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Schooling is a social activity. It is my premise that our understanding of the conditions, processes, and effects of teaching and learning in schools would benefit from more research that is social in nature. Social studies education and research in particular would benefit from more social ways of thinking about society and research and of investigating and interpreting schooling and social studies (see Clements, 1981b). For the most part, however, the assumptions and practices adopted by social studies and other educational researchers have been asocial.¹

Educational research has been “coming out of the laboratory closet” and into the “natural” social setting of the classroom (Leinhardt, 1978). But, the move has been accompanied by efforts to make a closet out of the classroom by decontextualizing it, that is, by examining classroom phenomena in isolation from one another and their institutional, societal, and historical settings (Mishler, 1979). Consequently, the ecological validity and value of much classroom research has been unnecessarily limited (Doyle & Ponder, 1975). While classrooms are no more natural settings than are subways or skyscrapers (see Hamilton, 1981, on the evolution of the classroom system), classroom research does seem to hold promise for manageable and meaningful social study.

To describe schooling as a social activity and propose that the study of schooling reflect its social character, i.e., a social perspective, assumes mutual influence among school phenomena and between schools and larger
social structures. Further, people in schools are seen as jointly creating and acting on meanings or definitions of their situations as they interact over time. To take a social perspective is to reject oversocialized notions of human thought and action, instead viewing teachers, students, and others as creators as well as consumers, transmitters, and, perhaps, victims of their milieux.

The purposes of the present inquiry are to (a) delineate characteristics of social research with particular reference to classroom research, (b) identify examples of recent social studies classroom research that are social in nature, and (c) explore the possibilities and limitations of the social study of social studies.

Social versus Asocial Classroom Research

Classroom research is defined as systematic inquiry about school classrooms that is directed toward understanding classroom processes. It is usually but not necessarily conducted in classrooms. Such research can employ various methods—historical, philosophical, experimental, survey, empirical, ethnographic—or combinations of methodologies. Social studies classroom research would include studies of social studies classrooms or other (e.g., “self-contained” elementary) classrooms with reference to social studies concerns.

Tentative distinctions between social and asocial classroom research were derived from the literature in social psychology, sociology, and social inquiry. Particularly helpful were Bronfenbrenner (1976), Mishler (1979), and Popkewitz (1981) on social contexts, Mills (1959) and Waller (1932) on social study, and Bellack (1978) and Magoon (1977) on interpretative-constructivist research. Initial conceptions were refined in the process of examining classroom studies and the interpretative literature on classroom research and teaching (e.g., Doyle, 1977, 1979; Gump, 1971; Popkewitz & Wehlage, 1977; Westbury, 1973, 1978).

Characteristics distinguishing social and asocial classroom research are viewed as dimensions along which studies might vary. These dimensions are context, interaction, and participant conceptions—the extent to which phenomena of interest are contextualized, considered as dynamic and interacting, and interpreted in relation to participant conceptions.

Context. Contextualized study of social studies education attends to one or more of the contexts of social studies teaching and learning. In terms of classroom research, attention is directed to the contexts of social studies classroom instruction. Context can be conceptualized and partitioned in a number of ways. Here, context is used in its everyday, dictionary sense of the “situation, background, or environment relevant to a particular event, personality, creation, etc.” (Webster's New World Dictionary, Second College Edition, 1974, p. 307) where environment consists of the “conditions,
circumstances, and influences surrounding, and affecting the development of, an organism or group of organisms" (p. 468).

Contexts vary in direction and extent of impact as well as scope (situation specific to universal) and stability (short-lived to eternal). They can be distinguished by size, structure, and substance. The appropriateness of one or another means of distinguishing among contexts depends on the purpose and focus of study, i.e., contexts of what? Rather than attempt to taxonomize context, the intent here is to suggest contexts that seem relevant to social studies classroom instruction and how they might be studied.

Physical and temporal contexts are often distinguished from social contexts, even though physical settings are socially constructed, and time and history are socially interpreted. In addition to characteristics such as the variety and technology of classroom space, facilities, and materials, physical contexts might be examined in terms of their availability, arrangement, access, use, purpose and meanings. In a case study of the role of curriculum materials in elementary social studies instruction, for example, the activities associated with materials use (as well as the physical and substantive characteristics of the materials) were examined on the premise that the meaning and impact of curriculum materials depend on how they are used by teachers and students (Cornbleth, 1982). King's (1980) ethnographic study describes the availability, arrangement, and access to “play” materials in kindergarten classrooms and vividly illustrates their use, meanings, and social functions.

Temporal context refers not only to amount of time allocated or actually used for instruction, or whether it is morning or afternoon, but also to the sequence and pacing of events during and across instructional segments (see Arlin, 1979; Gump, 1971; Kounin, 1970). Further, classrooms exist in the context of a particular historical period (e.g., nuclear, Cold War, post-industrial), which likely influences what is taught and learned and how. The examination of controversial issues and the development of political beliefs are but two illustrations of social studies concerns that seem particularly susceptible to history. Classrooms also have histories of their own. What happens at one point in time sets precedents for and affects subsequent events.

Social contexts include overlapping interpersonal (e.g., dyadic, group), institutional (e.g., school, school district, state legislature and department of education-instruction), community (e.g., parents, local organizations), and societal (e.g., values, political movements) contexts. These contexts incorporate elements pertinent to both the academic and social aspects of schooling and classroom instruction.

Interpersonal contexts frame individual behavior. Interpersonal behavior, even at the dyadic level, is not merely a function of individual attributes (e.g., age, sex, ethnicity, I.Q., reading level), but also of time and place. Indicative of strategies for examining interpersonal contexts are ethnographic
and sociolinguistic studies of face-to-face interaction (e.g., Gearing & Sangree, 1979; Green & Wallat, 1981; McDermott, 1977; Mehan, 1978). Goffman (1964), for example, details the "neglected situation," arguing that interpersonal interactions, such as those between a teacher and one or more students, constitute social situations with distinguishing cultural characteristics and structures. They are not merely sequences of verbal and nonverbal behavior. "Cultural rules establish how individuals are to conduct themselves...and these rules for comingling...socially organize the behavior of those in the situation" (Goffman, 1964, p. 135). In other words, interpersonal interactions are social contexts that shape the behavior of participants; understanding observed interpersonal behavior requires identification of the operative cultural rules. And, these cultural rules are generated, in part, by the participants. At the interpersonal level, "social contexts consist of mutually shared and ratified definitions of situation" (Erickson & Shultz, 1981, p. 148) as well as the actions that participants take on the basis of their definitions (see Stebbins, 1975; Waller, 1932).

