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Articles

1 Populations, Samples, Randomness, and Replication in Two Social Studies Journals

James P. Shaver and Richard S. Norton

The purpose of this study was to determine if research in social studies education reflected the same lack of attention to population and sample definitions and description, to randomness, and to replication that the authors found in a previous review of articles in the American Educational Research Journal over a ten-year period. Their study of all the research articles in Theory and Research in Social Education and in all Research Department of Social Education through 1978 indicated that small percentages of the articles report research done with random samples of subjects, that accessible populations were not often described with data, that the definitions researchers provided for target and accessible population and the sample descriptions appeared inadequate either as a basis for sampling or for others to use in replicating the studies, and that few studies used random assignment to conditions. It was concluded that, while much time, effort and money are expended on social studies education research, the data produced by this review raise serious questions about the nature of that research enterprise.

11 Citizenship Education for Conflict: An Empirical Assessment of the Relationship between Principled Thinking and Tolerance for Conflict and Diversity

Janet Eyler

This study brings the perspective of cognitive moral development to the frequent finding that citizens endorse democratic procedural norms in the abstract, but are unable to apply these norms to unpopular groups or actions. If the ability to apply these norms entails a capacity for principled reasoning then we would expect to find that principled thinkers surpass non-principled thinkers in applying such democratic principles as majority rule and minority rights in concrete controversial situations; in endorsing the legitimacy of political conflict; in defining the citizen role as active rather than passive; and by showing greater interest in politics. Results of the study support all but the final assertion. If educators wish to facilitate the development of civic tolerance, attention must be paid to creating conditions conducive to cognitive moral development.

27 Trends in Social Studies Graduation Competencies

Jerry R. Moore and Paul L. Williams

Perhaps more than any other topic, graduation competencies have recently been the focus of both popular and professional literature about public schooling in America. This article reports questionnaire findings concerning the possible reduction of the breadth and scope of social studies programs
in order to allow for more instructional time in the "basic" content areas contained on competency tests. The authors' survey of forty-eight members of the Council of State Social Studies Specialists led them to conclude that minimum competencies in language arts and mathematics are potentially competitive with social studies space and emphasis in the school curriculum and, consequently, that social studies teachers, chairpersons, supervisors, and teacher educators need to become more skilled in the translation of curriculum goals into performance criteria, the identification of competencies, the development and identification of appropriate tests and test items, and the interpretation of test results.

37 John Dewey and the Social Studies Curriculum
Kieran Egan

The purpose of this article is to discuss three ideas which seem to have had a profound influence in making the social studies curriculum what it is: the belief that one must begin all teaching and learning from the child's every-day experience, the distinction between natural and formal education, and the distinction between socializing and educating. The best-known exposition of these ideas can be found in the writings of John Dewey, particularly Education and Democracy; the author focuses on those parts of Dewey's overall thesis which provide some fundamental ideas on which the present social studies curriculum stands, with the intention of showing the frailty of those foundations.

57 Reaction/Response

A Reaction to Social Education in the Classroom: The Dynamics of the Hidden Curriculum
Catherine Cornbleth

61 Response to Cornbleth
Henry A. Giroux and Anthony N. Penna

65 Book Reviews

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The use of inferential statistics in educational research presents perplexing problems. The theoretical sampling distributions used in the interval estimation of population parameters assume data obtained through random sampling, just as random assignment to treatments is assumed in the more common use of the distributions (parametric or non-parametric — see, e.g., Siegel, 1956; Morrison & Henkel, 1970) in tests of significance. Nevertheless, doubts have been expressed about the frequency with which the assumptions of randomness are met in educational research (e.g., Shaver, 1979a). Admittedly, it is difficult to obtain random samples of subjects for educational research projects, but the school setting does provide a natural laboratory in which random assignment could often be achieved (Campbell & Boruch, 1975).

Given the difficulties in obtaining random samples for educational studies, and in light of the serious questions raised in recent years about the role of statistical inference in the scientific model for establishing effects (see, e.g., Morrison & Henkel, 1970; Shulman, 1970; Carver, 1978; Campbell & Jackson, 1979; Shaver, 1979a), it might be expected that replication would be a widely used strategy for determining treatment effects and their generalizability. But, as with random sampling and assignment, it has been claimed that replications have not been prevalent in educational research (see, e.g., Shulman, 1970; Shaver, 1979a).

Claims about practices in educational research frequently lack a basis in systematic data, and studies of commonly used research methods and strategies could make significant contributions to evaluations of the educational research enterprise. Recently, Shaver and Norton (1980) published findings based on a review of articles in the American Educational Research Journal (AERJ) over a ten-year period. They addressed four questions:

Do educational researchers tend to select their samples randomly from defined and/or described accessible populations?

Do educational researchers tend to define their target populations and describe their samples?
Is replication, direct or systematic (Sidman, 1960), a frequently used research strategy in education?

Do educational researchers tend to restrict their conclusions according to the limitations in their sampling techniques or in regard to possible differences between their accessible and target populations?

The results were not particularly positive. In the six volumes of *AERJ* reviewed for the 1968-77 ten-year period (see last column of Table 2), 32% of the articles reporting human subject research defined the target populations, 42% and 8% defined or described the accessible population, and 19% reported random samples. While 35% reported experimental studies involving the random assignment of subjects, as contrasted with 9% reporting quasi-experimental studies lacking random assignment (Campbell & Stanley, 1963), there was in recent years a decline in experimental studies and an increase in quasi-experimental ones (Shaver & Norton, 1980, Table IV). Direct and systematic replication were each reported in only 7% of the articles. Shaver and Norton (1980) suggested that the results of their review of articles in *AERJ* called for profound reconsideration of current orientations in educational research.

**Purpose of This Study**

*AERJ* reports research from a broad spectrum of educational concerns, and only small proportions of studies are from particular curriculum areas. Consequently, the data from the Shaver and Norton (1980) review could not be used to answer questions about research practices in special fields, such as social studies education. The purpose of this study was to determine if research in social studies education reflected the same lack of attention to population and sample definition and description, to randomness, and to replication (Shaver, 1979b, p. 34) as that reported in *AERJ*.

**Method**

Research in social studies education is reported in a number of sources. We limited our review to articles published in *Theory and Research in Social Education (TRSE)* and the Research Department of *Social Education*. The primary reason for that decision was that both are publications of professional organizations (*TRSE*: The College and University Faculty [CUFA] of the National Council for the Social Studies [NCSS]; and *Social Education*: NCSS) concerned with social studies education, and the articles should, therefore, reflect the interests and orientations of "mainstream" social studies educators. Moreover, assuming that our review did turn up matters of concern about research designs and strategies in social studies education, the organizational relationships of CUFA and NCSS to the journals held some promise that editorial policies in regard to publishable studies of social studies education might be influenced by our results. This latter point is not a minor one. Journal criteria for judging manuscripts not only reflect research norms, but help to determine them as well. Bakan (1967) has referred to journal editors as being "in some sense the ultimate 'teachers' of the profession" (p. 16).
Despite our professionally relevant reasons for selecting *TRSE* and *Social Education* for review, there is need for caution in assuming that the articles in those journals are necessarily representative of all social studies education research reports. For example, Ward, Hall, and Schramm (1975) found that educational research reports in “related profession” journals tended to be of higher quality than those in “education” journals. The scattered reports of social studies research in journals other than *TRSE* and *Social Education* might likewise differ in quality.

The research articles in all issues of *TRSE* and in all Research Departments of *Social Education* through 1978 (1973-1978 for *TRSE* and 1969-1978 for *Social Education*) were read and scored using the same set of categories as had been used for the Shaver and Norton (1980) review of *AERJ* articles (see Table 1). The category definitions were based on conventional use of educational research terminology in recognized contributions, such as Campbell and Stanley (1963) and Bracht and Glass (1968), and widely used textbooks, such as Borg and Gall (1979). The review of the articles was done by the junior author, at the time an advanced Ph.D. candidate in psychology at Utah State University who had served for three years as a research/teaching assistant in the College of Education’s Bureau of Research Services.

**Table 1: Categories Used in the Review of *TRSE* and *Social Education* Articles**

1. **Target Population:**
   a. Term Used.

2. **Accessible Population:**
   a. Term Used.
   c. Population Described (with data).

3. **Method of Sample Selection:**
   a. Random.
   b. Representative (procedure to insure representativeness without randomness).
   c. Volunteers.
   d. Selected by Others (not controlled by the researcher).
   e. Available Sample (such as one’s own classes).
   f. Can’t Tell How Selected.

4. **Sample Described (with data).**

5. **Study Type:**
   a. Experimental.
   b. Quasi-experimental.
   c. Correlational.
   d. Causal-comparative.
e. Survey.

f. Other (such as single subject and pre-experimental designs).

6. Knowledge Building Approach:

   a. Replication —
      1) Direct.
      2) Systematic.

   b. Extending Previous Findings.

   c. Test of Theory.

   d. Other (methodologically oriented).

   e. None.

7. Conclusions Limited:

   a. By limitations in accessible population vis-a-vis target population.

   b. By sample deficiencies.

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Note: Definitions of the categories are available from the senior author.

Establishing reviewer agreement is not a common procedure in content analysis studies. However, agreement in scores obtained in independent reviews of AERJ articles by the junior and senior authors ranged from 78% to 100%, with all but three 89% or above (see Shaver & Norton, 1980), indicating that the categories could be used with reasonable consistency by different individuals. For the TRSE and Social Education articles, which were reviewed immediately following the AERJ articles, a different tack was taken, somewhat more consistent with typical content analysis methodology. A randomly selected sample of six TRSE articles and four Social Education articles was reviewed independently by the junior author and the senior author. The senior author then reread those articles for which any category scorings were not identical and decided whether the junior author’s scoring involved a legitimate interpretation of the research report. For all but four categories, the agreement was 100%. For the discrepant categories, the agreements were: Target Population Defined — 98%; Method of Sample Selection — 94%; Study Type — 96%; and Knowledge Building Approach — 94%. These results indicated that not only could two independent reviewers use the categories consistently, but that the scores obtained by the junior author had validity as judged by a person who has been teaching and writing in educational research for over fifteen years. The results gave us confidence in our review findings, especially as statistical analysis was not to be applied to the data and our interest was in discernable differences, not fine discriminations.

Results

The first of the four questions which guided our review of articles published in TRSE and Social Education, like the earlier review of AERJ articles, was: Do social studies education researchers tend to select their samples randomly from defined and/or described accessible populations?
The summary in Table 2 indicates that the term “accessible population” was not used in the TRSE and Social Education articles, although 64% and 82% of the TRSE and Social Education articles, respectively, did present some definition of the accessible population. Not only did a higher percentage of Social Education articles than TRSE articles define the accessible population, but both exceeded the 42% for the AERJ sample. Thirteen percent of the articles in TRSE and 9% of those in Social Education presented some description of the accessible population using data gathered prior to or during the research. These figures are quite similar to the 8% for AERJ articles. We did not rate the definitions or descriptions of accessible populations for clarity or comprehensiveness. But, as with the AERJ articles, our overall impression was that both definitions and descriptions tended to be cursory and incidental, and not laid out as the basis for sample selection or as a basis for replication of the studies.

Random sampling was not reported frequently in TRSE or Social Education research reports. The 13% and 18%, respectively, were quite similar to the 19% for AERJ articles.²

Even if random sampling cannot be achieved, random assignment is crucial in experimental-type designs. Ten percent and 9% of the articles reported experimental designs (with random assignment) in the two social studies journals, considerably less than the 35% for AERJ; and the 26% and 18% reporting quasi-experimental designs (without random assignment) were considerably more than the 9% for AERJ. However, our AERJ data (Shaver & Norton, 1980, Table IV) indicated an increase in percentage of reports of quasi-experimental designs and a decrease in reports of experimental ones in 1976 and 1977. A look at the year-by-year data indicated no trend in the reporting of quasi-experimental designs in Social Education; but five of the nine quasi-experimental designs in TRSE were reported in 1978, and no experimental designs were reported that year.

The types of other sampling methods commonly reported are as revealing as is the lack of random sampling. Volunteers were used for the research in 26% and 23% of the TRSE and Social Education articles, as contrasted with 9% of the AERJ articles. (Of course, the use of volunteers is legitimate when the target population is defined as a volunteer group — not a frequent occurrence — but selection or assignment from the accessible

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¹Some information recorded for each article is not reported here to conserve space: The affiliation of the author(s) (university, public school, research organization, and other, such as NIE); whether the study was funded and, if so, the source of funding (government agency, private foundation, or internal, such as a university faculty grant); and, whether the study involved new data or the reanalysis of previously gathered data. A summary table can be obtained from the senior author.

²The limited number of cases (N = 31 for TRSE and N = 22 for Social Education) limited the number of cross-analyses that could be done. For example, with only four instances of random sampling for each journal (see Table 2), it did not make much sense to ask, as we did with the AERJ articles (N = 151), whether articles reporting use of random samples also were likely to contain definitions of accessible populations.
Table 2: Category Frequencies and Proportions for TRSE, Social Education and AERJ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>TRSE (N = 31)</th>
<th>Soc. Ed. (N = 22)</th>
<th>Total (N = 53)</th>
<th>AERJ (N = 151)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target — Term Used</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Defined</td>
<td>12 (39%)</td>
<td>17 (77%)</td>
<td>29 (55%)</td>
<td>49 (32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access. — Term Used</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access. Defined</td>
<td>20 (64%)</td>
<td>18 (82%)</td>
<td>38 (72%)</td>
<td>63 (42%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access. Describ.</td>
<td>4 (13%)</td>
<td>2 (9%)</td>
<td>6 (11%)</td>
<td>12 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sample Type:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random</td>
<td>4 (13%)</td>
<td>4 (18%)</td>
<td>8 (15%)</td>
<td>28 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representative</td>
<td>2 (6%)</td>
<td>3 (14%)</td>
<td>5 (9%)</td>
<td>14 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers</td>
<td>8 (26%)</td>
<td>5 (23%)</td>
<td>13 (24%)</td>
<td>13 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selec. By Other</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>2 (4%)</td>
<td>1 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>2 (4%)</td>
<td>18 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can't Tell</td>
<td>18 (58%)</td>
<td>9 (41%)</td>
<td>27 (51%)</td>
<td>82 (54%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sample Describ.</strong></td>
<td>25 (81%)</td>
<td>19 (86%)</td>
<td>44 (83%)</td>
<td>128 (85%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Study Type:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exptl.</td>
<td>3 (10%)</td>
<td>2 (9%)</td>
<td>5 (9%)</td>
<td>53 (35%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quasi-exptl.</td>
<td>8 (26%)</td>
<td>4 (18%)</td>
<td>13 (24%)</td>
<td>13 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correl.</td>
<td>13 (42%)</td>
<td>12 (54%)</td>
<td>25 (47%)</td>
<td>85 (56%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causal-comp.</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>2 (6%)</td>
<td>4 (18%)</td>
<td>6 (11%)</td>
<td>5 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Know. Building:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replic.-Dir.</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>10 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replic.-Sys.</td>
<td>4 (13%)</td>
<td>3 (14%)</td>
<td>7 (13%)</td>
<td>11 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ext. Findings</td>
<td>25 (81%)</td>
<td>13 (59%)</td>
<td>38 (72%)</td>
<td>121 (80%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory Test</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>12 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td>6 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>6 (19%)</td>
<td>7 (32%)</td>
<td>13 (24%)</td>
<td>9 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conclus. Limited:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By Access. Pop.</td>
<td>5 (16%)</td>
<td>3 (14%)</td>
<td>8 (15%)</td>
<td>11 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By Sample</td>
<td>6 (19%)</td>
<td>6 (27%)</td>
<td>12 (23%)</td>
<td>16 (11%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Columns may total more than 100% because some articles reported more than one study.

<sup>a</sup>"Other" included articles of a methodological rather than a substantive nature, such as reports of test development.
population should still be random if inferential statistics are to be used.) The use of available samples (such as administering tests to a group of students in a class one is teaching) was reported in only 3% and 4% of the TRSE and Social Education articles, somewhat less than the 12% for the AERJ articles. But the proportion of articles for which it was not possible to discern the sampling method was high for TRSE (58%), for Social Education (41%), and for AERJ (54%). The somewhat lower percentage for Social Education appears to be the result of greater proportions of random and representative sampling. Because researchers are usually eager to report the use of random, or even representative, samples, it is likely that few of the "Can't Tell" articles involved such procedures.

Based on our review of TRSE and Social Education articles, the answer to our question with regard to the selection of samples in social studies research must be the following: Definitions of accessible populations are reported more frequently (although not more comprehensively) than in AERJ; but social studies education researchers, like those who publish in AERJ, are either not much inclined or able to obtain random samples.

