disobedience?) to generalization (Which is the most valid conclusion to be drawn from the study of the civil rights movement in the U.S. since 1954?) to interpretive (e.g., students were presented with the quotation, "We will match your capacity to inflict suffering with our capacity to endure suffering....We will not hate you, but we cannot obey your unjust laws," and asked who was the most likely author—Booker T. Washington, Martin Luther King, Jr., W. E. B. Du Bois, or Malcolm X)

⁸ Those findings tend to represent European American sentiments, however. As Epstein (1998) points out, African American students are less convinced that U.S. history is one of real progress.

⁹ Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for helping me see this distinction.

¹⁰ For a particularly cogent discussion of that debate see Foner (1990) and Novick (1988).

¹¹ Thanks to Bruce VanSledright for helping me see this connection.

¹² Thanks to the anonymous reviewer who suggested this citation.

¹³ For a contrary perspective on the relationship between empathy and imagination, see Lee (1984).

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Rights and Obligations in Civic Education: A Content Analysis of the *National Standards for Civics and Government*

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Abstract

A quantitative content analysis of the National Standards for Civics and Government revealed that concepts associated with traditional liberalism—citizens' rights and freedoms—far outnumber concepts associated with classical republicanism or communitarianism (e.g., civic virtue, the reciprocal relation between citizens' rights and their responsibilities to the public good). Moreover, this focus on rights and freedoms to the relative exclusion of duties and obligations may be at odds with a more collectivistic value orientation held by many members of ethnic and racial minority groups. Consistent with previous studies of civics texts, our analysis indicates that the concept of political participation plays a very small role in the National Civics Standards. Finally, the "subtext" of the National Civics Standards does little by way of reflecting the contributions of women and minorities to public life. Implications for civic instruction in increasingly heterogeneous public school classrooms are discussed.

Although young people are politically socialized through a variety of sources—including family, friends, newspapers, and the television medium—social studies education is the main source of formal

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civic education in the United States. Experts agree that civic education involves building both the skills necessary for making decisions on public issues and the skills necessary for public participation (Anderson, Avery, Pederson, Smith, & Sullivan, 1997; Hoge 1995). The ideal outcome of civic education is therefore to teach students about their roles as citizens of the United States. To participate meaningfully in civic life, citizens must know what citizenship entails, including the rights and responsibilities that accompany their roles as citizens.

In 1989, President George Bush met with the nation's governors to develop a plan to improve public education. The result was *America's Education Goals*, a list of six major objectives to be achieved by the year 2000. The third goal presaged the development of specific content standards:

American students will leave grades four, eight, and twelve having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, history, and geography; and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our modern economy (p. 9).

For more than a decade, the standards movement has been a major focus of both educational reform and debate.¹

The National Standards for Civics and Government

In 1991, the federal government—for the first time in the nation's history—funded the development of national, voluntary standards for the core academic areas. The allocation of federal monies for educational curriculum standards marked a significant shift from the local control that has traditionally characterized U.S. public schools.

Standards documents for the social studies, including U.S. history, world history, geography, and civics, were released in November 1994. Each document specifies the content knowledge and skills students should acquire at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The standards have been widely distributed throughout the nation's schools, and are believed to serve as resources for teachers as well as textbook publishers.

The *National Standards for Civics and Government* (hereafter referred to as the *National Civics Standards*) were developed by the Center for Civic Education. More than three thousand teachers, scholars, parents, business representatives, and elected officials contributed to the development of the standards (Bahmueller, 1995). Briefly, the civ-

ics standards identify the essential concepts to be mastered by students: 1) the relations among civic life, politics, and government; 2) the foundations of the American political system; 3) ways in which the government established by the Constitution embodies the purposes, values, and principles of American democracy; 4) the relations of the United States to other nations and world affairs; and 5) the roles of citizens in American democracy.

The contents of the *National Civics Standards* have had an impact at both the local and state level. Indeed, because developers of the 1998 Civics National Assessment of Educational Progress recognized that "state and local curriculum framework documents are beginning to reflect the content and concepts embodied in the voluntary *National Standards for Civics and Government*," the construction of that test was based largely on the contents of the *National Civics Standards* (National Assessment Government Board, 1996, p. 10).

Although the *National Civics Standards* have not received the critical attention that other standards documents have (Stotsky, 1994), a few reviews of those standards have been critical (Dry, 1996; Merelman, 1996; Vinson, in press). Merelman (1996), for example, argues that the *National Civics Standards* place relatively little emphasis on civic participation. Instead, the *National Civics Standards* emphasize what he calls a "cultural hegemony" over recognition of different values within American democracy, and neglect the important role of civic participation. He wrote, "...the proposed National Standards emphasize shared political values over political participation; oversimplify the relationships between American political values; assert a highly contestable function (cohesion) for shared values; and rely mainly upon elite statements to identify these political values" (Merelman, 1996, p. 55). Similarly, Vinson (in press) argues that the *National Civics Standards* only vaguely address civic participation, without mention of the different or incompatible social or political ends to which participation might be directed. Further, Vinson asserts that the reality of "oppression" (e.g., the marginalization, exploitation, and powerlessness of some groups) is overlooked in the *National Civics Standards*, making it difficult for students to develop an understanding of the discrepancy between the "real" and "ideal" of U.S. democracy.

However controversial the standards documents may be among scholars, there is little doubt that the contents shape curricula, influence what and how teachers teach, serve as a guide for textbook authors, and influence the contents of national tests of students' educational progress. Our goal in the current research is to describe whether and how the *National Civics Standards* for grades 9-12 (hereafter referred to as the *Civics Standards 9-12*) serve as an appropriate model that will shape active and effective future citizens in an increasingly racially and ethnically diverse society.

Rights, Obligations, and Multicultural Issues in Civics Education

Contemporary thinking about civics education in the United States often reflects two central concerns. One concern is that civics instruction typically devotes little attention to multicultural issues. For example, Parker (1996) argues that “citizenship education rests on a feeble conception of democratic citizenship that skirts social and cultural diversity” (p. 104). A second concern of educators and researchers is that students have become increasingly individualistic and often lack a sense of social responsibility. As we will subsequently argue, these two issues—insufficient attention to multicultural concerns and a primary focus on individualism and rights—are not independent.

People for the American Way (1989) conducted a survey of 1,006 adolescents and young adults and found that when respondents were asked about good citizenship, they focused on individual rights to the neglect of civic duties and civic participation. Although respondents valued the freedoms inherent in a democracy, they did not report a sense of duty or obligation to exercise the responsibilities of citizenship. Indeed, this emphasis on rights to the exclusion of obligations has been cited as one source of a decline in civic participation in the United States over the past decade (Garman, 1995).

Other researchers have corroborated this trend toward disengagement from public life. High school students are increasingly alienated from public life (Easterlin & Crimmins, 1991; Rahn & Transue, 1998). In their analysis of seven age cohorts, Bennett and Bennett (1990) found that young people feel “less obliged” to keep abreast of political events, to serve on juries, to vote, or in other ways to serve their country or communities. The authors conclude on an ominous note: “In sum, among the youngest, best-educated segments of our society, the concept of democratic citizenship is in serious decline” (p. 110).

Mentions of rights absent mentions of obligations are not surprising, given that most current approaches to civics education focus overwhelmingly on individual rights and liberties to the neglect of the more collective dimensions of American politics and history (Bricker, 1989), including our responsibilities to other citizens. These approaches appear to reinforce the value of individualism and to ignore our interdependence with one another.

Students of different races, ethnicities, nationalities, and cultures bring to the classroom diverse values, some of which may be at odds with traditional liberal American values. As classrooms become more ethnically and racially diverse, teachers may find that the relative emphasis placed on individual rights versus collective duties and obligations is incompatible with many students’ cultures and values.

In part, this incompatibility may result from the different social identities reflected in the classroom. Triandis (1989), using the cross-cultural concepts of “individualism” and “collectivism,” has shown that ethnic minorities in the United States have a more collectivist sense of identity than does the European-American majority; that is, among many ethnic minorities, the self is conceived in relation to larger groups to which the individual may belong, such as immediate and extended family, friends, co-workers, and neighbors. Unlike individualists, members of collectivist cultures or subcultures adhere to norms that prescribe duties and obligations. Rhee, Uleman, Lee, and Roman (1995) found that self-identified Asian-Americans described themselves in more collectivist terms than European-Americans; that is, they conceived of themselves in relation to their connections with and duties and obligations to family, friends, neighbors, and other members of their group. And historically, the experience of African-Americans has been of a collective nature (Lipset, 1996); for example, civic and religious groups have served as agents of mobilization for members of the African-American community (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995).

Thus, multiculturalism in civic education requires not only attention to the achievements of minorities or attention to the ways in which minority students learn best, but also requires attention to ways in which students from different racial or ethnic groups conceive of themselves in relation to others: as autonomous individuals in pursuit of rights, or as interconnected members of groups or collectives, with obligations and duties to one another and to the whole. To what extent are the values implicitly or explicitly advocated in the *Civics Standards 9-12* reflective of the increasingly diverse values held by public school students?

Liberalism, Communitarianism, and Cultural Values in Civic Education

Cultural concepts such as individualism and collectivism are closely related to concepts of interest to political scientists, political theorists, and civics educators. These concepts resonate with historical traditions associated with citizenship.

The political philosophy of liberalism, which emerged in the nineteenth century, has its roots in movements to establish freedom of religion, individual consent to government, and equality of citizens (Ball & Dagger, 1995). Freedom under liberalism is the freedom to choose one’s own ends and values, and is more closely tied to private affairs than to participation in public affairs. Given this emphasis on freedom as choosing one’s own ends and values, there is only a minimal emphasis on obligations (Sandel, 1984, 1996). Thus, liberalism as a

political philosophy is especially compatible with the cultural values of individualism.

In contrast to classical liberalism, communitarianism is a relatively recent political philosophy that resonates with the tradition of civic republicanism. As a contemporary "movement" in its own right, communitarianism often draws upon this tradition of civic republicanism to argue against what are viewed as the excesses of liberalism, which views citizens solely as "rights-bearers" excised from the context of community. Given the communitarian view of the individual and communities as constitutive of one another, one outcome is an increased recognition of the individual's obligations (see Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1996; Etzioni, 1993; Galston, 1998; Glendon, 1991; Sandel, 1996). At a personal level, the roles played by the individual as family member or neighbor, and the mutual obligations inherent in those roles are emphasized. At a public level, communitarianism emphasizes the reciprocal nature of rights and responsibilities, and is thus more compatible with a collectivistic value orientation.

The concepts of liberalism and communitarianism are closely related to the cross-cultural psychological concepts of individualism and collectivism, respectively. Research in cross-cultural psychology indicates that the United States as a culture is among the most highly individualistic in the world (Hofstede, 1980; Hui, 1988; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Moghaddam, Taylor, & Wright, 1993). Further, an individualistic versus a collectivistic value orientation has implications for civic engagement. Funk (1998), for example, using responses from the 1990 NES (National Election Study), found that a commitment to societal need over self-reliance was significantly related to such pro-collective acts as donating to charity and participating in solving community problems. Another line of research within psychology supports the notion that Americans of racial and ethnic minority backgrounds may have a more collectivist sense of identity (Madsen & Shapira, 1970; Rhee et al., 1995; Shkodriani & Gibbons, 1995; Triandis, 1989). Thus, the cross-cultural concept of an individualistic versus a collectivistic value orientation is associated with some forms of civic engagement, and may be differentially associated with racial and ethnic group membership.

The Current Research

The relative emphasis placed by the *Civics Standards 9-12* on individual freedoms and rights (in contrast to collective responsibilities, duties, or obligations) has powerful implications for what teachers teach, what textbook authors write, what students learn, and ultimately, how and whether civic education translates into an informed

and involved citizenry as young people mature and actualize their roles as citizens. Our goal was to quantify the relative emphasis placed on such individualistic or classical liberal concepts as individual rights, freedoms, and liberties, versus an emphasis placed on such collectivistic or communitarian concepts as the obligations or duties of the individual to participate meaningfully in public life.

Based on previous educational research and contemporary conceptualizations of American political culture, one might expect that the *Civics Standards 9-12* would reflect a strong emphasis on individual rights, with only a secondary focus on the communitarian concepts of duties and obligations. Still, given growing national concern about adolescents' political alienation and their lack of commitment to the common good (e.g., Bennett & Bennett, 1990; Bennett & Rademacher, 1997; Easterlin & Crimmins, 1991; Rahn & Transue, 1998; Teixeira, 1992), and given explicit attention to the goal of introducing students to the concept of civic republicanism, one might expect the *Civics Standards 9-12* to reflect a greater balance between the importance placed on individual rights and the importance placed on citizens' obligations to and their participation in the larger political community than is present in contemporary political culture.

We also explore the degree to which the *Civics Standards 9-12* stress political participation. Previous work indicates that civics texts convey a passive view of citizenship (People for the American Way, 1987). However, given recent concern about the decline in young people's political participation, one might expect the *Civics Standards 9-12* to devote more attention to active citizenship.

Finally, although the primary focus of our study is on the degree to which the *Civics Standards 9-12* reflect the relative importance of rights, obligations, and civic participation, as we analyzed the *Standards*, we became aware of an interesting "subtext." Throughout the *National Standards* (for all grade levels), quotations from historical and contemporary political figures appear in the margins. Because of our interest in multicultural issues, we wondered whether the individuals quoted would reflect the diversity of our society in terms of race, ethnicity, and gender. Although the marginal quotations are not part of the text of the standards *per se* ("what students should be able to know and do") and are unlikely to be read by students, we believe that the selection of the quotations conveys to teachers and textbook authors a message about the individuals whose political thoughts and actions were or are most significant, and therefore worthy of study. Thus, this question became a secondary but related part of our research: To what extent do the marginal quotations throughout the *National Civics Standards* reflect the intellectual and social contributions of women and minorities from our society's distant and more recent history?

Method

To facilitate a complete analysis of the contents of the *Civics Standards 9-12*, the document was scanned into computers and then imported into the computer software QSR NUD*IST (Qualitative Solutions and Research Nonnumerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorizing; Qualitative Solutions and Research Pty, Ltd., 1997). For analytical purposes, we defined a text unit (our unit for analysis) as a sentence, phrase, or clause (often delimited by bullets) that served to communicate a complete thought. Given this operational definition, the *Civics Standards 9-12* included a total of 1,259 text units.

To assist in our search, we first compiled a list of frequently used words corresponding to the concepts of "rights," "obligations," "participation," "individualism," and "collectivism." The generation of these lists of words was guided first by literature in political science offering descriptions of contemporary American political culture (e.g., Bellah et al., 1996; Conover, Leonard, & Searing, 1993; Glendon, 1991). The generation of words conveying collectivist and individualist sentiments was guided by literature from cross-cultural psychology (e.g., Hui; 1988, Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989). Finally, as a check on the word lists corresponding to the five categories above, we consulted *Roget's International Thesaurus* (1977) for words or phrases that might have been omitted from scholarly works (please see Appendix A for an exhaustive list of words corresponding to the five categories). Based on these lists, we then performed text searches for rights, obligations, participation, individualist, and collectivist mentions, respectively. Based on these searches, NUD*IST identified 336 text units containing words from one or more of the five categories (26.7% of the total text units).

Once QSR NUD*IST had identified text units containing one or more of the words on our search lists, two sets of coders independently coded each of these 336 text units for the presence of concepts or ideas reflecting notions of rights, obligations, and participation, and for concepts or ideas that reflected a collectivistic or individualistic value orientation. Table 1 contains exemplars of text units corresponding to our coding categories; as is revealed in Table 1, a text unit could contain references to one or more of our coding categories. Disagreements were resolved via consensus of all researchers.²

Following the QSR NUD*IST search and coding of the text units generated, we created a data set with each text unit representing a case. Using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), we examined the relationships among the codes; compared frequencies of references to individualism, collectivism, rights, duties, and participation (using chi-square and binomial tests); and assessed the strength of association among those content categories (using phi correlations)

Table 1

Exemplars of Text Units Corresponding to Seven Coding Content Categories

Coding Category	Exemplars
Rights Only	"To do so, it is useful to distinguish among three categories of <i>rights</i> that are of particular significance in the American political system."
Collectivist Only	"Another equally important avenue is the many <i>associations</i> and <i>groups</i> that constitute civic society."
Individualist + Rights	"To achieve this standard, students should be able to explain the meaning of <i>personal rights</i> as distinguished from political <i>rights</i> ."
Collectivist + Obligations	" <i>Civic virtue</i> requires the individual to subordinate personal interests to the interests of the <i>community</i> as a whole, the <i>common good</i> ."
Rights + Obligations	"... specifying the allocation of <i>rights</i> and <i>responsibilities</i> and of benefits and burdens."
Individualist + Collectivist	"Differing ideas about the purposes of government have profound consequences for the well-being of <i>individuals</i> and <i>society</i> ."
Individualist + Collectivist + Rights + Obligations	"In a political system in which one of the primary purposes of government is the protection of <i>individual rights</i> , it is <i>important for citizens</i> to understand what these <i>rights</i> are and their relationship to each other and to other values and interests of their <i>society</i> ."
Participation	"The formal institutions and processes of government such as political parties, campaigns, and elections are important avenues for choice and <i>citizen participation</i> ."
Participation + Individualist Collectivist	"The well-being of American constitutional democracy depends upon the informed and effective <i>participation</i> of citizens concerned with the preservation of <i>individual rights</i> and the promotion of the <i>common good</i> ."
Not Coded	"How are power and responsibility distributed, shared, and limited in the government established by the United States Constitution?"

to determine whether words from one coding category were more frequently associated with words from the other four coding categories.

Finally, a secondary goal of our research was to document the representation of women and minorities as reflected in quotations distributed along the margins of the document. The *National Civics Standards* contain 77 verbatim quotations from contemporary and historical figures and five quotations extracted from well-known documents (e.g., *Declaration of Independence*). The 77 persons to whom quotes were attributed were categorized by gender and by race or ethnicity.

Results

Rights, Duties, and Participation

We looked first to the relative frequency of text units containing references to citizen rights and freedoms versus citizen duties and obligations to determine whether “rights” or “responsibility” concepts take precedence in the *Civics Standards 9-12*. Text units referring to citizen rights ($n = 154$, 12.2% of total text units) outnumber text units referring to citizen responsibilities ($n = 82$, 6.5% of total text units) by nearly two-to-one, a statistically significant difference, χ^2 ($df = 1$) = 23.38, $p < .0001$. Further, with only a small number of text units in the *Civics Standards 9-12* containing references to both rights and responsibilities ($n = 17$, 1.4% of total text units), there is little emphasis placed on the reciprocal nature of citizen rights and obligations, and thus little emphasis placed on contemporary communitarianism as an alternative to traditional liberalism.

Of course, rights need not be associated exclusively with an individualistic value orientation, and responsibilities need not be associated exclusively with a communitarian or collectivistic value orientation. In fact, in Western countries other than the United States, notions of rights are often framed in collectivist terms; for example, the 1982 *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* guarantees minority language education rights. Thus, references to rights in the context of a community or group may denote a different understanding of citizenship than would a focus on the individual as rights-bearer. Therefore, we considered whether citizen rights or obligations were more frequently accompanied by concepts associated with an individualist value orientation or with a collectivist value orientation. Any patterns of association would not be due to the greater frequency of either individualist or collectivist words or phrases, given that those two coding categories were comparably represented in the *Civics Standards 9-12* ($n = 137$ for individualist codes, $n = 144$ for collectivist codes); this difference in frequency is not statistically significant, χ^2 ($df = 1$) = .174, *ns*.