Classroom activities might be viewed fruitfully as interpersonal settings for both social and cognitive teaching and learning. Beyond allocated social studies instructional time (Smith, 1979), time on task and time spent in various activities in social studies classes (Cornbleth & Korth, 1980a; Herman, 1977; Stodolsky, 1979), social research would consider the teaching-learning opportunities and constraints afforded by specific activities (Korth & Cornbleth, 1982; Stodolsky, Ferguson, & Wimpelberg, 1981). In an experimental study of 11th and 12th grade social studies classes, Smith (1980) examined student conceptions, on-task behavior, and achievement in different concept discussion contexts. His findings that student commitment to discussion and two forms of attentiveness varied with the discussion context suggest that more attention might well be paid to the underlying structures of classroom activities.

Consider, for example, a social studies recitation consisting of teacher question-student response-teacher reaction interactions, occasionally interspersed with teacher elaboration of important points and teacher reprimands to students deemed inattentive or uncooperative. Typically, the situation or interpersonal context is mutually defined as one in which the teacher controls the interaction as director and judge while the student's role is a passive, dependent one of complying with teacher demands in order to obtain a favorable evaluation. The differential status of teacher and student in these exchanges is evident in their respective rights and responsibilities. The teacher as questioner has the right to determine the topic and how it is to be pursued, to speak at any time, to select other participants and terminate their participation. The students have the obligation to respond when requested and to remain quietly cooperative and receptive at other times. If students resist or challenge these implicit or explicit rules, teachers tend to assert their authority or employ coercive power in an effort to regain con-
trol of the interaction. Occasionally, however, students are successful in negotiating a redefinition of the situation and altering the rules guiding interaction such as whether they must raise their hands and wait for the teacher's permission to speak (Copeland, 1980; also, see Martin, 1976).

In sum, classroom research is contextualized to the extent that it considers the physical, temporal, and social contexts of the phenomena of interest, including the interrelationships and mutual influences among them. Contextualization of social studies classroom research goes beyond detailing samples and settings (e.g., Shaver & Norton, 1980) to consider what difference contexts seem to make. Classroom research is decontextualized and asocial when it involves examination of phenomena (such as teacher questions or student time-on-task) in isolation as if they were independent of time, place, and social location (see Cronbach, 1975; Mills, 1959). To ignore the multiple contexts of schooling is to obscure or misrepresent its social origins and nature. Social activities, including schooling, are "context dependent and can only be understood within their contexts" (Mishler, 1979, p. 2).5

Interaction and Participant Conceptions. The interaction and participant conceptions dimensions of social classroom research are implicit in the notion of context just elaborated. Interactive study of social studies classrooms attends to the interactions among classroom phenomena and their contexts. For example, students and teachers interact with curriculum materials, which are part of their physical environment, and with one another, which constitutes their immediate interpersonal setting. Together, these interactions shape the use of curriculum materials and how students and teachers relate to each other. Social study minimizes the fragmentation of classroom elements that distorts conceptualizations of classroom conditions, events, and outcomes.

Interactive studies also tend to be dynamic, portraying the flow of interaction and change over time. Rather than present a classroom snapshot, researchers follow and attempt to account for emerging trends and patterns. In contrast are studies that examine classroom phenomena at only one point in time or average observations across occasions. Recent studies of how teachers and students begin the school year (e.g., Emmer, Evertson, & Anderson, 1980) indicate that classroom structures and patterns of interaction do not simply exist but are created anew each year or semester, which suggests the desirability of classroom research that is dynamic rather than static. Future studies might move beyond classroom management concerns to consider how teachers and students create the academic and social curricula of their classrooms.

Participant conceptions include their meanings and purposes, i.e., participants' definitions of the classroom situation and their goals in the situation. How classroom participants define a situation influences their actions,
which, in turn, can serve to modify or sustain both the situation and their definition of it. Differential teacher expectations and treatment of students in ways that are self-fulfilling are one illustration of the interaction of participant conceptions and classroom events. Another is provided by Goldenson's (1978) study of the effects of an experimental curriculum unit on senior high school students' attitudes toward civil liberties. He found that attitude changes associated with a civil liberties unit were mediated by students' perceptions of teacher credibility; positive attitude change was greater when students perceived the teacher as fair, knowledgeable, concerned, interesting, and understandable.

The importance of incorporating participant conceptions into classroom research is based on the assumption that behavior is purposeful and that outsiders (e.g., researchers) cannot adequately interpret the actions of insiders (e.g., teachers, students) without access and attention to their meanings and purposes as well as to the contexts and interactive course of observed behavior. Teachers and students do what they do because they see their actions as serving desired ends. Their activity might seem absurd (or worse) to the observer unacquainted with their conceptions of the situation in question. In a study of students' involvement with school work, Laffey (1980) found that 10th grade social studies students' "constructions," i.e., their assessments of classroom situations, were associated with observed and reported involvement. While he concluded that "the student's understanding of the class situation provides a base of action, helping to explain the intensity and frequency of classroom behavior" (p. 16), it is also likely that classroom and other events affected students' constructions.

Consideration of participant conceptions in social research avoids dichotomizing thought and action. Particularly useful in this regard is the concept of perspective developed by Becker, Geer, Hughes, and Strauss (1961). Whereas constructs, theories, and ideologies, like attitudes and values, tend to be abstracted from particular situations and assumed to exist apart from actions, perspectives are situation specific, incorporating both ideas and actions and the relations among them. Perspectives also tend to be complex, consisting of more than a single belief-action pairing. The substance of a perspective includes one's definition of the situation and the problem(s) it presents, one's purposes or goals under these circumstances, and the ideas and actions employed toward reaching desired goals. Perspectives indicate how individuals interpret and thus create their environments and how they react to or act on them (see Argyris & Schön, 1974; Bussis, Chittenden, & Amarel, 1976). Boag and Massey (1981), for example, have illustrated how the perspectives of two elementary teachers mediated social studies curriculum change proposals.