**Target Populations.** The second question that provided focus for our review of articles was: Do social studies education researchers tend to define their target populations? While the percentage of articles in TRSE that defined target populations (39%) was close to that for AERJ (32%), the figure for Social Education was much higher (77%). While our impression was that, as with TRSE and AERJ, the definitions were not very complete, the Social Education authors were much more inclined than the TRSE or AERJ ones at least to mention the population(s) in which they were interested.

**Replication.** Frequent reports of replication studies might tend to mitigate concern with the low levels of random sampling reported in TRSE and Social Education. However, no direct replications were reported in either journal (as contrasted with 7% for AERJ), and only 13% of the articles for TRSE and Social Education combined reported systematic replications, even though we applied our category definitions liberally. Nevertheless, the 13% is almost double the AERJ percentage (7%) for systematic replications.

Note that substantial proportions of the articles provided descriptions of their samples (81% for TRSE; 86% for Social Education). These percentages are nearly identical to the 85% for AERJ. As with AERJ articles, our impression was that the descriptive data were sparse and reported incidentally as part of statistical analyses, rather than being sufficiently complete to serve as the basis for replication of the study or for readers to decide to what populations of persons and settings the findings might apply.

As our study came from a general concern with the lack of accumulative research knowledge in education (Shaver, 1979a) and in social studies education in particular (Shaver, 1979b), we looked at approaches to knowledge building other than replication. No TRSE or Social Education articles were concerned with theory testing (8% of the AERJ articles were).
The 81% of TRSE articles which reported research aimed at extending previous findings was considerably higher than the 59% for Social Education (and similar to the 80% for AERJ). The 32% of Social Education articles for which no concern with knowledge building could be detected was much higher than the 19% for TRSE, and both were considerably above the 6% for AERJ.

Limitations on Conclusions. The fourth question of concern in our review of TRSE and Social Education articles was whether conclusions were explicitly limited in terms of shortcomings in accessible populations or samples. The percentages of limitations by accessible population (TRSE, 16%; Social Education, 14%) and by sample (TRSE, 19%; Social Education, 27%) were not particularly salutory. However, both were higher than the percentages for AERJ (7% limited by accessible population, 11% by sample).

Discussion and Conclusions

The overall picture of research in social studies education that emerges from our review of TRSE and Social Education articles is similar to that for AERJ. Small percentages of articles report research done with random samples of subjects. Use of the terms target and accessible population, which would indicate awareness of the underlying concepts (see, e.g., Bracht & Glass, 1968), did not occur in the social studies journals. Accessible populations were not often described with data. Social Education articles tended to define both target and accessible populations more often than TRSE articles, and both more so than AERJ articles; but in general the definitions appeared inadequate either as a basis for sampling or for others to use in replicating the studies. The same could be said for the descriptions of samples; they were frequent but incidental and cursory. Moreover, few studies were experimental — that is, used random assignment to conditions. Whether the balance between correlation-survey studies, on the one hand, and experimental-type studies, on the other (presented in Table 2), is the correct one is beyond the purview of this article; but given the general function of random assignment in insuring pretreatment chance differences on all present and relevant variables, the paucity of experimental as compared to quasi-experimental designs is cause for concern (see, Campbell & Boruch, 1975; Shaver & Norton, 1980).

Our review indicates, then, that neither the fundamental bases for use of inferential statistics (random sampling and assignment) or the essential prerequisite for the interpretation of findings beyond a specific project (adequate description of populations and samples) is present in much research in social education. As we pointed out for AERJ articles (Shaver & Norton, 1980), one must raise serious questions about the use of inferential statistics when the lack of randomness makes probability statements indeterminate.

At the same time, it would be erroneous to create the impression that random sampling from defined populations would solve the conundrum of generalization from individual studies. When conducted on adequate data,
inferential statistics only tell one the probabilistic limits within which a sample statistic represents the population parameter or, conversely, the likelihood that a result would have occurred by chance if the null hypothesis were true. They do not tell the researcher, as is all too commonly supposed, whether or not chance accounted for the result or even how likely it is that the same result would occur again in the real educational world (see, e.g., Carver, 1978). That is why providing adequate descriptions of accessible populations and, especially, of samples is so important: To provide readers with some basis for judging whether the results apply to settings of interest to them.

The inadequacy of inferential statistics to provide desired information on generalizability even with random sampling, but especially when that assumption underlying theoretical sampling distributions is not met, is a basic argument for use of replication as a basic strategy in educational research (Shulman, 1970; Carver, 1978; Shaver, 1979a), and in social studies education research in particular (Shaver, 1979b). The lack of replication indicated by our reviews should be cause for concern and discussion. What if it is accepted that the repetition of findings is a necessary element in the model of inquiry which has been so productive in the natural sciences and that the replication element of that model is relevant to social studies education research? Then those who can shape research in social studies education should address themselves to the means by which the prevalent research paradigm (statistical analysis without meeting randomness assumptions and eschewal of replication) can be modified.

A caveat is in order, however. The necessary re-examination of our research culture must take place with the realization that even if social studies education researchers devoted themselves to the traditionally espoused goal of building verified theory (note that none of the TRSE or Social Education articles had a theory-testing orientation) and used better designed studies and replication as a strategy, that goal may not be attainable. That is, the possibility that general laws of the type developed in the natural sciences will always be beyond the reach of educational researchers must be taken seriously (see Shaver, 1979b; Shaver & Norton, 1980).

Much time, effort, and money are expended on research in social studies education. Data such as produced by our review of research articles in TRSE and Social Education raise serious questions about the nature of that research enterprise. The contemplation of the questions raised, even the consideration of how to reshape the enterprise, merit attention from CUFA and NCSS, and from individual researchers, professors, and journal editors.
References


Citizenship Education for Conflict: An Empirical Assessment of the Relationship between Principled Thinking and Tolerance for Conflict and Diversity

Janet Eyler
Peabody College of Vanderbilt University

Introduction

There is a well developed literature in political science on civic tolerance, which has consistently supported the finding of Prothro and Grigg that Americans tend to support democratic procedural norms or "rules of the game" in the abstract, but are less likely to endorse them in specific settings or for disliked groups. Those who are likely to apply these rules consistently are more likely to be among the political elite, or the well educated (Prothro and Grigg, 1960).

This lack of widespread support for democratic procedural norms and unwillingness to accept the legitimacy of political conflict and competition has disturbed those concerned with citizenship education. While there is scant evidence that this concern has had much impact on the civic tolerance of young citizens, there is evidence that the need for citizens to have these capabilities is increasing. A number of social and political trends appear to be heightening the impact of the mass citizenry on public policy. These trends include the breakdown of such mediating institutions as the political party, the growth of ideological awareness, and the rise of single issue political action.

Educators need a better understanding of the phenomenon of civic tolerance to inform their teaching. This study is an attempt to illuminate this area of political science research from the perspective of cognitive moral development theory and to draw implications from the research for citizenship education.

A cognitive developmental perspective has been applied to political issues by a number of researchers (Saratt, 1975; Adelson and O'Neil, 1966; Lockwood, 1976). Here we will use Kohlberg's moral development perspective, which is the best developed of those examined (Kohlberg, 1973). This approach to the development of tolerance for conflict in the mass citizenry is potentially fruitful for a number of reasons: 1. Theoretically, the underlying construct of socio-moral perspective provides a plausible explanation for the rejection of the legitimacy of political conflict among early
adolescents and some adults; the concept of principled thinking provides an explanation for the tendency of many citizens to respond to civic tolerance items in an inconsistent manner; 2. there is some empirical evidence to associate political and moral thinking; 3. processes associated with civic tolerance in the political science literature are similar to experiences and processes that have been associated with attainment of principled thinking in the moral development literature; 4. if these variables are linked, then there are a number of implications for citizenship education in school and community settings.

Research Related to Democratic Procedural Norms

Civic tolerance. Procedural norms which allow consideration of alternatives are essential to the decision making processes of a democracy. Those who have studied procedural norms relevant to tolerance for diversity have found rather consistent results. Although there appears to be some degree of consensus among Americans about democratic procedural norms when they are asked to respond to concrete situations involving political conflict, their willingness to apply these norms is heavily influenced by their opinions on the particular issue and by their feelings about the specific groups involved. This inconsistency between abstract political values and concrete applications of these values is less pronounced among political elites, i.e., those who are most active in the political system and among the better educated.

The first major study of these issues was carried out by Stouffer in the early 50s. The focus of his research was the relationship between the perceived threat of communism and people’s willingness to allow communists, socialists, atheists and members of other controversial groups to speak, to have their books placed in public libraries and to engage in other public events. Stouffer compared two samples. One was a national sample of citizens, his “mass” sample. The other was a sample of 1500 civic leaders. Stouffer found his mass sample to be relatively intolerant of the right of controversial groups to express themselves in a public forum; only about one third of this group was rated tolerant. In contrast, two thirds of the elite or civic leader sample was rated tolerant on Stouffer’s measure. Stouffer also found that within the mass sample, education was closely associated with tolerance. Finally, the subject’s own opinion on the concrete issue, in this case perceived threat of communism, was closely associated with intolerance towards the controversial groups. This was true in both the elite and mass sample (Stouffer, 1963). McCloskey, in the 60s, compared mass and elite samples with similar results. His “elite” was composed of delegates to the 1956 political party conventions (McCloskey, 1964).

Prothro and Grigg, working with much smaller samples in Ann Arbor and Tallahassee in the 60s, found that almost all respondents endorsed majority rule and minority rights concepts in the abstract, but that there was much less support for application of these rights to presumably unpopular groups or actions. Education and socio-economic status were associated with consistency (Prothro and Grigg, 1960).
Reacting to some of the conceptual and empirical difficulties of these earlier studies, Lawrence undertook a more sophisticated attempt to test for patterns of civic tolerance in 1971. He noted that several elements which might account for intolerance were confounded in many of the earlier studies. He developed questions to separate tolerance for particular types of political expression such as demonstrations or public speaking, attitudes towards a variety of groups such as black militants or radical students, and attitudes about particular issues such as marijuana smoking or pollution. He also assessed the relationship of educational attainment to these other factors. Lawrence's conclusions, while richer than those previously obtained, are basically consistent with the thrust of the earlier work. He found tolerance to be highly issue-related as earlier researchers had assumed. Consistency in application of general norms increased with education. Differences among educational strata were greatest where norms are positive (tolerant) and issue orientation negative. Better educated subjects were able to allow disliked groups to exercise their constitutional rights. There was little difference when individuals felt supportive of the norm and positive toward the specific group or issue tested. In such cases there is no cognitive conflict and no actual need to apply the procedural norms. Lawrence also found a greater degree of tolerance of political activity by unpopular groups in 1971 than earlier studies had shown (Lawrence, 1976).

This trend towards somewhat greater tolerance has also been found in national citizenship assessment data for high school students. As with studies of adult populations, adolescents had been found to be intolerant of dissent and uncommitted to democratic procedural norms (Remmers, 1973). Recent assessments have shown an increase in tolerance for minority groups and for acceptance of Bill of Rights guarantees (Mehlinger, 1978). These changes, however, may result from shifting attitudes towards specific groups and may not be a genuine growth in civic tolerance (Sullivan, 1979). Groups that were anathema in the 50s and 60s may not be viewed as a threat today.

**Conflict tolerance.** Related to the notion of civic tolerance is a less well studied concept that we will call conflict tolerance; this is the acceptance of political conflict as a legitimate or essential element of the democratic process. Although early political socialization research established that much political learning approached adult levels by about 8th grade, one area of understanding that lagged behind was comprehension of political conflict. Children had difficulty accepting the possibility that there could be genuine difference of opinion among political leaders or candidates while both sides remained good citizens. Children had a tendency either to minimize or deny political conflict, or to condemn manifestations of this conflict (Hess and Torney, 1967).

Litt found a similar rejection in adolescents of politics as a process of bargaining and conflict resolution. This was most pronounced in a lower SES community where text material and civic leaders failed to support the teaching of this point of view; it was less apparent in a wealthier district where attention to politics as process was given in the schools (Litt, 1963).
The Growing Need for Civic Tolerance in the Mass Citizenry

Although teaching support for democratic procedural norms has been close to the hearts of social educators, the importance of this support in the mass citizenry has been a matter of debate among political theorists. When confronted with the evidence of an ideologically inconsistent, unknowledgeable and intolerant citizenry, some have argued that democracy depends on the adherence of political elites to procedural norms; as long as the mass citizenry is relatively passive the lack of ability to translate vague norms into political behavior is not important; it is the political elites who inform and lead and who must be supportive of democratic values (Dahl, 1976).

A rich history of support for demagogues and consequent persecution of political and ethnic minorities undermines the credibility of this view. One cannot guarantee citizens will remain passive or that leaders will be uniformly supportive of democratic norms. The inadequacy of this view may be greater today than in the past, as a number of social and political trends enhance the likelihood of effective political action. One trend has been towards a greater degree of political awareness and ideological consistency in the mass citizenry. One study found current citizens as aware and ideologically consistent as elite studies of politicians two decades ago (Nie and Anderson, 1974).

A second trend is the decline of the mediating role of political institutions over the past decades, while respect for all government and social institutions has also fallen dramatically (Miller, 1974). One example of this decline of mediators is the diminished role of the political party. The party no longer plays as important a part in the selection of candidates and the management of campaigns, nor does it effectively organize the electorate in support of candidates. The party has been replaced by candidate centered campaign efforts carried out through direct media contacts with the voter and through the primary system. At the same time voters, especially the young, fail to identify themselves with parties (Ladd, 1978). There is thus a large volatile pool of citizens who are hostile towards government institutions and unaffiliated with organized political groups; this is a group available for mobilization (Nie and Verba, 1972). The ability of this group to tolerate political conflict is potentially very important.

Another trend that necessitates concern with the ability of the citizenry to comprehend and support application of democratic norms is the growing tendency for single issue voting. More voters attempt to affect specific political policy rather than simply cast votes to legitimate decisions and candidates put forward by the political elite. Single issue voters are often driven by a concern for highly personalized "gut" issues such as abortion, gun control, pornography, sexual standards and ethnic concerns; these are issues on which it is particularly difficult to compromise or recognize another legitimate point of view. This is precisely the type of heated political situation in which one would expect specific issue concerns to impede application of abstract norms of civic tolerance to concrete political situations (Scammon and Wattenberg, 1970). Conflict and comprise are the essence of politics. It will be difficult for individual citizens who are active
in the political process to find satisfaction if they cannot accept the legitimacy of political conflict as a normal part of the process. The reduced likelihood of a passive citizenry governed by political elites also makes effective use of democratic procedural norms by the mass citizenry important if these democratic norms are to be maintained.

The Relationship of Cognitive Moral Development to Civic Tolerance

A cognitive development perspective on civic tolerance helps explain some of the findings in the political science literature on civic tolerance and has a number of important educational implications, especially for adolescents and adults.

This approach has its origins in the work of Piaget. The basic premise is that cognitive maturity is not the accumulation of information and experience, but a qualitatively different way of thinking. Development proceeds through a fixed sequence of stages and is associated with age, intellect and experience. The capacity for abstract thought, "formal operational thinking," necessary to apply general principles in specific cases does not appear, if at all, before early adolescence. A number of researchers have applied these developmental concepts to political issues. Adelson and O'Neil asked adolescents to solve a series of political problems confronted by a group of people stranded on an island after a shipwreck. They found that older subjects were able to consider more points of view and the social impact of choices (Adelson and O'Neil, 1966). Saratt found that few adults spontaneously used a "principled" or abstract reason when asked to resolve a hypothetical political problem. Most chose concrete responses. As with civic tolerance, educational attainment was closely associated with a tendency to use a principled response (Saratt, 1975).

Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of cognitive moral development is a particularly useful approach to the issues that concern us here, as it is focused on development of thought about similar issues and is somewhat more fully developed than other developmental approaches. A theory which explains how people reason about moral issues has clear application to understanding the development of political reasoning. Moral issues involve resolution of competing claims; political decisions also involve conflicts over competing claims in the "allocation of values for society." The issues that Kohlberg has identified as fundamental to moral reasoning include such clearly political concepts as authority, law and rules, justice, rights, and punishment; and, individuals use the same structural patterns of reasoning associated with Kohlberg's classic moral dilemmas when analyzing political conflicts (Lockwood, 1975).