References to citizen rights were more frequently accompanied by individualist references ($n = 42$) than by collectivist references ($n = 10$), a statistically significant difference, χ^2 ($df = 1$) = 19.69, $p < .0001$. Still, a fair number of rights mentions were accompanied by joint individualistic and collectivistic references ($n = 24$). In contrast, mentions of citizen obligations or duties were accompanied by nearly equal numbers of individualist and collectivist references; mentions of obligations were accompanied by 16 references to individualistic themes, and by 12 references to collectivistic themes, a nonsignificant difference, χ^2 ($df = 1$) = .571, *ns*. Thus, in the United States, a highly individualistic culture, rights seem to be construed primarily as an individual concept. And in contrast to more collectivistic cultures (and to our theoretical expectations), obligations exist as much in relation to other individuals as in relation to groups or larger society.

We also documented the number of text units in the *Civics Standards 9-12* that mentioned citizen participation. It is striking that only 66 text units (5.2% of total text units) contained any mention of civic participation. These references to civic participation were more likely to be accompanied by collectivistic references ($n = 13$) than by individualistic references ($n = 3$), a statistically significant difference, χ^2 ($df = 1$) = 6.25, $p = .012$. Figure 1 provides a summary of the number of text units containing references to rights, responsibilities, and participation.

Finally, references to rights, responsibilities, individualism, collectivism, and participation were not comparably distributed throughout the *Civics Standards 9-12* text. Although references to both individualism and citizen rights were equally distributed throughout the document, references to collectivism appeared more at the beginning of the document than at the end, ($r = -.166$, $p = .001$), whereas references to citizen obligations and participation appeared more frequently at the end of the document ($r = .355$ for obligations, $r = .257$ for participation, both p 's $< .001$). Thus, the *Civics Standards 9-12* do not appear to be neutral in the attention paid to the concepts of individualism, collectivism, rights, responsibilities, and participation; individualistic and rights references appear uniformly throughout the document, whereas responsibility and participation references are relegated to the end of the document. Further, given the distribution of these concepts throughout the *Civics Standards 9-12*, references to collectivistic concepts are infrequently accompanied by specific mention of duties, obligations, or civic participation, concepts most closely related to collectivistic ideals.

Representation of the Contributions of Women and Minorities

Of the 77 quotations from contemporary and historical figures, 64 (83.1%) were attributed to European-American men. Of the remain-

ing 13 quotations, seven (9.1%) were attributed to European-American women, five (6.5%) to African-American men, and one (1.3%) to a Native-American man (Chief Joseph). Conspicuously absent—given the increasing participation of minorities in public affairs—were quotations from African-American women, Hispano-Americans, and Asian-Americans of either gender. This race- and gender-skewed distribution is surprising, given the explicit goal of the *National Standards for Civics and Government* to enhance students' understanding and appreciation of diversity. Table 2 shows the percentage of quotations in the *National Standards for Civics and Government* by race and gender, and a breakdown by race and gender of percentages in the U.S. population and the U.S. Congress.

Table 2

Percentages of Women and Minorities in the U.S. Population, in Congress, and in the Marginal Quotations of the *National Standards for Civics and Government*

Group	% of U.S. Population ^a	% of Locally Elected Officials ^b	% of U.S. Senata ^c	% of U.S. House ^c	% of Standards Quotations
Men	49.0	65.7	91.0	88.3	90.9
Women	51.0	20.4	9.0	11.7	9.1
White	82.7	82.2	96.0	86.7	91.2
Black	12.7	2.3	1.0	8.5	6.5
Hispanic	11.0	1.2	0.0	4.1	0.0
Asian and Pacific Islander	3.7	0.1	2.0	0.7	0.0

^aEstimated 1997 data. Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race. Source: No. 13. Resident Population Characteristics—Percent Distribution and Median Age, 1950 to 1997, and Projections, 2000 to 2050. *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1998*. U.S. Census Bureau.

^b1992 Data. 14% did not report sex and 15% did not report race of Hispanic origin. Source: No. 477. Local Elected Officials, by Sex, Race, Hispanic Origin, and Type of Government: 1992. *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1998*. U.S. Census Bureau.

^c105th Congress, 1997. Source: *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, January 4, 1997, 27-30. We chose the 105th Congress because those data are contemporaneous with the most recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau. Minority representation in the 106th Congress is comparable. Percentages of Hispanic representatives and senators remain unchanged, as did the percentage of African-Americans in the House of Representatives; the only African-American senator (Carol Moseley-Braun) lost her bid for re-election in 1998. The number of women in the 106th Congress remained unchanged in the U.S. Senate, and there was an increase from 11.7% to 12.9% in the House of Representatives, a percentage still far short of parity. Source: Tarr, D. R., & A. O. Connor eds. 1999. *Congress A to Z*. Third Edition. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Inc.

Of course, it could be argued that attention to historical figures of previous centuries might preclude a diversity of spokespersons. Still, the number of quotations from the 20th century exceeded the number of quotations of any previous century, and of those 20th century quotations ($n = 31$), fully 25 (80.1%) were attributed to majority

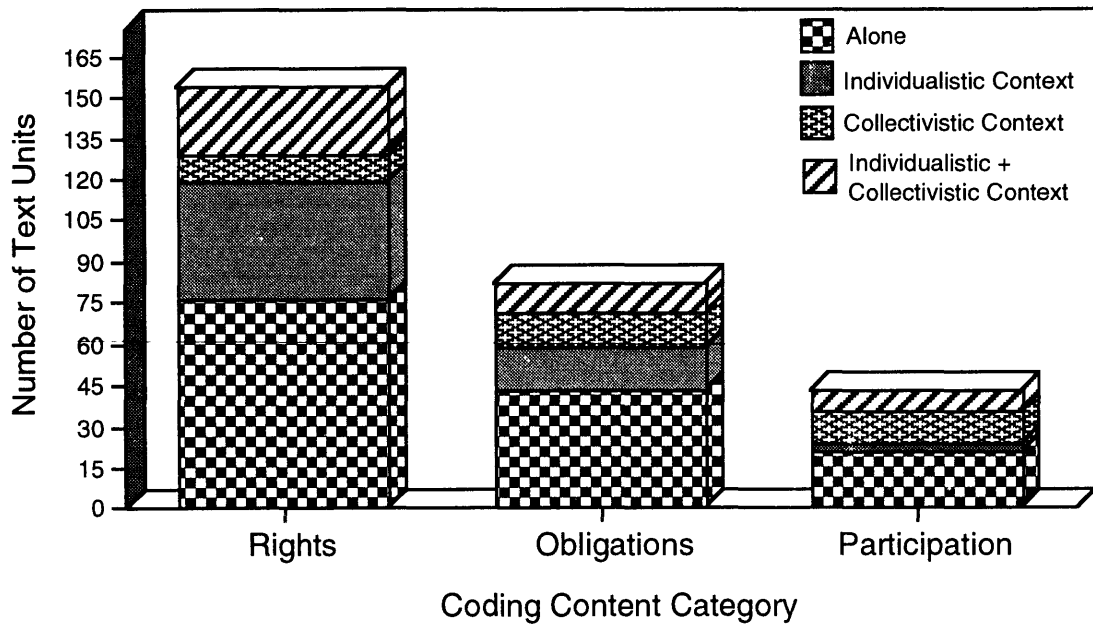


Figure 1. Number of Text Units Containing References to Rights, Obligations, and Participation.

men, whereas only three were attributed to African-American men (Ralph Ellison and Martin Luther King), and three to majority women (Jane Addams and Judith Shklar). Of course, to describe an imbalance in the racial, ethnic, and gender distribution of quotations from the *National Standards for Civics and Government* is not to provide a ready prescription of what the balance should be. Given the relatively small proportions of women and minorities in visible and influential public roles, both historically and in contemporary society, one would not necessarily expect the distribution of *Civics Standards* quotations to reflect the current demography of the United States. Nonetheless, it should be noted that this distribution of "quotables" is even more skewed in the direction of European-American men than is the case among the current U.S. population, among locally elected officials, and among members of the United States Congress (see Table 2).

Discussion and Implications

The preceding quantitative analysis of the contents of the *Civics Standards 9-12* suggests that the *Standards* might well help to perpetuate the dominant liberal perspective on citizen rights and responsibilities; there are nearly twice as many references to citizen rights as to responsibilities. At the close of a century during which collective action (e.g., the Civil Rights Movement, the Women's Rights Movement, the Gay Rights Movement) yielded gains in the political and social rights for historically oppressed *groups*, references to rights in the *Civics Standards 9-12* are associated with a focus on the individual, rather than a focus on groups or collectives. Moreover, the importance of civic participation is neglected, both in the absolute number of references to participation, and in the priority placed on participation, references to which tend to appear for the most part at the end of the *Civics Standards 9-12*. Finally, the "subtext" conveyed to teachers and textbook authors in the selection of marginal quotations is one of European-American male dominance in the political sphere. In a word, the sections of the *Civics Standards* we analyzed reflect the status quo.

In some respects, these findings mirror those of Conover, Leonard, and Searing (1993), who reported that Americans draw predominantly on the liberal tradition in emphasizing individual rights, and only secondarily in addressing what obligations citizens owe. They also confirm Merelman's (1996) argument that although the *National Civics Standards* do make reference to communitarian themes of shared values, there is considerably less emphasis placed on broad-based citizen participation. The overall picture of citizenship in the *Civics Standards 9-12*, as revealed through our content analysis, depicts the good citizen as one who is an individual rights-bearer, and one who is a relatively passive citizen whose rights are not accompanied by corre-

sponding obligations, including the obligation to participate in civic life. As Vinson (in press) reminds us, citizens are “good” or “effective” less because of what they *know*, and more because of what they *do*. The *Civics Standards 9-12*—with their emphasis on knowledge, attitudes, and values to the near exclusion of active, informed participation—do relatively little to ensure that civic knowledge will be translated into effective citizenship that embodies active engagement in civic life.

The analysis of the quotations found throughout the margins of the *National Civics Standards* reflects an ongoing neglect of the expanding role of women and minorities in civic and political life in the late 20th century. Of the contemporary and historical individuals whose ideas were deemed worthy of verbatim quotation in the *National Civics Standards*, fully 89.6% were men, and 83.1% were European-American men. The intellectual contributions of women—including women of color—were conspicuously absent. The relative paucity of women’s and minorities’ contributions to public and political life as reflected in the quotations reinforces previous inclinations in United States culture; the *National Civics Standards* are most definitely *not* “ahead of the curve.” To the extent that teachers or authors take cues from the “subtext” of the *National Civics Standards* for guidance in classroom instruction or textbook writing, they will devote relatively little attention to the contributions and achievements of women and minorities in civic life.

The potential impact of the *Civics Standards 9-12* in the political socialization of youth will be actualized through both the contents of textbooks and the civics classroom experience. Civics textbooks, as the cornerstone of instruction, might well contribute to this relative emphasis on freedoms and rights, at the expense of the duties and obligations inherent in citizenship. For example, Simmons and Avery (in press) found in their content analysis of U.S. government and civics textbooks that individual and group rights play a prominent role in those textbooks, and that citizens’ responsibilities and duties were mentioned much less frequently than were their rights. In future research, we will explore the extent to which individualist and rights-oriented themes pervade contemporary civics textbooks and the instruction teachers provide to students in the classroom.

Results of other research studies indicate that minority students tend to be more community-oriented (collectivistic in their value orientation) than non-minority (European-American) students. To the extent that the *Civics Standards 9-12* serve as a guide for textbook contents and teachers’ classroom instruction, the paucity of contemporary communitarian themes or ideals may be less compatible with the values and experiences of ethnic minority students than with the values and experiences of non-minority students. If an individualistic

rights perspective permeates civic instruction, minority students may find those themes and ideas at odds with their own experience, and may find them less easily learned, accepted, or acted upon. This speculation is consistent with Niemi and Junn's (1998) findings, which indicate that civics education courses have a lesser impact on minority students' civic and political knowledge than on European-American students'.

Alternatively, textbooks that provide a more balanced coverage of the reciprocity of rights and obligations, or teachers who provide a balance of individualistic and communitarian orientations, may convey ideas that are more compatible with minority students' values and experiences. Perhaps written and verbal instruction that balances individual and community concerns, and that emphasizes the reciprocal nature of rights and obligations will be more congruent with the experiences of ethnic minority students, and will yield more learning, more positive attitudes toward citizenship, and consequently, more active engagement in civic life.³ The issue is particularly salient given projections that by the year 2050, 58% of U.S. precollegiate students will be students of color (U.S. Census Bureau, 1996), while the percentage of European-American teachers—currently 90%—is expected to increase (Delpit, 1995). Of course, instruction that reflects a sensitivity to the values and experiences of minority students will benefit European-American majority students as well, for *all* students will carry forward an appreciation of the citizen as an individual *and* as a member of the collective, as well as an awareness of individual rights *and* an awareness of the civic obligations that make those rights secure.⁴

Appendix A

Words Corresponding to Each of Five NUD*IST Search Categories

Individualist: Refers to individuals as the unit of citizenship (i.e., personal, individual, individuals, individually, individualistic, private, liberalism, voluntary, privileges, competition).

Collectivist: Refers to the considerations of larger groups to which individuals may belong, ranging from community to society, as well as other groups within civil society (i.e., common good, group, cooperate, cooperates, cooperated, cooperating, cooperation, cooperative, society, social, community, republicanism, voluntarism, civic virtue, commitment, collection, collaborate, collaborates, collaborated, collaborating, collaboration, public good).

Rights: Mentions freedoms and rights borne by citizens. May be freedom from governmental intervention or rights assured by government. Includes specific mentions of rights that may be exercised, such as "freedom of speech" (i.e., right, rights, liberty, liberties, free, freedom, freedoms).

Obligations: Mentions obligations and duties owed by citizens. This covers mentions of specific obligations such as "duty to vote" as well as general normative imperatives, such as "a good citizen looks after the neighborhood"

(i.e., duty, duties, responsible, responsibility, responsibilities, obligation, obligations).

Participatory: Mentions citizen participation in a number of domains, from neighborhoods to community to state to the national level (i.e., participate, participates, participation, take part, takes part, taking part, join, joins, joined, joining, act, acts, acted, acting, engage, engages, engaged, engaging, involve, involves, involved, partake, partakes, play, plays, played, playing, contribute, contributes, contributed, contributing, influence, influences, influenced, influencing, hand, hands, perform, performs, performed, performing, vote, votes, voting, voted).

Note: Each of the five codes above represents an independent code, standing alone or in combination with others. Text units were coded if they addressed citizenship, but not abstract references to "rights of man" [sic] or "the common good" or references to institutions and documents.

Notes

¹ There remains fierce controversy across the political spectrum about the development of the standards documents: Who should have been involved in developing standards? Whose views should have been represented? How should the standards be used? Do national standards supplant local control of curriculum? Critics' concern has increased as states have begun using assessments to measure whether students are "meeting the standards." Indeed, one anonymous reviewer of this article suggested that the debate *per se* may have a more lasting impact on educational practice than will the standards documents themselves. For a concise and insightful critique of the standards movement, see Gratz (2000).

² Levels of agreement for each content category were high. Rates of intercoder agreement were: individualist, 88.1%; collectivist, 84.6%; rights, 94.2%; and obligations, 88.7%. An alternative assessment of intercoder agreement is provided by the Kappa correlation coefficient, which takes into account chance agreement of nominally coded data (Pett, 1997): individualist, .73; collectivist, .68; rights, .88; and obligations, .55. All coefficients are statistically significant at $p < .001$.

³ Of course, we acknowledge that there are a number of structural impediments to the active participation of minorities in U.S. public life (e.g., poverty, violence, marginalization, discrimination). Nonetheless, we believe schools could play an important role in encouraging more active political participation among minority groups.

⁴ A collectivistic orientation may be particularly important in an increasingly global society. Parker, Ninomiya and Cogan (1999) argue that citizens of the 21st century need the ability to think about the common good from a global perspective if they are to address issues that cross traditional national boundaries.

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(En)gendering Multicultural Identities And Representations In Education¹

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Abstract

This article examines the place of women of the world in the implicit and explicit social studies curriculum of the schools. The authors establish a postcolonial feminist framework for dealing with this topic and draw on evidence from personal testimonies of immigrant and native women, the treatment of women of the “third world” by mainstream media, social studies curriculum standards, and one classroom teacher’s story. Central to the article is an examination of the tension teachers face in dealing with issues of gender cross-culturally as they navigate between ethnocentrism and cultural relativism towards what is called “the middle ground.” The authors offer suggestions at the end of the article for incorporating material about women of the world into the social studies curriculum from a postcolonial feminist perspective.

We write this article as two academic women with a variety of experiences, shared and separate, that have shaped a joint set of concerns about the relationships between gender, teacher education, and school curriculum. One of us was born in the United States; the other in India. We met at Teachers College, Columbia University in New York City—one, a professor of social studies education, and the other, a graduate student at that time and now a professor of curriculum and instruction/multicultural education at Louisiana State University. Across the disparate settings of city and suburb, in classrooms, at conferences, and via email and live conversations, we have engaged in discussion concerning the challenges of teaching in the United States about “women of the world” from postcolonial feminist perspectives. Our dialogue has illustrated on numerous occasions the distinctive situatedness that “Western” and “non-Western” women bring to such

encounters. This article will offer critical commentary on the place of "women of the world" in the U.S. academy generally, but more specifically, the place of non-Western women, their lives and stories, in teacher education and school curriculum in the social studies. We use the concept of curriculum broadly to include both the explicit or formal curriculum, such as content about gender found in world history and global studies courses, as well as the hidden curriculum, that is, knowledge about women acquired and transmitted informally by students and teachers within school contexts. The hidden curriculum about women of the world is shaped by a variety of sources: popular culture and the media, students' and teachers' socialization and life experiences, and the presence in American schools of increasingly large numbers of immigrant women from countries with different gender arrangements than those typically found in the United States.

Feminist anthropologists advise that the meanings and effects of women's roles, rights, and opportunities in diverse cultures are not always what they seem to be (Ortner, 1996). Thus, Westerners can be easily misled in making judgments about women's status in societies very different from their own. All teachers, whether they make gender part of the explicit curriculum or not, will notice that some of their female students come to class veiled, talk of arranged marriages, or sit silently through class discussions. As teacher educators, we are concerned that, without adequate preparation, teachers in this country will respond to female students with ethnocentric judgments or unwittingly offer curriculum representations that rest on negative and stereotypical images of non-Western women. Such representations will be offered as curricular "truth" in classrooms where new immigrants (a term used to describe those who have entered the United States since the change of law in 1965 allowed for greater immigration from non-European countries) sit alongside "native" students, all of whom are in need of more sophisticated understandings of a world in which the hegemony of U.S. popular and commercial culture masks deep and persistent differences in cultural values and norms.

Relatively insulated by geography, and culturally, politically, and economically dominant since the end of the Second World War, U.S. society has historically expected that new immigrants will assimilate to its values and leave traditional customs and attitudes behind them. Female immigrant students may find themselves caught in a borderland between the West's emphasis on freedom and individualism and many non-Western cultures' focus on the needs of family or group over those of the individual. This reality, combined with changing gender roles within the United States, may lead them to look to their teachers for guidance in negotiating various cultural conflicts. Both teachers and teacher educators need to develop "cross-cultural competencies" (Pryse, 1998) if they are to help their students, both immi-

grant and “native,” male and female, deal with these issues. This article is an invitation to teachers and teacher educators to begin the process of reflection and conversation that will help them meet these challenges.

At present, the silence of teacher education (Blackwell, 2000) and the curriculum (Sadker & Sadker, 1995) about women’s lives is pervasive, applying to the stories of virtually all women, whatever their country of origin. A good deal of scholarship over the last two decades has documented the problems encountered by young women in our nation’s schools (Gilligan, 1982; Pipher, 1994; Orenstein, 1994; American Association of University Women, 1992). In an enlightening ethnography of recent immigrants’ adjustment to U.S. high school life, Olsen (1997) reports that immigrant girls exhibit lower self-esteem and higher depression rates the longer they are in the United States. Such a provocative finding indicates the critical need to use the space of schools, universities, and curriculum to help immigrant women negotiate their hybrid, sometimes conflicted identities.