Attention to teacher and other participant perspectives and how they are socially constructed would seem to enhance understanding of classroom processes and of possibilities for change. Social study incorporates the con-
text of meanings within which participants act and considers participant conceptions in their larger social contexts. It allow[s] one to understand how people's conceptions shape their behaviour, and how such conceptions and behaviour change over time in an evolving process of interaction . . . the dialectical process of how people create the very social structures that in turn shape them. (West, 1975, p. 36)

Summary. It has been proposed that the study of schooling would benefit from more research that is social in nature. The characteristics of social research were described in terms of three dimensions—the extent to which context and interaction of phenomena are considered and the degree to which participant conceptions are incorporated in description and interpretation. Social classroom research was described as contextualized, interactive/dynamic, and sensitive to participant conceptions, and recent social studies classroom research was cited to illustrate these characteristics.

Of the social studies classroom research published in the last five years (fewer than 30 studies were located), a majority of studies tend toward the asocial on all three dimensions. Although few in number, there are social studies of social studies education. In addition to those already cited, examples of social classroom research include (a) large scale projects such as the Case Studies in Science Education (Stake & Easley, 1978); (b) a study of first graders' sex role knowledge and behavior in relation to community, teacher-school, and curriculum contexts that incorporates participant conceptions (Goetz, 1981); (c) a study of elementary teachers' planning for social studies in relation to institutional context, including both formal and informal policies, that incorporates participant conceptions (McCUTCHEON, 1981); and (d) a study of the social construction and functions of knowledge about other cultures in elementary social studies classes (White, 1980).

Possibilities and Limitations of Social Study

The potential of classroom research that is social in nature is explored in relation to the development of a research base for social studies education and the use of research derived knowledge.

A Research Base. Given the complexity of classroom phenomena, neither social nor asocial classroom research will rapidly add to the present knowledge base for social studies education. Although social research does not require a large staff or sophisticated technology, it is labor intensive, particularly with respect to time and imagination. The costs of classroom research seem particularly high if one conceives of a research base as additive or cumulative, where discrete studies are expected to add up to provide a comprehensive picture of social studies education. With the goal of a cumulative research base, the cost-per-research finding, if it could be calculated, would likely be considered high for both social and asocial research.
Any investment in a cumulative research base would depreciate rather rapidly since specific research derived facts and generalizations decay over time (see Cronbach, 1975), that is, they become obsolete as conditions change. Consequently, attempting to accumulate an adequate research base is akin to the endless labors of Sisyphus who, doomed to push a heavy rock up a steep hill, found that it forever rolled back down again.

Further, pursuit of a cumulative research base implies that research data somehow spawn explanatory concepts and theories. Instead, it appears that the generation of explanatory hypotheses precedes the production of data to test them (see, e.g., Phillips, 1980). Productive scientific inquiry has never involved the stockpiling of findings with the expectation that they might someday come together in a grand theory.

Instead of seeking to amass research derived information for social studies education, it would seem more fruitful to work toward creating an evolving, heuristic research base (see Confrey, 1981). New research should not merely add to what already exists but facilitate refinement, extension, or revision of present knowledge. This orientation implies that what is needed is not simply more research or more technically sophisticated research but more powerful, theory generated research, powerful in the sense that it enables us "to develop explanatory concepts, concepts that will help people use their heads" (Cronbach, 1975, p. 126). Explanatory potential would be a major criterion of research value (see Magoon, 1977). It is here that social research would be more cost-effective than asocial research. If a research base is viewed as evolving rather than simply cumulative, a social perspective offers considerable promise, both for reinterpreting already available data and for suggesting questions to guide future research.

As illustration of the explanatory potential of a social perspective, consider the evidence of continuing textbook-based social studies instruction in which the narrative text largely defines the content and means of instruction. How is this evidence to be interpreted? A social perspective suggests an examination of (a) textbook instruction in context both within and beyond the classroom, (b) interaction among teachers, students, textbooks, and settings, and (c) conceptions of the participants in textbook instruction. When this was attempted, it was found, among other things, that textbooks and their accompanying recitations serve socialization and control as well as instructional purposes (e.g., Shaver, Davis, & Helburn, 1978; Westbury, 1973).

Moving beyond documentation of events, differences, and correlations to begin to understand how and why events and patterns occur and persist, one might more directly investigate how knowledge is constituted and distributed in social studies classrooms, how the social order of the classroom is constructed, and how knowledge and social order are intertwined (see Clements, 1981a). In so doing, one might begin to question assumptions and practices that seem to have been taken-for-granted despite evidence to the
contrary, e.g., that adding to teachers' subject matter knowledge or repertoire of teaching strategies will substantially alter their classroom practice.

**Use of Research Derived Knowledge.** There appears to be a widespread if implicit assumption that research findings should be instrumentally useful (e.g., Shaver, 1979). In other words, useful research is taken to be that which indicates prescriptions, preferably broadly applicable ones, for classroom practice. By this criterion, social studies and other educational research have not been notably useful. Even when findings have been deemed sufficiently convincing to support prescription, the prescriptions have often been rejected by teachers as unworkable or they have been tried and found not to work as expected.