Most important, Kohlberg's theory suggests that the capacity of an individual to tolerate conflict, to accept the legitimacy of the expression and political organization of genuinely conflicting points of view, is constrained by the stage of moral reasoning capacity achieved by the individual. From this cognitive developmental perspective, the ability to understand and
therefore tolerate conflict is not an attitude but an intellectual attainment. While an individual might acquire tolerance in particular situations through a social learning process, the ability to generate effectively a tolerant response in a novel and threatening context for controversy depends on structural elements of the person’s thought process.

Kohlberg’s theory is often discussed in terms of stages labeled with shorthand expressions that tend to focus attention on content differences among stages, rather than on the qualitatively different structure of reasoning embodied in each stage. For example, stage three is the “nice girl/good boy” stage, stage four is the “law and order” stage. A more useful way to approach the theory for our purposes is to examine the socio-moral perspective that underlies thinking at each stage. Each succeeding stage represents a more complex, differentiated social perspective — a more complicated world view. Simply stated, as the individual develops, the socio-moral perspective changes from an egocentric or individualistic view, to a view embedded in the social group or system, to one which transcends particular social systems or institutions.

Before individuals can accept the right of others to express positions that are in strong conflict with their own, they must have the capacity to view society and social conflict from a complex group perspective. That is, they must be able to accept simultaneously their own membership in the larger society and sub-groups within that society. This is essentially the difference between a stage three perspective oriented to a single set of group norms and a stage four perspective which can distinguish between laws — such as the political rules of the game — shared by the broader society, and varied norms and values of groupings within that society. At stage five, the individual is able to differentiate not only norms and sub-group values from more basic social values and laws such as procedural rules, but can also identify principles which take precedence over the rules of prevailing social institutions.

An early finding in the political socialization literature that, although young adults have attained near adult levels on political attitudes, they have difficulty coping with political conflict can be interpreted from this theoretical perspective. Hess and Torney quote a 7th grade girl’s reaction to the 1960 presidential election:

What sort of thing impressed you?

How Kennedy and Nixon both promised many things. And the morning after the election when Kennedy was elected, and Nixon said that Kennedy would be a nice president. Kennedy said how sorry he was that Mr. Nixon wasn’t elected. He would have been just as good a president as he was himself, and that he wished they could both be president together. I would have liked them to go together instead of going through this big thing that they go out in the streets and talk to all the people and giving the impression that they got a better impression than the other one. It would have been easy if they both went together. Then there wouldn’t have been much quarreling and fighting . . . (Hess and Torney, 1967)
This child is struggling with the apparent contradiction of two respected political figures in conflict and seems to resolve it by denying genuine conflict. Her alternative seems to be denial that one or the other candidate is part of the group, i.e., a good person, or the belief that they are really in agreement. She is having difficulty accepting the legitimacy of genuine conflict within the broader political consensus. This is the socio-moral perspective of “love it or leave it” — the inability to accept political and social disagreement. One would expect citizens with a stage three non-principled socio-moral perspective to embrace such American values as free speech and due process in the abstract, as part of the American creed, and have a great deal of trouble applying them to individuals who are not viewed as part of the group or good Americans. This inability of many citizens to apply the elements of the American creed to those not accepted as “good” Americans is, of course, precisely the finding of civic tolerance research. This finding is thus consistent with a cognitive developmental interpretation.

Students of political socialization have also found that the individual's perception of an appropriate citizenship role changes with maturity. Children endorse a passive role; their responses focus on respect for and obedience to authority. Adolescents are more likely to suggest a more active citizenship orientation involving voting, staying informed about public affairs and expressing political points of view (Jennings and Neimi, 1974). This is consistent with Kohlberg's description of the evolution of the conception of authority through successive developmental stages. Conventional subjects tend to be unquestioning and passive towards authority; principled subjects have an independent set of values by which to judge the actions of authorities. This notion of good citizenship involving action is also consistent with the view of conflict implicit in the theory. Citizens who appreciate the legitimacy of political conflict would be expected to include advocacy in their concept of citizenship.

For Kohlberg, as for Piaget, the process of cognitive development entails active resolution of conflict. The individual confronts a conflict that is not easily resolved by the particular cognitive orientation that he/she possesses; alternative solutions are examined; a more useful and complex perspective is developed to handle this and similar conflicts. Those who are more active in social interaction and who are more exposed to the viewpoints of others develop more rapidly and further than those who do not have experience (Kohlberg, 1973). Age, though an index of maturation, is also suggestive of experience. It is not surprising that age is associated with cognitive moral development. Education is also associated with development, perhaps because it increases the likelihood that an individual will be confronted by problems, points of view and people that might otherwise go ignored or unnoticed.

This mechanism of growth through experience with conflict resolution is consistent with the finding that the well educated and political elites are more likely to be able to apply democratic procedural norms to specific cases than the average citizen is. Presumably, through political activity as well as through education, individuals are exposed to problematic political situations or issues and are more likely to confront alternative viewpoints and be required to resolve the conflict. Thus political participation may facilitate cognitive development useful for effective citizenship.
While findings in the literature of political tolerance are consistent with a cognitive developmental approach, nothing has been done to establish the link empirically. This study is an attempt to do so. If development of the capacity for principled political thinking is critical to the ability or tendency to be politically tolerant we would expect that:

1. Principled thinkers will be significantly more likely to apply consistently principles of democracy, such as majority rule and minority rights, to specific cases involving such issues than non-principled thinkers.

2. Principled thinkers will be more likely to accept political conflict as desirable and legitimate than non-principled thinkers.

Since a more complex socio-moral perspective equips the individuals with the capacity to appreciate conflict and question authority we would expect that:

3. Principled thinkers will be more likely to endorse an active citizenship role than non-principled thinkers.

Finally, since the mechanism for development of a principled level of cognitive moral development entails confrontation and personal resolution of controversial issues, we would expect that for individuals of the same age and educational background:

4. Principled thinkers will show more political involvement, such as political interest and involvement in discussions of political issues, than citizens who reason predominantly at a conventional level.

**Method of the Study**

**Sample.** The sample included 135 college freshmen and sophomores with a median age of 18/19. Students were sampled by classes in the required general education curriculum of a small private teacher's college and were representative of the college as a whole in their distribution among major fields. Two thirds of the sample were females and nearly all were pre-service teachers. Data were collected during spring of 1978.

**Identification of Principled and Non-principled Thinkers.** For the purposes of this study it was desirable to have sub-samples of subjects who, while similar in other respects, differed dramatically in their cognitive moral perspective. Rest's Defining Issues Test (DIT) was used to identify sub-samples of subjects who rarely select principled responses as the key consideration in resolving an ethical dilemma and those who often do so. Rest's test is an attempt to measure objectively Kohlberg's moral stage construct. Subjects are asked to identify the important arguments a decision-maker should consider when confronted with a series of dilemmas identical to or similar to Kohlberg's frequently used dilemmas. This instrument is not appropriate when accurate fine stage scoring is required; here we are con-

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1Pilot work using a written version of Kohlberg's open-ended interview yielded similar results to this study, but was extremely time consuming and produced large numbers of unscorable protocols.
cerned with two broader categories. Rest's P score correlates moderately with Kohlberg's methods of scoring structured open-ended interviews. Test-retest reliability has been reported at .81 where the initial range of scores was great to .65 where initial scores were more similar (Rest, 1977).²

Because respondents select rather than generate responses, the DIT yields high P scores for those who would normally be scored Stage 4 by conventional systems (Rest, 1977). This is acceptable in this study since the complexities of a Stage 4 socio-moral perspective are adequate to allow the individual to extend procedural protections to unpopular groups.

In this sample, the distribution of P scores was roughly normal with 40 P as the median. This is typical of comparable college populations reported by Rest. Those scoring 50 P or above were identified as predominantly principled thinkers. The cut points were established by taking the top and bottom 20% in an earlier administration of the DIT to a similar population. The 30 P score is about the mean for high school students reported by Rest; the 50 P score is near the mean for graduate students in earlier studies (Rest, 1977). Cut points, based both on pilot administration to other students at the same college and on scores generated by groups expected to show large differences in development, helped assure that the subjects in the sub-samples would consistently approach moral conflict from different cognitive moral perspectives.

Of the 135 respondents, 25 subjects placed in the high scoring group and 34 placed in the low scoring group; 15 questionnaires were discarded due to incomplete data. The median age of the high P score or “principled” thinking group was 19/20; the median for the low scoring group was 18/19. The sex ratio was about the same in both groups.

Related Variables. The civic tolerance, conflict legitimacy, citizenship role, and political interest variables were measured by items largely drawn from the literature and will be elaborated on in the discussion of findings. These items were embedded in a questionnaire containing other items many of which dealt with current or local controversial public issues. These additional items were designed to discourage attempts to give socially correct responses.

Presentation and Interpretation of Findings

Civic Tolerance. Following Prothro and Grigg, subjects were asked to respond to general items relating to support for procedural elements of the democratic creed, i.e., majority rule and minority rights (Prothro and Grigg, 1960). (A sample item: “Public Officials should be chosen by majority vote.”) Respondents were also presented with items in which these general principles were applied to specific actions or groups. There were 5

²In addition to the relationship to Kohlberg's measurement system, there is additional data to support the validity of the Rest DIT measure. The P score increases with age and education. The highest average scores are obtained by groups who would be expected to have had considerable exposure to processes and arguments associated with cognitive moral growth. Such "experts" include political theory students and graduate students in philosophy. In addition, in experiments using the DIT, P scores have risen for groups exposed to treatments focused on analysis of moral conflict, but not for groups engaged in equally rigorous but less theoretically relevant instruction in other subject matter, such as logic (Rest, 1977).
specific items related to majority rule. (A sample item: "In a city referendum deciding on tax supported undertakings only taxpayers should be allowed to vote.") There were 6 specific items for minority rights, including an item about censorship added to Prothro and Grigg's original 5 items. (A sample item: "If a person wanted to make a speech in this city against churches and religion, he should be allowed to speak.") Those endorsing 4 of 5 majority rights items or 5 of 6 minority rights items were considered to apply general democratic procedural norms consistently in specific cases.

**Majority Rule.** The results of the comparison of the two groups on the specific majority rule items support the hypothesis. Both groups almost universally supported the general items, but the principled group was significantly more likely to endorse at least 4 of 5 of the specific applications of the principle.

**Figure 1:** Support Majority Rule — Specific Cases by Principled Moral Reasoning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principled Reasoning</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Majority Rule</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[x^2 = 27.8\text{ significance .00}\]

n = 25 34

In the case of majority rule the differences in pattern of endorsement between the groups are even more dramatic in the raw uncollapsed data.

**Figure 2:** Support Majority Rule — Specific Cases by Principled Moral Reasoning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principled Reasoning</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Majority Rule Items</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[x^2 = 20.62\text{ significance .00}\]

Those who have a better developed capacity for principled thinking are better able to generalize democratic procedural norms to specific cases. They are better equipped to give the "cliches" of democracy operational meaning. Such citizens have the capacity and perhaps the inclination to support political leaders who articulate and enforce these values; they should be better able to participate in political action without attempting to prevent similar participation by those with other interests.

**Minority Rights.** While the differences between groups in endorsement of minority rights items are not quite as great as they were for majority rule, there is still a significant difference. A majority of both groups endorse 5 of the 6 specific applications, but a rather sizable minority of the non-principled thinking group fails to endorse these items.

These findings are not inconsistent with a cognitive developmental interpretation. The underlying assumption in comparing responses to general and specific civic tolerance items is that the specific items pertain to groups or actions that are perceived as threatening or unacceptable. If the subject
does not experience this subjective conflict between the general norm and its specific application, then the degree of cognitive moral development would be largely irrelevant to the response. For many subjects in this study, there may have been no clear conflict between the general norms pertaining to minority rights and the groups identified in application items. College students today may not perceive a serious threat from allowing minority ethnic groups, socialists, atheists and so forth to express their views and thus have no trouble endorsing minority rights items pertaining to these groups. Greater attention to these issues in the social studies curriculum and in the media may have shaped the responses of this generation of students. The general societal awareness of human rights issues may also have influenced these responses. They are consistent with the recent findings of greater support for democratic procedural norms (Lawrence, 1976). A social learning rather than cognitive developmental model might best account for this finding. To untangle specific instances of social learning related to the groups or acts mentioned in items and the tendency to generalize principles, further assessment of attitudes about specific groups would be needed. The lack of this type of data in this study makes it impossible to interpret fully the results obtained on the minority rights variable.

**Figure 3: Support Minority Rights — Specific Cases by Principled Moral Reasoning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principled Reasoning</th>
<th>Minority Rights +</th>
<th>Minority Rights -</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ x^2 3.8 \text{ significance .05} \]

n = 25 34

**Conflict Tolerance.** As Weissberg has noted, there is probably a personality as well as a cognitive component to conflict tolerance (Weissberg, 1974). These important personality issues are beyond the scope of this study. Individuals who can comprehend the utility or necessity of political conflict for effective decision-making in a democracy may not be comfortable in conflict situations; however, without this intellectual acceptance of the legitimate role of disagreement among those who are politically active, it will be difficult to maintain democratic procedural norms. In this study, we have looked at only a small fragment of the issue of conflict, *i.e.*, acceptance of partisan conflict. Two items endorsing the usefulness of partisan conflict were drawn from Litt's study of adolescent political conceptualization. (A sample item: “Conflict among the political parties hurts our nation more than helps it.”) Acceptance of the legitimacy of political conflict required endorsement of both items. As can be seen in Figure 4, principled thinkers, who presumably have the capacity to comprehend the complexity of simultaneous conflict and consensus within a society, were significantly more likely to endorse the value of conflict and are thus better equipped to be active participant citizens, citizens who accept the right of others to be equally participant.

In a pilot study conducted in the same area as the college, elderly residents responded to the majority rule and minority rights items; these residents were almost universally unwilling to apply minority rights principles to the specific groups and issues identified in these items.
Citizenship Role. Since students of political socialization have traced the perception of citizenship role in children and adolescents, there are several measures available in the literature. Since even the standard “active citizen” items define citizenship rather passively — voting is for many legitimation of authority — we have added a third more activist category to the citizenship measure taken from Jennings study of adolescent socialization. Subject responses to the following open-ended item were categorized as 1. passive/obedient 2. alert/informed 3. active. To be identified as “active” subjects had to identify behaviors beyond voting: “People have different ideas about what being a good citizen means. Note some of the things that you think describe a good citizen — that is, what things about a person are most important in showing that he/she is a good citizen.”

None of the principled thinkers gave a passive/obedient response as either the first or second attribute of a good citizen; about half of the non-principled thinkers did so.
Not only are principled thinkers more likely to identify an active role for the citizen, but it is consistent with the literature on civic tolerance to suggest that an active orientation may facilitate the development of principled thinking. Those who are politically active show greater tendency to generalize from democratic procedural norms to specific incidents. It may be that in their political roles they have had to confront genuine political conflict and to resolve that conflict effectively. For example, a city official may actually have had to deal with the right of a controversial political figure to speak in a public place. Such individuals have been forced to consider the constitutional implications and solve the problems presented. This confrontation/resolution process is instrumental in cognitive moral growth.

Political Interest. One would expect political interest to facilitate cognitive moral development much as political activity should. Those who are interested in politics, or who frequently discuss political issues with friends, may be exposed to controversy and alternative points of view that encourage development. In this study there was no difference between the two groups in response to the item: “Some people follow public affairs a lot; others don’t pay much attention. Do you follow public issues: most of the time, often, occasionally, hardly ever.” When respondents were asked if they discussed political issues with friends, the principled group was more likely to indicate that they did so several times a week or more than was the non-principled groups. This difference was not, however, statistically significant. If political interest is related to principled thinking, more sensitive measures are needed. This may not be tapping conflict resolution experience.

Summary of Findings and Implications for Citizenship Education

The results of the study support the plausibility of attempting to account for patterns of civic tolerance from the perspective of cognitive moral development. Principled thinkers were more likely to extend the principles of majority rule and minority rights to specific groups or political behaviors; to endorse the legitimacy of political partisan conflict; to define the citizen role in terms of active involvement. In fact, none of the 25 gave a passive definition of citizenship, while nearly half of the low scoring group did. Principled thinkers were more likely to report frequent political discussions with peers, although this last finding was not statistically significant. There was no difference in the tendency of principled or non-principled thinkers to express political interest.

Civic tolerance and cognitive moral development are here associated. If, as a cognitive developmental theoretical perspective would imply, the capacity for conflict tolerance is limited by the level of cognitive moral development attained by the individual, then it is crucial for the development of citizen competence for educators to facilitate this intellectual growth. Although social learning and exposure to particular issues or groups may appear to increase tolerance, one cannot predict future conflicts; to assure the ability to apply democratic procedural norms flexibly in crisis settings educators must go beyond multicultural exposure, to intellectual development.
According to Kohlberg, the crucial elements in the developmental process include awareness of genuine moral conflict that cannot be resolved at the individual’s current stage, exposure to solutions which reflect the next highest stage, and resolution of the conflict (Kohlberg, 1973).