In order to develop a multicultural feminist analysis, which engages the situatedness of women students and teachers, particularly those “of color,” we utilize a methodology that combines a range of qualitative approaches. We draw on our own life experiences, interviews with non-Western women, participant observation in teacher education institutions, and secondary literature to offer this critical commentary about how the lives of women of the world are represented in American educational settings. Our feminist perspective emanates as much from lived experience as from published work. A postcolonial frame allows us to engage specific realities (especially history, geography, immigration, race, culture) as we articulate a vision for more responsive educational practices in a global context. After explicating this framework, we relate the stories of a small sample of women from other cultures now working in United States’ educational contexts as a means of bringing first-person perspectives into the foreground of this discussion. Moving to several illustrative examples of the representation of immigrant women in the media and social studies journals, we show how the problem of cultural relativism [that is, the view that all cultures must be evaluated on their own terms] vs. ethnocentrism [that is, the view that one’s own culture is superior and indeed, the “natural” way of doing things] shapes the hidden curriculum concerning women of the world. We then consider New York State as a case study for assessing what attention, if any, national and state social studies curriculum standards pay to gender. Finally, we present one example of a social studies teacher’s struggles over cultural relativism vs. ethnocentrism as enacted in a northeastern secondary classroom. We end the article by offering suggestions for in-

corporating material about women of the world into the social studies curriculum from a postcolonial feminist perspective.

Our theoretical framework will inform consideration of the following questions: Will curricular representations respect their subjects as equal partners in the process of interpretation of cultural meaning about their lives? Will such curriculum be successful in “embracing the middle ground” (Storrs & Mihelich, 1998) between a cultural relativism that offers no critique of practices such as genital mutilation, veiling, and arranged marriages, and an ethnocentric approach that insists upon the Western female experience as the ideal? [How] Will women’s realities as more than half the world’s population be reflected in today’s standards-driven curriculum? Finally, how will teachers and teacher educators portray the experiences of women of the world in a manner that reflects the fact that all cultures shape but do not determine identity, so as to avoid the problems of overgeneralization, stereotyping, and essentialism?

A Postcolonial Feminist Framework

In 1984, bell hooks noted: “Much feminist theory emerges from privileged women who live at the center, whose perspectives on reality rarely include knowledge and awareness of the lives of women and men who live on the margin” (preface). A decade later, the Beijing Conference on Women’s Rights in 1995 made clear that many non-Western women believe Western feminists are trapped within their own cultural paradigms and reflect the very forms of cultural imperialism and ethnocentric preconceptions for which the West is notorious. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Mohanty (1997) remind us of the need to attend to “localized questions of experience, identity, culture and history” (p. xvi) so that we are able to understand specific microprocesses related to the circulation of power. Only through such reflections will we be able to engage in the “transformative practices...needed in order to develop nonhegemonic selves” (Alexander & Mohanty, 1997, p. xviii). These concerns, voiced by women who have experienced their absence in feminist scholarship, make us conscious of the need to engage with the specific cultural, geographic, and historical positionalities of the different women of the world, as well as the dynamic intersections of national, racial, and ethnic boundaries which are part of their lived experiences. Thus, postcolonial feminist approaches reflect the multiple, divergent, and dynamic realities of women’s lives. Rather than adhering to static notions of “third world women,” such nonhegemonic, feminist representations serve to deconstruct Western ethnocentrism as they cross national and cultural boundaries, evolving as new identifications emerge.

We note the following challenges in applying a postcolonial feminist framework to education: 1) the tendency to essentialize (that is, to reduce to inherently female status) certain aspects of women's identities; and related to it, 2) the failure to recognize the important intersections of race, class, sexual orientation, geography, colonial tradition, and culture in defining gender roles worldwide; as well as 3) the resultant, uncritical belief that all individuals share the same needs and desires as those of Western women and men, especially regarding the relationships between women and men, the individual and the community; and finally, 4) the assumption that a discourse on human rights can be applied uncritically by Western women to non-Western women without interrogating the Western values that lie at the base of this system.

Acknowledgment of the plurality of women's experiences worldwide has emerged slowly in the scholarly literature. Developing their perspectives from somewhat distinct starting points, a number of widely-cited academics (for instance, Gloria Anzaldúa, Diana Fuss, bell hooks, Audre Lorde, Chandra Mohanty, Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, Trinh Minh-ha, and Cornel West, among others) have critiqued the tendency of the literature on representation to reduce and appropriate the identities of those living "on the margins." Although these discourses emerge from separate disciplinary perspectives, they inform each other and as a body raise critical questions regarding the intersecting and often conflictual histories of race, colonialism, class, gender, sexual orientation, and culture.

Within education such topics are discussed, to the degree that they are treated at all, chiefly within the context of work in critical pedagogy, anthropology, or cultural studies. Overall, the connection between women's studies scholarship and education has been underdeveloped, although some important examples of such work have emerged over the last ten years (see, for example, Biklen & Pollard, 1993; Lather, 1991; Luke, 1996; Maher, 1999; Stone, 1994; Weiler & Middleton, 1999). Still, consideration of gender from a cross-cultural perspective has made only minor inroads into educational literature.

Multicultural education in the United States has typically engaged race and ethnicity more energetically and indeed, one might say, more sympathetically than gender, culture, or class (Fine, 1994; Hoffman, 1996; Luke, A., 1995; McCarthy & Crichlow, 1993; Rezai-Rashti, 1995). Indeed, one anthropologist, in summarizing a variety of critiques of multicultural education, describes this movement as "culturally embedded and often parochial" (Hoffman, 1996, p. 546). She offers as an example one multicultural textbook's approach to the concept of family:

Family and friends are presented here as cultural universals that, in their generality, have a certain comfortable (even vaguely therapeutic) appeal. The problem is that these supposed universals are grounded in a very culture-specific understanding of how the world works. The emphasis on people and families being unique, for example, has rather clear roots in an American world-view where the individual and his or her uniqueness are both highly valued and unquestioned. (Hoffman, 1996, p. 553)

Given these considerations, we believe it important to attend to the narratives of women of color and non-Western women in order to make them integral to educational practice. We stress that history, geography, language, class, and culture are dynamic markers of identity that operate in somewhat different ways depending on the contexts and reciprocal forces these attributes set in motion. The lived experiences of immigrant women offer an opportunity for teacher educators and teachers to “make textbooks of students’ lives” (Style, 1996) as a means of addressing the silence of curriculum about women of the world and problematizing the representations found in publications.

Both school textbooks and scholarly writings about “third world women” typically reflect an unexamined Eurocentric perspective that views non-Western societies as static, backward, and necessarily oppressive to women, who are often portrayed in an exoticized fashion (Teng, 1996; Majid, 1998). Scholars:

locate “third world women” in terms of underdevelopment, oppressive traditions, high illiteracy, rural and urban poverty, religious fanaticism, and “overpopulation” ... Besides being normed on a White, Western (read progressive/modern)/non-Western (read backward/traditional) hierarchy, these analyses freeze “third world women” in time, space and history. (Mohanty, 1991, pp. 5-6)

Such essentialist discourses reify non-Western women and women of color as the “Other”—silent, passive, subjugated, and ultimately excluded (see, for example, Trinh, 1989). Even while providing space for representation, such treatment co-opts the story being told:

No need to hear your voice when I can talk about you better than you can speak about yourself. No need to hear your voice. Only tell me about your pain. I want to know

your story. And then I will tell it back to you in a new way. Tell it back to you in such a way that it has become mine, my own. Re-writing you, I write myself anew. I am still author, authority. (hooks, 1990, pp.151-52)

Thus, teaching and teacher education must address the concerns of all students who struggle with conflicting traditional inheritances and new cultural experiences. In the case of immigrant students, schools are key sites where new layers of identity conflict are blended into the familiar landscape of adolescent identity formation. As immigrant women “try to understand their gendered options for balancing the costs and rewards of movement along any of the Americanization continuums” (Olsen, 1997, p. 123), both students and teachers of all backgrounds undoubtedly extract their own lessons about women of the world from witnessing the repercussions of such identity conflicts as manifest in the public space of schools. Teachers and teacher educators will need to recognize the plurality of perspectives and experiences of their immigrant students, providing curriculum space for women students to present their stories, on their own terms, and through their own eyes.

Lived Experiences of Re-Presentation in the Academy

This section offers direct testimony by women of color in the academy who are either foreign-born or second-generation U.S. residents about their efforts to shape and resist curricular re-presentations of their lives and identities as they study, teach, work, and live their lives. The analysis serves a two-fold purpose: first, it illuminates the struggles experienced by women of color, of various ages, and more recent immigration into the United States, as they negotiate—collectively and individually—representations and identities in terms of race, class, gender, and self within a Western, multicultural society. Secondly, it serves to shed light on the hidden/implicit curriculum of educational programs and the implications for the preparation of future teachers and teacher educators, including those “of color.” Collectively, these experiences illustrate how misperceptions can serve as barriers to communication, participation, and self-representation for non-Western women in particular educational contexts. Furthermore, these incidences of marginalization/othering lead the subjects towards efforts to negotiate self-representations through debates and dialogues, information sharing and mutual support, introspection, and negotiation inside and outside the classroom.

The original example emerged as a self-reflexive critique on Asher’s part when she wrote a paper on “representation as curriculum” for a presentation at the Annual Meeting of the American Edu-

cational Research Association (Asher, 1998). This included discussion, in the form of three vignettes, of her teaching experiences in the academy as an international graduate student of color. In this article, we have synthesized data from across these vignettes in an effort to illuminate the emergent themes found there. We then related Asher's personal experiences to those of three other Asian and Asian American women, a sample of convenience, if you will, developing our analysis of lived experiences of (self-) representation in the U.S. academy. Our informants, situated in different geographic regions, were either doctoral students or had recently moved on to faculty positions; they had lived in the United States for varying lengths of time prior to commencing doctoral studies. Each participant was given an overview of the questions this article considers along with the authors' approach to addressing them. Each was then invited to respond, either orally, or in writing, in terms of her own particular experiences and concerns.

The following issues related to negotiating (self-)representations in the academic context emerged, therefore, as common themes drawn from these four testimonies: contestations within the educational context in terms of the intersection of gender, race, ethnicity, and identity; others' (mis)perceptions of self; and continuing, often embattled efforts to re-present oneself. These issues are interrelated and influence each other—for instance, efforts to represent oneself often developed as a result of conflicts and/or misperceptions. The relative salience of gender, race/ethnicity, and identity differed among participants, given each one's particular situatedness and history in the United States. In the following discussion, the analysis of Asher's experiences is presented in the first person and those of the other participants via pseudonyms in the third person.

Contestations within the educational context over self, identity, and representation were manifest over long and short terms, with peers and faculty, in ways subtle and obvious, direct and indirect. For instance, Debbie, who identifies herself as a "1.5 generation" Asian American woman, recalled how a White, male faculty member at a large mid-Western school of education expressed "disappointment" to another student that an in-class group discussion was not progressing well. He blamed the group's inadequate performance (as he saw it) on its "four foreigners." Debbie was struck by his assumption that the four people of color (she was one of them) were "foreigners," when indeed she knew them all to be U.S. citizens (see Takaki, 1993). Further, she experienced such comments as "hurtful to Asian Americans." Debbie feels it is her "responsibility to challenge such statements," and, acting to re-present herself, she took the matter up with the faculty member who initially reacted defensively and later apologized. Through this process, Debbie concluded that "it is very difficult dealing with White liberals." She also turned to a minority student group

on campus where her concerns would be understood by peers who, she imagined, had also experienced “othering” in the academic context. Ironically, male faculty members have also told Debbie that she is too “aggressive” and needs to “tone down a bit.” Conscious as she is of her particular situatedness at the intersection of race and gender, Debbie wondered if a non-Asian woman and/or male student would receive the same advice for “resisting traditional academic modes” of deference and demeanor and being as vocal and assertive as she is. As she encounters such situations, Debbie self-reflexively negotiates who she is “professionally/personally/politically” in each educational context.

Similarly, I wrote (Asher, 1998) about the contestations I encountered in teaching graduate level courses, first as a teaching assistant in a curriculum design course and then as an instructor helping a faculty member with a pair of multicultural education offerings. The latter two courses were offered as a paired unit—one for about 100 master’s degree students that was designed to fulfill the New York State multicultural education requirement; and the other for six doctoral students that served as fieldwork related to the multicultural education course. In both instances, I was challenged by students, first a male and then a female. Both students were White, although there were students of color in each class. In the curriculum design course, a White male student erupted angrily when I was leading a discussion group, forcefully expressing frustration with the process. I was thrown by this extraordinary outburst. In the paired unit, an intern who claimed that I had no teaching experience and had nothing to contribute in the role of instructor questioned my validity. In this instance, the student was a female, White peer (another doctoral student) who continued to challenge my authority on an ongoing basis. My commitment to educational equity and articulation of critical perspectives on the issues we debated as a teaching-learning community seemed to count for nothing with her. Again, I was initially nonplused by this frontal assault on my legitimacy.

Upon reflection, like Debbie, I found myself wondering what role race/gender/culture might have played in giving rise to each of these instances. For instance, as the teaching assistant leading the discussion in the curriculum design course, I was female, a person of color, Asian Indian; the student who erupted angrily was male, White, American. Would this situation have unfolded differently if the discussion leader were not female and/or a person of color? Added to this was the cultural component of respecting teachers and peers which was part of my socialization in India. Within the framework of my own upbringing and schooling, such interactions had had no place in academic settings.

Furthermore, I wondered if perhaps these two students thought (or simply assumed) themselves able to dismiss my authority as a teaching assistant because, after all, I was, like them, a student. However, at the same time, I was compelled to consider the extent to which they might have taken racial privilege—and/or gender privilege in the first episode—for granted, possibly without even being aware of it. Again, like Debbie, I found myself engaging in self-reflection as I sought modes of self-representation.

I experienced a split in terms of how I saw myself engaged with the process of teaching and the new ways I might need to learn. Here I was, simultaneously, at the margins (as a woman of color) and the center (in the role of teacher) in the U.S. academy. I asked myself what kinds of “cross-cultural competencies” (Pryse, 1998) I would need to acquire in order to negotiate similar issues related to representation, culture, and curriculum when they arose in the future. The shock of these contestations led me to struggle with self-representation as I became sharply aware of the need to learn new ways of responding to behaviors in diverse pedagogical contexts. And yet, even as I learn new ways of self-representation and articulate my critique as an academic of color, I attempt to affirm and maintain my attitude of respect toward those who have taught me as well as towards my peers. That is, I find myself developing a “mestiza consciousness” (Anzaldúa, 1987) that allows me to acquire new ways of situating myself as I live at the intersections of culture and gender in the context of the U.S. academy and, at the same time, retain those aspects of my Indian/Asian culture that I value deeply.

The second issue that emerged from the interviews was that participants encountered (mis)perceptions of self from faculty members as well as students. That is, they felt that others in their educational contexts did not always understand their issues, realities, and concerns, despite their efforts to express the same. Broadly, these problems include but are not limited to: assumptions about and lack of knowledge regarding non-Western women, and a bypassing (intentional or otherwise) of the voices and concerns of non-Western women. A common thread running through these stories is the marginalization and/or othering of the participants’ lived experiences in relation to Western representations.

For instance, Keum Jee, who referred to herself as a “foreign student,” recalls being the only one who had a “language problem” when she was enrolled in an educational psychology department in a graduate institution in a large northeastern city. When she asked for extra time to complete an in-class exam, the professor, a White woman, did not understand the issue of her “struggle to express herself [in English],” and instead assured her that “Americans too do not write correct grammar.” While the intent of the professor may have been to be

helpful, Keum Jee felt that her own concerns did not really register. In another example, Shanti came to the United States from India to earn a master's degree at a university in the South. Later, as a doctoral student at another institution in the South participating in a discussion of gender and environmental issues, Shanti encountered "several puzzled students [who] asked . . . how a 'third world woman' could feel 'empowered.' They also seemed puzzled at the idea that being a 'third world woman' could involve having a positive identity and feeling more than a victim." More recently, as an assistant professor at a northeastern liberal arts college, she found most of her "young students could not imagine 'third world women' as being anything other than subordinated, oppressed victims within a patriarchal, backward, male dominated society. Nor could they imagine that these women could reflect critically on and address their conditions without the help of enlightened, emancipated, Western women." Furthermore, Shanti also noted that her students reacted with disbelief when they encountered "data that indicated that child mortality rates in U.S. states such as Alabama and Mississippi are similar to child mortality rates in Latin American nations such as Bolivia."

Again, in terms of my (Asher's) own experiences, one memorable example of such ethnocentric encounters occurred when Crocco asked me to serve as a guest lecturer who would critique/respond to a course text by Elizabeth Bumiller (1990) called *May You Be The Mother Of A Hundred Sons: A Journey Among The Women of India*. Although I was glad to accept this invitation, I thought it only fair to share with Crocco that, when I had read the book at an earlier time, I had had a rather negative reaction to the author's simplistic depiction (in my opinion) of the lives of Indian women. Crocco welcomed the dialogue that my differing perspective would (and did) generate. Initially, I struggled with my emotional reaction to this book, concerned that it would interfere with my presentation, until a mentor simplified matters by advising me to acknowledge my reaction at the outset. I did so—making my discomfort part of the curriculum.

Thus, the invitation to critique this book opened up a curricular space that allowed the class to risk dialoguing across differences and interpreting re-presentation of self and other. This exchange created the opportunity for the class collectively to interpret "membership as well as ethnicity" (Greene, 1993), within the present-day context of U.S. school and society. However, not all students understood that one of the issues central to my critique was the question of "who has the power to define whom and when and how" (McCarthy & Crichlow, 1993, p. xvi). Rather, as the class proceeded, many of the students interpreted my reading of Bumiller's book as overly "sensitive," questioning my critical re-presentation of the lives of Indian women. Once again we see the intersection of contestations, efforts at re-presenta-

tion, and resistance at both the level of explicit and implicit curriculum within the educational context.

By documenting these lived experiences we attempt to highlight the forces of the "hidden/implicit curriculum" which operate to marginalize "third world women" at all levels within the academy. Although these personal narratives cannot be generalized, they resonate with the issues set out by hooks, Alexander and Mohanty, and other postcolonial feminist writers. This personal testimony points to the vast educational terrain where work needs to be done if we are to (en)gender truly multicultural curriculum representations. We use these reflections drawn from personal experience to shed light on the complex problems of identity and representation in cross-cultural educational contexts, particularly regarding women's lives and stories from around the world.

Media Representations as Shaping the Hidden Curriculum

Since the Beijing Conference, national media have frequently reported the prevalence of human rights violations against women in developing countries. In this section, we briefly discuss a set of issues related to the cross-cultural realities and representations of non-Western women that serve as examples of areas for teacher education, social studies, and multicultural education to address. These selections are only a small sample of the forms of treatment accorded this subject by contemporary news outlets. We believe that the recent emphasis on issues such as genital mutilation, selective abortion, and female infanticide shape a climate of mis-representation about the lives of non-Western women that is skewed due to its partiality of focus. Furthermore, this emphasis serves to deflect attention from similar problems such as domestic violence and date/acquaintance rape faced by U.S. women.

The veiling of Muslim women, their treatment in fundamentalist Islamic cultures, and lack of civil and political rights have become major national news for the *New York Times* (Crossette, 7/16/98). The United Nations and various human rights' groups have taken up such causes, now reported with regularity in many U.S. newspapers. While drawing attention to women's stories, this coverage often reduces complex realities into stereotypical, biased, and decontextualized representations. For instances, such practices as arranged marriage, veiling, and clitoridectomy have become tropes for all that the West finds objectionable in other cultures' approaches to women's lives and definitive proof of their oppression.