Instead of asking to what extent research is or can be instrumentally useful, it seems more fruitful to ask how research might be used and to consider interpretative as well as instrumental uses of research derived knowledge. This suggestion dates at least to Dewey (1929), who admonished that "no conclusion of scientific research can be converted into an immediate rule of educational art" (p. 19), and Waller (1932), who argued that school studies should help teachers gain social insight, i.e., "insight into the social realities of school life" that can enhance their observation and interpretation of events in their own classrooms. This notion has recently been echoed by prominent mainstream educational researchers. Cronbach (1975), for example, proposes that research derived generalizations be treated as working hypotheses (rather than conclusions or probabilistic universals) to be tested in particular situations such that effects are observed and interpreted in context. Similarly, with respect to research on teaching, Good and Power (1976)

suspect that generalizations derived from classroom research . . . function not as predictors of future events but as guidelines for understanding particular situations or contexts . . . as guides to assessing the likely consequences of alternative strategies in complex educational situations. But this does not decrease their value for the teacher . . . . Theories can be of value in specifying those dimensions which are relevant to an understanding of classroom phenomena, can extend the range of hypotheses (alternative strategies) considered, and sensitize the teacher to the possible consequences of his [or her] actions. (p. 47)

Recently, Fenstermacher (1980) distinguished three possible uses of research on teaching in school practice, which he termed rules, evidence, and schemata. Rules, converting research results into directions for teachers to follow, describe an instrumentalist position. Evidence, using research results to test one's beliefs about teaching, is similar to Cronbach's view and that of Good and Power. Schemata, using research to provide a conceptual framework for interpreting classroom events and enlarging one's knowledge
and understanding of classroom phenomena, comes closest to the suggestions of Dewey and Waller. Rules cast the practitioner as a passive technician whereas evidence and schemata encourage active, reflective, and responsible practitioner, including researcher, roles. If the usefulness of research is viewed in terms of evidence and schemata rather than rules, then social research seems to offer rich possibilities, but no panacea, for social studies education.

From a social perspective, it appears that disappointment with social studies research may well be a function of inappropriate expectations and the asocial nature of much of that research. The challenge before us, then, is to reorient our notions of research and its purposes. Meeting this challenge involves moving beyond false quantitative-qualitative methodological dichotomies in considering how we might best portray and interpret the contexts, interactions, and participant conceptions of classroom phenomena. The methodological literature and the social studies previously cited suggest both the feasibility of such efforts and promising directions for future research in social education.

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Endnotes

1See, for example, Chanan (1976) and Popkewitz (1978). Some of the most cogent recent criticisms of asocial orientations have come from within psychology; see Sarason (1981) on clinical psychology and Sampson (1981) on cognitive psychology.

2Research conducted in classrooms is not classroom research when it offers little or no explication of classroom processes. For example, studies that attempt to assess or compare the effects on students of one or more curricula typically provide demographic characteristics of the sample and setting, a description of the intended treatment(s), and detailed analyses of student scores, but they often provide little basis for explaining how or why the treatments did or did not show the expected effects.


4To distinguish social from asocial research is not to deny that the latter is a social activity, one which is carried on within the interactive contexts of particular research communities and is quite sensitive to participant conceptions of what constitutes acceptable research.

5Warren (1975) found little evidence that the organizational (school and school district mandates and procedures) and sociocultural (parent and community expectations) contexts of teaching that he examined directly influenced classroom teaching in an elementary school; he concluded that teachers operated in contextual isolation. However, he seems to have (a) relied on official or public statements more than on the everyday interactions of teachers, specialists, and administrators, and (b) sought evidence of external contextual influence on individual

From an environmental psychology perspective, Barker (1963), for example, has elaborated the mutual influences among what he calls nested settings or contexts. Any one

both constrains and is constrained by the outside unit that surrounds it and by the inside units it surrounds. This means that entities in nesting structures are parts of their own contexts; they influence themselves through the circumsjacent entities which they, in part, compose . . . a word defines itself by its contribution to the meaning of the sentence of which it is a part. (p. 16)

Also, see Bronfenbrenner (1976).

Also, see Morgan (1979), who incorporated participant conceptions in identifying and attempting to account for relationships between teaching patterns and students' "sense of purposeful involvement" in secondary social studies classes; Ehman (1980), who examined students' perceptions of social studies classroom climate with respect to the inclusion and treatment of controversial issues in relation to their political attitudes from sophomore to senior years; and Combleth and Korth (1980b), who investigated social studies and science teachers' initial perceptions of their (black and white, male and female) students in relation to subsequent student behavior and teacher-student interaction (but did not directly examine (a) context factors or aspects of teacher perspectives that might mediate classroom expression of differential perceptions, or (b) change over time in teacher perceptions).

As one illustration of the promise of a heuristic research base and the interpretative use of research by researchers, see White's (1981) proposal for an ecological model of the construction of classroom lessons.

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Introduction

A few weeks ago one of us experienced that dismal sensation that comes from recognizing that bread has been cast on waters—and has sunk to the bottom, disappearing forever from view. One of our student teachers, who had done a creditable job during the microteaching component of our methods class, stood in front of her high school pupils asking one after another Bloom Level I, rote memory questions. After class, the author asked her what had happened to all of the work in methods class on questioning strategy. What, in particular, had become of the varied questions, arranged at different levels of abstraction? The young lady looked confused, as if she had been addressed in an unknown tongue.

A few probing questions revealed what one could have predicted: she had regressed to memory level teaching because she had not made any connection between practicing different level questions in the methods class and actually using them in a classroom. Understandably this raised the next question: Why had the connection not been made? The tentative answer: Emulating her cooperating teacher and most of the rest of her teachers for the last 16 years, she had not realized that her job was to do anything else but drill students on what they were supposed to have read in the text. We
thought about this. Of course the connection escaped her. Microteaching was apparently just one more task, one more obstacle to overcome before one was permitted to begin student teaching and then a career consisting largely of disciplining and training future citizens to be passive spectators. The next logical question is: What are the perceptions and philosophical assumptions of some teachers which enable them to proceed as if they had never heard of Reflective Inquiry, part of our Three Traditions theory, as if they were untouched by the notion of decision-making?

We have addressed ourselves to these foundational questions in the past. Our Three Traditions theory was an attempt to classify social studies teachers on the basis of their assumptions about purposes, method and content. The present effort continues our study with this emphasis: we shall attempt to identify the philosophical assumptions that social studies teachers may adopt, especially as these assumptions relate to ontology, epistemology, axiology, social goals and theories of human nature.