The development of a more complex and more adequate socio-moral perspective depends on involvement in and resolution of genuine conflict. There is some evidence that this growth can take place in classroom discussions of hypothetical dilemmas, but such synthetic dilemmas may leave some students unchallenged. These students are unlikely to show development (Blatt, 1969). It is important for schools to focus on the kinds of conflicts that generate controversy in the community. To be sure, students are exposed to these issues in the community, media and so forth, but it is in the classroom that these issues may be confronted in ways likely to facilitate development. Teachers may help students become aware of the moral conflicts inherent in political and cultural issues, may help them identify alternative positions and encourage students to resolve these conflicts. In addition, schools can help students develop the intellectual skills necessary for analysis of complex problems.

The teacher in the controlled environment of the classroom can create conditions for the developmentally productive use of controversy. There is some evidence that a classroom where teachers show respect for student views and provide students with opportunities for collaboration in achieving class objectives contributes to the development of respect for and tolerance of the views of others (Hawley, 1976). An open classroom climate where students participate in decision making and are free to challenge and discuss views raised in the subject matter appears to provide an appropriate context for cognitive moral growth and has been associated with outcomes related to civic tolerance (Ehman, 1980).

Once students are made sensitive to conflict and develop skills of analysis they may be better equipped to confront such issues in future non-school political arenas. Students of moral development have found that high school students exposed to analysis and resolution of moral conflicts are more likely to continue to develop to higher stages of understanding after they leave school than those who have not had this experience (Kohlberg and Kramer, 1969). This is important because, although significant development can occur during the high school years, students are unlikely to achieve a consistent principled level of thinking. Unless schools can launch students on a process that will continue into adulthood, large numbers will be unlikely to develop the capacities necessary to cope with political conflict. Both encouraging involvement in political activity and providing tools for conflict resolution may start students on a process that will facilitate this future development. Social education must continue in non-school political settings.

Schools have the capacity to control more than curriculum content; the school is also a political system and students may be involved in participation experiences within the school. Many of the decisions routinely made in schools involving distribution of benefits, school rules, discipline and
instructional options may be more salient to students and more likely to engage them in serious analysis and force conflict resolution than hypothetical issues, or social issues discussed in the classroom. There is some evidence that such participation in school decision making has a positive impact on support for democratic norms (Merelman, 1971).

Thus educators who wish to facilitate the cognitive development which may be essential to civic tolerance should give attention to the curriculum, political climate of the school and community involvement. The process is not completed in childhood or adolescence nor in school. Social educators need to consider ways to encourage future student involvement and ways to define their own role and the appropriate settings for their work more broadly.

References


Trends in Social Studies Curricula and Graduation Competencies

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Perhaps more than any other topic, graduation competencies have recently been the focus of both popular and professional literature about public schooling in America. The natural culmination of a decade devoted to a faulty concept of accountability, the minimum competency movement has vaulted into the spotlight as a critical public wants to know why the schools cannot assure the "basics" for everyone. Newspapers and popular journals reporting the minimum competency movement generate a picture that nearly all states are now or will soon be requiring minimum competency testing in the "basics." Recent articles in *Phi Delta Kappan* promote the feeling that minimum competency tests are inevitable everywhere:

As of March 15, 1978, 33 states had taken some type of action to mandate the setting of minimum competency standards for elementary and secondary students. All of the remaining states either have legislation pending or legislation or state board studies under way. (Pipho, 1978, pp. 585-8)

The broad and often loose commentary on minimum and graduation competencies promotes a series of important questions. To what extent are the minimum competencies related to the curriculum goals/instructional performances promoted by the professional communities in education? What is the status of assessment procedures—skills and knowledges—among those who will make decisions about minimum competency testing? More specifically for the social studies, to what extent do emphases on the "basics" promote undesirable imbalances among various domains of the curriculum. For example, "basics" may be operationalized in the social studies as low-level knowledge outcomes, simplistic approaches to skill development, or even outcomes which traditionally have been associated with other content areas such as language arts and mathematics. Paradoxically, some social studies outcomes, like map skills and "life" skills, are

1Author's Note: These data were collected in 1979. The competency movement is so volatile that the data may become quickly dated.
being operationalized within the context of language arts and mathematics instruction and assessment. Well-intentioned emphases on the "basics" may result in diminished attention to outcomes that the social studies profession has identified as meaningful.

Under the leadership of Anna Ochoa the National Council for the Social Studies has demonstrated extensive concern about the impact of the *NCSS Curriculum Guidelines* (1971) and the *Multiethnic Guidelines* (1976) on the social studies curriculum, the relationship between NCSS curriculum goals and large-scale assessment practices, and the influence of the minimum competency movement on the social studies. In 1978, the NCSS Committee on Testing was established to conduct a study of the relationship between the *NCSS Curriculum Guidelines* (1971/1976) and standardized testing in social studies (Fox, Williams, and Moore, 1978). Members of the Committee on Testing were invited to prepare an NCSS policy statement on graduation competency testing in the social studies—approved by the NCSS Board of Directors in November, 1978 (Fox, Williams, and Winters, 1979). As members of one or both of these committees and as a result of research on the *NCSS Curriculum Guidelines* and testing practices, we became increasingly interested in assessing what impact the minimum competency movement was having on social studies in the states.

In November, 1979, the Committee on Testing reported its findings to the Council of State Social Studies Specialists (CS 4) for its reaction (Moore, 1979). Questions generated by the CS 4 group, coupled with the Committee on Testing's research, produced the following questions: How pervasive is the minimum competency movement in the social studies? What is the relationship between established minimum competency tests in social studies and professionally produced NCSS Curriculum Guidelines? To what extent do the minimum competency tests "deflect" the intent of social studies curriculum/instruction? In other words, has the rich scope and breadth of social studies programs been reduced in order to allow more instructional time in the "basic" content areas contained on competency tests?

A questionnaire focusing on the questions above was prepared and distributed to one CS 4 representative in each of 48 states. CS 4 members were selected as respondents to the survey because they reflect the most current and accurate knowledge of trends in their states. Two states, which do not hold membership in CS 4, were not included. Completed questionnaires were received from 43 states—a 90% return. What follows is a description and analysis of the findings and results.

Of primary interest were the extent to which states had mandated graduation competencies and were operating testing programs and the extent of overlap between curriculum subjects. The following questions were asked:

Does your state mandate graduation competencies in curriculum areas other than social studies?  
(N = 40) Yes 19 No 21
Do you feel that social studies skill competencies are included under language arts/reading competencies?  
(N = 18) Yes 13 No 5

Do you feel that social studies skill competencies are included under mathematics competencies?  
(N = 16) Yes 6 No 10

Does your state operate a testing program to assess graduation competencies in areas other than social studies?  
(N = 18) Yes 12 No 6

Are these tests norm-referenced?  
(N = 13) Yes 6 No 7

Less than 50% (19) of the CS 4 members reported that their states mandated graduation competencies in one or more areas of the curriculum (see Table 1). These data suggest that the minimum competency movement may not be as pervasive as was reported in the May issue of the Phi Delta Kappan.

Table 1: Graduation Competency Requirements by Subject Area and Number of States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Area</th>
<th>No. States</th>
<th>Subject Area</th>
<th>No. States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Physical Ed.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Arts</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Business Ed.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Consumer Ed.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responses by the social studies specialists from states mandating minimum competencies strongly support (72%) the notion that many social studies skills are included on the graduation competency tests in language arts/reading. Further, 37% perceived that social studies skill competencies were also included on competency tests in mathematics. When the Committee on Testing examined achievement tests in social studies, it was noted that map and globe measurement and graph reading and interpretation skills were frequently included as test items under the mathematics heading. Items dealing with locating the main idea, interpreting and drawing conclusions from historical passages, and hypothesizing about and making decisions about social problems were frequently found on reading/language arts tests.

Of the 19 states that mandate graduation competencies, 13 states conduct a testing program to assess those competencies. These states are closely divided between the reported use of norm-referenced and criterion-referenced tests.
Recommend the report of the Committee on Testing raised serious questions about the sources of the social studies curriculum. How significant were the NCSS Curriculum Guidelines in the preparation of a social studies philosophy, curriculum goals and instructional objectives? How much do the state departments of education direct and/or influence the social studies curriculum in the public schools? An initial assumption of that study was that the classical curriculum model shown in Figure 1 would be present in the social studies.

Therefore, the following questions were included on the survey:

Does your state distribute a philosophy or rationale statement for the social studies curriculum? (N = 43) Yes 29 No 14

Are school districts expected to incorporate the philosophy of rationale statement into their social studies curriculum? (N = 29) Yes 21 No 8

Is the social studies philosophy statement based upon the NCSS Curriculum Guidelines and Multiethnic Guidelines? (N = 29) Yes 16 No 13

This assumption rests on the basic readings in Curriculum (Taba) and the NCSS Guidelines. While the assumption was clearly made in the study, it was not necessarily an expectation.

See Table 4 for survey of responses by state.
Approximately two-thirds (29) of the CS 4 respondents reported that their states prepare and distribute descriptive philosophies or rationales for the social studies curriculum, but only 21 states expect the local schools to incorporate these philosophies into their curricula. Less than 40% (19) of the states distribute specific social studies objectives to the local schools, and only 12 of those states expect the objectives to be included in the local school curricula. Several respondents (10) reported that they did not believe that it was desirable for the state authority to exercise influence over the social studies curriculum.

When asked if the curriculum philosophy and/or instructional objectives for social studies were based upon the *NCSS Curriculum Guidelines* and *Multiethnic Guidelines*, approximately 50% of the respondents reported that the state philosophy was congruent with the *Guidelines*. The respondents' comments suggested that their state curriculum guidelines were consistent with, rather than based upon, the *NCSS Curriculum Guidelines*.

The following questions were included on the questionnaire to identify the locus of influence—state or local school district—on graduation competencies in social studies:

- Does your state legal code or state education authority require that students must successfully satisfy graduation competencies in social studies?[^4]
- Does the state or the local school district determine the specifics of the graduation competencies in social studies?
- Is your state likely to require graduation competencies in social studies in the near future?[^5]

[^4]: See Table 4 for survey of responses by state.
[^5]: See Table 4 for survey of responses by state.
If graduation competencies are required, will the state or the local school district most likely determine the specific competencies?

These data indicate that 24 states have or will soon have graduation competency programs in the social studies. About half of these states will assign responsibility for the determination of graduation competencies to the local schools, while the remainder of the states will establish statewide competencies. These responses, along with responses concerning curriculum leadership, indicate that more than 50% of the states allow the local school authority to determine the objectives and competencies under the social studies curriculum.

**Table 2: Required Social Studies Courses and Content of Competency Programs (Number of States)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Courses</th>
<th>Required Social Studies Courses</th>
<th>Competency Program Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Am. History</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State History</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World History</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prob. of Dem.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soc./Anth.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Social studies curriculum goals are frequently derived from subjects and/or topics that are required by educational authorities. While the requiring of a subject, such as American History, does not mandate particular cognitive or skill behaviors, traditional beliefs and materials about American History do influence social studies goals. When asked about course/topic requirements the CS 4 respondents indicated:

Does your state require that selected selected courses be taught in the social studies curriculum?  
(N = 43) Yes 38 No 5

*Inadvertently, state history was not listed on the questionnaire as a source for social studies competencies. One respondent did write in state history as essential to the state competency test.*
Does your state require that selected topics or units be included in the social studies curriculum?

These responses strongly suggest that the states' influence on social studies is best characterized as mandated subjects rather than as mandated sets of curriculum goals and performances.

The respondents were asked to indicate what courses were required in their states and what courses they felt were most likely to contain instruction essential to satisfy the graduation competencies in social studies. (See Table 2.) The respondents were also asked to indicate topics (units) that are required in the social studies classroom and those topics that are most likely to be a source for graduation competencies. (See Table 3.)

Table 3: Required Social Studies Topics and Content of Competency Programs (Number of States)⁷

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Required Social Studies Topics</th>
<th>Competency Program Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fed. Const.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Const.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumerism</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Enterprise</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Communism</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law Education</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data reported in Tables 2 and 3 clearly suggest that social studies subjects and topics required by the states emphasize American studies over world studies. The major content influence of the graduation competencies reinforces that conclusion. Topics mandated in the social studies curriculum emphasize the individual's adjustment to society (i.e., consumerism, anti-communism, free enterprise, law, etc.).

The tabled data illustrate that the subjects and topics mandated by the states are not congruent with content sources for graduation competencies. Graduation competencies are generally "minimum" requirements and it may be argued that social studies curriculum/instruction should be more comprehensive than a set of "minimum competencies." Nevertheless, the sources of the social studies curriculum and the sources of the social studies competencies appear to be significantly different.

The Committee on Testing reported that standardized tests in the social studies include a significant number of items referenced to geography knowledge and skills (Fox, Williams, and Moore, 1978). The pattern of

⁷Inadvertently, state history was not listed on the questionnaire as a source for social studies competencies. One respondent did write in state history as essential to the state competency test.
state requirements (Tables 2-3) is not congruent with that testing practice, unless geography information is subsumed under the content of other subjects and topics.

Table 4: Selected Survey of Responses by State

| Does your state distribute a philosophy or rationale statement for the Social Studies Curriculum? | Yes: AL; AZ; CA; CT; DE; FL; GA; HI; ID; IN; IA; KS; ME; MI; MN; NB; NV; NY; NC; ND; OR; PA; TN; VT; VA; WA; WV; WI | No: AK; AR; IL; KY; LA; MD; MS; MO; NM; OH; OK; RI; SC; WY |
| Does your state legal code or state educational authority require that studies must successfully satisfy graduation competencies in Social Studies? | Yes: CA; DE; HI; IL; IN; NM; OR; PA; SC; VT; VA; WY | No: AK; AL; AZ; AR; CT; FL; GA; ID; IA; KS; KY; LA; ME; MD; MI; MN; MS; MO; NB; NV; NY; NC; ND; OH; OK; RI; TN; WA; WV; WI |
| Is your state likely to require graduation competencies in Social Studies in the near future? | Yes: AL; AR; FL; GA; LA; ME; MD; MN; NV; TN; WV |

The final section of the questionnaire asked the CS 4 representatives to indicate how graduation competency tests in social studies would be conducted:

| Where graduation competencies are required, are norm-referenced tests (NRT) or criterion-referenced tests (CRT) most likely to be used for assessment? | (N = 24) | NRT 10 | CRT 14 |
| Will (are) the graduation competencies in social studies to be assessed by the state or by the local district? | (N = 24) | State 8 | Local 16 |

It is readily apparent that local school districts are frequently responsible for the selection and/or development of the graduation competency assessment in the social studies. In addition, it appears that over 40% of the states will (are) employ norm-referenced tests to assess these competencies.
The NCSS recently published a bulletin, *Defining the Social Studies*, which describes confusion that exists over the definition and purpose of social studies in the public schools (Barr, Barth, and Shermis, 1977). The survey of CS 4 personnel suggests that the NCSS Curriculum Guidelines (1971/1976) have, at best, limited impact on what is practiced in the social studies classroom. Furthermore, it appears that there is only limited direction given by state departments of education to the social studies curriculum — except that expressed through mandated courses and topics. The pattern of these mandated subjects and topics clearly supports the conclusion that the state influence on the social studies curriculum tends to focus upon the individual in a national society at the expense of the human condition — incongruent with the NCSS Curriculum Guidelines (1971/1976). The NCSS curriculum documents emphasize a breadth of content and concepts promoting a multicultural view of the world and society, while the states' requirements tend to focus upon an inward view of the individual in society.

An examination of the content source for the graduation competencies in social studies indicates that minimum standards for graduation are derived from yet another curriculum source — something that might be termed adjustment to society. The origin of the graduation competencies appears related to contemporary concerns of the popular culture — job skills, law enforcement, etc., rather than the traditional subjects.

Graduation competency programs will obviously result in remedial instruction for those students failing to meet minimum standards. Increasingly the cost of remediation and the obvious incongruity between professional concepts of social studies and those held in the popular culture will “deflect” and shape social studies goals. Instructional models “deflected” by assessment procedures and instruments clearly abort the classical curriculum design in social studies.