During the spring of 1998, a national newsmagazine reported on the dilemma faced by a hospital in Denver when recently immigrated women from sub-Saharan Africa approached medical doctors

asking them to perform clitoridectomies on their prepubescent daughters. This prompted an intensive discussion by hospital personnel about the practice, its cultural roots, and its psychological and physical risks. The hospital staff recognized that an official refusal would mean the mothers or a native practitioner would likely carry out the procedure on their daughters without benefit of either sterilization or anesthesia, as is standard in those parts of Africa where this custom exists. That recognition sparked a lively debate about what the "humane" response should be, given this repugnant set of options. In the end, all save one of the doctors and nurses refused to consider doing the procedure. The hospital adopted the policy that it would not perform genital mutilation and planned a program of outreach education to inform parents of the long-term physical and emotional dangers of this practice.

In a similar vein, the *New York Times* ran an article on March 23, 1998 entitled "Mutilation Seen as Risk for the Girls of Immigrants." The author describes the efforts by Congresswoman Louise M. Slaughter from Rochester, NY to prosecute those who violate a 1997 federal law forbidding the practice. Slaughter issued a report estimating that more than 100,000 girls and women in some immigrant communities in the United States have been victims or are at risk of genital mutilation. The number of victims runs to 100 million women worldwide. A women's human rights organization in New York, Equality Now, has received numerous letters from African women asking for help in fighting this practice in the United States. The organization's director stipulates that any effort here, as in Africa, must be led by African activists "in order to avoid culture clash" (Crossette, 3/23/98, A3).

Two points must be made in relation to this discussion. First, we are not advocating acceptance of practices like genital mutilation under the principle of cultural relativism. As assaults on young women's physical and mental well-being, we reject such practices. Second, we are not arguing that patriarchy or sexism are found in the United States only because they have been "imported" along with the new immigration. On the contrary, patriarchy and sexism are well-established features of the United States social, political, economic, and religious landscape (see, for example, Gordon, 1992; Perlstein, 1998; Sanday, 1996). Representation of women's lives within social studies curriculum will need to come to terms with U.S. realities as well.

A final example of the challenges of cross-cultural encounters, real and figurative, comes from a recent social studies journal. The author (Scott, 1998) describes the experiences of Thai exchange students living in the United States and how frequently they encountered Americans with no knowledge at all about their home country, its history, or cultural mores. Despite general ignorance about Thailand's culture and even its geographic location, Americans fre-

quently relayed their impression to the exchange students that all Thai women were prostitutes. Undoubtedly, this view was based on widely circulated reports in the media over the last few years of sex tours in Southeast Asia.

Such stereotypes are interpreted in this article as a manifestation of the general problems with media representation of women's lives around the world. It is beyond the scope of this article to deal more fully with this subject; however, these brief illustrations of a more pervasive set of issues related to the hidden curriculum point to the prior "knowledge" about women of the world students bring to social studies classrooms. As cross-cultural encounters become a more common part of the everyday life of schools, teachers must actively employ the concepts of culture, ethnocentrism, and cultural relativism as introductory strategies for framing the consideration of women's lives worldwide. Teachers will need to unpack both their own and students' preconceptions about these realities if they are to introduce gender in ways that find a middle ground between ethnocentrism and cultural relativism.

Social Studies Curriculum Standards and Women Of The World

In this section we consider social studies curriculum as prescribed in New York State and New York City. We consider this case for two reasons: 1) this context is one that finds many immigrant women part of the school population, especially in New York City and other large cities throughout the state; and 2) the state's use of high-stakes outcomes testing, called Regents exams, have been coupled with curricular standards upon which graduation from secondary school is contingent, thus influencing in crucial ways what does or does not get taught.

In New York City, three groups have been influential in shaping curriculum: the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), New York State, and the City itself, which promulgates its own social studies framework. Furthermore, professional disciplinary organizations such as history, geography, and economics have also created curriculum guidelines and course outlines. In this article, we will consider NCSS, NY State, and NY City curriculum standards. Overall, we find that there is little consideration of women's lives in or outside the United States.

In 1994, NCSS promulgated a set of rather generalized curriculum standards that since then have shaped state curriculum frameworks and social studies textbooks. Apple and Christian-Smith (1991) argue that such a process in effect creates a national curriculum because of the small number of textbooks published today. Also in the early nineties, educational policymakers in New York and California

fought highly divisive battles over social studies curricula (Cornbleth & Waugh, 1995). New York State circulated a draft version of its new social studies framework in 1996; by 1998, schools began to put a somewhat modified version into practice. New York City implemented its own new social studies framework in 1995. Contestation over racial and ethnic treatment within these frameworks may account for the meager attention given to gender.

These three frameworks all reflect responses to the standards movement that opt for fairly loosely articulated sets of curricular goals. NCSS, for example, articulates ten broad "strands" of a conceptual nature, such as "culture," "time, continuity, and change," and "individuals, groups, and institutions." These are then translated into content knowledge and performance indicators, or criteria, differentiated according to three levels: early grades, middle grades, and high school. NCSS also provides examples of lessons utilizing specific sets of content and performance indicators. For example, strand IX, "Global Connections," proposes that: "Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of global connections and interdependence." This strand includes seven performance outcomes for students such as the ability to: "demonstrate understanding of concerns, standards, issues, and conflicts related to universal human rights." In New York State, teachers lobbied for a more finely articulated set of course outlines to flesh out the broadly stated curriculum guidelines. With new Regents exams that will raise the bar in terms of student performance, many teachers felt more explicit statements were needed about what the two years of world history, one year of American history, and semester each of economics and political science ought to contain.

All three curriculum frameworks pay scant attention to gender. The NCSS standards mention several women deemed notable in U.S. history and demand that students show how gender contributes to the "development of a sense of self" (1994, p.37). Otherwise, little in the way of women's history or the consideration of gender as an important feature shaping social experience is evident.

One might argue that the loose structure of the NCSS standards, in particular, does allow teachers to infuse content about women into their curriculum. However, the sad truth is that very few teachers seem to have sufficient background in women's history, especially of the global sort, to do this effectively. Our experience as teacher educators indicates that even students enrolled in a master's program in social studies education, who were undergraduate history majors, possess very little knowledge about women's history, especially outside the United States. Research also indicates that "education schools do not provide future educators with either the training or the experience they need to create a gender-fair, multicultural education system"

(Scott & McCollum, 1993, p. 186; see also Blackwell, 2000). Unfortunately, the standards shaping social studies curriculum in New York do not provide much incentive for teachers to learn more about women's lives. Furthermore, the contemporary climate of high-stakes outcomes testing linked to these standards may contribute greatly to maintaining women's invisibility in the social studies curriculum.

Lessons From One Classroom Teacher's Experience

Rethinking curriculum and teaching practice so that the voices of women from around the world are made audible is central to the process of multicultural curricular transformation, one reinvigorated by a critical, cross-cultural consciousness. Stan Karp's (1996/97) article in *Rethinking Schools*, "Arranged marriages, rearranged ideas," offers an excellent example of such self-reflective multicultural pedagogy, one in which Karp makes clear the manner in which he arrived at a middle ground between cultural relativism and ethnocentrism. Karp tells the story of his Bangladeshi female student, Jihana, who wants to attend college but encounters familial pressure for an arranged marriage, a traditional Bengali custom. Thoughtfully debating the tension "of figuring out the dividing line with 'other people's children,'" Karp recalls his own "culturally insensitive" reaction to a similar situation faced by another Bengali student of his, Rafia, over 10 years earlier. He describes his reaction at the time in this manner:

I was horrified at the idea, and said so. In fact, as I recall, my main reaction consisted in expressing my outrage that women were oppressed in this way in her culture. I told her I didn't think anyone had the right to tell her who to marry, and that it was much more important for her future to go to college than to please her parents...I somewhat flippantly told her she could stay at my house for a while if she decided to run away.

When Jihana's story jogged my memory, it was with more than a little embarrassment that I recalled that my reaction to Rafia had been foolish and not a little arrogant. At that time, I had acted as if the most important response to Rafia's dilemma was to show her that not everyone was so "backward" as her parents, and that there were swell, "enlightened" folks like myself who believed in her right to shape her own future and education. In effect, I was showing off the "superior" values and "advanced" thinking of "progressive Western culture," especially of radicals like myself, and contrasting it to the "underdevel-

oped practices" of her own community which I encouraged her to reject. (1996/1997, p. 6)

Karp devises a creative pedagogical response—an example of the kind of self-reflexive educational practice advocated by Hoffman (1996)—to Jihana's situation that he presents as an effort to reconcile his own strong values with respect for the traditional values and realities his student brings to the situation. Drawing on the transformative power of writing, Karp invites Jihana to write a story about arranged marriages for the student magazine. He emphasizes that this will be a service for the growing Bengali student population and others as well because the article will draw attention to concerns often marginalized within the broader school community. Jihana agrees; student and teacher negotiate issues such as earning academic credit for the writing, maintaining the anonymity of the author, and preserving the option not to publish:

As we talked, several things started to become clear. By locating the issues of arranged marriages inside the broader issue of women's rights, which cuts across all cultures and countries, it became easier for Jihana to address the topic without "stigmatizing" her own community. If Bengali women had to wrestle with arranged marriages and male dominance, the supposedly more "liberated" sexual culture of the United States presented women with its own set of problems: higher levels of sexual assault, single teenage parenthood, divorce, and domestic violence. (Karp, 1996/1997, p.7)

Eventually, Jihana publishes her article, "Muslim Women: Where Do We Belong?," in the school's magazine, identifying herself as the author. She becomes something of a spokesperson for "Bengali issues," including the manner in which South Asians are represented in the curriculum. Karp concludes by reflecting on his "need to deal with issues of cultural difference with more humility and care" (1996/1997, p.7).

Karp's increased cross-cultural competence (Pryse, 1998) allowed him to recognize his student as a subject with her own reflexive orientation to the encounter. Critiquing hegemonic views of society, this teacher practices what many feminist educators advocate by providing students with "opportunities to counter dominant understandings through an analysis of their personal experiences" (Storrs & Mihelich, 1998, p. 102). Capitalizing on this insight, Karp encourages Jihana to represent herself and situate her narrative within the framework of both Western and non-Western feminist cultural issues. It

should be noted that Karp does not abandon his own values or abdicate what he sees as his responsibility to his student by adopting a posture of cultural relativism.

One of the toughest struggles for educators confronting similar situations in the classroom is reconciling their own ethnocentrism (if it is acknowledged at all) and commitment to human rights with the mandate to respect other cultures. The inner dialogue may go something like this: "Those of us who seek to honor all views are caught in a paradox when dealing with those views that directly contradict our own: 'If I allow you to continue to practice your values, I may violate other values including my own.' How I deal sensitively with these value conflicts is a critical factor for both multicultural and global education" (Stanley Foundation, 1988, p.10).

Conclusion

Given our postcolonial feminist framework, the testimony offered by lived experience, the influence of the media, the imposition of social studies standards, and one teacher's compelling story, we propose the following set of recommendations in response to the four questions posed at the outset.

Our first question asked how the fact that women make up more than half the world's population will be reflected in curriculum. As we have seen, few incentives for incorporation of women's lives and stories can be found in social studies curriculum standards, at least in New York. Nevertheless, we believe that committed teachers, as "curricular instructional gatekeepers" (Thornton, 1991), can find space for teaching and learning about women should they choose to gain the requisite background. If teacher education programs devote more critical attention to the intersecting issues of gender, race, class, culture, and diversity, this may help. Popular textbooks in the field of multicultural teacher education such as those by James Banks, Christine Sleeter, and Carl Grant point the way in this regard, though the experience of many teacher educators reflects "a persistent perception" that multiculturalism tends "to mute gender analysis" (Marymount Institute on Gender Equity and the Education of Preservice Teachers, 1999).

In incorporating women's stories into the curriculum, teachers and teacher educators need to keep in mind that throughout the world, women's status reflects the impact of cultural and religious traditions restricting women's participation in public, political, and economic life. Anthropologist Sherry Ortner (1996) considers male domination a nearly universal cultural phenomenon. Historian Gerda Lerner (1986) has argued that patriarchy, or the domination of women by men, has existed in Western societies for thousands of years. Many U.S. citizens

believe the status of women in this country to be vastly superior to that of non-Western women, due to this culture's emphasis on individualism and the protection this affords women's rights within legal and constitutional frameworks. They are surprised to discover that many non-Western women place far less emphasis on rights and the Western feminist ideal of individualism.

Our second question asked whether women will be equal partners in the process of interpreting their lives' cultural meaning. This will demand that teachers and teacher educators listen to their stories. Drawing upon a postcolonial feminist framework, educators must self-consciously situate such narratives and representations of others as well as themselves in terms of the complexities, reciprocities, and fluidities of history, culture, race, ethnicity, nationality, class, gender, and sexual identity. Advocating storytelling and autobiography as discourses of oppositional consciousness, Mohanty (1991) argues that "the existence of 'third world women's' narratives in itself is not evidence of decentering hegemonic histories and subjectivities. It is the way in which they are read, understood and located institutionally which is of paramount importance" (p. 34).

Finding those who will speak with native authority about women's experiences in other cultures may be difficult. Not all classrooms provide safe space for the articulation of women's issues, given such factors as student resistance, classroom dynamics, and unsympathetic teachers. Likewise, not all individuals will wish to be presented as "representative" of women in their culture. In settings not yet characterized by demographic diversity, literature and film may be used to introduce these stories. Balancing stories of women's victimhood with those showing women's efforts at self-determination, avoiding essentialism, simplistic understandings, and overgeneralization are all important. Taking inventory of how students perceive distant cultures through semantic mapping and other constructivist approaches will reveal and perhaps dislodge negative stereotypes emanating from the hidden curriculum. By taking this first step, students may then move on to more sophisticated understandings of women of the world and cultural complexity in general.

How do we as teachers and teacher educators negotiate the conundrum of cultural relativism vs. ethnocentrism in order to reach "the middle ground"? Storrs and Mihelich (1998) describe their approach: "As instructors, we challenge proponents of each of these poles of a very complex issue to embrace the possibilities in an effort to work towards a middle ground. Our intent is not to dictate students' values. We intend to broaden their understanding of how gender constructions work and how 'unnatural' essentialisms can be" (p. 112). It should be noted that the "middle ground" between ethnocentrism and cultural relativism will undoubtedly be inflected by values just as are

the poles along this continuum. In their discussion of this teaching dilemma, Storrs and Mihelich (1998) stress the following points: first, teachers should name and problematize both the ethnocentric belief that the American way is, ipso facto, the best way, as well as the view of cultural relativism that all ways are equally good; second, teachers should educate students to an understanding that culture informs the American gender system just as it does those of other societies; and third, that all cultures shape but do not determine human identity. In the end, however, teachers and teacher educators will map the terrain of the middle ground according to their own values and professional judgments.

Undoubtedly, teachers will be challenged by what they see as tangible forms of subservience in their classrooms, such as the chador or purdah. If subjects like polygamy, suttee/sati, arranged marriages, brideprice, and female infanticide or selective abortion become part of the explicit social studies curriculum, they are likely to be discussed within a curricular context informed by a commitment to individualism and human rights, driven by demands for coverage, and presented in a manner that often conflates capitalism with democracy. On the level of classroom practice, the tendency to essentialize women's identities will remain strong without greater teacher knowledge of women's history and a more sophisticated conceptualization of groups and their relation to individuals within the social studies curriculum. In sum, it will be important that American educators deepen their own understanding of diverse cultural groups, reflect critically on their own predispositions about these subjects, recognize the complex and paradoxical way in which women's roles function worldwide, and resist facile judgments concerning the differences among women. This, in turn, will enable them to work effectively to develop similar knowledge and dispositions in their students—a crucial goal for the multicultural/global social studies classroom.

The final question asked how teachers and teacher educators portray the experiences of women of the world in a manner that reflects the fact that all cultures shape but do not determine identity. Teachers can help students think about this topic and many of the issues found in the social studies curriculum in terms of three critical concepts: generalization, stereotyping, and essentialism. Social science is built on generalizations about aggregate data that have a certain truth value but do not necessarily predict the particular case from the general principle. Stereotyping is a form of overgeneralization such that each particular case is apprehended only as an example of a narrow range of stock descriptors, allowing little room for individual variation from the narrow and biased set of characteristics attributed to the group. Essentialism is the most virulent form of failing to see the individual case, insisting most negatively that all members of a

group not only fit the stereotype but that the negative characteristics are “essentially” and immutably related to group membership. Stereotyping and essentialism reduce individuals to exemplars of certain types, reflect forms of determinism that may be either cultural or biological in origin, and obstruct rather than enhance knowledge. Helping students grasp such pivotal concepts related to interpretation of the lives of women of the world will pay extra dividends in social studies courses that also tackle issues such as racism and other forms of prejudice.

In sum, seeking the “middle ground” between cultural relativism and ethnocentrism in dialogue about women and men, human rights, family, society, and nation will be a challenging endeavor for most social studies classrooms, yet one fully consonant with a 21st century mandate for citizenship education. Teachers and teacher educators who create curricular space for the voices and diverse realities of all students, female and male, new and old, will provide a fully participatory lived experience of civic culture within the multicultural/global classroom, now recast to embrace the women of the world.

Note

¹ We wish to note that no significance should be attached to the order of authors' names; both contributed equally to the preparation of this article. We would also like to thank those who reviewed earlier drafts of this article: Carol Kessler, Pennsylvania State University, Delaware County; Stephen J. Thornton, Teachers College, Columbia University; Keith C. Barton, University of Cincinnati; Petra Munro, Becky Ropers-Huilman, and Laura Hensley of Louisiana State University; and the anonymous reviewers for *Theory and Research in Social Education*.

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Promises Made, Promises Broken: Teaching and Testing in the 20th Century*

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Lenin is reported to have replied when told about the successes of the Czarist educational system, "one good chemist is worth a thousand poets." I get the distinct feeling that Leninisms are alive and well in plans for improving schools in the 21st century United States. Lenin, it seems, believed that the demands of the 20th century would be material and pragmatic, but not visionary or utopian—scientific, not poetic. New schools would be needed to prepare new Soviet citizens for jobs that would pull their economy out of its eighteenth century structures and push it into the industrial mainstream of the West. Educational standards were set accordingly, curricula were written, and Pavlov's dog salivated. We're told that many more chemists were produced than poets and that progress was made, ideologically speaking. Many of the educational changes took place in the name of patriotism, particularly in the name of the poor peasants who were expected one day to wither away the state through collective action. Promises were made to build a new modern society and provide personal freedom from want through responsibility.

We hear similar rhetoric in efforts to reform schools in the United States at this time, although Lenin is seldom cited as its architect. We're told that the demands of the world economy are such that America needs chemists and other technically skilled workers to bulk up industry in order that we might throw our weight around the globe economically. It seems that the meek shall not inherit the earth, and that the meekest among us are the poor, particularly racial and linguistic minorities, women and children, all of whom are at risk of living poetic lives. That is, they are likely to be deemed useless unless they are taught the skills the economy demands.

This is a change from the original rhetoric for public schooling in America. Thomas Jefferson sought public schools to develop an informed electorate. His notion of democracy, admittedly impoverished by his inability to see non Europeans and women as complete citi-

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zens, was directly connected to schooling. In the latest government rhetoric about schooling, however, there is more talk about the economy and civility than about personal control over one's political life. The freedom expressed in the new rhetoric about schooling and literacy is about choices for consumption. Equality is what individuals can do for themselves. Those who do poorly in school or those schools that do poorly are chided for being unproductive, rather than being undemocratic.

To reform schools, many Americans have developed standards, written curricula, and neutered Vygotsky until his work reads like Pavlov's. American schools are making progress, ideologically speaking. State mandates and standardization have enabled one educational official after another to proclaim the miracle of rising test scores. These reformed schools promise society a skilled workforce enabling transcendence in the global economy and promise individuals a productive, if not meaningful, life. The consequences of these reforms, however, may be that we have very few schools educating poets, and that along the way, we are losing alternative visions of America in the 21st century, utopian hope, and collective action. In a hopeful attempt to slow down this reformation, I use poetry to drive my argument concerning likely consequences of these new forms of Leninism across the United States

First Poem—Bertolt Brecht's Praise of Learning

Learn the elementary things
For those whose time has come.
It's never too late!
Learn the ABC. It won't be enough, but learn it.
Don't be dismayed by it!
Begin! You must take over everything.
You must take over the leadership.