**Ontology**

Ontology, also known as metaphysics, is a philosopher’s shorthand term for theories of reality. Ontological questions include, What does it mean to exist? What is real? Is reality essentially of one kind or many? Is reality reducible to perception or does it consist ultimately of external phenomena and events? These questions have been asked, in one way or another, even before the Golden Age of Greek philosophy in Athens in the third and fourth centuries B.C. We have come to the conclusion that social studies teachers tend to hold certain ontological assumptions—quite unconsciously—and that these form a consistent position. Consider the following questions, rounded up in a few minutes from our collection of texts, study guides, assignments and textbooks.

1. T-F A civil war is fought between 2 different nations.
2. T-F Lenin had no problem of holding on to his party.
3. Fill in the blank—
   What things did Stalin establish under his rule?
4. Why has bicameralism tended to work so well in Congress?
5. What relation has progress to happiness?
6. “liberty cabbage”
7. Alfred Zimmerman

Questions one through three come from a seventh grade test given in a nearby Indiana school within the last year. Question four comes from the 1972 edition of the venerable Magruder work (McClenaghan, 1972, p. 216) and question five was taken from a civics text in our collection of 19th and 20th Century social studies textbooks (Ross, 1927, p. 192). The last two questions come from a more recent work on American history (Wiltz, 1972, p. 461). A moment’s reflection on these questions reveals that the first is a definition while the second asks respondents to agree with an historical in-
terpretation. Question three is unintelligible since the term "things" is used as an abstraction that could refer to phenomena as varied as "institutions," "political processes," "laws" or whatever else one may care to name. Question four, which asks for a judgement, is philosophically grotesque, since the answer is already provided within the question itself, i.e., it is given that bicameralism has "worked so well." Question five is apparently a philosophical proposition in which it is assumed that the critical terms, "progress" and "happiness," are both clear and related. Questions six and seven are brief identifications in which the answers are, respectively, "sauerkraut," and "the World War I German diplomat after whom the infamous telegram was named."

Philosophical Reductionism

The point of these examples is to offer illustration of our contention that some social studies teachers have reduced all reality to verbal propositions which can be phrased in terms of short and succinct sentences. Thus, as these illustrations seem to suggest, the reality in tests, study sheets, workbooks, after-the-chapter questions and virtually all discourse in classrooms has been compressed to an undeviating and homogeneous formula. Whether value judgements, philosophical assertions, intuitive opinions, theoretical rationales, concepts, definitions or empirical facts, all manage to be homogenized in the same ontological meatgrinder and emerge looking like simple declarative sentences turned into questions. As in the brief list compiled above, an historical interpretation, a judgement, a complex philosophical issue, an archaic noun and a definition are treated in precisely the same way.

Given such philosophical reductionism, one must then ask, What are the ontological assumptions upon which these practices are based? It would appear that some teachers may be classified as naive realists, i.e., they believe that there is a reality out there which exists on its own terms and is capable of being known as such. Teachers possess this reality, having obtained it from a text, professors or other experts who exercised prior ownership. This form of realism is a decayed version of the Positivism of the 19th Century from which contemporary social studies is largely derived.

By this we mean that 19th Century Positivists believed that there were laws in both the physical and social domain which govern all behavior. These laws have been built into the cosmos, i.e., were part of the fabric of the universe and are absolute and are therefore totally independent of perception by any human being. It seemed to follow that man's task lay in apprehending pre-existent reality and absolute laws.

In sum, the reality of social studies teachers can be described by this statement: Some teachers believe that there is a reality out there which exists independent of human perception. Such reality may be captured in brief assertions in which no differentiation need be made among concepts, judg-
ments, definitions, empirical facts, theories, intuitive hunches or the like. Thus, it is essential for students to be able to decide that it is either true or false that a civil war is fought between two different nations and that Lenin "had no problem of holding on to his party." A recollection that sauerkraut was renamed "liberty cabbage" during World War I is equally as important as the correct response to a question concerning the true relationship between "progress" and "happiness."

In sum, then, it appears that without consciously formulating an ontological position, teachers subscribe to the tradition known as naive realism. Teachers believe that reality lies "out there," external and independent of human perception; it follows that such reality must be known on its own terms. Finally, teachers appear to believe that all reality is capable of being reduced or compressed to assertions that are either true or false, correct or incorrect, right or wrong.

Epistemology

One's ontological position may carry implications for one's epistemology. That is, how one conceives of reality has something to do with what one conceives as knowledge. In the case of most social studies teachers, the notion that there is an external reality which may be reduced to true-false, right-wrong statements implies an epistemological position. Valid knowledge, then, appears to consist of these statements. Valid knowledge, as curriculum content, is that which is to be found in texts, movies, filmstrips, videotapes or lectures. An assertion that something is valid and is known as such is its own proof. Consider the following discussion held by one of the authors recently with some students about ready to embark on teaching.

"What," one of the students was asked, "are your goals concerning drug education?" The predictable answer was, "Give students the facts and let them form their own opinions." The student was then requested to tell everyone how he would distinguish between a fact and an opinion. The answer: "No problem. The facts are in the text." But, we pressed the student, how does one come to recognize a fact and distinguish it from an opinion? Facts, the answer was, are "universally proven." When the student was asked to provide an example of a "universally proven" fact in the field of drug education, a conflict immediately broke out. Well, then, we asked, is the statement, "Marijuana is a dangerous drug" a fact or an opinion? The conflict deepened. At this point, we pointed out that texts are invariably written by human beings, that they have biases, passions and prejudices which are usually not plainly indicated. On this account, it is good policy to distinguish between the health education text and the revealed and immutable word of God, as delivered on Mt. Sinai.

We tried to clinch the argument with a paraphrase of a quotation from the philosopher A. J. Ayer: (1956, p. 26)
Whether there are any empirical statements which are in any important sense indubitable is, as we shall see, a matter of dispute; if there are any they belong to a very narrow class. It is, indeed, important philosophically to distinguish between necessary and empirical statements and in dealing with empirical statements to distinguish between different types and degrees of evidence.