Minimum competencies in language arts and mathematics — the popular “basics” — are potentially competitive with social studies space and emphasis in the school curriculum. Skills common to language, computation and social studies instruction are most likely to be assigned to those subjects most clearly defined and popularly supported. The content of standardized tests suggests that this condition is already a serious problem (Fox, Williams, and Moore, 1978).

There is considerable danger that the social studies profession and professionals may view the graduation competency movement with excessive simplicity. It has become increasingly apparent that social studies educators have not given an appropriate emphasis to the process of assessment. While outcomes for the social studies have been well described in the more popular methods texts, systematic and complete discussions of the processes of assessing student learning have been severely lacking. An upcoming NCSS Bulletin on testing will document this phenomenon at some length. Extensive confusion exists in the profession about the utility of norm-
referenced and criterion-referenced tests; both are being used to assess minimum competencies. The Committee on Testing examined and reported on locally produced and state produced graduation competency tests in social studies. The report concluded that these test prototypes illustrate considerable naivete about testing within the profession (Fox, Williams, and Moore, 1978). While no position about the desirability of minimum competency testing has been taken either by NCSS or in this paper, it is quite apparent that the competency movement is here and in place in many areas of the country. Therefore, since education agencies at all levels are likely to be involved in the minimum competency process, social studies teachers, chairpersons, supervisors and teacher educators are in need of improved skills in testing and evaluation. Social studies professionals need to be skilled in the translation of curriculum goals into performance criteria, identification of competencies, development and identification of appropriate tests and test items, and the interpretation of test results. Without this expertise, test makers are likely to define, shape, and assess a social studies that is incongruous, inconsistent and inappropriate to the goals that social studies professionals believe are important for American youth.

References


Introduction

The Social Studies curriculum does not work. It does not work conceptually, and it is not working in practice. Conceptually, it lacks the logical and psychological principles necessary to give it a coherent structure. In practice, surveys consistently show it to be the least popular subject with students, and show, among school leavers and college freshmen, massive ignorance of even its most basic subject matter.

My purpose in this article is to discuss three ideas which seem to have had a profound influence in making the Social Studies curriculum what it is. The best known exposition of these ideas can be found in the writings of John Dewey, particularly in his *Democracy and Education*. The degree to which his writings have had a causal influence on the curriculum, and the steps whereby that influence might have been felt, are not my concern here. Rather, his writings are referred to because they embody the set of ideas which find a realization in the form of the present Social Studies curriculum, and which provide what theoretical basis it has.

There has been much debate about how far, or even whether, Dewey's ideas have been put into practice, and how far practices which claim Dewey as their theoretical source are in fact reasonable interpretations of his words. In some cases the interpreters seem to have added their own words to Dewey's, or even replaced his with theirs, retaining only the influence attaching to his name. The "expanding horizons" form of curriculum, for example, is sometimes associated with Dewey's writings; at other times it is claimed to have nothing to do with Dewey's ideas, deriving rather from some principles of developmental psychology. Whatever the historical case about the development of the present general form of the Social Studies curriculum, it seems to me clear that the theoretical justification for this general form is nowhere else as adequately and systematically laid out as in *Democracy and Education*. Even if the present form has in fact been brought about by atheoretical piecemeal tinkering, nevertheless a theoretical justification for that form is available in Dewey's writing. And, of course, tinkering is never atheoretical — even if theory is not conscious, it informs presuppositions which determine curriculum decisions. In what follows,
then, my criticism of the general form of the Social Studies curriculum is aimed at those of Dewey's ideas which support it. If some readers want to claim that the ideas are not his but are some interpreter's, then they will have to show that the words Dewey uses mean something different from what I take them to mean. When discussion "expanding horizons," for example, I mean by that precisely what the quotations from Dewey suggest. That "expanding horizons" may have gathered further theoretical or practical impedimenta is not my concern here. What I want to do in this case, and other cases, is to criticize the best justification I can find for this form of curriculum, and the best justification I can find is in Democracy and Education.

In the first section, I will discuss Dewey's interpretation of the truism that one must begin all teaching and learning from the child's everyday experience, from what the child already knows best, and work gradually outward from that, and will consider how that idea has provided the most powerful principle giving form to the Social Studies curriculum. In the second section, I will discuss Dewey's distinction between natural and formal education, and see how that is influential in determining further aspects of the curriculum structure and dominant methods of teaching in Social Studies. In the third section, I will look at Dewey's distinction between what I call socializing and educating, and note how that has a most general and pervasive influence on thinking about the proper content and purpose of the Social Studies curriculum.

In each case I will criticize Dewey's interpretations and distinctions. My aim is not to construct a compelling argument against Dewey's overall thesis in Democracy and Education, even if I could. Rather, I focus on those parts of it which provide some of the fundamental ideas on which the present Social Studies curriculum stands, with the intention of showing the frailty of those foundations.

John Dewey and Expanding Horizons

Central to Dewey's critique of that uninspired and dogged educational practice which he saw around him as a young schoolmaster was his observation that it ignored what he called the psychological principle. It treated the child's mind as a passive and reluctantly receptive organ into which knowledge, logically organized, might with some difficulty and force be impressed; the method of this impressing involving the heavy use of repetition and rote-learning. The psychological principle, in contrast, saw the child's mind as naturally active and full of impulses to explore the world. From this principle Dewey drew two prominent and intertwined educational recommendations. One concerned the kind of curriculum content which would best engage the child's naturally active mind in exploring the world. The second concerned the methods of teaching and learning which would best encourage the continued growth of learning.

I have somewhat artificially separated these two recommendations for purposes of discussion. In this section I focus on the principle's role in providing content, and organization of that content, in the Social Studies cur-
riculum; in the next section I focus on its role in suggesting teaching and learning methods. It will be evident that there is considerable overlap between the two.

There is an intuitively obvious sense in which knowledge can be expanded only from the basis of past experience, and Dewey built heavily on this sense to suggest a structure for the whole curriculum. In his later reflections on education, he still maintained that:

It is a cardinal precept of the newer school of education that the beginning of instruction shall be made with the experience learners already have; that this experience and the capacities that have been developed during its course provide the starting point for all further learning. (Dewey, 1938/1963, p. 74)

In addition, he argued that there should be "orderly development towards expansion and organization of subject matter through growth of experience" and that it is "essential that the new objects and events be related intellectually to those of earlier experiences, and this means that there be some advance made in conscious articulation of facts and ideas" (Dewey, 1938/1963, pp. 74, 75).

Application of these ideas has produced the "expanding horizons" Social Studies curriculum, wherein children begin from the kinds of local knowledge and immediate experience with which they arrive at school and are gradually introduced to increasingly distant places, experiences, and times. This principle is most clearly evident in the early grades. Children typically begin with subject matter about themselves and their families and move gradually outward to deal with pets, local neighborhoods, then to larger communities, to towns, cities, interactions among communities, to states or provinces, their country, their hemisphere, and then to various culture realms around the world, to the historical dimensions of their region and country and to the history of some other areas of the world. In the higher grades, by which time the structuring force of this lone organizing principle has greatly weakened, the options for study can be enormous. There is usually a return to a more detailed look at their own region's and country's history, then law, consumerism, economics, urban studies, human behavior, communication and media, and so on, may all find a place — to the point where it is hard to articulate a criterion by which almost anything might be excluded from the Social Studies curriculum.

A common variant on this form is the "spiral curriculum," which is organized around topics — such as "producing and consuming," "cooperation within groups," "specialization," "social control" — returning to these at ever higher levels of complexity throughout the curriculum. This is perhaps not so much a variant on the "expanding horizons" model as a superimposition on top of it. Thus "producing and consuming" will be seen first in the context of the child and the family, then in that of the local community, then in interactions among communities, and so on.

The truism that one must work from what children already know is the only principle detectable which gives structure to the Social Studies curriculum. There are two problems with this. The first is that it more or less
exhausts itself by the sixth or seventh grade, being replaced by no equivalent principle determining the structure of the secondary Social Studies curriculum. There is usually some national history, government, and geography available, and often a rather sketchy look at the history of some other area of the world—though this is often one of a large number of electives. These, however, lack any clear logical or psychological rationale for their place in the curriculum, beyond the feeling that students ought to know something about how their country works and how it got that way, before finishing their compulsory education. (This is not to suggest that such a rationale is wrong or inadequate, but just to point out that there is no other.)

Dewey's interpretation of the truism that one must begin from what children have experienced and work out along lines of content associations serves not only as a logical principle determining the form of the curriculum, but as a psychological claim about what and how children can learn. Indeed, it mixes the logical and psychological in the claim that children's minds are such that they can learn material meaningfully only if it is organized along an expanding line of content associations from past experience.

The second problem with the "expanding horizons" truism lies in the way that Dewey interpreted it. Dewey stresses constantly the importance of children's experience, and the capacities which that experience provides, but his interpretation of the capacities which children's experience provides is always in terms of the content of that experience. In expanding on the truism that one must begin from what children know best, Dewey notes: "What is here insisted upon is the necessity of an actual empirical situation as the initiating phase of thought" (Dewey, 1916/1966, p. 153). He argues that is is a fallacy to suppose that one "can begin with ready-made subject matter of arithmetic, or geography, or whatever, irrespective of some direct personal experience of a situation" (Dewey, 1916/1966, p. 153). These principles are to apply not only in elementary grades for the beginning of formal study, but

Even for older students, the social sciences would be less abstract and formal, if they were dealt with less as sciences (less as formulated bodies of knowledge) and more in their direct subject-matter as that is found in the daily life of the social groups in which the student shares. (Dewey, 1916/1966, p. 201)

1This distinction between the logical and psychological is intended to serve very generally to distinguish between claims made about the way subject matter has to be organized to make sense, and claims made about the way children's minds work in finding something meaningful. This distinction is different from that made between the logical and the psychological in Democracy and Education. For a criticism of Dewey's distinction, see Paul H. Hirst, "Logical and psychological aspects of teaching," in R. S. Peters (Ed.) The Concept of Education (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967).

2For an argument that this mixing of the logical and psychological, if done consciously, is appropriate given education's practical interests, see Kieran Egan, Education and Psychology: Plato, Piaget, and Scientific Psychology (forthcoming).
Given such an interpretation of the truism, it seems to follow easily that "The true starting point of history is always some present situation with its problems" and "local or home geography is the natural starting point" (Dewey, 1916/1966, pp. 214, 212).

If Dewey's interpretation of the truism is correct, one may reasonably wonder why the curriculum area which more than any other has been based on it is not more educationally effective. If it represents a logical and psychological truth, why do students on the whole find it so unattractive and why do they seem to learn so little of its content? No doubt the curriculum is not always ideally taught, no doubt Dewey's ideas are not followed as precisely as they might be, and no doubt other variables intervene. But Dewey argues so forcefully that any other way of organizing instruction is bound to be ineffective, one cannot but wonder why a curriculum that is organized, at least in its early grades, quite closely on ideas he articulated seems not clearly more effective in producing aware citizens and people more knowledgeable about history and geography than, say, those of the European countries whose curriculum structure ignores this fundamental "necessity." If the "expanding horizons" curriculum is an embodiment of a logical and psychological truth why can it be unequivocally maintained, with the support of a large amount of depressing evidence, that "on the whole, the social studies are the least effective educationally of any of the basic areas taught in the American public schools" (Tyler, 1965).

Unease about the Social Studies curriculum has led to some questioning of the "expanding horizons" model within the last decade or so (see, e.g., Herman, 1969). But these are not radical challenges to the basic principle. Rather, in general, they are based on observations that children often reach a grade level knowing many of the things which are scheduled to be taught. This improved knowledge is put down to such influences as T.V., films, and wider travel. The conclusion of these observations tends to be merely that many children are ready for a rather wider range of topics in the curriculum. They merely reflect a desire to update Dewey's interpretation in light of some effects of modern technology. More rarely, it is observed that by, say, grade six children learn from normal interaction with their environment a large proportion of the content of the first three years of the Social Studies curriculum. While this leads to the question, "Why do we bother to take a sizeable portion of curriculum time to teach children things just before they will learn them from normal social interactions anyway?", it has not led to the articulation of an alternative principle for organizing the elementary Social Studies curriculum.3

If we accept as a truism that one must begin with what children know best and move out gradually from there, basing future learning on past experience, what other conclusion but a Dewey-style "expanding horizons"

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3I am not suggesting that this observation is necessarily true. My point is simply that even people who make it do not follow through with an alternative principle for restructuring the elementary Social Studies curriculum.
curriculum can one construct? One may begin by disagreeing with Dewey about what children know first and best. He writes that,

The knowledge which comes first to persons, and that remains most deeply ingrained, is knowledge of how to do; how to walk, talk, read, write, skate, ride a bicycle, and so on indefinitely. (Dewey, 1916/1966, p. 184)

This criticism of Dewey, and of the Social Studies curriculum based on the ideas he expresses, begins, then, at the beginning — with what children know first and best. Before they can walk or talk, before they can skate or ride a bicycle, they know joy and fear, love and hate, power and powerlessness, and the rhythms of expectation and satisfaction, of hope and disappointment. They know love and hate, good and bad, better and more profoundly than they know even how to walk or ride a bicycle. Children who never learn to walk or talk or read know love and fear, expectation and satisfaction, hope and disappointment.

The knowledge which comes first to persons and remains most deeply ingrained is not knowledge of “how to do”; it is the fundamental categories upon which we learn increasingly to make sense of anything in the universe and in human experience. It does not, then, follow that “primary or initial subject matter always exists as matter of an active doing, involving the use of the body and the handling of material” (Dewey, 1916/1966, p. 184). It does not follow, then, that the only access children can have to the world and wider human experience is through lines of gradually expanding content associations from their local environments and immediate experiences. Those environments and experiences provide not only restricted exposure to particular knowledge, they provide fundamental categories for making sense of the world — and children can have direct meaningful access to anything which can be organized within those categories.

What is at issue here is not whether children know better how to walk and ride a bicycle than they know love and hate, hope and disappointment. These represent quite different kinds of “knowledge,” and to attempt a comparison of them as kinds of knowledge even would be a bit odd. Two points seem worth making here, however. First, the above suggests at least that there is an alternative way of interpreting the truism and that this alternative interpretation is sensible.

The second point is that if our concern in education is with understanding the world and experience and the growth of knowledge about these, our beginning seems more sensibly based on children’s knowledge of the most fundamental categories of thought whereby these are made meaningful, rather than on their ability to walk and skate. These latter, it might also be noted, are “knowledge” only in an extended sense of the word — we would more usually call them skills or abilities. We say we know how to skate, but such knowledge is subconscious. If we attempt to deal with it consciously we begin to stumble and fall over. This again suggests a poor foundation for a process which is concerned with the development of conscious understanding of the world and experience.
If one considers what most engages children’s minds it is surely stories about monsters, witches, dragons, knights and princesses in distant times and places, rather than the subject-matter, however actively engaged, of families, local environments, and communities. Children clearly do not have to be led from their everyday reality by a process of expanding horizons till they gain access to talking animals in bizarre places and strange times. It is clear that children have direct access to their curious imaginary realms. Indeed, they have much easier access to these than to the content of their everyday world when it is treated as “subject-matter.” Why should this be so? One reason is that fairy tales are organized on those fundamental moral and emotional categories which we identified as the things children know first and best. Such tales embody struggles between good and bad, the brave and the cowardly; they give content to love and hate, fear and security.

My purpose here has been to show that the sole organizing principle evident in the present Social Studies curriculum is based on a highly dubious interpretation of what children know best. That is, the logical form of the “expanding horizons” curriculum seems to be based on a psychological error. Children do not know how to walk or skate better or earlier or more really than they know love and fear; and, anyway, observations about how well they know how to walk or skate are somewhat beside the educational point. In enunciating his “psychological principle,” then, Dewey articulates something which is far from the self-evident truth it has commonly been taken to be, and is anyway not the central observation to make about children’s minds if one’s focus of interest is their education.