Learn, man in the asylum!
Learn man in the prison!
Learn women in the kitchen!
Learn sixty year olds!
You must take over the leadership.

Seek out the schools, you who are homeless.
Acquire knowledge, you who shiver.
You who are hungry, reach for a book: It's a weapon.
You must take over the leadership.

Don't be frightened to ask, friend.
Don't be talked into anything.
Check it for yourself.
What you don't know yourself,

You don't know.
Scrutinize the bill.
It is you who must pay it.
Put your finger on each item, ask:
How did this get here?
You must take over the leadership.

In Indianapolis, Linda K. Williams ticks off her expenses for the small neatly furnished apartment that she shares with her teen-aged son: electricity, phone, groceries, medicine, life insurance, clothes, health insurance, lunch money for her son, and bus fare for both. The expenses total nearly \$19,000 per year, yet her take home income from her job as a secretary is \$15,700. A high school graduate, divorced, and 43, Ms. Williams relies on her sisters and a boyfriend to make ends nearly meet. "I visit the food bank once a month, and James is eligible for reduced lunch prices at school," she reports. "If I lose my job, my sisters will take me in. I know they will."

Up the road from where I work in Pennsylvania, Katherine Ostrosky lives with her mother and four children in a trailer park. She works two part time jobs for minimum wages and no benefits. If she works 72 hours a week (that's maximum time allowed at both jobs) for 52 weeks a year, then she makes a little over \$19,000. If she slips to sixty hours a week, however, she then falls \$2000 below the poverty line. That's seven eight- and-one-half hour work days for a high school graduate, who manages to read about a book a week. "Mostly trashy novels," she smiles. At 39, her husband in prison for armed robbery, her mother watches her children day and night, the federal government provides reduced lunch for her two children in school, and the state offers health insurance for her children (but not her) at what they call "a modest fee" (\$10 per child annually and a \$5 copayment for each visit). "If I lose one of my jobs, I'll find another. My mother owns the trailer, and our car is mostly paid for."

Roberto Ruiz, a maintenance supervisor at the Denver Convention Center, makes a little over \$17,000 a year to support a family of four. After medical insurance and taxes, he says that there isn't enough to pay his mortgage. An increase in any fixed budget item (e.g., utility rates, school taxes, etc.) or an unexpected expense (school trip, illness, transportation problems) and his family eats less. "It's the only flexible part of our budget." A 37 year old veteran with a high school diploma, Mr. Ruiz must forego occasional overtime in order to accommodate his wife's job and the lack of affordable child care. Many months there is not enough money. "You rob Peter to pay Paul. You juggle back and forth. We're always behind."

None of these families are classified as poor in America. Each lives the life afforded them after the breaking of the New Deal covenant in order to "end welfare as we know it." All enjoy the prosper-

ity of the hundreds of thousands of new jobs created during the longest sustained economic boom in American history. The previous record from the 1960s was broken in January 2000—over nine years without a declared recession. However, for each of the new high skill/high wage jobs created during the 1990s (that's those jobs which pay over the median income for a family of four or about \$40,000), nine jobs with pay below \$10 an hour have been created. The children in these three families are not listed among the 23 percent of children recognized as being poor in the United States. In fact, these families are better off than the 14 percent of families who currently live on incomes below the poverty line. That absolute line was set in 1963 according to the cost of the minimum daily caloric intake needed to keep a person alive. Since Americans in 1963 spent a third of their income on food, the government set the poverty line by multiplying that cost by 3 and then multiplying that product by 365. The only changes in the poverty line since 1963 have been to adjust the basic cost according to inflation. The multipliers have remained the same.

We learn in these narratives about the lives submerged beneath the headlines of the stock markets rising and corporate mergers. The narratives animate the official stories that capitalism is the only viable alternative left for the unemployed and employed poor, and therefore, they had better prepare themselves accordingly. These stories also undermine the statistics designed to make us feel comfortable that we live in neat quintiles—poor, working class, middle class, upper middle, and rich—in which the rich receive incomes only ten times that of the poor and less than three times the middle. Seldom do we get a glimpse of the statistics that show that ten percent of the American population control over two-thirds of the country's wealth, while the other ninety percent of us enjoy the remaining third.

Let me expand this notion of inequality a little more. According to the U. N. Development Report of 1996, over the last thirty years, the richest fifth of the world's population increased its share of the wealth from 70 % to 85%. The poorest fifth's share declined from 2.3% to 1.4% of the total. The income of the richest 358 people in the world is equal to that of the poorest 45%. That's income, not wealth. Closer to home: In 1995, Bill Gates' net worth was greater than the combined wealth of the poorest 40% of Americans. That's 106 million people. Despite the grumbling about social security in the United States Congress the stock market is not the solution. Federal Reserve statistics show that 60% of Americans own no stock at all—not even in their pension funds. The wealthiest 1 percent of Americans own nearly 50 % of all stock and the bottom 80% own only 3 percent. It's not hard to see who has benefited from the booming stock market. In the *Communist Manifesto*, Karl Marx exclaimed "you are horrified at our intending to do away with private property, but in your existing society,

private property is already done away with for 9/10s of the population.” That statistic still seems accurate.

Second Poem (actually a lyric) The Dead Kennedy’s “Kill the Poor”

Efficiency and progress is ours once more
Now that we have the neutron bomb.
It’s nice and quick and clean and gets things done.
Away with excess enemy.
With no less value to property.

No sense in war, but perfect sense at home.
The sun beams down on a brand new day
Unsightly slummers gone up in a flashing light
Jobless millions whisked away.
At last we have more room to play.
All systems go to kill the poor tonight
Gonna kill, kill, kill
Kill the poor tonight

Cornell West suggests that “to be part of the democratic tradition is to be a prisoner of hope.” Many Americans hope to end poverty by meeting citizens’ and society’s critical needs through schooling. That hope begins with definitions of poverty and its causes and with theories about the relationships between individuals and society. Often this hope is presented to us through stories that promise to end poverty and to strengthen America simultaneously. Politicians, pundits and educators have several options from which to choose, each following a different ideological position within the American democratic tradition. The poor are prisoners of those choices—those stories—those promises.

Conservatives, such as Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray in *The Bell Curve*, understand the critical needs of those who are poor to be the acceptance of the facts of our stratified society, which they suggest, are based primarily on genetic endowment. The poor are poor because they are less intelligent, they say. Since for them, intelligence is substantially immutable, Americans should stop proposing policies which force the unprepared in to jobs and positions for which they are intellectually unequipped. This, they argue, is bad for society and also bad for the individual. Rather, conservatives say the critical needs of the poor are met by letting the economy do its work and teaching the poor that the best things in life are free—friends, family, and community. For conservatives, welfare breeds dependency, affirmative action pushes minorities and women beyond their levels of competence, and compensatory schooling retards the intelligent and frustrates the unintelligent. Herrnstein and Murray conclude, “For

many people, there is nothing they can learn that will repay the cost of the teaching.”

Conservatives are straight-forward in their suggestions for school reform. They value reductions of state involvement through privatization and local control, but they seek testing to rank order students to determine what schooling will best prepare each for his or her station in life.

Neoconservatives promote moral literacy as the cure for poverty. They argue that the poor are poor because they lack the moral values that enable one to prosper. This same lack of morals allows the poor to justify a life of crime within a democracy. In the *Book of Virtues*, former Secretary of Education, William Bennett defines the values as: self-discipline, compassion, responsibility, friendship, work, courage, perseverance, honesty, loyalty, and faith. Mark Gerson argues that the poor lack these morals because they come from a culture of poverty which does not offer them sufficient numbers of moral models to instantiate these values within community members. Bennett suggests, moral education traditionally has been the work of home and church and was extended to the school during this century. However, since World War II, he suggests that the “infusion of diversity in schools and a surfeit of confusion, bureaucratic thinking and community apathy” has led to a moral decline in poor Americans. In a later book, *The Death of Outrage*, Bennett describes the general decline of moral literacy among all Americans based on the popular acceptance of the Clinton/Lewinsky affair. Now everyone needs moral literacy, and Bennett is prepared to sell the moral curriculum to meet this critical individual and societal need.

Neoconservatives favor school reform that will instill the moral code of Western civilization in every American. According to Bennett’s latest book, *The Educated Child*, this reform requires memorization of standardized facts akin to E. D. Hirsch’s core curriculum with a moral literacy overlay.

President Clinton’s neoliberal views on poverty suggest that we should take the deal of global capitalism. We have no choice because there are no viable alternatives. The poor should prepare themselves to compete better in the marketplace during their entire lives. Since the educational policy of America 2000 (which Clinton helped write for the Bush Administration), the federal government has called for world class schools based on the demands of capital because the information economy will make us all rich. All of us, that is, who develop our human capital, continuously upgrading our work skills. National standards, national examinations, the America Reads Initiative, networked schools, job training, etc. have been directed at individuals to help each to prepare for the prosperity which awaits.

School reform for neoliberals means that capitalism has its way with schools. Because capitalism must reformulate itself to accommodate a global scale, the institutions that support business must be reformulated also. At the same time we see huge profits for the wealthy, we see towns and cities crumbling when companies move factories and headquarters to increase profits, families dissolve because economic pressures, and local and state governments bid to lure corporate interest to their locations. Schooling, as we know it, is beginning to change in order to develop entrepreneurs instead of factory workers. All that is solid melts into air without regard for the people or social structures, save one. The rich get richer. It's nothing personal; it's just business say neoliberals.

But as former Secretary of Labor, Robert Reich recanted in *Locked in the Cabinet*, "I came to Washington thinking the answer was simply to provide people in the bottom half with access to the education and skills they need to qualify for better jobs. But it's more than that. Without power, they can't get the resources for good schools and affordable higher education or training. Powerless, they can't even guarantee safe workplaces, maintain a livable minimum wage, or prevent sweatshops from reemerging. Without power, they can't force highly profitable companies to share the profits with them. Powerless, they're as expendable as old pieces of machinery."

Liberals argue that the poor are poor because they are denied equal opportunities in life, and therefore they need governmental assistance to gain access to the best opportunities available. Programs that advocates of the other political groups assail are the bread and butter of liberal solutions to poverty: Affirmative action, Medicare, social security, Title IX in sports, etc. Each program is directed to open opportunities to those who have been denied access to jobs, education, healthcare, and independence in the past. To stop the regeneration of poverty among the young, liberals seek to identify the best practices of education among the well-to-do and make them equally available to the poor. As Iris Rotberg and James Harvey told Congress in 1993 "low income and minority students have less contact with the best qualified and more experienced teachers, the teachers most often likely to master the kinds of instruction strategies considered effective for all students". Most educational research is in this liberal tradition of helping the poor. Title 1, standardized testing, and teacher/school effectiveness are all liberal attempts to discover, and then, improve the best methods, making sure that the poor have access to them.

Perhaps you are aware that we have liberals to thank for the prominent position of testing in schooling. Bobby Kennedy tacked an assessment rider on the initial Title 1 Bill to ensure that racist school personnel would spend the new federal money on the education of poor kids. The test scores, he thought, would inform parents whether

or not schools were being effective in providing equal opportunity. Today liberals find themselves quoting Kennedy on this matter often without really knowing it. Standards and tests are in the poor's best interest say liberals. But as Mainer Brenda Power explained in *Education Week* last winter, test scores show that kids in Maine read better than most other Americans, however, that skill still doesn't lead to employment when there are not many good jobs available.

Each of these positions places the onus of beating poverty upon the poor. Advocates pretend that all of the conditions are in place to end poverty except the solution they champion. Each has its own version of the schooling success equation—reformed schooling promises academic success for all, which in turn will translate into high skills, bringing high wages or happiness to all Americans. Conservatives say extend tracking through high stakes testing. Neoconservatives hope to insert moral literacy. Neoliberals will raise the academic standards in order to create lifelong learners. Liberals will end the barriers to the best instructional practices for all. Employ their solution, and in a short time, there will be no poverty in America because the economy will find lucrative places for all (or at least, we will learn to be happy with the places it does find for us). Tell that to the Linda Williams, the Katherine Ostroskys or the Roberto Ruiz of this country. Try to sell it to their children.

In their own ways, each of these four positions attempts to employ the Dead Kennedy's solution to drop a neutron bomb on the poor in order to end poverty without disrupting property values or the basic relative economic relationships among the classes in our classless society. All rely on the absolute, and not relative, notions of poverty. All that need be accomplished is to push the poor over the dollar amount to keep them alive. In this way, advocates of each position see Linda, Katherine and Roberto as American school success stories. Each is a high school graduate with additional job training. Advocates of the alternatives claim that the promises of schooling have been kept to these individuals and their families. We just need to find two minimum wage jobs for the other 14 percent who languish below that line, then we would be well on our way to meeting the social promise of schooling as well.

Poetry Anyone?

But can we continue to call America a democracy with a gap in income and power in which ten percent of the population controls two-thirds of the wealth and even more of the power? Can we call America a democracy when five corporations control three quarters of the media and access to information? Can we call America a democracy when so few Americans understand the connection between

power and literacy portrayed in Bertolt Brecht's poem or Robert Reich's point about power for what he calls "the bottom of society"?

Brecht tells us to learn to read because it is a weapon in the class war that has marked Western history for several centuries. As Robert Bellah writes in *The Good Citizen*, "There is a class war today, but it is neither being waged by people like me nor by the people suffering most in today's world. Class war today is being waged ruthlessly, largely effectively, and with little resistance, by the rich on the poor both nationally and globally." Reich wants us to recognize that we share more in common with Linda Williams, Katherine Ostrosky and Roberto Ruiz than we do with Charles Murray, William Bennett, or Bill Clinton. Brecht hopes our literacy will be an inquiring one—one that helps us to ask, "how did things get this way", "why do they stay this way", "who is and who is not involved in making these decisions?" And at least Brecht thinks schools could help. Imagine that! Schools designed to help the 90 percent of Americans defend themselves against the rich.

Radical Democrats take up the issues which Brecht and Reich articulate. They acknowledge the failures of twentieth century attempts at democracy and the possibilities of new literacies to explore and act on both freedom and equality. They argue that the past failures were predictable based upon the inabilities of conservatives, liberals, even collectivists, to address these issues imaginatively. Although conservatives, neoconservatives, neoliberals, liberals, and collectivists claim their positions to be founded on principles of both freedom and equality, their respective visions of what's good for Americans and America force them to demand consensus for action based on their terms alone. To the contrary, radical democrats suggest that democracy *requires* adversarial relations among social actors as they advocate their interpretations and their preferred social identities. As Claudia Mouffee explains:

It is the tension between consensus—on the values of freedom and equality—and dissensus—on interpretation—that makes possible the agonistic dynamics of pluralist democracy. This is why democracy's survival depends on the possibility of forming collective political identities around clearly differentiated positions and choices among real alternatives."

Many members of the poor and the ninety percent with little power reject the identities that traditional political ideologies afford them. Conservatives and neoconservatives offer us rather fixed identities with few chances to articulate what possible life choices might be brought into existence and to choose among those alternatives.

These limits deter our interests in participating in civic life, whether local or at a distance, because either consciously or unconsciously we understand the limits of our freedom and the absence of equality within these ideological conditions. Of course our alienation leaves traditional hierarchies and power relations unchanged or little challenged which is part of the conservative agenda, I think. Liberals (old and neo) encourage our freedom only if it acts like a neutron bomb and does not disrupt the social, economic, and political structures and order. Despite the outward appearances of difference, the consequences of liberalism are much like that of conservatism with more cultural freedom allowed. Perhaps this explains why some critics find so little difference between US political parties and choices. Liberal tolerance of cultural freedom is not necessarily helpful to the poor and powerless as Nancy Fraser explains.

The liberal version of multiculturalism is premised on a one-sidedly positive understanding of difference. It celebrates difference uncritically while failing to interrogate its relation to inequality. Like American pluralism, the tradition from which it descends, it proceeds—contrary to fact—as if United States society contained no class divisions or other deep seated structural injustices, as if its political economy were basically just, as if its various constituent groups were socially equal. Thus, it treats difference as pertaining exclusively to culture. The result is to divorce questions of difference from material inequality, power differentials among groups, and systematic relations of dominance and subordination.

For democracy to work, radical democrats argue that individuals must recognize that their identities are multiple and fluid—not only fixed by class, race or gender. We are all members of many social groups that influence our thoughts, actions, and values in substantial ways, and we vary our hierarchical arrangements of those memberships according to circumstance and intentions. Beyond that recognition, however, citizens must learn to use the power of their memberships to force clear articulations of positions by forming large coalitions to enact their shared concerns. Perhaps the best recent example of this is the demonstrations which sent the World Trade Organization packing from Seattle. There were groups from many nations, many races, many classes who were willing to look beyond their differences to seek common ground and some power. Perhaps the worst example of this is the inability of coalitions to form in order to force presidential and other candidates for government office to articulate anything remotely resembling a clear position. Nor have we been successful in

forcing media—even ones that use public funds—to allow candidates with clear alternatives to receive an airing.

Democracy, then, hinges on the development of individuals' identities that are committed to the values of freedom and equality (blended with the values of their other group memberships) and to active participation in civic life. Although that identity cannot be fully specified, it requires at least three elements: reflexive agency, the will to act, and the ability to make room for adversaries.

Reflexive agency invites citizens to evaluate the world in terms of their intentions and values and, at the same time, to evaluate those intentions and to reflect upon those values. In this way, citizens take inventory of their identities, their values, their motives, and their actions, investigate the sources of those parts of themselves, and make choices about which ones they hope to enhance and which they hope to diminish.

The will to act, which for many has been diverted from public to private matters, must be redirected through individuals' sociological imaginations—the recognition that their apparently private problems are really connected to public issues because that problem is shared by many. Linda Williams is African American. Katherine Ostrowsky is Polish American. And Roberto Ruiz is Mexican American. They enjoy many different group memberships in religious, recreational, and informal groups. Each thinks of her or his situation as unique and private—they have internalized conservative rhetoric of personal responsibility for their economic situations. Yet they share the common problem that public life affords them little economic opportunity and those that are available will not keep them well or serve their children. As individuals become aware of the political possibilities of their multiple and fluid identities, they begin to see real opportunities to form larger, more effective coalitions for accomplishing goals shared across social groups. Reflexive agency ensures that coalitions will not become fixed power blocks as basic and secondary assumptions for action are consistently scrutinized.

Because those identities are not fixed and future intersections of values cannot be predetermined, citizens begin to recognize the need to *respect the positions of their adversaries*—not to the point of agreement, certainly, but enough to recognize commitment to the shared principles of freedom and equality. This is one lesson learned from the split between the new and old left in the 1960s, which created room for neo-conservatism to evolve. The limits on this respect are set by individuals' and groups' commitments to those principles. Anyone rejecting freedom and/or equality outright stands outside the democratic process, and therefore, becomes the legitimate object of democratic scorn.

Radical Democrats seek to identify and establish the social conditions that produce democratic citizenship. Schooling figures prominently within radical democratic explorations. They offer a critique of current ideological positions, for example: Joe Kincheloe's critique of the Bell Curve logic, Colin Greer and Herb Kohl's reconsideration of William Bennett's virtues, James Gee, Glynda Hull, and Colin Lankshear's critique of neo-liberal schooling, and Stanley Aronowitz's objection to liberal's science as the dominant form of human knowledge. Some radical democratic educators move beyond critique to hope as in Donaldo Macedo's challenge to what every American should know. Sy Knolauch and Lil Brannon's demonstration of whose mind is closed, Gerald Coles' exploration of the science behind recent governmental policy on schooling, Arlette Willis and Violet Harris' insistence that race be considered in educational research, Curt Dudley Marling and Sharon Murphy's challenges to Reading Recovery, Carole Edelsky's repositioning of whole language, Lisa Delpit's blasting of progressive education, and Denny Taylor's ideas about toxic literacies. Each of these educators attempts to address the question—how do we create schools which promise to provide the poor with the weapon and tool of literacy so that they can engage in public life with the increased possibility of disrupting the relations of wealth and power in this country?