The very next class period, when the topic was picked up, we asked this particular student about his—by now, we hoped—deepened understanding of the epistemological issue. His answer: he would present the facts, which were universally proven, and allow the students to form their own opinions. Vaccilating between an urge to commit suicide and strangle the student—which would have been a challenge in view of his size and muscularity—we retired, licking our wounds and wondering what was to be learned from all this. The answer: we were asking students to make distinctions which they neither make now nor expect to make as a teacher. Distinguishing among levels of probability, discriminating between empirical statements and judgments of value, are not only hairsplitting and picayune activities, they are not called for. What is called for is (a) to make verbal claims that the goal is to avoid biasing students and simply present facts and allow them to form their own opinions, (b) steadfastly refuse to undergo the intellectual effort necessary to distinguish between facts and opinions, and (c) continue as before, indoctrinating students in whatever is taken to be truth and beauty.

In sum, then, some social studies teachers—who are probably not unique in this respect—perform the same reductionism epistemologically as they do ontologically. Their general disinclination to distinguish between various truth claims, to treat all curriculum items as equally certain and equally factual is not—despite our occasional feelings to the contrary—a form of perversity. It is simply that the model of teaching they carry around in their skulls does not call for such fine discrimination. To expect such distinctions is as pointless as requiring the asking of a variety of questions at different Bloom taxonomic levels.

**Axiology**

Just as there is a relationship between one's conception of reality and what one takes to be valid knowledge, there is also a connection between both ontology and epistemology and one's position on values. For teachers, this relationship is difficult to understand and appears to be paradoxical. While social studies teachers agree that there is a difference between matters of fact and value, they are reluctant to explain the distinction. However, one also discovers that in the thinking of teachers, value claims have the same status as absolute facts. Values—some values at any rate—are just as coercive as facts.
To be sure, there are matters of taste and preference. One may or may not accept President Reagan's current economic theories. This is a matter of preference just as is one's taste in political parties. However, if the text labels the New Deal as a "period of reform," it is reform—with all that this term connotes. If the history text describes the Civil War as an "inevitable conflict," then it must have been inevitable. If the name of the textbook is *Freedom vs. Communism* and purports to be a comparison of capitalism (which is either the same as or must always accompany democracy) and communism, freedom is not simply a value judgment but a substantive reality. The point is that some value judgments are not apparently judgments; they are as much "given" as facts. They are built into the fabric of reality. "Freedom," "reform" and "inevitable conflict" are an inescapable part of our social reality and the text author or teacher is simply reporting what is there.

If values are resident within our social environment as much as hardness and smoothness are resident within polished teakwood, what follows is that students must be acquainted with the meaning and necessity of certain values in much the same way as they are acquainted with the characteristics of wood, the wetness of water or the color of leaves in the autumn. Acquainting students with the fact that our bicameral system has worked so well is not, in the eyes of teachers, what a few of us believe it is: uncritical inculcation into nation-state worship. It is simply reinforcing the desired response. To ask "why" the bicameral system has worked so well is, as Magruder and many other text writers have done, to accord the same status to a judgment as one accords to a given. We are simply finding out how and why bicameralism has worked so well; that it has worked well is not a value issue. Here is another example, taken from an examination given recently in one of the local schools.

What offers the best hope for members of lower classes to improve their social and economic position?

How does the U.S. stimulate (sic.) its production?

The answer to these two matching questions, we learned, is "c. education" and "h. competition." One could argue validly that the United States stimulates production by means of periodic wars, overt and covert subsidizations, tariffs, and monopolistic or other anti-competitive institutions. Similarly, one could argue that there is no best hope for helping the "lower classes" improve their "social and economic position." Or one could assert that the best means of so doing lies in income redistribution. One might even argue, as Hunt has summarized the conflict, that it is undesirable for the poor to improve their lot in life for such would deprive the world of a cheap and readily available labor supply. In any event, the point should be clear: these two test items, which are eminently moot and arguable, were treated not as the moot and arguable statements they are, but rather as givens.
As reductionist and simple as all of this is, it is consistent with what we have seen so far. As we have seen, many teachers do not make distinctions between one truth claim and another. Neither do they make distinctions between matters of value and other statements. It is not simply that they are unaware of the unceasing conflict among philosophers about what is or is not a value or a fact. It is, in the final analysis, that teachers believe values are built into the social fabric and occupy the same ontological status that mathematicians accorded to axioms before the 19th Century. The internal angles of a triangle do equal 180 degrees and bicameralism has worked well.

To insist that there are value issues and value conflicts is to ask teachers to perform the labors which they do not perceive as essential, important or even desirable. The task, then, is not, as many social studies educators have argued, to teach students to clarify values but rather to transmit the right set of values which are as indubitable as facts. Refusing to make distinctions between fact and opinion we believe does not arise out of perversity, but because such philosophical distinctions have nothing whatsoever to do with the real teaching goals—as perceived by social studies teachers.

**Human Nature**

Of the many concepts treated under the category "theories of human nature," the most important for our purpose is passivity and activity. Most social scientists and educators—at least to the extent that they are conscious of the philosophical category called human nature—would probably opt for the notion that human beings are biological organisms in active interaction with their environment. This position has a number of advantages, e.g., it harmonizes well with the findings of cultural anthropologists; it neatly avoids the trap of the nature vs. nurture wrangle; and it reflects the assumptions of most educators. Textbooks on educational psychology or curriculum and methodology tend to advocate teaching which assumes that children are active and wish to do things.

A fairly typical statement is this: (Massialas and Hurst, 1978, p. 34).

The new pedagogy proposed that children learn best through 'inquiry' and 'discovery.' This was simply the notion that true learning takes place when children are given the opportunity to discover, develop, and test for themselves ideas about their environment; or, to use Bruner's words, to find out 'how things are related.' Instead of being told about the world, children would now be presented with problems or puzzling situations and asked to resolve them through forming hypotheses, collecting relevant data, testing the hypotheses, and drawing conclusions.

However, classroom teaching and school structures quite often reflect not the implications of an active human nature but rather passivity. There is a good deal of evidence for this assertion. For instance, in most classrooms
students do not originate; they respond. According to our own research, most of the questions asked in social studies classes must be classified at the Bloom I level. This finding has been reported by most other researchers and paints what most of us consider a dismal picture. Further, students do not ordinarily devise criteria for evaluation; they accept those of teachers who, it should be noted, are not often consciously aware of their criteria. Although some schools have moved toward a physical structure that allows students to move around (flexible scheduling, modular instruction, large-small group instructions, folding walls, etc.), the most common arrangement is still the self-contained classroom, with 50 minute periods, and in which desks are arranged neatly in a row. There are many other indications of practices which assume that curriculum is reducible to the notion that learning is what happens to children.