**Formal and Natural Learning**

My concern in this article is with the Social Studies curriculum first, and only secondly with an exegesis of John Dewey’s writings about education. It might properly be pointed out that, if my purpose is to elucidate what Dewey meant by the psychological principle or to understand his ideas about learning, then an appreciation of the wider contexts in which these ideas were articulated is necessary. One must see them in part in the context of that Peirce-inspired pragmatic reaction against Cartesian dualism and its belief that knowledge may come most truly from passive contemplation, in part as a reaction against “traditional” educational practices whose sole concern was the logical organization of subject matter wholly abstracted from any context of meanings in which the child might share and from any sensitivity to children’s psychological development, and in part as an attempt to graft onto bourgeoning impersonal, industrial social institutions and their schools the practical down-to-earth values and meanings imbibed by Dewey in his own rural boyhood. But as our concern is with how ideas he

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4This is not to argue that these should therefore become the content of the curriculum. My concern is with another aspect of the false assumptions underlying the “expanding horizons” model.
expresses have been used to develop a Social Studies curriculum, the contexts which influenced their meaning for Dewey are of less interest here than the contexts into which the ideas were absorbed in educational practice. So, for example, while Dewey's ideas about learning and the need for active discovery methods in schools are enriched by the context of pragmatic philosophy, those ideas were adopted into educational practice in a philosophical context which frequently amounted to little more than a vague Rousseauian romanticism. The superficial way in which ideas were abstracted from his writings, and from his context of meanings, appalled Dewey himself. He wrote *Experience and Education* in an attempt to clarify what he had meant. He is hardly blameless, of course, even for the abuses to which his ideas were subjected. His expression of his ideas is occasionally unclear and reading him demands of the reader an unusual degree of interpretation.

I mention this here because in this section I want to consider a distinction Dewey suggests between formal and natural learning. It is not a distinction that Dewey treats in any carefully analytic and systematic way, but it is one that seems of fundamental importance because of the way it has affected the Social Studies curriculum, and is embodied in both the structure of the present curriculum and in assumptions about how best to teach much of the content of that curriculum.

Underlying Dewey's argument that practical doing must be central to all learning or education is an assumption that there are two more or less distinct kinds of learning or education. (Dewey uses the two words more or less as synonyms in this context.) One kind of learning is supposed to occur in normal social living, in homes and local environments — as was Dewey's rural experience — as a result of more or less spontaneous interactions with the environment. This kind of learning occurs in contexts full of meaning for the child; it "is incidental, it is natural and important" (Dewey, 1916/1966, p. 6). Distinct from this is a kind of learning or education which takes place in schools. This results from formal instruction and is artificial; it "easily becomes remote and dead" (Dewey, 1916/1966, p. 8).

Like Rousseau before him — and apparently the source of this duality — and like Piaget after him, Dewey believed that there is a kind of natural experience or developmental process which, being natural, is good, "personal and vital," and allows easy, spontaneous learning (Dewey, 1916/1966, p. 8); and there is this distinct formal education wherein learning seems always to be distrusted (see Egan, 1980). The former kind of learning leads to the growth of the practical, knowledgeable citizen who forms the ideal of *Education and Democracy*; the latter tends towards effete, elitist incompetents.

Dewey's solution to this dualism which he saw, a solution necessary for education to occur properly, was to make formal learning conform as closely as possible with the natural process. But while this is not an easy matter — "there are conspicuous dangers attendant upon the transition from indirect to formal education" — it is necessary, because "As formal teaching and training grow in extent, there is the danger of creating an
undesirable split between the experience gained in more direct associations and what is gained in schools” (Dewey, 1916/1966, pp. 8, 9).

A part of Dewey's solution to this problem of moving from natural to formal education leads to some of the ideas discussed in the previous section. We must expand from “actual empirical situations” (Dewey, 1916/1966, p. 153); we must establish a “progressive order, using the factors first acquired as means of gaining insight into what is more complicated” (p. 20); we must root all subject matter “in the daily life of the social groups in which the student shares” (p. 201); “Before teaching can safely enter upon conveying facts and ideas through the media of signs, schooling must provide genuine situations in which personal participation brings home the import of the material and the problems which it conveys” (p. 233) and, he assures us, “Recognition of the natural course of development . . . always sets out with situations which involve learning by doing” (p. 184).

Before arguing whether Dewey's solution to the problem is a good one or not, we should perhaps ask whether he has identified the problem properly; before considering his resolution of the dualism, we should ask whether it exists. If, say, we were to conclude that there are not two distinct kinds of learning or education such as Dewey asserts, or that they are not to be distinguished in the way he suggests, then we might wonder about the practicality of his proposed solution.

In Rousseau's case, the romantic reaction against the dessicated rationalism of the intellectual world of his time and its accompanying intellectual over-confidence and pomposity and its impoverished sense of human reason is understandable. Indeed, it represents one of the great liberating achievements of intellectual history. We can accept the greatness of the achievement now, while passing over what we might reasonably consider Rousseau's romantic excesses. Experience has clarified that the causes of human frailty do not lie exclusively in the kinds of social institutions Rousseau identified. Neither the Indians of North America, nor children, we would now believe, were or are “noble savages” until touched by the corrupting hand of organized institutions. Society does not necessarily make people better or worse, but is rather a condition of normal human life. Apart from human society we do not become noble, we simply lack certain means of developing certain potentials. (This is not to say that improvements in social institutions and schools may not help people to live better lives, but simply that apart from such institutions people are not necessarily good or better, or that such institutions are necessarily corrupting or tending towards corruption.)

It is not part of my present purpose to try to explain the persistence of this romanticism in Dewey, or Piaget. It is a part of my purpose, however, to point out that the distinction between natural and formal education, or, in Piaget's terms, between development and learning, is a product of an old romanticism and that it lacks even a shred of evidential support. There are no good reasons to believe that children interacting with their home or local environments are learning in some natural and powerful way that should
form a model for classroom learning. There are no good reasons to believe
that there is a natural kind of learning or process of development that is
distinct from "formal" learning.

We can all, of course, distinguish between learning that is valuable and
learning that is inert. That distinction is evident to every teacher every day
in every classroom. In our experience of schools we have all probably been
coerced to learn something we considered then, and consider now, to have
been worthless, a waste of time during which we could have been learning
something valuable. We all recognize that some people have become highly
trained in some academic subject in a way that is dessicated and removed
from all human value and usefulness. Dewey builds heavily on this common
observation, but it is far from clear that the distinction he works towards
reflects the common intuition he starts from. The value of learning, we
might reasonably observe, is not tied to its replicating in some way a
distinct process which occurs spontaneously in non-formal settings. While
we can probably all remember being bored at school, we can probably also
remember moments when we were excited by something. The immediate
associations of times of boredom and times of excitement are not, at least
in my experience, tied to the degree of formality or naturalness — accord-
ing to Dewey's descriptions — of the activity or materials or kind of learn-
ing.

Dewey's form of this distinction, and the suggestions he has made for
making classrooms reflect as closely as possible the distinct learning process
that is supposed to occur naturally outside them, has led most prominently
to those teaching methods which are associated with what was called
"progressive education." Perhaps the most distinct of these methods is often
called "discovery-learning," and many "inquiry methods" aim to replicate
natural learning as against formal instruction. These methods have received
new support, impetus, and in some cases, precision, as a result of Piaget's
pronouncements about education, and as a result of the work of educators
who seek educational implications from Piaget's developmental theory (see,
e.g., Piaget, 1970, 1973; Schwebel and Raph, 1973; and Athey and

Having articulated his distinction between natural and formal education,
Dewey concludes:

Hence the first approach to any subject in school, if thought is to be
aroused and not words acquired, should be as unscholastic as possi-
ble. To realize what an experience, or empirical situation means, we
have to call to mind the sort of situation that presents itself outside
of school; the sort of occupations that interest and engage activity in
ordinary life. And careful inspection of methods which are per-
manently successful in formal education, whether in arithmetic or
learning to read, or studying geography, or learning physics or a
foreign language, will reveal that they depend for their efficiency
upon the fact that they go back to the type of situation which causes
reflection out of school in ordinary life. They give the pupils
something to do, not something to learn; and the doing is of such a
nature as to demand thinking, or the intentional noting of connec-

Now clearly there was and is much sterile, formal instruction that is largely meaningless to children. We can agree in detail with Dewey's description of what was, and remains, wrong with much teaching. The existence of an abuse, however, does not justify any alternative. Dewey's statement above, that "careful inspection of methods which are permanently successful in formal education . . . will reveal that they depend for their efficiency upon the fact that they go back to the type of situation which causes reflection out of school in ordinary life," is presented without any evidence, of course.

Even the least pragmatic of us should be interested in the evidence accumulated since Dewey's time. If the "discovery-learning" methods best exemplify "the type of situation which causes reflection out of school in ordinary life," and if Dewey's general claim is anything close to the truth, we would expect such methods to show great improvement in children's learning over that produced by formal instruction. But after decades of practice and, one supposes, refinement of the techniques which Dewey claimed were absolutely necessary for effective learning, a conscientious reviewer of all the available evidence characterized the effects of progressives' use of discovery-learning methods as an "educational disaster" (Ausubel, 1961, p. 32). If one allows for the excesses of those progressives whose claims for the value of Deweyian methods went "far beyond the evidence as well as far beyond all reason" and which expressed, rather than sensible educational principles, a "sentimental fantasy about the nature of the child and of the educative process" (Ausubel, 1961, p. 8), one still found that the vast bulk of the evidence examined testified to the general ineffectiveness of discovery-learning methods. Again, if Dewey was right about the only way, or even the best way, to make learning meaningful, surely those methods which reflected as closely as possible his ideas should show some clear improvements over formal instruction? Yet the opposite is the case. Consistently, in comparisons of discovery-learning as practiced by Deweyian progressives or Piagetian neo-progressives with "traditional" formal instruction, the former is never more effective in producing learning by any measurement available (see also, Brainerd, 1978; Lawton and Hooper, 1978).

This is not at all to argue that discovery-learning or inquiry methods are useless. There are occasions when they offer considerable educational advantages, and they must be accounted important additions to teachers' repertoires of techniques. This is to argue, however, that if Dewey's - and Rousseau's and Piaget's - distinction reflected reality, these methods would surely give some evidence of improved learning as against "traditional" methods. Even if we characterize all learning produced by formal instruction which ignores Dewey's principle of replicating natural learning as "brain-stuffing" (Schwebel and Raph, 1973, p. 290), or as a result of "coercion" that does not constitute "true learning" (Inhelder et al., 1974, pp. 25, 26), it is surely very strange, given the claims made for the effectiveness of "natural" learning, that it cannot do better than brainstuffing.
Our techniques of educational measurement are indeed rather crude, and in practice a thousand variables affect the results of using any teaching method; but, in face of the strength of the claims Dewey makes and the absence of any evidence to support them after long experience, we are supported in calling into question the validity of Dewey's distinction between formal and natural learning, and the implications he drew from it for teaching methods. The doubtfulness of the fundamental distinction upon which Dewey built so many recommendations for curriculum structure and teaching methods throws into doubt the practicality of that structure and the general applicability of those methods.

This questioning of the distinction from which discovery-learning methods grew raises doubts not just about the general applicability of discovery learning, or the belief that it somehow represents a more "natural" form of learning than results from "traditional" instruction, but also raises further questions about the expanding-horizons model. Dewey recommends natural learning because it is the paradigm of effective learning out of school, and it is thus the method of learning by which children come to know those practical, daily things that are most basic and meaningful. The problem he resolved in part through proposing discovery-learning as a method — the problem of how to get from natural to formal learning without loss of meaning — he resolved in part also through the expanding horizons curriculum. That is, he carried into the school, not just a method by which children learned in their daily environment, but the very content of that environment as well. I am suggesting that these solutions are to a problem that does not exist in the form Dewey saw it, and are consequently of very doubtful practical value. The reason that much school content is inefficiently learned by children seems indeed to be connected with its removal from contexts of meaning in which the child shares (Donaldson, 1978), but there is no reason to believe that such contexts cannot be created in formal classroom settings using methods of direct instruction. And, indeed, there seems to be no reason to believe that local environments, homes, and everyday experiences cannot frequently be impoverished in terms of such contexts of shared meanings. Which is to say, the way Dewey makes the distinction seems to owe more to an eighteenth or nineteenth century romantic image of pure nature set against impure institutions and to an image of man as problem-solver and the world as a set of problems to be solved, than it does to evidence and critical observation.

Again, my purpose here is not to provide a compelling refutation of Dewey's ideas, but rather to show the frailty of the foundations of the Social Studies curriculum which is built on such ideas. My appeal to empirical evidence resulting from comparisons of progressive as against traditional practices shows very little in a positive sense. It would not, for example, be very sensible to appeal to such evidence to support the use of traditional methods. But the absence of any evidence supporting the claims Dewey makes has a certain negative force. It is not, after all, as though Dewey suggests that such methods may result in some small improvements. He is talking about necessities and absolutes.
So we may reasonably doubt Dewey's interpretation of the kinds of things children know first and best and his interpretation of how children best learn those things. The two are, as noted above, interconnected. Particularly they are interconnected foundations of the Social Studies curriculum, and so we may reasonably doubt whether it is well founded.

Socializing and Educating

Everyone makes some distinction between what I will here call the socializing and educating functions of schools. These are functions which obviously overlap, perhaps to quite a large degree; but, it is generally recognized that it is useful to hold some distinction between them. By socializing we tend to mean those activities which are directed towards enabling students to perform as competent agents within their society; by educating we usually mean something in addition to this — that something is usually rather vague and difficult to specify in any detail, but it refers among some other things to a range of cultural attainments which do not serve any particular social end, but enrich in some way the life of the person who acquires them. Socializing, we may say, makes life in society possible; educating makes it more worthwhile. Clearly we want schools to help achieve both socializing and educational aims, and clearly the former are necessary while the latter are merely desirable.

Socialization and education employ different criteria in justifying curriculum activities. Socializing applies, prominently, the criterion of direct relevance or utility to social praxis. So, given the nature of our society, teaching children to read and write is justified on grounds of social utility, and learning such skills is an important component in the socializing process. Learning to read with refined critical discrimination and to write with style cannot be justified on criteria of direct social utility or relevance, but they may be justified on grounds of educational value. Similarly, learning some local, regional, and national history can be justified on socializing grounds — such knowledge is important for people to have even a simple understanding of how their society functions and how it got that way. Developing a sophisticated historical consciousness cannot be justified on grounds of social utility, but may be justified on grounds of educational value.

Now clearly socializing and educating are not entirely distinct categories, and indeed "socializing" and "educating" are perhaps not the best terms to use in making this distinction. But my aim here is not to establish any elaborate distinction, but simply to secure agreement that what I am calling socializing and educating activities represents a real, commonly observed, and useful distinction. Clearly the two flow into each other at many points. Educational activities seem in many cases to take off, at no very precise point, from socializing activities. Given the way I am making this distinction, one might say that education is impossible without socialization. But
then I should add that they should not be seen simply as sequential activities — that first one socializes and then one educates. Rather, it seems reasonable to say that almost all activities in schools have socializing and educational dimensions. In woodworking or metalworking, for example, one can justify children's learning the use of tools and the abilities to make and fix things on clear socializing criteria. But these activities properly should also have an educational dimension, which will usually be connected with some aesthetic aspect of the work — the desire to do something well or beautifully, or some quality above and beyond what pure practical utility calls for. Similarly in teaching, say, writing, one rarely will stop at a level of unvarnished literacy. Usually some educational considerations of style will enter in.

This underlines the imprecision of the distinction, and the fact that from the point of view of daily practice in schools it is not one that teachers will normally find in any way useful. But it seems, despite its imprecision, to be a fundamentally important distinction to bear in mind when thinking about the organization of the school curriculum. What is perhaps most crucial is that we bring to bear on decisions about what should go into the curriculum criteria drawn from notions of socialization that are distinct from criteria drawn from notions of education. It is important to be aware of this distinction, and to be aware that while socializing and educational activities are not themselves in conflict in any way, there may well be conflict for curriculum time between socializing and educational activities. Thus someone who seeks a single general criterion for deciding what should go into the curriculum is likely to collapse one to the other. Thus appeals to "disciplines" are often appeals that implicitly reject, or diminish the importance of, socializing criteria in choosing curriculum content; and appeals to "relevance" often implicitly reject educational criteria.

I attempt to sketch this distinction here, even if only rather vaguely, because it seems to bring to the fore some fundamental notions about what ought to be the purposes of the Social Studies curriculum and what content should go into it. Dewey also makes a somewhat similar distinction, but in a rather different way, and using different terms. The way Dewey makes the distinction has had a considerable influence on the way people have commonly conceived the purposes of the Social Studies curriculum, exemplified by statements of purpose to be found in typical Social Studies textbooks; and it has had a considerable influence on the content of the Social Studies curriculum. The very term "Social Studies" seems to be inherently ambiguous and vague — what is to be studied and how? Some of the answers suggested by Dewey's writings seem to turn on the way he deals with the distinction between socializing and educating activities.

Dewey, as we have seen above, distinguishes that kind of education "which everyone gets from living with others" (Dewey, 1916/1966, p. 6) from the kind of education which may result from formal instruction. Also he distinguishes between studies which are of intrinsic value and those which are engaged for some instrumental purpose, and he stresses the importance of finding in any study or activity an aesthetic quality which
will make it of intrinsic value for the individual. Now while these distinctions reflect something of the distinction made above between socializing and educating, they are also different from it in some important ways.