In a sense these educators are offering suggestions for how schools might develop more poets in America—makers, inventors, visionaries, utopians—who can think and act outside our current understandings of freedom and equality. None rejects chemists or their science, but each recognizes the need for more poets to help us rethink our lives and the structures we have and will create for them. I think these educators believe that there is poetry in each of us—that we can be called poets, offering alternative arrangements of space and social processes in order to that we might increase our conditions of freedom while ensuring more equal distribution of recognition, wealth and power. Radical democratic educators make these promises to individuals and society. Perhaps through our actions, we can bring new meaning to the term poetic justice. I close with three personal projects of radical democratic schooling.

Schooling for Poets

The first project invited first and second graders and their families to learn about farming in Pennsylvania and its importance to the state's history, its economics, and its health. We have engaged in a year long study of farming and farm life. Our work began in August, learning the lyrics for the song "The Farmer is the One Who Feeds Us All." That song touches on the social struggles of high interest rates,

rising costs, and low prices which drive farmers deeper into debt while they grow the food that feeds us all. We used the internet to test the lyrics against the realities of farmers across America. Relying on relatives and acquaintances as experts, we began to discuss and write about issues of fairness and markets for farmers in our community. Young as they are, they were able to form judgments on rights and responsibilities. Our efforts in the Fall connected us with a migrant education project in Southern Valley. We spent three days in a collaborative educational project in which the children of migrant workers and the our students discussed issue of farming, popular culture, and families. Two newspapers were produced during the three days and a children's campaign was initiated for better funding for migrant education materials. We wrote letters to State government and local corporations, which yielded both photo opportunities for politicians and businessmen and commitments to provide more funds for migrant education.

I offer the Towns/Farms Together Project as a reasonable example of radical democratic schooling. Reflexive agency enabled us to open families', teachers' and children's intentions and values for personal and social inspection. Our efforts to read and write about what we understood about farming and fairness changed our lives and brought us in contact with people different than ourselves. The will to act arose from those contacts as our differing amounts of cultural capital enabled us to see common goals. Our efforts to help brought us in contact with adversaries of family farming—the state and agribusiness. Although reluctant to trust these groups, the children decided by consensus to join them in lobbying for more migrant education funds.

The second project took place at an alternative secondary school. No bells, little control of bodies outside of class time, cross age, interdisciplinary work. The school is small, and I worked with 8 students in an historical documentaries course which combined historiography with film production, including analog and digital editing. Watching documentaries while reading about the social construction of history prepared these ninth through twelfth graders for their productions. Six projects were completed: a documentary about a struggle over the inclusion of sexual orientation in the public school district's harassment policy, an oral history of the WPA projects in the area, a document history of the largest black agricultural community above the Mason-Dixon line, a film about the KKK recruitment in area high schools, a aerial photographic investigation of the loss of green space during the last 20 years, and a film about the struggle over the water supply for a local village. We understand these documentaries to be open inquires into personal and social values, actions to inform our community, and a way to look at many sides of an issue in order to see who might be involved in productive ways.

These two examples of “schooling for poets” took place alternative schools. The first is a private elementary school, and the second is the equivalent of a charter school. The third project is small but ongoing attempt to move such pedagogy into mainstream schooling. The project is a decade old and has involved hundreds of teachers in different parts of North America. We work from Roger Simon’s notion of projects of possibility—the idea that the contradictions between social forms and human freedom are opportunities for civic action. We read articles on theory, research, and pedagogy—many from the educators employing radical democratic ideas—and then, plan and launch projects to extend both social forms and freedoms toward what may be possible, but as yet are unknown. Current projects include: an exploration of tensions between undergraduate students and international students’ teaching assistants, an attempt to blend English, History and technology within local high school students’ investigations of their identities, an effort to write an accompanying pamphlet for girls who are asked to read the *Book of Virtues*, a search for postcolonial children’s literature to become part of the required reading list in Puerto Rican schools, a brochure for working parents on negotiating homework with children and schools, postings about the official and unofficial structures among Phish Phans, and a project to identify, list, and distribute website addresses by and for progressive educators.

Each of these projects, whether directed by young children, adolescents, or adults, attempts to develop reflexive agency, the will to act, and respect for adversaries in attempts to grow powerful literacies among the poor and powerless. In the millennium issue of the *Reading Research Quarterly*, Kathy Au and Taffy Raphael conclude—“The 20th century has been characterized as an era of broken promises in schooling. We hold out hope that the 21st century will be characterized as an era of promises kept.” The Brecht poem reminds us how the promises might be kept in the future, not by simply learning the ABCs but by using our literacies to act. In the Coda of the book, *Poetry for the People*, June Jordan makes this point as well.

I ain’t goin’ nowhere unless you come with me
I say, I ain’t goin’ nowhere less’n you come with me
I ain’t about to be some leaf that lose its tree
So take my hand, see how I’m reachin’ out for you
Hey, here’s my hand, see how I’m reachin out for you
We got a whole lot more than only one of us can do

La Guerra: Struggles in Living and Teaching Critical Pedagogy

Pruyn, Marc. (1999). *Discourse Wars in Gotham West. A Latino Immigrant Urban Tale of Resistance and Agency*. Boulder: Westview. 214 pp. Hardcover, \$65.00. ISBN 0-8133-9067-2.

Review by COLIN GREEN, Department of Teacher Preparation and Special Education, The George Washington University, Washington, DC, 20052.

Marc: How do adults best learn to read and write?

Gloria: The Sir puts words on the board, explains how to read them, and reviews them.

Marc: What is the role of the teacher, and of the student, in this process?

Juan: The teacher has to say what is right and what is wrong. The student has to pay attention.
(Pruyn, 1999, p. 103-104)

As my eyes scan across this short interchange between students in an adult literacy class, and a participant-researcher, my mind immediately begins to make all-too-familiar connections. The views articulated by Latina/o working class immigrant adult students in Central Los Angeles bear striking resemblance to the words of parents in a working-class inner-city neighborhood half-way across the world in Belfast, Northern Ireland. For many of these Northern Irish working-class parents, keen for their children to succeed in standardized schooling practices, my role as an elementary school teacher closely resembled Juan's articulation of how a teacher should instruct. In my case, young children were the students, but the act was still one of passively drinking from the reservoir of academic and moral knowledge that I encapsulated in my role as teacher. That's simply the way school operated! Geography, culture and language, may define and discriminate these two unique settings, yet both the undergirding and explicit messages are remarkably trans-national—'learning' and 'schooling' occupy fixed and uncontested positions.

These positions are clear manifestations of a transmission model of schooling, predicated on Fordist/industrialist approaches that have conceived of schools and classrooms as factory assembly lines. My

role as teacher/automaton is to construct my students' minds at various work stations/centers, and fill them with 'sanctioned', 'true' facts/parts that must be unquestioningly received. Quality control management (QCM), in the form of regurgitation of the 'correct' facts through standards control, can then occur at numerous points along the assembly line, so that only the most rigorous students can be shaped into high quality products, whilst all others become labeled as inferior quality or 'damaged goods'. If we so choose, the 'factory assembly line' analogy can be continued to its ultimate destructive end. Alternatively, we can choose to conceive and practice teaching and learning through another, potentially more powerful paradigm. One conceptual and pedagogical attempt to harness the power of this paradigm constitutes the central thread of *Discourse Wars in Gotham West*.

Historical and Philosophical Influences on Discourse Wars

A wide corpus of literature has sought to problematize traditional conceptions of schooling. One of its central themes seeks to make more fluid and ambiguous the roles of students and teachers in the process of schooling, positioning both roles in more critical and questioning stances (McLaren, 1995, 1997; Giroux, 1994, 1997; Darder, 1995; May, 1999; Apple, 1993). The central criticalist orientation of this research, builds on mid-twentieth century neo-marxist writings of Horkheimer (1947), Adorno (1950), and Marcuse (1964) at the Institute of Social Research at the University of Frankfurt, and later, on Paulo Freire's (1970) critical pedagogical work in Brazil.

The late Paulo Freire's well-documented critique of the transmission or 'banking' model of schooling stands as one of the most strident assaults on the fixed and uncontested notions of teaching and learning. In short, Freire notes that students and teachers are often positioned as diametric opposites, with students representing vacuous "containers...receptacles to be filled by the teacher" (p.53). The more competent the teacher is, the better she/he can fill the receptacles. "The more meekly the receptacles permit themselves to be filled, the better students they are" (p.53). Freire exposes the shortcomings and oppressive nature of such teaching and learning, exhorting us, rather, to engage in *liberatory* pedagogies that reject the uncritical transmission or transferal of information, and to encourage both teacher and students' mediation of knowledge through political and cultural lenses.

It is within this liberatory, criticalist tradition, that Pruy'n's work in Gotham-West is conceived and conducted. Pruy'n introduces his work by noting the influence of criticalist research on his own "pedagogy, philosophy and political/cultural groundings" (p. 3). His review of the extant corpus of literature in critical pedagogy spawn the questions and concerns that guide his work with students in an adult

Spanish literacy class in Central Los Angeles, which he poignantly likens to Gotham-West. Pruyun sets out to explore how pedagogy inspired by critical theorists can be successfully implemented in classrooms and other educational settings; whether it truly invites teachers and students to be more self-reflective; and fundamentally, does it encourage students to act in ways that run counter to 'banking' notions of teaching and learning? Hence, at the core of his exploration, lies the question: "what forms of social practice foster, or inhibit, the development of *critical student agency* in the classroom?" (p. 7).

Critical Student Agency

Pruyn defines the concept of *agency* as "[a] purposeful action taken by an individual, or group of individuals, in order to bring about change" (p. 4). *Agency* is explored from three converging yet distinct theoretical perspectives – first, from Gramscian notions of hegemony and counter-hegemony; second, from Foucauldian poststructuralist perspectives on subject positioning; and third, from Freirean critical pedagogical theory. In brief, Pruyun uses these three perspectives in the following ways.

Gramsci's (1971) primary contribution to the notion of *agency* is expressed in his elaboration of 'hegemony' and 'counter-hegemony'. Gramsci sees hegemony as the means by which those with power in society can impose their bourgeois ideologies and values over those in subordinate social classes. Schools, he contends, are one of the many cultural tools of the bourgeoisie, used to reinforce the existing social and economic order by presenting bourgeois norms and cultural practices as 'inviolable' and 'natural'. Other cultural institutions such as the press, political parties, and the church further strengthen and sanction these 'normal' practices. As a consequence, a cultural and ideological domination ensues that appears to operate by 'consent' within the framework of a seeming civil society. When 'consent' is questioned or made problematic, subtle forms of state-sanctioned coercion come into play to reinstate 'appropriate' and 'correct' ways of operating, so that the existing status quo may be perpetuated.

In comprehending how hegemony functions, Gramsci proposes that we endeavor to find oppositional ways of acting so that a counter-hegemony can be established. In those sites where bourgeois cultural norms and values are propagated, Gramsci asserts that a transformation can take place through working class intellectuals and their sympathizers questioning and challenging hegemonic values. An alternative way of viewing society and its cultural and political institutions can be encouraged, which will eventually supplant existing hegemonic practices. Within school sites, radical teachers and students can become the 'organic intellectuals' in Gramsci's process of transformation, acting as the central conduits for the emergence of a counter-

vision of schooling. Pruyun contends that it is in Gramsci's notions of counter-hegemony that *agency* can begin to develop.

The second major strand of Pruyun's notion of *agency* emanates from Foucauldian and poststructuralist theories. Pruyun astutely notes the significant contributions of poststructuralism to our understanding of how *agency* is discursively formed, yet paradoxically, "it [poststructuralist theory] represents a major theoretical challenge to the whole notion of *agency*" (p. 21. italics mine).

Poststructuralist theories highlight the nature of our 'split, multiple selves' that are created and produced as we position ourselves in differing discursive situations. Foucault, who might claim not to be a poststructuralist himself, but whose views resemble positions taken by poststructuralists, asserts that "power is everywhere local" (1977). Thus, in one discursive situation, a social subject may have power to act as an oppressor, whilst in another be powerless and thus oppressed. This ambiguity and fluidity thus make problematic the whole notion of *agency*. Pruyun notes, "when there is not a specifically pinpointable and unified "enemy" to struggle against....how do we resist, or act agentively? And against whom?" (p. 22). Given this dilemma, Foucault would posit that a resistance of oppressive social structures would be futile. Rather, it might be more rewarding to operate outside of existing structures. In essence, social subjects can then refuse to accept how others are positioning them as social subjects.

Pruyun admits to the problematic nature of the poststructuralist view of the diffusion of power and its concomitant forms of oppression and domination. It is particularly challenging when there is a desire and a need for individual and collective social action.

If identity, self, class, gender and race are no longer central issues in a project for social justice, because forms of oppression are hyper-localized, is there any possibility for individual or group agency? (p. 24).

For Pruyun, a "discourse of possibility and hope" (McLaren, 1994) does exist. If poststructuralist theories afford us descriptions of how processes of *domination* occur in discursive situations, Pruyun contends that it is possible to theorize how processes of *liberation* from oppression might also occur through discursive means. If the positioning of self and others in discursive practices is produced to dominate and oppress, how might this positioning help produce social subjects with liberatory perspectives? It is indeed these liberatory outlooks that Pruyun identifies as *agentive* or endowed with *agency*. Although he recognizes the central role of discourse in how individuals understand their lived experiences, Pruyun rejects the poststructuralist deterministic positioning of social subjects through discourse. (The inherent tensions in

Foucauldian post-structuralist notions of power and Pruy'n's notions of agency will be discussed at a later stage).

To counteract this predeterminism, Pruy'n finds conceptual solace in a third theoretical perspective, namely Freirean-inspired critical pedagogy, which he posits as a vehicle for *critical agency* both within and outside of schools. Freire views education as inherently a political project (Giroux, 1988). Its end goal is to permit men and women not only to read and understand their lived experiences, but also to transform those lived experiences and the relationships that are constituted with broader society. Similar to Gramscian notions of "organic intellectuals", Freire (1970) sees teachers as critical practitioners who can facilitate the development of a critical consciousness or "conscientization" in their students. In the development of a critical consciousness in both teachers and students, educational processes can thus begin to take a stand against oppression and hegemonic practices. For Pruy'n, "the development of a critical student identity toward the world could then lead to *critical student agency*" (p. 31, italics mine).

A Slice of Gotham-West in the 1990s: Sociopolitical Context of Discourse Wars

The adult literacy classes that form the setting for this book are an integral component of *Siempre Adelante*, "Always Forward", a community-based organization that serves a predominantly Latina/o political and economic refugee community in Central Los Angeles. The remit of the organization is wide-ranging to include legal advice on immigration, residency and citizenship issues, the collection and distribution of food for poor neighborhood families, and the provision of ESL and Spanish literacy classes to interested adults in the community. Funding for the organization comes from multiple sources that include fund-raising events and foundation grants. The literacy classes supported by *Siempre Adelante* are an economic and social necessity given the pervasive existence of illiteracy in Los Angeles, and in particular, among the Latina/o population. Pruy'n details the "grim state of affairs for the 6.25 million Latina/o children in public schools in the United States, a majority of whom live in California" (p.63). Citing factors such as disproportionately high rates of school dropout, nearly twelve percent of Latinas/os over twenty-five years old never finishing fifth grade, and fewer than ten percent of those over twenty-five receiving a bachelor's degree, the adult literacy classes of the community-based organization become an important lifeline for many of the refugees living in the neighborhood.

The organization's work has assumed heightened significance in Gotham-West, California, given the sociopolitical backdrop during the 1990s of Propositions 187, 209 and 227, all of which have dispro-

portionately effected the Latina/o population in adverse ways. The adult literacy classes have thus become a central arm of how the organization can combine the fostering of literacy skills with the raising of a critical political consciousness among its community, so that a just struggle can ensue against the hegemonic values and practices associated with this triumvirate of oppressive laws. This local and state-wide sociopolitical context provides an influential and unsettling backdrop to Pruy'n's research.

Sharing the Lived Experiences of some of the Inhabitants of Gotham-West

Pruy'n's study focused on the pedagogical and social practices of three teachers, Guillermo Linares, Daisy Contreras and Nadia Monterey, and their one group of consecutively shared students. The ethnographic data at the center of *Discourse Wars* was collected over a thirteen-month period, and included field notes and video-tape evidence of classroom sessions, audio-taped interviews with students, teachers, literacy directors and coordinators, and the examination of archival documents such as project funding proposals, training documents, student workbooks and internal program reviews. Pruy'n believed these multiple data sources would provide windows into the micro-, mid-range and macro-discursive practices of this Freirean-oriented literacy project.

From discourse analysis theory, Pruy'n drew upon an IRE (initiation-response-evaluation) framework to analyze the teacher-student discourse that ensued in the classroom. Under traditional applications of this framework, teacher-student interactions were rigid, with the teacher asking a question, the student responding with a brief right or wrong answer, and the teacher evaluating the accuracy of the student's response. Indeed, the author notes that using traditional IRE patterns in classroom interactions, tend to propagate the very forms of 'banking' teaching and learning against which Freire so adamantly railed. On a broad, generic level of analysis, Pruy'n highlighted that IRE "was a very common and consistent discourse pattern across the practice of all three teachers" (p. 75). However, its usage was sufficiently fluid to produce variable manifestations of teacher and student positionings within the adult literacy class sessions.

The teachers either positioned students as active social subjects (discursively placing students in roles where they could co-construct classroom knowledge with the teacher and their classmates) or attempted to position them as the "objects" of instruction (following a hegemonic/banking/recitation model with students as receivers of knowledge). My set of codes evolved as this former set of teacher

acts was labeled “student subjectification,” and the latter set of teacher acts “student objectification” (p. 77).

These two differing forms of teacher discursive behavior caused the adult students to adopt ‘stances’ that Pruyne characterized as conformist, resistant or agentic. Students who assumed a conformist stance essentially complied with the traditional expectation of students as empty vessels waiting to be filled from the teacher’s fount of knowledge. Some displeasure may have been noted by the students, but there was no observable effort to resist or disrupt this expectation. Those students who followed a more resistant course chose to ignore or disobey teacher mandates and directives, thus “going beyond the potential displeasure demonstrated under conformism” (p. 78). Although such students offered resistance to hegemonic classroom practices, they did not collectively offer any alternative or counter-hegemonic actions to replace traditional classroom discourses. Those who did, Pruyne identified as acting in an agentic manner, able to “elaborate or act out a preferable set of counter-hegemonic practices” (p. 79).

“De Nosotros Sale Nada” (From us comes nothing)... Guillermo’s Classroom

The adult students’ first teacher was Guillermo Linares. A native of El Salvador, he had taught Kindergarten through 8th Grade for over fifteen years in his country before being forced to leave because of his stance on human rights and his leftist political views. Guillermo’s students were primarily with him to learn how to read and write in Spanish, and, subsequently, to progress to English in one of the program’s three ESL classes. Guillermo made sacrifices to be a teacher for the program, working a second job at a local store and sharing his one bedroom apartment with two roommates. Guillermo loved to teach, and he perceived the role of teacher as one of “bringing consciousness to those in our care” (p. 67). In his thoughts and words, he espoused fundamental tenets of Freirean-inspired pedagogical practices. However, data from literacy activities collected in his classroom revealed otherwise.