As with other categories we have employed, human nature is a traditional philosophical shorthand term. It refers to what many know or feel to be the underlying, perhaps permanent, substratum that underlies all human behavior. When someone claims that there will always be war because "human nature" is the way it is, what is probably meant is that 1. there is a persistent human essence, 2. this essence is unchanging and unmodifiable, and 3. it is essentially hostile, belligerent, aggressive. Some may agree with the first two statements but then conclude that human nature is not naturally aggressive but rather peaceful and cooperative. In addition to ideas about the "innate" peacefulness or hostility of human nature, there are a number of other ways of conceptualizing this nature. Teachers, we believe, have tended to accept—if unconsciously—a particular conception of human nature, at least as the term applies to the nature of learners.

**Passive Students Reacting and Responding**

A number of individuals have examined the philosophical Weltanschauung in which the world and everything in it are essentially governed by mechanistic laws. In educational terms, a mechanistic model of the universe and man was translated into the language of factories, production and commerce (Schultz, 1973). Schools became “plants,” students “products,” and centralized bookkeeping and accounting resulted in “uniform” curriculum. All of this might be appropriate, Longstreet (1976) observed acidly, if schools really were factories and students were inert bottles of beer.

Despite Longstreet's anguish, teachers often do not distinguish between bottles of beer, i.e., inert entities, and human beings with goals. The critical difference—that human beings can project goals and make autonomous decisions—has been lost in the welter of theories that derive directly from the industrial-commercial model of education, learning and teaching. Thus, partly as a function of a Lockean theory of mind and learning, a mechanistic conception of the universe and the dominance of an industrial-commercial model of teaching, students have been defined as "those beings
upon whom others act” and curriculum as “things initiated elsewhere which happen to students.” There is nothing inherently erroneous about this assumption; if school is, as William James said it was, preparation for life, and if life for most in an industrial society consists largely of reacting and responding, it is fairly easy to see why teachers believe that human beings are passive. Passivity as an assumed fact of human nature simply reflects the passivity of social roles.

Social Philosophy and Social Participation

In our first description of the Three Traditions we argued that certain social studies teachers have a limited conception of citizenship. More recently we have begun to understand what “limited” means. In a book-length work we are now completing, we devoted a chapter to conceptions of citizenship held by social studies educators. We concluded that while most social studies text writers mention “citizenship,” they rarely define the term. This has not been an oversight, however, for it has permitted text authors to argue that citizenship is whatever they say it is. Behind this seemingly arbitrary practice is an easily identifiable aim: it has permitted text authors—and teachers—to mediate whatever cultural values happened to be handy. We also have seen the enormous philosophical differences between the assumptions built into democratic participation and the limited conception we describe.

The two most prominent characteristics of our society—certainly according to such visitors as de Tocqueville, Lord Bryce and, more recently, Dennis Brogan, are democracy and pluralism. However one defines democracy, it is usually construed as a process in which those who are governed determine both their governors and the laws by which they are governed. Although pluralism may refer to something either structural or functional, it has the clear meaning that there are a large number of associations—The Federalist Papers called them “factions,”—organized according to their self-interest. It has followed that the various groups, associations, and factions wish to reach their goals at the expense of others. The combination of democracy and pluralism has kept our society in a continuous state of ferment for most of its existence. Given the lack of consensus which is built into a pluralistic society, laws, institutions, philosophical goals and cultural patterns come into being, shift, erode and re-emerge in a ceaseless process.

The implication of both democracy and pluralism for a conception of citizenship raises at least two questions. First, citizenship would seem to require an understanding of both decision-making in its widest sense and a knowledge of decision-making in our particular society. Second, citizenship would involve possession of decision-making skills. That is, one must not only know how decisions are made, one must also have the particular skills involved in reaching decisions. All analyses of what is called, often darkly, “practical politics” suggest that to be successful, one must know how to get legislation
passed, must know what affects voters’ thinking, must know how to exert pressure on the levers of power, must know how and why threats are used and must understand what is politically possible.

It is demonstrable that analysis and decision-making are not objectives accomplished in most social studies classrooms. Since the second decade of this century, the curriculum in civics has been memorization of the formal decision-making structures of government.\textsuperscript{12} In practice this meant that students, at least twice before high school graduation, are required to memorize the minute details of court structures, election procedures, the tripartite form of government, the formation of local taxing districts and the civics teachers’ most favorite—How a Bill Becomes a Law.\textsuperscript{13} Knowledge of such details, however, has but a distant relationship to the actual process by which decisions are made in this society. One cannot for a moment imagine that the following excerpt does justice to the reality:\textsuperscript{14}

During the 1960’s, American Negroes have carried on an increasingly intensive effort to achieve full political, educational, economic, and social opportunity, as well as equal protection under the law. In the courts and in demonstrations which have affected northern cities as well as Southern States, Negroes have pursued their quest for first-class citizenship. Opposition to this effort has sometimes resulted in violence.

This truncated, pallid and lifeless account of perhaps the most turbulent and bitter years of our history could not convey the cajoling and threats employed by President Johnson and Vice President Humphrey, could not describe the implacable resistance of “Bull” Connor in the South or the explosion of Watts after the death of Martin Luther King, Jr., could not impart the flavor of blacks and whites picketing swimming pools, bars, restaurants, and department stores. One then wonders why the substitution of an anemic, bloodless “coverage” of formal decision-making processes for an inquiry into the real complexities of citizenship. Why memorize details which, according to most research, will be forgotten within days? We suggest that these are not rhetorical questions and that there are answers.