Dewey would not, of course, use the term socializing as a good label for anything he would distinguish from education. He, and indeed most people, would quite happily include the activities I am calling socializing under a broad sense of education. I have made the distinction in the terms I chose to point up the fact that for Dewey what I have called socializing activities are the paradigmatic forms of education to which all educational activities ought to conform, and that he tends to use a criterion drawn from what I have called socializing to judge the purposes and appropriate content for education as a whole.

(I am not, of course, trying to argue that my distinction between socializing and educational activities is "true" or better than Dewey's distinction in any way. I want simply to establish that mine is a sensible distinction to make, and I make it because it helps to clarify some distinct things that Dewey finds it unnecessary or unimportant to distinguish in the same way. My concern, then, is the implications that follow from Dewey's finding it an unimportant distinction.)

Dewey says: "What nutrition and reproduction are to physiological life, education is to social life" (Dewey, 1916/1966, p. 9). In applying my distinction one would put "socialization" rather than "education" in that sentence. (This is not, of course, to disagree with Dewey, because his use of "education" here clearly incorporates both my notion of education and of socialization. What is significant is that for Dewey no such distinction is considered important.) He adds: "When we have the outcome of the [educational] process in mind, we speak of . . . shaping into the standard form of social activity" (Dewey, 1916/1966, p. 10). He is emphatic that "With the wide range of possible material to select from, it is important that education . . . should use a criterion of social worth" (Dewey, 1916/1966, p. 191).

Dewey is arguing against a form of education which he sees as belonging to class-divided states, wherein the aristocracy enjoys an "ornamental" classical education of personal cultivation and almost exclusively of intrinsic value and the lower classes learn instrumental, utilitarian skills. In his democracy, the social experience of democratic life is to ensure that no such division will occur. All studies for everyone are to be both intrinsically valuable and instrumentally useful: "It is the particular task of education at the present time to struggle in behalf of an aim in which social efficiency and personal culture are synonyms instead of antagonists" (Dewey, 1916/1966, p. 123). (It may be noted in passing that "synonyms" forms an odd contrast to "antagonists." One might more easily say that social efficiency and personal cultivation should be combined, or be seen as compatible, in any individual. By suggesting that they should be synonymous, Dewey suggests that they should be the same thing; that is, in my terms, socializing and educating should be identical.)
The ever-present danger Dewey sees to this democratic aim is that certain kinds of studies will become formal and abstract and escape from the social experience of democratic life, creating a kind of mandarin mentality in those who follow this path, thus creating again the old social divisiveness. And, of course, "Formal education is peculiarly exposed to this danger" (Dewey, 1916/1966, p. 232). This fear of escape from the realities of everyday democratic experience powerfully influences his notion of what should form the content of the curriculum: "The subject matter of education consists primarily of the meanings which supply content to existing social life" (Dewey, 1916/1966, p. 192).

Now clearly Dewey's conception of social life is not nearly so narrow as is suggested by my notion of socialization. Dewey means much more than the basic social utility I refer to. Again, my purpose here is not so much an exegesis of Dewey's ideas, nor, in this case, of the influence of people like G. H. Mead on them, as a concern with what has happened once they are applied to the Social Studies Curriculum. My point here is that while clearly we cannot sensibly claim that Dewey was only concerned with what we call socializing, nevertheless there is a powerful trend in his writing to make socializing criteria dominant in determining curriculum content and providing purposes for the educational process as a whole. Also, once these ideas have been abstracted from the richness and complexity of meanings and associations in which they exist in Dewey's writings, they take on, in determining the Social Studies curriculum, a simpler, clearer, and more restrictive sense which is nearer to our notion of socializing.

It may, however, be argued that if our concern is the Social Studies curriculum a heavy emphasis on socializing is quite appropriate. The strong tendency of Dewey's thought in the direction of letting socializing criteria dominate education as a whole may be seen in his vision of the place of Social Studies in the general curriculum. In his attempt to prevent formal studies from being isolated from their social effects and possibilities, he seeks to make Social Studies the center of the curriculum to which all other studies can be tied. So he says, the Social Studies "are so important that they should give direction and organization to all branches of study" (Dewey, 1958, p. 183).

This tendency to see what I have called socializing as the paradigmatic form of education and to rein all studies tightly to social effects and possibilities seems to involve two major problems for the Social Studies curriculum which embodies these ideas, however imperfectly and vaguely it does so.

A first problem might be seen in what becomes of studies like history and geography when sucked into a Social Studies curriculum dominated by criteria drawn from notions of socializing. As Dewey puts it, "The function of historical and geographical subject matter... is to enrich and liberate the more direct personal contacts of life by furnishing their context, their background and outlook" (Dewey, 1916/1966, p. 211). That is, their function is to serve as enrichment factors in the socializing process. If they have to furnish the context, background and outlook of present "personal con-
tacts of life" — if these are to provide the criteria for choosing what history and geography is most worth studying — then we get the kind of local, regional, and national history and geography which in fact are the staple of the secondary Social Studies curriculum, and which are what we have distinguished as socializing activities. That is, there is no distinct criterion for studying, say, history for its own sake, for seeing it as an autonomous mode of inquiry and an autonomous form of knowledge, or for developing a sophisticated historical consciousness.

Given that their function in the curriculum is this present-oriented socializing, and limited one, it is no surprise that Dewey can blend these quite distinct forms of knowledge and their modes of inquiry into one: "While geography emphasizes the physical side and history the social, these are only emphases in a common topic, namely, the associated life of man" (Dewey, 1916/1966, p. 211). They are thus simply "two phases of the same living whole" (Dewey, 1916/1966, p. 218).

Similarly Dewey recommends study of Indian life in North America because our present solutions to the social problems of providing shelter, food, protection, and so on are so complex.

Recourse to the primitive may furnish the fundamental elements of the present situation in immensely simplified form. It is like unraveling a cloth so complex and close to the eyes that its scheme cannot be seen, until the larger coarser features of the pattern appear . . . and by seeing how these were solved in the earlier days of the human race, form some conception of the long road which has had to be traveled, and of the successive inventions by which the race has been brought forward in culture. (Dewey, 1916/1966, p. 215)

So also industrial history is to be studied because it "reveals the successive causes of social progress" (Dewey, 1916/1966, p. 215). This emphasis on society, which is supposed to make studies interesting because real to children's experience, means that a focus on heroes or great people runs a great danger of isolating the doings of such heroes from their "social situations . . . from the conditions that aroused [them] and to which [their] activities were a response" (Dewey, 1916/1966, p. 214). For similar reasons Dewey claims that "Economic history is more human, more democratic, and hence more liberating than political history" (Dewey, 1916/1966, pp. 215-16). (These seem to be cases where Dewey's "psychological principle" — what children naturally find interesting — comes into some conflict with his socializing purpose. It seems that in such cases the former must give way to the latter.)

Dewey's ideas about the proper role of history and geography in the curriculum seem commonly to be reflected in much simpler terms in typical Social Studies textbooks, where one sees history and geography described as extensions of present experience in time and space, or some such. The fact that one is an empirical science and the other a study of past human events reconstructed from present traces, having different kinds of methodologies, theories, and modes of expression, makes no dint in their being taken as twin extensions out from the present.
Dewey resolved the duality between natural and formal learning by seeking to collapse the latter to the former; he avoids the duality we have suggested between socializing and education by largely collapsing the latter to the former and calling the result "education." Now clearly this simplifies matters somewhat, but while Dewey frequently writes about the importance of what we have called educational activities, he nowhere provides a criterion for selecting them for the curriculum that can compete with the criterion drawn from what we have called socializing activities.

Despite Dewey's discussion of the intrinsic value of certain educational activities, and the overall aim to liberate the child from the local and immediate, the general effect of his constant tying of all studies to empirical experience and social activity seems to be, in Social Studies at least, a curriculum that remains in thrall to the local, the provincial, the narrow. His rhetoric stresses the means of escape; his criteria for choosing a curriculum keeps the child's imagination tied to the present and the local. Given the above distinction, I would want to rettitle Dewey's celebrated book, Socialization for Democracy. In it he has little to say about education; it is a book about socializing. And given that he has largely collapsed education to socializing it seems to me — not to put too fine a point on it — that Democracy and Education has been one of the most powerfully influential anti-educational forces on North American schools.

Conclusion

If our attempts to revise or reconstruct the Social Studies curriculum are made while accepting more or less as presuppositions Dewey's ideas about expanding horizons, his distinction between natural and formal learning and his dominant socializing criterion for selecting content, then we must remain in thrall to the general form of Social Studies curriculum which is presently dominant. If we are liberated from these ideas and distinctions we can approach the task of revising or reconstructing the Social Studies curriculum with some hope of making it more educationally valuable.

If we are liberated from Dewey's notions of "expanding horizons," we can replace the present educational vacuousness of the curriculum in the junior grades with something more educationally worthwhile. If we are liberated from his distinction between formal and natural learning, our pedagogy can be based on more sensible principles of organizing curriculum material so that it is more engaging and meaningful to children at different ages. If we introduce educational, as well as socializing, criteria for the selection of curriculum content, we may be freed from, among other things, the educational impoverishment, and logical absurdity, of tying history and
geography to some vague sense of expanding from the local and immediate in space and time.5

The Social Studies curriculum does not work. Its general acceptance, and incorporation, of the three ideas criticized above — it seems reasonable to claim — represent three reasons why it does not work.

References


If arousing interest, provoking reflection, and perhaps even stimulating action are among the purposes of Giroux and Penna's (1979) recent contribution to this journal, then they are apt to be successful. However, the outcomes may be other than those intended by the authors. Their argument seems likely to alienate a number of readers and to increase the already considerable distrust and distance between school and university educators.

As I understand Giroux and Penna's argument, the goal is to change the nature of schooling, consistent with their vision of the good society, i.e., one that is just, egalitarian, cooperative, democratic, and characterized by a collective sense of social responsibility, group solidarity, and reciprocity. Giroux and Penna focus, as have others interested in educational change, on the so-called hidden (implicit) curriculum, particularly the nature of teacher-student classroom relationships. Their rationale appears to be twofold. First, attempts to introduce changes in the explicit curriculum that are at odds with the implicit curriculum have a relatively small probability of succeeding. Such changes are not likely to be long lasting or have the desired effects. Second, the messages communicated by the implicit curriculum are more at odds with their prescribed social reordering than are those conveyed by the explicit curriculum.

Giroux and Penna remind us of the role of the implicit curriculum and its likely impact on efforts to change the explicit curriculum and other aspects of schooling; in addition, they point out that the school exists within a socio-political context and that it both reflects and is an agent of that larger society. That schools and school personnel do not exist in isolation means that we do not and probably cannot act in ways that are entirely independent of societal constraints (which are economic and ideological as well as social and political). Thus, schools are socialization agents as well as complex, established settings not especially receptive to piecemeal attempts to change their structure, function, substance, or spirit. But, with respect to educational change (be it reactionary, moderate, or radical), a number of questions remain.
The authors sketchily indicate the nature of their preferred society but do not elaborate or justify their preferences. They do not specify toward what ends change should be directed, who is to decide, for whom, on what basis. I remain skeptical of imposed egalitarianism, undefined justice, etc. These concepts can be useful analytical and interpretive tools when they are explained, illustrated, and applied. Without such explication, however, they tend to be meaningless and, perhaps, authoritarian in their own right.

Although the specifics and extent of needed changes in contemporary society and the priorities to be assigned to particular goals remain equivocal, there is little doubt that ample room for improvement does exist. Pluralism, for example, is an important feature of democratic society, yet it is not mentioned by Giroux and Penna. While pluralism has observable manifestations, it is an essentially intangible phenomenon, encompassing both the existence and the recognition of the legitimacy of human diversity, of different ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving. Pluralism in its various manifestations — political, intellectual, economic, technological, social, cultural — is a pervasive aspect of human experience. Pluralism not only makes choice possible but provides a stimulus for the growth of individuals, groups, and the larger society.

Consider intellectual pluralism as a case in point. While theories provide useful frameworks for interpreting experience — providing a conceptual scheme, indicating questions to be raised, and, perhaps, suggesting methods to be employed in pursuit of answers — they also tend to limit what is seen and the meaning attributed to experience. To the extent that there is intellectual pluralism, diverse theories offer multiple vantage points from which to formulate more adequate conceptualizations and to revise them as circumstances change. To forbid, deny, or refuse to consider alternative paradigms turns theory into ideology and, possibly, dogma. As a consequence, one is likely to "see only part of the elephant," and to miscreate the whole from unnecessarily limited vision. Further, the beliefs which result tend to be self-perpetuating; what does not fit is rejected or rationalized.

It is important, therefore, to avoid the temptations of dogma, despite the reassurance and motivation that appear to accompany allegiance to a cause. With intellectual pluralism, there is ambiguity, but also impetus for growth. One implication for schooling and social studies curriculum is that students be provided with opportunities to experience intellectual (and other manifestations) of pluralism and to explore various current and future possibilities, in order to extend their knowledge base, the scope of their vision, and their range of options. Intellectual pluralism implies the desirability of multiple perspectives in responding to questions of who is to decide the direction of social studies curriculum change(s), for whom, and on what basis.

Giroux and Penna's position, however, ignores the pluralistic features of a democratic society and its intellectuals. The result is to deny us much choice in responding to the issues and dilemmas of schools. Earlier in their essay they suggest social studies educators should lead the way. Later, they express some doubts about these individuals' abilities and commitments — the ability to discern the true path and the commitment to the right goals.
The implication of their argument, in contrast, is that there exists a more knowing elite in whom we should entrust our futures, an elite including some (or many) social studies educators. This, I believe, is seemingly incompatible with democratic values. I am not convinced that most people are incapable of learning and of coping with the rights and responsibilities involved in making personal and collective decisions. This is not to deny a professional responsibility to explore alternatives, to test notions, and to share findings (and biases) with others. The potential for influence, however, in a pluralistic society, resides largely in effective communication and perceived credibility.

After some attention to school curriculum organization and its socialization effects, Giroux and Penna then turn to democratic classroom conditions and “implementation.” They purport to “identify an alternative set of values and classroom social processes . . . for formulating a collectivist and democratic social education, stripped of egoistic individualism and alienating social relationships” that “should be used by social studies educators in developing a content and pedagogy which link theory and practice and restore to students and teachers an awareness of the social and personal importance of active participation and critical thinking” (p. 33).

While students are to have some opportunities for decision-making, apparently teachers are not. Giroux and Penna state that “every effort should be made to give students an awareness of the necessity of developing choices of their own, and to act on those choices with an understanding of situational constraints” (p. 33). However, teachers are portrayed as near hopelessly authoritarian, manipulative, and provincial. In any event, critical thought and decision-making receive little further attention from the authors as they return to the implicit curriculum and indicate means of democratizing classroom social relationships.

To democratize classroom processes and thereby move toward the good society, we are urged to replace tracking practices with heterogeneous classes, implement “dialogical” grading and “modified self-pacing,” and provide opportunities for small group activity and for students to “serve an apprenticeship in teaching” as peer leaders and tutors. Giroux and Penna’s prescriptions call for modification of classroom organizational patterns which are consistent with their criticisms of the implicit curriculum, but the authors do not show how these changes will affect the quality of teacher-student and student-student relationships and thereby provide the basis for a humane education.

Further questions remain. How are the prescribed changes to be accomplished? How, for example, are presumably domineering, manipulative, and narrow-minded teachers (and administrators) to be convinced (or coerced) to change their ways? Giroux and Penna have cautioned us that social studies developers will have to build their pedagogical models upon a theoretical framework which situates schools within a sociopolitical context. As such, the main assertion of this paper is that if social studies developers seek to change classroom life through various intervention strategies, then they will have to comprehend the school as an agent of socialization. (p. 22)
However, their recommendations do not directly address the socio-political milieu in which schools and school personnel exist or the present socialization aims of schooling. Given that current practices serve some established interests and perceived needs and that reform (as opposed to technological innovation) involves changes in behavioral and programmatic regularities, how might such regularities be modified?

Overall, my reaction to Giroux and Penna’s paper is one of disappointment. Perhaps too much was promised — or expected. With respect to educational change that is democratic in both process and outcomes, a more modest approach may have more impact. As an initial step, effort might be directed toward increasing self-awareness of present educational conditions, of varied possibilities for change, and of the tacit values and likely consequences of the options. Social studies educators might provide opportunities, encouragement, and support for colleagues and other school people, including students, to undertake similar kinds of inquiry. In schools, social studies educators might, among other things, encourage systematic teacher self-observation or provide descriptive analyses of ongoing classroom processes. Non-judgmental feedback can serve as a basis for productive discussion and, possibly, self-initiated change. Forsaking the temptation to act as either messiah or doomsayer, the social studies educator’s role would be one of catalyst, facilitator, and consultant.