The discursive interactions between Guillermo and his students conformed to traditional hegemonic classroom practices, and permitted little space for critical student agency. Pruyne noted that the students had been positioned, and positioned themselves to ‘accept the word and the world’ of the teacher. The words and worlds of the students were barely visible, and when they surfaced, they were quickly supplanted by the more ‘authoritative’ discourse emanating from Guillermo. Pruyne cited a number of examples to reveal the hegemonic pedagogical practices of Guillermo’s class, presenting and interpret-

ing this data using discourse analysis. The following discussion on Salvadoran/Central American history exemplified the passive and conformist stances of the students in response to Guillermo's positioning of himself and of his students.

Farabundo: I have a strange question. Who were the enemies who destroyed our country?

Guillermo: From inside and from without. Let's look at the word "communism". It comes from the word "common," to share things in common. In this way, Salvadorans should be united. Maybe some of you suffered during these times, cutting coffee or something. My brother-in-law was a big owner. The workers worked and cut all day, and the bosses rob you.

Students: (Are nodding their heads.) Yes, yes.

Silvia: I remember working in coffee and cotton. The bosses always robbed you.

Guillermo: There are always those who misinterpret about this. The military leaders-I had one in my family, a very high military official-could do whatever they wanted economically. They could buy and sell cars. They didn't pay taxes. And they could cross the borders as they pleased. But it's not that way anymore. The people are aware and struggling. There are still some abuses, but there are less... Teachers we can't lie to our students. We have to tell them the truth. About everything. So the government labels us "guerrillas." We told the truth. And that truth hurt the military, the rich.

Students: (Nod their heads.) Yes, yes.

The students were receiving one interpretation of Salvadoran history. Although they may have been sympathetic to Guillermo's views, there was little space created for students to agree or disagree with their teacher. Pruyin noted that the tightly controlled discourse patterns of Guillermo's teacher-student interchanges served merely to objectify the students, despite Guillermo's avowed belief in Freirean pedagogy. It was his reticence to change such discourse and positioning patterns that eventually led to his frustration when some of the students began to resist his hegemonic classroom practices. It was these very practices

that brought him into strong disagreement with Daisy Contreras, the director of the literacy program, and finally forced him to leave and pursue his teaching practices elsewhere. Upon Guillermo's departure, Daisy assumed the role of teacher.

"De Nosotros, Sí Sale Algo" (From us comes something)...

Daisy's Classroom

The adult students' second teacher was Daisy Contreras, an Argentinean born and educated teacher. She and Guillermo shared a similar teacher training background, but her wider sociopolitical involvement in issues of social justice had led her to rethink and reformulate her classroom pedagogy in ways that contrasted with Guillermo's approaches to teaching and learning. For Daisy, her literacy practices with the students were to provide them with the kind of academic and political tools to help them "transform problematic socioeconomic conditions in their lives" (p. 68). She posited that if classroom activities were centered around the students' economic and social lives in central Los Angeles, then learning would naturally ensue.

Pruyn found that Daisy was viewed as an authority by her students but not as an authoritarian. Pruyin noted that there was a feeling in the classroom that the teacher and the students "are on the same side of the table" (p. 112), and that a 'counter-hegemonic pedagogy' was beginning to take shape as the dominant form of social practice in the classroom. In this form of pedagogy, Pruyin asserted that a critical student agency had begun to form and the students were for the most part re-socialized into more egalitarian forms of classroom discourse. Similar to Guillermo, Daisy was seeking to incorporate issues of Salvadoran history into literacy practices. However, the following exchange highlighted the substantive differences in classroom discourse and practice in Daisy's classroom. The students had constructed a simple sentence detailing why the war in El Salvador had not been good for the country. Daisy sought to allow the students opportunities to elaborate on the sentence. These were the same students who had participated in the discursive exchanges highlighted in Guillermo's class.

Daisy: We could talk for months on this reality.

Students: (Begin to share personal stories about their experiences with the war in El Salvador.)

Gloria: We were out in a car. With my sister, I was eight. The soldiers threw a bomb at the car. All the people died including four children. They took me to the hospital. I

still have this mark here. (She indicates a scar on her head just above the hair line.) I was all bloody on my face. My sister lived. The driver was yelling at the soldiers, 'Don't throw bombs at me, I'm...(xx)....(xx).' But they did it anyway.

Students: (Talk about the death squads, the differences between the FMLN and the Salvadoran government, and the military's practice of 'forced conscription'.)

Gloria: It's getting worse again. Everyone is armed.

Daisy: People have had to re-arm to protect themselves. There are ongoing skirmishes, even though the elections are approaching. There are personal stories, but I think we have to look at the larger processes. Before the semester is over, we're going to get an update from *Siempre* on the Salvadoran situation. Using your ideas, and discussion, we're going to develop this.

Daisy tried to make her curriculum engage with the everyday social, cultural and political experiences of her students. In so doing, she began to develop an academic critical agency in her students. This sense of critical agency found further expression through Daisy and her students' participation in wider social justice issues. With much encouragement, she persuaded Gloria to serve on the *Siempre* student council. Another one of her students, Veronica, accompanied Daisy to a community organized pro-immigrants' rights march.

As with any transformation from passive conformist modes of learning to ones imbued with critical agency, Pruyin noted that some of the students found the process of change more difficult than others. Guillermo's classroom had provided a comfortable framework, where roles had been clearly defined and notions of teaching and learning had been rigidly configured. In interviews with the students, Pruyin candidly highlights the tensions that students feel when hegemonic literacy practices are replaced by more egalitarian practices. Some students believed that the rhythm and pace of learning might have slowed in Daisy's classroom and the students wanted more dictation as a literacy practice. Pruyin leaves the reader to draw her or his own conclusion on the degree to which such tensions are salient in his interview data. His only assertion is that the development of critical student agency in the *Siempre* literacy classes is not a "linear, fully successful, or completed process" (p. 134).

“De Nosotros, Sí Sale Mucho” (From us comes a lot)...

Nadia’s Classroom

With the students in Daisy’s class progressing at various paces, it was decided to split the students into two classes. The majority of the students who had been with Guillermo and Daisy moved into Nadia Monterey’s class. Nadia was born in El Salvador and had been both a teacher and principal. Nadia’s colleagues, including Daisy, thought of her as a traditionalist and Nadia frequently expressed doubts about Freirean pedagogy, expressing her preference for phonics and skill-based instruction. Pruyun found that despite Nadia’s partially hegemonic practices (she dictated the subject of the lessons), the students had become sufficiently agentive in their positions as learners that they were able to co-construct with Nadia counter-hegemonic discursive practices.

Pruyn found that Nadia’s hands-off approach to lesson planning, classroom time and discursive interactions, left substantive gaps or spaces. Students thus assumed agentive stances by filling those gaps and spaces with their own discourse and social practices. Nadia may have selected the topics and activities, but Pruyun noted that it was the students who ran most of the discursive interactions in the classroom. This particular section of Pruyun’s book highlighted multiple examples of students helping each other with the pronunciation and articulation of certain Spanish phrases in passages dealing with basic economic knowledge of how banks operate with customers’ money. There was much student-student collaboration on assigned tasks, much help offered by students if another student was struggling with vocabulary or pronunciation activities, and much encouragement when a student was successful in the struggles of learning.

Pruyn also noted that during Nadia’s class, critical student agency was taken to a wider level with the formation of a *cundina* or cooperative. Nadia’s class had been studying a unit on the theme of community. The students cited cooperatives as excellent examples of effective forms of community. With further discussion and help from personnel who worked in *Siempre*, the students and Nadia formed their own version of a savings and lending cooperative. Each member of the class assumed a rotating responsibility for its management and its funds were used to benefit members of the class.

This group of poor, working class, formerly illiterate, largely undocumented immigrant students, who had months earlier felt as if “from us comes nothing”, now saw themselves as active social subjects...By forming, maintaining, and enlarging the *cundina* over time, these students were taking a concrete action on a problematic socio/ political/ economic situation in their lives (p. 157).

The transformative process that had led to the establishment and development of both academic and wider political student critical agency, manifested in the *cundina*, represented for Pruyn one significant example of the critical agency espoused by Gramsci and Freire.

Strengths of Discourse Wars: Lessons for Social Studies Education

The problematic challenges and gratifying successes of engaging curriculum with the social, cultural and political experiences of teachers and students, find thought-provoking and careful articulation in Pruyn's work. For those of us engaged in teaching and learning in social studies education, this work warrants a detailed reading. Our field of study lends itself naturally to the contextualized pedagogies that Pruyn's work advocates. More importantly, however, *Discourse Wars* provides a framework for the examination of pedagogical ideologies that may foster or inhibit one of the fundamental goals of social studies education, namely, the promotion and strengthening of genuine forms of democracy through collective critical agency.

For social studies educators interested in developing critical student agency in our classrooms, we might wonder at the nature of teacher-student and student-student discourses that would lead us and our students to assume conformist, resistant or agentive stances. In this respect Pruyn's work becomes an invaluable source, a looking glass into which we can peer to explore the complexities of teacher and student positionings, to observe the obstacles to critical and liberatory pedagogies, and to be informed of the potential of socially-just schooling practices. Moreover, Pruyn's presentation of Guillermo's classroom reminds us that employing the language of critical and liberatory pedagogies is insufficient in-and-of-itself to foster critical student agency if teaching practices retain their hegemonic characteristics. His case reminds us that in our social and discursive relationships in the social studies classroom, we must 'walk the walk' if our students are to position themselves as active social subjects who contribute to critical forms of democracy and agency.

Another strength of Pruyn's work of potential interest to social studies educators centers on his ability to address one major criticism of linguistic and discursive analyses of text, namely, that they often do not extend to an explication of how discourses evidenced in local contexts have political and ideological consequences (Gee, 1990). Pruyn's attempt to examine the discourse—the sayings, doings, thinkings and feelings—of his latina/o adult immigrants and their teachers, affords us such an opportunity. We witness the capacity of classroom literacy and social practices to empower learners so that their learning becomes inherently tied to a struggle for equity and social justice in Central Los Angeles. In an era in which social studies education is often seen as politically and ideologically driven by

Fordist/industrialist notions of schooling, it is affirming to see and hear of what might be possible if we choose another paradigm of thought and practice.

Significantly, as a former elementary school teacher and current teacher educator interested in developing critical and liberatory pedagogies in my classroom, Pruy'n's work causes me to shift my thinking regarding my role as teacher in the construction of critical classroom pedagogy. *Discourse Wars* is a testimony to the need for the focus of critical pedagogy to move *away* from the teacher and toward an acknowledgement that students *and* teachers must co-construct critical discursive relationships in the classroom. Without doubt, teachers can set the tone for agentic behaviors in their social studies classrooms, but as in Nadia Monterey's class, it was the co-construction by students of critical agentic stances that caused substantive changes to result in more student-centered pedagogies that connected to the lived experiences of all participants. Nadia and her students' co-construction of classroom social and discursive relationships, and the implications of those relationships for broader issues of agency, may constitute one shift in critical theory and its liberatory pedagogies. My interpretation of the discourses in Nadia's classroom reflects a refocusing of one central facet of critical theory. There appears to be a shift from an allegiance to the legitimacy and primacy of the intellectual (as espoused by Giroux's notion of the 'transformative intellectual') to a more collective understanding of how critical agency expresses itself when it is democratically co-constructed by *all* participants. I leave the reader to make his or her own judgement with regard to this interpretation.

Questions Raised by Discourse Wars: Is Agency Attainable in Schooling Practices?

One of the major vexing questions raised by Pruy'n's work concerns his central notion of critical student agency. The author's use of Gramscian and Freirean notions of individual and collective agency appear to sit very uncomfortably with poststructuralist notions of power. I am not fully persuaded that the acceptance of Foucauldian notions of power do not in some measure negate the possibility of large-scale agency as advocated by Gramsci and Freire. For Foucault power is "everywhere local", and thus resistance rather than large-scale agency becomes the only tangible possibility. Hegemonic practices in school settings are so embedded and enforced by ideological apparatuses that we ultimately discipline ourselves to stay within the apparatus, venturing only small acts of resistance to reflect our sense of individual and collective agency. Pruy'n candidly admits that he has been selective in his use of poststructuralist notions of power as they relate to discursive practices. However, it is this very use of

poststructuralist notions of power that I believe neutralize, if not negate, the sense of critical student agency that Pruyun advocates is possible in classroom practices.

The author reconciles this tension in his own mind by concurring with his second teacher, Daisy Contreras, that large-scale critical agency may not be the singular way to effect change in the social, political and economic lives of students and teachers. Small changes within the classroom context might represent the transformation and revolution advocated in Gramscian and Freirean pedagogies. Reaching this conclusion, Pruyun's work aligns itself with other critical and liberatory pedagogies that note that "solutions to complex problems such as racism, sexism, classism and other forms of prejudice are lived and taught in small daily increments, and not through any one grand event" (Rehak, 1998). This recognition thus becomes the framework inside which an agentive discourse of hope and possibility can be realized in classroom practices. The implications for social studies education are thus made real and attainable.

One major limitation of *Discourse Wars* is the lack of analytic exploration by Pruyun surrounding issues of gender, class and nationality of both students and teachers. Agentive behaviors occurred more frequently in both classrooms taught by females. How might this influence the co-construction of student agency in similar or dissimilar settings? Given the cultural and linguistic homogeneity of the classrooms studied, how might critical student agency manifest itself in multicultural classrooms? In our current 'accountability-obsessed' educational climate, with increasing demands for standardized measures of teacher and student performance, how might public schools and colleges of education create the spaces and gaps in which critical student agency can be fostered? Pruyun's work certainly offers us a glimpse of what is possible in terms of resistance and struggle. Might these very same manifestations of dissent permeate to influence local schooling policies and practices to open up the necessary gaps for tangible, critical agentive behaviors?

Pruyun's articulation of a slice of life in Gotham-West is refreshing in that he does not cast himself in the role of a Batman or Robin in his candid and easy-to-read ethnographic tale, although his astute observations and thoughtful analyses on the world of classroom discourse would very well parallel the intense gaze of 'Catwoman'! Despite some philosophical and methodological questions, *Discourse Wars* offers social studies educators an understanding of how we might co-create classroom practices that aid the development of both teacher and student agency. This is of significant import to social studies educators who take seriously the charge of promoting and strengthening egalitarian forms of democracy, both on a small-scale level in their

classrooms, and on a wider societal level as they participate in the struggles for equity and social justice.

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One Damn Thing after Another: Reflections on Howard Gardner's Vision for Historical Study in Schools

Gardner, Howard. (1999). *The Disciplined Mind: What All Students Should Understand*. New York: Simon & Schuster. 287 pp. \$25.00. ISBN 0-684-84324-8.

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In his recent book, *The Disciplined Mind: What All Students Should Understand*, Howard Gardner presents a thoughtful synthesis of much of his own earlier work in an attempt to develop a somewhat comprehensive vision for American schooling. The work is well organized and thoughtfully written, though it breaks little new ground. In fact, the title and the central theme, whether intentionally or unintentionally, borrows from a critic of education from an earlier era, Arthur Bestor, who wrote, "The disciplined mind is what education at every level should strive to produce." (1953, p. 64) Though not as sharply critical of our schools as Bestor, the vision of schooling in the disciplines that Gardner weaves may be, in some respects, just as conservative.

Gardner argues that the focus of schooling should be education for understanding, a "virtue-filled" education in the disciplines. What he brings to the quest, going far beyond Bestor, is a thorough synthesis of much of the best available scholarship in educational psychology and state of the art thinking about instructional planning that applies his own work on multiple intelligences. Predictably, though in an illuminating fashion helpful for teachers, parents, scholars and others interested in the improvement of schooling, Gardner provides thoughtful examples applying his concept of multiple intelligences to schooling for understanding the disciplines.

The work is interesting and accessible and provides a broad look at a number of educational matters in some depth, setting a context for the argument Gardner makes for a thoughtful education in the disciplines. However, the case he makes for the disciplined mind is substantially weakened by a failure to carefully examine other alternatives in a meaningful way. Like many in today's educational world, he barely mentions social studies, arguing instead for the primacy of history as the social discipline of choice. Yet, in making a case for history (and a discipline-based approach) he barely scratches the surface of the longstanding battles over the curriculum, in social studies or any other field (Kleibard, 1986). It is as if he is unfamiliar with the broad field of social studies and ignorant of our century long turf war over its definition.

One substantial acknowledgement he does make to potential critics is to state, early and fairly frequently in the text, several of the potential objections of postmodern critics to many of his arguments and recommendations. An objection he predicts is that postmodernists will criticize his allegiance to the disciplines as the most powerful tools for understanding the world and the eternal questions. Another is that his selection of curricular examples from the scientific, artistic, and historical legacy of Western Europe (Darwin, Mozart, the Holocaust) and his statement of an admittedly classical purpose for education (pursuit of the true, the beautiful, and the good) will be criticized. The examples he chooses and the purpose he develops can and rightly should be criticized. Yet, to be fair, he not only acknowledges many of the points that might be made by a postmodern critic, but offers an explanation and defense of his choices.

In this essay, I shall focus primarily on his choice to recommend an education in the disciplines as the best possible education we can offer. Alongside his rhetoric and examples favoring the disciplines as the best possible grounding for a thoughtful education, I notice examples suggestive of integrating and going beyond disciplinary boundaries. He provides little discussion of the contextual issues of race, class, and gender or the systemic structure of schooling, little mention of practical matters of financing educational reform, and a cursory discussion of the current status of schooling. He doesn't comment in much depth on the standards movement in education, though he is not supportive of the movement as a whole and favors a more individualized approach.

Gardner's Vision

Gardner's hope for education, the education that he would like for all humans, is in essence a conservative approach to schooling combined with mildly reconstructionist rhetoric and state-of-the-art discipline-based curricula. He writes:

It is important that a culture identify the truths, beauties, and virtues that it values, and that it then dedicate resources to inculcating their understanding in young learners... If we spend time on important topics, we can approach them through several entry points; we can draw a variety of analogies; and we can even capture the core ideas of such topics in a number of model languages. The result of such a multi-pronged education should be that most students have attained deep- or at least deeper- understanding. And, what is equally important, they will have a sense of what it means—of how it feels—to under-

stand consequential topics. They will have at least a taste of a disciplined mind. (p. 244-245)

In short, Gardner calls for an enhanced traditional education, capable of actualizing the longstanding goals of acquiring literacy with notations and mastery of disciplines. Yet his call for meeting these goals goes far beyond the traditional in uses of the disciplines, at least in the examples he provides. He calls for a pedagogy that, while aimed at conservative goals, could be quite liberatory in practice.

In the introductory chapter of his book, Gardner argues that education for all human beings needs to “explore in some depth a set of key human achievements captured in the venerable phrase, ‘the true, the beautiful, the good.’” (p. 16) Gardner believes that education must continue to confront virtue, in full awareness of its problematic nature. For the ancients, the classical ideal of virtue was the ultimate goal of education. Acquisition of knowledge and skill were seen as the necessary handmaidens for the attainment of moral virtue—the highest good—in the service of one’s society. Gardner asserts that study of the academic disciplines remains the best way to pursue this mission.

From my perspective, this is a questionable assertion. It is, for Gardner, more an assumption than a thesis, though he makes an effort to support it. He does not, however, address the broader questions: What means of constructing the curriculum can best lead to the purpose of individual growth and societal improvement? What is the most appropriate field of study for the education of the young citizen? In making his case for a discipline-based approach, he not only fails to consider the pros and cons of many other alternatives, he ignores the historical evolution and purposes of the disciplines. Until recently, historians and their discipline marginalized the struggles of oppressed peoples. In schools, a fact-myth-legend approach has dominated history teaching. Recent evidence suggests that this approach continues (Loewen, 1995). The curriculum focuses on socializing, but not counter-socializing (Engle & Ochoa, 1988). Questions of social justice are but a faint echo in the meta-narrative that has been planted in most of our minds.