References

Response to Cornbleth

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Revisionists in general and neo-Marxists in particular represent a distinct minority in the profession of social studies educators. As such, their writings have been largely ignored by reformers interested in educational change. The absence of a response to our paper would have reaffirmed a belief that minority views can be effectively rejected by being ignored. One measure of the vitality of the social studies field is the quality of the debate that makes problematic its most basic assumptions and values. The degree to which the field is capable of examining and testing the truth claims of its competing paradigms is one indication of the reflexivity that is needed to prevent the discipline from “sliding” into an uncritical form of ideology. Professor Cornbleth’s critique has given us the opportunity to continue the dialogue and to renew our effort to provide another perspective on the topic of meaningful social education.

Cornbleth criticizes our paper on grounds that we have failed to acknowledge the pluralistic nature of a democratic society. Her argument that pluralism has been partially realized in our nation’s schools will not withstand historical analysis, however. Despite disclaimers to the contrary by a few remaining consensus historians of American education, the institution of schooling which developed during the last century and a half has been best described as “The One Best System” (Tyack, 1974). Schooling in a developing industrial and increasingly technological society became the vehicle for inculcating in students as untrained workers basic patterns of thought. These patterns correspond to the values of efficiency and hierarchical work relationships in the private sector and to non-coercive forms of political and social control in public life. Efforts by educators to maintain and to stabilize pluralistic forms of schooling were systematically denied by political decisions and economic disincentives (Katz, 1968, 1971).

Understanding the institutionalization of schooling as a historical process with its development inextricably linked to the accumulation of economic capital in the sphere of corporate enterprise is essential to understanding the parallel development of “one best system.” Schools became consolidated and centralized in form and became bureaucratic and
hierarchical in human interactional terms as a response to the structure and demands of industrial life. To think otherwise, as Cornbleth implies, is to suggest that the schooling process occurs in a politico-economic vacuum. An argument for pluralism cannot ignore the major historical contours of educational life in America. Caught between the need for a detailed blueprint of how change can take place in schools and a celebration of pluralism, Cornbleth ends up substituting her own ambiguous theory for reasoned critique. Extolling the virtues of pluralism, Professor Cornbleth confuses the articulation of how schools *might* function with a curious silence regarding how, in fact, they do operate.

Schools are complex institutions whose day to day functions in both ideological and structural terms cannot be understood outside of the social, political, and economic context in which they exist. As part of a wider societal process, schools and classroom pedagogy are dialectically linked, as Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) and Bernstein (1976) have shown, to the social and cultural reproduction of the existing society. This becomes clear when we look at the way knowledge is selected, organized and distributed in schools as well as in the way specific forms of social relationships mediate the hierarchically ordered social formations of the workplace and other social agencies.

Our perspective on schooling is commonplace to revisionists. Our reason for rehearsing it here is that it does not seem obvious enough to social educators involved in educational change. To us, they initially seem naively optimistic about the possibility of changing static institutions. Their considerable efforts to change schools have not resulted in the desired effects for at least two reasons. The rhetoric of reformers implies, first, that schools are "mindless" institutions and, second, a logical outgrowth of the first, that they are malleable. The image imposed on schools by reformers is one of isolation and aimless activity. On the contrary, schools do work in our view; they work as agencies for reproducing the existing society. That is their mission and that mission can be understood only by situating schools in a politico-economic and historical context. As Apple and King (1978) have argued, schools may reproduce a population "... roughly equivalent to the economic and social stratification in society."

By arguing that schools are political institutions that roughly reproduce and legitimize the ideological and structural imperatives of the dominate social order, we attempted to provide new analytic tools, concepts, and theoretical insights that would place the nature of schooling in a more relational perspective. Underlying the nature of such analysis was the need to illuminate some of the very real material and ideological constraints which structure and limit the experiences of students and teachers. To do so was to argue against those views of schooling that either celebrate the neutrality of schools or the more political position that claims that teacher intentionality alone will result in progressive forms of pedagogy. Cornbleth dismisses the nature of our critique by calling such a theoretical stance elitist. What she fails to realize is that the foundation for the critique of any theoretical position begins by displacing its basic assumptions as well as the questions that inform its mode of inquiry. The label elitist is simply
 atheoretical. It fails to answer questions and it fails to challenge; it simply dismisses without the benefit of informed theoretical argumentation.

Certainly neither the call for pluralism nor the celebration of multiple perspectives tells us very much about the political and ideological constraints that shape and structure the experience of teachers and students who operate within the context of schooling. How does such a perspective explain the origin, development, and ideological nature of the various perspectives whose existence is taken for granted? What is the relationship between these perspectives? Are some more valued than others? If so, whose interest do they serve? How are they linked to the larger society? Are there material constraints in schools that prevent certain views of social reality from being realized? Clearly, teachers and students are often placed in situations that are structured by definitions using categories that go unquestioned. To illuminate the common-sense assumptions that guide much of the way school knowledge and classroom social relationships are organized is to suggest something that Cornbleth does not acknowledge: that the reproduction of the social order often exists in the ideologies and consciousness of teachers themselves. False consciousness is not something that can be brushed away by adulating the power of pluralism.

Our paper argued for the relational perspective that one does not commonly find in the traditional critiques of school reform. The importance of developing a relational argument rather than imposing the more traditional internalist critique of the school, its teachers and their problems can be observed by examining Cornbleth's recommendations for upgrading the quality of teachers' work. She states that "among other things, encourage systematic teacher self-observation or provide descriptive analyses of ongoing classroom processes. Non-judgmental feedback can serve as a basis for productive discussion and, possibly, self-initiated change." Although these proposed changes in teacher skill development reflect a genuine concern for the mental and pedagogical health of teachers, Cornbleth has overlooked the isolated character of teachers' work and its relationship to patterns of work in industrial life. Before recommending strategies for improving the lives of teachers, we need to discover why encapsulation in a classroom context has become the dominant form for dispensing school knowledge. Clearly, a bounded environment blurs a teacher's perception on the relationship between problems accentuated in the classroom but initiated in a larger societal context. Additionally, isolation limits their ability to respond effectively and instills an enduring feeling of powerlessness and failure. As Sharp and Green (1975) have stated, "instead of seeing the classroom as a social system and as such insulated from wider structural processes, we suggest that the teacher who has developed an understanding of his [or her] location in the wider process may well be in a better position to understand where and how it is possible to alter that situation."

Cornbleth's position is relativistic. Non-judgmental feedback replaces historical and sociological critique; systematic teacher self-observation along with descriptive analysis of ongoing classroom processes replace an analysis of those concrete mediations that tie schools to the larger social order and prevent teachers and students from understanding the normative based nature of their own experiences.
In the end, Cornbleth's concepts are static ideologically; they deflect reality rather than comprehend it. An unjust reality is spirited away in the call for a more modest approach in which “social studies educator's role would be one of catalyst, facilitator, and consultant.” Management practice replaces critique and struggle here, and the equivalency of all views becomes the theoretical bulwark for her form of pluralism. To argue for the equivalency of all views is to posit an equality in which schools and teachers alike appear unaffected and unsullied by the imperatives of class and power. The placid harmony that underlies Cornbleth's theoretical framework is one that presupposes that society is without those contradictions that are of its essence, contradictions that should be the starting point for any analysis of the role of schooling in this society.

References


Book Reviews

Section Editor, Jack Nelson, Rutgers University


Much attention has been given in recent years to the notion of “hidden curriculum.” Educators have begun to look beyond the stated objectives of school policy, procedure and curriculum to ask about possible unforeseen consequences. Many social educators have focused their concern on implicit learning — what do schools teach, for example, about power and power relationships, and about the ability of the individual to control the environment? Such inquiries into the nature of schooling call into question the usual willingness to accept assumptions and procedures and instead seek to make these assumptions the focus of study. Murray Edelman’s recent book *Political Language: Words that Succeed and Policies that Fail* contributes to this approach toward social and institutions and, more specifically, toward the study of power relationships and authority.

Edelman seeks to uncover the processes through which a society that claims to value equality and freedom so readily acquiesces to inequality and injustice. He is concerned with the structure of power: how it is maintained and how it is masked in a social system which depends, not on coercion, but on the “consent of the governed.”

Edelman’s attempt to shed light on this problem goes beyond conventional thought and methodology; that is, he goes beyond the study of observed behavior and accepted categories of analysis. He argues that the study of social behavior and surface attitudes obscures the social meaning and implications of this behavior. What needs to be examined are the processes through which the behaviors and attitudes are shaped. To do this, Edelman focuses on how language shapes our thinking and how this, in turn, facilitates the legitimization of established authorities and policies.

The thesis of this book is that language and symbols create personal and societal perceptions. To label a group as “rebels,” for example, suggests people who are disruptive and threatening to the social order. In other contexts, the same language may suggest a group fighting for its rights and freedoms. These perceptions, in turn, create the cognitive structures through which information is filtered, priorities are shaped and policies are justified. Both images of the “rebel” exist in the public mind to be called up as
needed. The rebel at home is to be feared and support for the appropriate policies is generated. But the rebel in Afghanistan is to be supported and different policies are pursued. Much of *Political Language* is an analysis of the ways in which personal and public cognitions are organized and evoked so that public policy, particularly that which perpetuates and justifies inequalities, is maintained. Edelman is not using the term "political" to denote only relationships between governing institutions and citizens. He is writing more broadly of power relationships and the ways in which decisions and policies are shaped in any social institutions.

Important to the consideration and solution of social problems is the creation of categories and labels of deviance. Edelman describes how the categories of social problems contain assumptions about causes and results. To talk about the "criminal," for example, is to turn attention on the individual and divert attention from the subtle interplay of the individual with the social and economic environment. Defining the problem, Edelman argues, defines the status of those involved in it: The victims to be helped or the incompetents to be rehabilitated have no power in the system that labels them.

The influence of labelling applies to events as well as people. Labelling an event a "crisis" focuses our attention on the particular event, suggesting that we need to work together, to make sacrifice if need be, in order to meet the crisis. Again Edelman's analysis helps us draw attention to how the symbolic forms can deflect attention from underlying causes and from critical inquiry. The semantically created crisis often masks the ongoing nature of serious problems in society, such as the distribution of energy or the nature of our foreign policy, and permits us to overlook, and even accept as natural, such profound societal problems as poverty.

Edelman's analysis gives specific focus to the helping professions, including teaching. Edelman describes how the helping professions help to make the status quo acceptable to the powerless. Through scientific language and the manipulation of symbols, professionals make socially derived categories of deviance, pathology and inadequacy seem neutral, scientifically derived facts. Because of the acceptance of professionals as knowledgeable authorities, the categories and assumptions of deviance are not questioned. Neither the professional nor the client question the power relationships of the "helping" situation or the processes by which "help" is given. The therapy, remediation and other forms of "treatment" enable the clients to see the problems as inevitable and, if at all troublesome, the trouble is that of personal inadequacy rather than related to social or structural conditions.

The symbolic manipulation has consequences not only for the client but for the helping professional. The actual consequences of institutional affairs are hidden behind the symbolic forms. Educators can feel progress is being made in schools when innovative curriculum is implemented, or mainstreaming is begun. But the changes may actually only be changes in language and label, while actual practices continue unchanged and the very real problems continue to exist.
The assumptions underlying Edelman’s arguments have bearing on social research in general. He argues that the search for objective facts, for laws to explain social behavior, obscures the fact that social thought and action is filtered through individual perceptions in social contexts. Reality is real only in so far as it is related to specific social, historical and cultural contexts.

The challenge presented to us in this book is to probe the assumptions which underlie our observations and understandings of social life. In the process of defining our facts we risk creating categories and overlooking the wide range of phenomena which influence social lives. What is needed is research which probes “the range of perceptions about social issues that people take to be fact” (p. 15). The established forms of social science inquiry place too great an emphasis on the search for “facts,” for laws of behavior and categories of analysis. Such a search can serve to mystify rather than to clarify, to obscure rather than to illumine.

The categories through which social problems are ordinarily analyzed are themselves to be taken as problems of study. We need to ask questions about the background system of interpretations and meanings, about the assumptions which underlie public values and behaviors. We need to begin to develop an understanding of the processes which shape thought and action, rather than to accept those actions as the basic data for social research.

Edelman’s analysis has important implications for the study of schooling and social studies education. Social educators play an important role in contributing to social definitions and understanding of social problems and issues. Edelman would have us question the extent to which educators, as well as other helping professionals, are political actors whose role in legitimating the social structure masks questions of authority and control. This suggests an approach to the study of schooling which questions the background of meanings most scholarship takes for granted.

An important goal for social educators is to uncover the power relationships in schools; but, beyond that, we need to begin to ask why these relationships have come about, how they are maintained, and, perhaps most important, what are their effects — both for school, the actors involved in schooling and the society in general. Schools are often criticized as agents of social control and social conformity, but the process underlying this is little understood. What roles are assigned to schools and why? What are the consequences of making schools the agents of social improvements, with programs such as drug education and human relations? What is the effect of labelling something a “problem” which can be solved through education. Who controls the definitions of “expert,” “problem,” and “change” which guide this idea of school? It is to these types of questions that Edelman’s analysis provides insight.

Edelman’s chapter on bureaucracies as mediating structures also suggests alternative ways of thinking about the institutional quality of schools. Edelman focuses our attention on the language generated by bureaucracy and the processes through which this language can create perceptions and definitions which justify bureaucratic policy while obscuring the failure of
policy to accomplish ostensible goals. Jargon and banal language create a sense of mutual understanding and dull the critical thought of those using the language. In any study of schools as organizations, we must attend to the effect of bureaucratic language and perceptions, particularly when considering possibilities for change.

It seems important to do for the study of schools what Edelman has done for the study of political behavior — to illuminate the ways in which language functions to establish a sense of reality which is not open to question, not seen as subject to change. We need to begin to understand how the labels we use in describing teaching and learning validate our beliefs about the way the institution functions and obscures inquiry into the underlying effects of decisions and actions. The American public, despite an expressed dissatisfaction with schools, has a commitment to the education process and a faith that our schools are largely doing their job. The public language about schooling makes it sound as if schools are, in fact, responsive to the needs of their constituents — “meeting the individual needs of children,” and providing a necessary service to society. Our job as social educators is to test the validity of this faith and inquire into the underlying processes of schooling, taking nothing for granted. To understand schooling, indeed to understand human activity, we need to ask questions about the social order — how it came about, how it is maintained and what are its consequences.
Call for Paper Proposals

The A.E.R.A. Special Interest Group in Research in Social Studies Education invites paper proposals to be submitted for the 1981 Annual Meeting to be held in Los Angeles, April 13-17. Because of new procedures in allocating program time, it is likely that the S.I.G. will have only two sessions, rather than the three or four we have had in past years.

Deadline for submitting proposals: August 15, 1980.

Guidelines for paper proposals appear in the May, 1980 issue of Educational Researcher. If this is not available, contact Lee Ehman for copies of the guidelines.

Send proposals to: Lee H. Ehman
Education 309
Indiana University
Bloomington, IN 47405

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2. Four copies of each manuscript should be submitted.

3. All text, references, and endnotes should be double-spaced.

4. Only substantive endnotes should be sequentially numbered and inserted in the text. Do not use endnotes to cite references. When citations are made, the author’s name, publication date and (if appropriate) page(s) should be enclosed in parentheses and located in the text. The complete reference should be included in a References section at the end of the text. References should be alphabetized and may take any standard form as long as they are internally consistent.

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Conceptualizations and research from all of the social sciences, philosophy, history and the arts are needed in clarifying thinking and practice in social education. Manuscripts are welcomed on topics such as those that follow:

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The politics, economics, sociology, social psychology, psychology, anthropology, philosophy, and/or the history of social education;

Alternative social organizations and utilizations of the school for social education;

Comparative studies of alternative models of social education;

Models of and research on alternative schemas for student participation and social action;

Relationship of different pre- and in-service patterns of teacher training to social education;

Models of the utilization of objectives in social education and related research findings;

Implications of learning theory, child development research, socialization and political socialization research for the purposes and practice of social education;
The relationship of different independent, explanatory variables to educational achievements in the area of learning about society and social relations;

The social organization, climate, cohesion of schools and other school characteristics as independent, explanatory variables predicting to general educational achievement.
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