The Human Mind

Prior to making a sustained case for the value of disciplinary study, Gardner devotes a chapter to what we know about the human mind, synthesizing much of the literature in educational psychology and its evolution, and making recommendations for practice. In this chapter, and in a few others, one gets the feeling that Gardner is really on his turf, after all, this is his area. Furthermore, he recommends that we draw on knowledge from psychology, neurology, biology, and an-

thropology as warranted in re-shaping education. He reviews the development of educational psychology, from the "olden days" of the competing behaviorist and trait views through the cognitive revolution and the rise of developmental perspectives. He discusses at least two important concerns of interest to social educators, how to excise misconceptions and replace them with more accurate mental images, and the lack of attention to motivation and emotion.

The latter portion of this chapter summarizes new research on education and the brain and offers important findings for educators, among them, that mental stimulation is necessary for growth; that action and activity help the brain learn best and retain most; that the brain has specific zones and networks linked to specific abilities and talents; and that emotional coding can lead to retention and use of new knowledge. One wonders how "new" some of these findings really are. Several are reminiscent of progressive theory, especially findings related to the importance of mental activity and emotion.

Another chapter describes effective school alternatives from other settings and explores the cultural underpinnings of education. Perhaps the most interesting passages of this chapter are those describing the preschools of Reggio Emilia, Italy, and its progressive-style integrated curriculum. Gardner cites additional examples of promising educational practices, each revealing cultural underpinnings, along with what Gardner views as a negative example, an E. D. Hirsch cultural literacy curriculum. The chapter concludes with the commonplace, that good schooling can arise from different cultures, but that educators must have a clear vision of what they want to achieve. This conclusion is complicated, Gardner admits, by ideological disagreements, cultural difference, rapid technological change, and by the fact that much of the most important curricula is hidden.

An Argument for the Disciplined Mind: Some Reservations

The balance of the book examines the role of the disciplines in teaching for "deep understanding." In chapter six Gardner begins the core of his argument for an education that "inculcates" students in an understanding of major disciplinary ways of thinking, and singles out science, math, the arts, and history. Gardner defends his choices with the mantra of needing to make selections and the importance of going for depth. Students should "see how one thinks and acts in the manner of a scientist, an artist, an historian," and will draw on these modes of thinking in understanding the world.

Gardner goes on to discuss obstacles to understanding in the disciplines. As for history, he notes that theories developed early in childhood persist, including a view of the world divided into good guys and bad guys (a "star wars script"); evolution as teleological with humans the crowning achievement; rampant presentism; and

atemporality. Naturally, with a focus on history, he ignores other equally damning misconceptions that fall under the purview of other disciplines such as the naïve view of power held by most Americans, and the general assumption that capitalism is the only natural and effective economic system. Teachers, he suggests, are unwittingly complicit in the survival of inadequate representations and misconceptions because of the text-test contest, short answer tests, the low standards bargain, and “coverage,” the old devil. These are aspects of what Tyack and Cuban have described as “the grammar of schooling,” linked to systemic factors that do not change easily (1995).

Gardner’s answer for these dilemmas is to develop in students the disciplinary expertise to “think like a historian,” to “immerse oneself deeply in the specifics of cases and develop one’s disciplinary muscles.” (p. 126) These recommendations come from one who is steeped in academia. I agree with his disdain for cultural literacy and his prescription for in-depth study, and he makes many useful suggestions for enhancing disciplinary understanding. Yet, his prescriptions leave me wondering whether he has ever heard of social studies.

One of the touchstones of issues-centered social studies is the quest for relevance, for contextualized learning. Gardner addresses questions of interest, motivation, and emotional connection when discussing educational psychology, but does not build these into his curricular prescriptions in a powerful way. He is correct when he suggests that generative topics and essential questions help establish interest and relevance, but he glosses over their centrality. Part of the power of the Reggio Emilio school is that the curriculum begins with student interests, then connects to relevant bodies of knowledge. Gardner seems to recognize value in this, yet argues for beginning with the disciplines as the source, then attempting to connect to students. This is a much different approach precisely because it places the disciplines in a hierarchical relationship to students’ lives and asks them to adopt the ways of the discipline. On the other hand, Reggio Emilio and other examples of good progressive education place students in the center and draw on multiple and relevant sources of knowledge to assist in answering students queries. One lesson of this approach is that rather than being handed down from above, knowledge is socially constructed. The decision to limit the study of a problem or topic to those situated within a discipline serves to decontextualize the curriculum, to draw a veil between student lives and school subjects. Schooling too easily becomes a technology by which certain ways of seeing and knowing are imposed on students (Marcuse, 1964). Imposing the disciplined mind, as the entire project, does not respect the student’s mind.

Of course there is value in giving students insight into the processes and concepts of history and other disciplines. However, the amount of time to be devoted to this approach is an open question. In recent years I have come to see the wisdom in the words of Kahlil Gibran. On teaching, he wrote, the purpose should be to lead the student "to the threshold of your own mind." (1923, p. 64) Perhaps learning to see through the lens of a discipline can help in this endeavor, but it is not essential, and may even prove detrimental.

Gardner also addresses the "interest groups" approach to curriculum, the idea that because there are so many sciences and social sciences we must touch on all, and argues that it "proves devastating in the curricular area..." (p. 117) The segmentation of knowledge can more realistically be viewed as an artifact of the modernist-industrial mind-set that dominates our universities and our lives. Many factors went into the evolution of the academic disciplines. In the 19th century, history and the social sciences were part of a larger project then known as the social sciences and were aimed at scholarship for social improvement. Through the impact of the new scientific history, and the scramble for status in the emerging university, historians separated from the community of social scientists. Other social science disciplines followed suit, preferring to claim the special status of "discipline" and the respect and professional benefits that went with it. Most scholars became, at least for some time, detached from the social and political fray, in the interest of developing "unbiased" knowledge and research. In time, the quest for unbiased knowledge was exposed, yet the disciplines remained, though with signs of some blurring of boundaries in recent years. I mention this to point out that there are reasons for caution when studying the disciplines. If we want students to develop their own minds, disciplined approaches to knowledge are helpful but insufficient. We must help students learn to grapple with decisions around life's important questions, and that requires a synthesis, drawing on but going beyond the disciplines.

Subsequent chapters illustrate the kind of education in the disciplines that Gardner has in mind, developing three "puzzles" as examples of the exploration of topics for "deep understanding." In chapter seven Gardner offers further justification for his theory of the disciplined mind and his claim that the disciplines are the best way of approaching the great questions. He is aware that most questions can be "approached from a variety of disciplines," yet he submits that, "The disciplines represent the most well honed efforts of human beings to approach questions and concerns of importance in a systematic and reliable way"(p. 144). The disciplines, he suggests, are "civilizing," and offer practiced methods of dealing with issues and questions." Moreover, he argues, the disciplined thinking of the historian is crucial if individuals are to draw inferences, make analogies, and

“express opinions and cast votes on issues of import in terms of reasonable criteria rather than sheer whim.” (p. 152) Much of what he says in these passages is not only true for history but for the social sciences and other sources of knowledge. There is no question that history is of value and that the disciplines have created a good deal of useable knowledge. The discipline of history is of great importance for the education of youth. However, Gardner’s arguments ignore the limitations that a focus on any one discipline as the core of social studies may erect.

Gardner misses the fact that the disciplines are concerned primarily with the creation of new knowledge, and secondarily, if at all, with the purposes of teaching or learning. These are markedly different purposes. Much of his commentary on the discipline is accurate, yet it does not add up to a strong case for the discipline of history as the best means for educating youth. Interestingly, the examples he draws belie his narrower vision, and call for broad study related to in-depth investigation of cases. Moreover, they imply ranging far beyond the limitations of any one discipline, following an issue where it leads.

Multiple Intelligences Applied to History

Gardner also provides a description and application of a multiple intelligences approach to deep understanding, and gives examples of thoughtful curriculum planning implementing his vision. This is a useful application of theory with excellent examples that any social studies teacher would find helpful in improving students’ conceptual understanding. Gardner suggests application of his theory through multiple entry points using engaging approaches to generate interest; use of powerful analogies and metaphors; and presenting multiple representations of core ideas. He notes, “Variety is the message of the day.” Each of these suggestions is appropriate and helpful, yet they offer little that is new, and have appeared previously as attention grabbers, the jurisprudential model, and concept teaching.

More troubling is the way he frames the goal of deep understanding around striving to, in his words, “inculcate understanding of what, within a cultural context, is considered true or false, beautiful or unpalatable, good or evil.” Passing on our understanding of the true, beautiful and good can easily devolve into simple cultural transmission. Whose understanding will be promoted and prized? To what extent will dominant voices remain dominant? Will the oppressed find a place? Whose truth will reign? Whose mind will be developed? Gardner’s vision is a middling one, deeply wedded to the disciplines. This is a thoughtful approach to schooling, however, it places too much emphasis on understanding, which must rightly be seen as a step, albeit an important one, toward decision-making and action.

Defend the Disciplines?

In the closing portion of the book, not only does Gardner discuss how to achieve his vision on a large scale, but he offers further justification for a discipline-based approach and some of his reservations about thematic and "interdisciplinary" teaching. Gardner describes himself as "a defender of the disciplines..." and writes that the disciplines provide us with "privileged ways into phenomena," and "the most sophisticated means for addressing the questions that preoccupy human beings... The rationale for studying the disciplines should be enhanced access to and stronger purchase on the major questions of human life" (pp. 218-21). Jonathan Kozol once wrote of the amazing lack of purchase and emotional distance that schools create around human suffering (1975). The disciplines typically contribute to this by distancing subject from object, placing the topic to be studied under glass, for unbiased investigation.

There are, from my perspective several problems with the disciplines as the structural force in the curriculum. The real world, Gardner admits, is not framed by the disciplines. Issues and problems reflected in perennial questions require us to look beyond the confines of any one discipline. Use of the disciplines as the structural foundation for curricular reform may be doomed from the start because of the decontextualization that typically accompanies their study. Gardner seems to accept that a good deal of decontextualization is acceptable, even necessary for creating the disciplined mind. On the contrary, I believe that a far more powerful vision for the improvement of social studies can be built around the notion of a curriculum that is richly contextualized, that starts with the learners own life experiences, that explores issues, problems, and dilemmas in local, national, and global settings, and that draws on disciplines and multiple other sources of knowledge. Moreover, our past experience with educational reforms built around the disciplines has been unfulfilling. The Brunerian vision of an inquiry-oriented approach to the disciplines was attempted, heroically, but with minimal success in the 1960s and 1970s. We would do well to take that previous failure into account when considering new reforms.

Gardner is wise enough to know that not everyone will share his vision. Accordingly, he describes alternative pathways, which could lead to development of multiple prototypes: the canon pathway, the multicultural pathway, the progressive pathway, the technological pathway, the socially responsible pathway, and the understanding pathway (his vision). He admits that these are to be read as instructive rather than definitive. Yet, Gardner's work demonstrates too little depth of study on curricular and philosophical alternatives. To write about curriculum and to develop a strong philosophical stance one needs to be fluent with the fields of curriculum, curriculum history,

and philosophy of education. Gardner provides little evidence that he has done thorough background work in these areas.

One Damn Thing after Another

In *The Disciplined Mind*, Howard Gardner argues for a particular vision of schooling, one rooted in our educational traditions and dedicated to making those traditions more functional. He wants to develop students who can make use of the disciplinary lenses of the historian, the biologist, and the artist. While these are worthy aims, they are not broad enough to encompass the possibilities that must be embraced in developing the educated citizen. Unfortunately, the work is limited by the author's disciplinary allegiance, and the equation of the disciplined mind with the educated citizen's mind and heart.

Though *The Disciplined Mind* is likely to be read by many influential educators, it will make little difference in the larger struggle to overcome the banking approach, which, in a history class, becomes "one damn thing after another" to cover superficially and forget. Like many other prescriptions for school improvement, Gardner's is likely to change the institution of schooling very little, marginalized by structural characteristics that determine which reforms will last. The socio-political and economic context of schooling suggests that schools resemble a machine-like technological apparatus in which the grammar of schooling persists; a reform effort that points toward thoughtful, in-depth study is worthy, but costly in terms of teacher time and workload. *The Disciplined Mind* is a must read for E. D. Hirsch, other advocates of cultural literacy, and for anyone involved in the movement to impose standards and high stakes tests. We can only hope that Gardner and other scholars will contribute to a critical mass of opposition to the runaway train of standards-based reform.

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Creating a Space that Challenged and Changed the Social Order

Crocco, Margaret Smith, & O. L. Davis, Jr., (Eds.). (1999). *Bending the Future to Their Will: Civic Women, Social Education, and Democracy*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. 291 pp. Paperback. ISBN 0-8476-9112-8.

Review by *PHYLLIS M. FERNLUND*, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park California, 95409.

Margaret Crocco and O.L. Davis, Jr. have created an engaging collection of biographical sketches of women who took leadership roles in social education from the late nineteenth century through the 1980's. These are women whose teaching, scholarship, and civic activism were focused on education about democracy and citizenship, rather than the narrower field of K-12 social studies. Eleven women are presented in this book, authors are in parentheses: *Mary Sheldon Barnes* (Author: Frances Monteverde); *Lucy Maynard Salmon* (C.H. Bohan); *Jane Addams* (Petra Munro); *Mary Ritter Beard and Marion Thompson Wright* (Crocco); *Lucy Sprague Mitchell* (Sherry Field); *Bessie Louise Pierce* (Murry Nelson); *Rachel Davis DuBois* (Davis); *Hilda Taba* (Jane Bernard-Powers); *Alice Miel* (Elizabeth A. Yeager); *Hazel Whitman Hertzberg* (Andrew Mullen).

These eleven women portrayed in *Bending the Future to Their Will*, provide a picture of the challenges faced by women to gain an education, a place in the academy, and a space to challenge and change existing social, political and educational paradigms. The authors point to the early development of some of the more contemporary components of the social studies: the use of primary sources in addition to textbook history, intercultural education, service learning, inquiry methods, community "backyard" history, women's history, and social history.

There are several ways to approach this book. At first, temporarily skipping over the beginning chapters, I read about Hilda Taba and Jane Addams, women whose work I knew and often used in my teaching. I was prepared to compare my understanding of their work with the ways the authors portrayed them in each chapter. Each chapter is approximately twenty pages, followed by a brief excerpt from their published works. As I finished a chapter, I was wishing for more; the chapters seemed too short to capture the tremendous body of work and many contributions of these women. In reading Petra Munro's chapter, "Widening the Circle: Jane Addams, Gender and Re/Definition of Democracy," I was once again reminded of the radical nature of Jane Addams work: her support for economic democracy and social justice, her criticism of Marxism with its emphasis on class struggle

and conflict, her view of democracy as a collective, not an individual act.

The chapters that offer glimpses into the lives and work of these women are not true biographies, so we might ask the purpose of such a collection. Why were these individuals chosen? What is the tapestry created by their stories? In the introduction Crocco presents the book as an examination of civic women who have been neglected by the mainstream, given only superficial treatment. Although most of the authors in *Bending the Future to Their Will* do not claim that these women's views were "naturally" female, they do vividly reveal the tremendous impact of gender on their lives and their work. As Andra Makler argues in the concluding chapter:

For each woman discussed in these chapters, the choice to be herself in the public world was a deliberate moral choice, an ethical stance taken and held despite personal hardship, pain, and frequently, public scorn. (p. 254)

This approach to the book using the lens of gender is compelling. If we look at this collection from the perspective of the challenges faced by educated yet excluded women who worked for various societal reforms, we can gain fresh insights into the role of citizen. These civic women, denied access to more traditional and formal power structures, made vital contributions to build a more democratic society.

It is difficult today to imagine some of the barriers they faced. Marion Thompson Wright concealed her marriage and two children in order to attend Howard University in the 1920's. The university prohibited married or divorced women from attending the university and from teaching there. In 1900, Lucy Sprague Mitchell was among the first female faculty members at the University of California, Berkeley. She found that the female students faced ridicule on campus and began a series of initiatives to improve women's housing, self-governance, and interconnections through social clubs. In the 1870's Mary Sheldon Barnes began a scholarly career at the University of Michigan in a new coeducational program, choosing a career in education rather than marriage and motherhood. After completing her education at the University of Chicago and Columbia, Hilda Taba was denied a faculty appointment in her home country of Estonia, perhaps because of gender. In 1933, she took a position at the Dalton School in New York; academic positions for women were very limited in the United States as well.

Many of these women lived during a time in which they were denied the right to vote, yet they challenged the restrictions from laws and social norms that reinforced male superiority. Some were fortunate to find husbands who supported their work and collaborated in

their efforts. O.L. Davis reports that when Rachel Davis DuBois married in 1915, she developed what she considered to be a 50-50 marriage that lasted two decades, then ended in divorce (p. 172). In the chapter written by Margaret Smith Crocco, she points out that unlike other scholars, Charles Beard insisted on recognizing his wife as co-author of several widely used history textbooks. Mary Ritter Beard wrote to a friend of her influence on her husband and their collaborative work:

History is in fact the whole story of humankind including literature, philosophy, biology and everything else. This is the way I see it and having thus seen it, I have in my collaboration with CAB [Charles A. Beard], from its beginning widened politics, war and law and political economy to cover more aspects of human development. CAB has accepted my wide interest and done everything he could to work with me as I have done everything I could to work with him (p. 106).

As I read through the lives of these women, I searched for the resources they used to successfully obtain an education and to influence their society. Some of the women had definite economic and social advantages compared to less affluent women during this period of time. Lucy Salmon had a well educated mother and a strong extended family who supported her entrance to the University of Michigan in the 1870's. Lucy Sprague Mitchell came from a wealthy Chicago family at a time of great cultural growth in Chicago. In the 1900's, she was educated at an exclusive boarding school, followed by higher education at Radcliff and Teachers College, Columbia University.

Others had the benefit of a mentor who provided support for a highly educated woman in a male-dominated society. Murray Nelson points to the positive influence of historian Arthur M. Schlesinger in connecting Bessie Louise Pierce to American Historical Association. In 1926, she became the first female president of the National Council for the Social Studies. As the role of women in the academy began to change, there were new opportunities within the established university structures. Alice Miel chaired the Department of Curriculum and Teaching at Teachers College from 1960 to 1967. Hazel Hertzberg served as chair of the Social Studies Department at Teachers College from 1957 to 1988.

The account of the lives of these women offers an alternative to the view of civic education dominated by individual rights and the political processes and structures of government. If the field of social studies is to be inclusive, we need a variety of role models and examples of many forms of participation in a democratic society, includ-

ing the local community and voluntary associations. At the close of the book, Makler suggests that the goals of social education should be expanded to prepare young people for "participation in multiple forms of associative living – learning communities, voluntary social occupational, religious, and other groups; as well as the political caucus, the policymaking forum, and the legislature (p. 270). There are references throughout the book to John Dewey's view of democracy as "associative living," a way of life, a way of living with others requiring continual nurture and development (1916, 1927). Makler proposes an approach to social education in which the curriculum is organized around relationships that connect the personal life to the communal life, building on some of the ideas of the caring school community of Nel Noddings (1992). Education can strengthen the quality of democratic life and in turn enhance the quality of our own life.

Crocco states that *Bending the Future to their Will* "is the first book to bring these subjects together to review their ideas about social education, to highlight their attention to the implications of individual and group differences for education, and to make a claim for their status as educational theorists" (p. 2). The authors in this book bring a welcome perspective to the conversation about public schools as well as the goals of social studies, a conversation that, as Michael Apple (1993) and others have described, has a long history dominated by competing interest groups. In the many analyses of social studies textbooks, researchers have often found a lack of social conflict and a dearth of stories about the dissenters (Popkewitz, 1977, Anyon, 1988). Voting is emphasized as the most important democratic process, sufficient to bring social consensus and progress. These stories offer a different perspective.

This collection offers valuable insights into new possibilities for social education reaching beyond schools to include settlement houses, women's clubs and other voluntary organizations. It helps us to glimpse the lives of civic women who contributed ideas, theories and practices to social studies and the broader field of social education. Through the lives and work of these eleven women, we are again connected to John Dewey's view of democracy as community life, and to a consideration of the kind of education that enables all individuals to participate and live in such a community.

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

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