The answer is that the possession of either skills or knowledge of actual decision-making in our society is not and never has been a practiced goal of social studies teachers. The argument that study of governmental structure is good preparation for the future is not based upon an analysis of either citizenship or what is required to function as a citizen in a democratic and pluralistic society. Furthermore, students appear to sense this: the most common complaint by social studies students that “they don’t see how they are going to use all this junk” is, in fact, supported by the research reports of the last 40 or so years which show that, in fact, citizens ordinarily do not have the kind of knowledge that is expected of them by social studies teachers.\textsuperscript{15}

Our conclusion: the unverbalized but real and operational assumption
which guides the social studies in our society is that by passively storing up information about historical events, decisions, governmental structure and unrelated details of geography, "social problems," etc., students are held to be disciplining themselves and thereby acquiring the knowledge and attitudes essential for citizenship at a later time. We wish to point out that it is not thought essential that students themselves undergo a decision-making process; only that they study the process as it was exercised by others in the past or the formal structure established by the Constitution. We wish to highlight the essential distinction here: it is between "making decisions" on the one hand and "storing up information" for decisions to be made at a later time. The latter is the real assumption which underlies social studies teaching.

Differences Between Verbalized Goals and Operational Assumptions

Although many—including both authors—have concentrated on the inconsistencies of social studies teachers, another perspective reveals not inconsistency and disharmony but the presence of a set of internally related and logically consistent philosophical assumptions. In our own confusion about the verbalized goals of social studies educators and the behavior of classroom teachers, we did not attempt to ask ourselves an important question. As inferred from the behavior of teachers, what are their operational assumptions? When we do this, we come up with the following set of conclusions:

First, as we have said, many teachers seem to be quite consistent in their beliefs about reality, knowledge, values, social goals and other philosophical categories. Their operational ontological assumption is that reality lies "out there," that is, reality is independent of the perceptions of any observer. We have also seen that, in the teachers' perceptions, reality is compressed, flattened out and reduced: all reality—whatever its form—is assumed to be capable of expression as short sentences. Thus, whether the teacher is talking about an intuitive hunch, a generally received opinion, a theoretical construct, a definition, a concept or an empirical fact, all forms of reality are treated as identical. All can be reduced to verbal expressions, phrased generally as declarative sentences in interrogative form. Finally, there are quick and clean answers to all questions, such as we have seen in "sauerkraut" and "competition."

Second, ontological and epistemological reductionism is extended to matters of value. In some teachers' worlds there are no value conflicts or substantial questions about value. (Although, of course, teachers do ask students, How do you feel about the Middle East? Roosevelt? or the like, such questions are not generally asked where they count, on examinations.) Values, like the "facts" that teachers talk about, are reduced to givens. And by "given" we refer to the sense in which pre-modern mathematicians used to define the term "axiom," as a self-evident and true-on-the-face-of-it proposition. Al-
though teachers would understandably resent this interpretation, we must point out the distinction between verbally endorsing the need for children to decide their own values and the actual practice which, in effect, as Boyd Bode used to say, consists of taking advantage of defenseless children. There is no other interpretation we can reach in light of the myriad illustrations we have seen. The ones we have cited—including the question about the "best" method of elevating the lower classes, as if the question were simply a self-evident truth, a given—constitute evidence that reveals how many teachers think about values.

Third, when one looks at the teacher beliefs about human nature, we find not the interactive assumption about active, goal centered human behavior that social scientists and educators have preferred for most of this century. We find, instead, the old Lockean idea—buttressed by the industrial-commercial model of schools and learning. That idea, reduced to its simplest, is the old *tabula rasa* or blank slate notion; a conception of human nature in which an active environment shapes a passive object.

Finally, we find in the conception of citizenship held by some teachers the notion that living is something that happens to people and therefore curriculum ought to be something that teachers do to students. As students discipline themselves to learn the myriad "facts" about the structure of government and the decisions made by others, they are storing up potentially useful information that will prove to be valuable at a later time, when as adult citizens they will begin to make decisions.

### A Passive Preparation for Citizenship

The passivity that runs through our description like a thread is a function both of traditional teaching practices and a set of philosophical assumptions. The idea that living is something that happens to you rather than something you do is not a bizarre or irrational belief. It flows directly out of assumptions that the teachers—reflecting the dominant culture—hold about learning, valuing, knowing, human nature, social goals and social roles. Hearkening back to the introduction to this article, we will consider the cultural patterns, historically developed, which support this distressing conclusion.

**Words and Things.** Here, as we have frequently in the past, we must call attention to the process in which teachers, having internalized the language of educators in their undergraduate years, have come to use this language to describe what they are doing. This process, as we have determined, is a constant within social studies and has been so since the 19th Century. When one compares the language of text writers in forewords, first chapters, introductions and the like and what actually happens in the body of the text, the gulf is evident. Consider these.

One U.S. history text author believed that his work would lead "pupils to
a thoughtful study of history, and to an appreciation of the fact that events hinge upon each other.” (A Brief History of the United States, 1877, p. 4) Another wanted students to “... study things in a scientific spirit, to learn their modes of genesis and their present aspects ...” (Fiske 1890, p. VIII) A third discussed the “... intelligent appreciation of the history of his (sic.) own country” (Gordy, 1912, p. VII) that would come from understanding history. A civics text author thought that his work would inspire “... boys and girls with a desire to do their part in bettering their own groups and neighborhood ...” (Hill, 1922, p. VII) An understanding of events, said the same author, would contribute to “... the ability to reason and [improve] the power to observe,” which, in turn, would lead directly to the enhanced capacity of “... the student to analyze and form critical judgments.” (Hill, 1922, P. VII) We cite this choice of language to illustrate that as far back as we can discover, authors of civics, history and other social studies texts conceptualized the subject as preparation for citizenship. Their choice of language provides a key to the intimate connection between the forming of critical judgments and appreciations and civic participation.

But when one reads the authors’ direction to teachers, when one analyzes the questions and assignments, another very different pattern is there. In most texts, many chapter questions required one word or short Bloom Level I answers.

The disjunction between what curriculum makers thought should happen and the specifics of curriculum construction, in effect, canceled one another out.

**Good Character, Locke and Industrialism.** The historical origins of what we take to be teachers’ dominant assumptions about passivity, discipline, conformity, etc., can be found in cultural patterns that have developed since the beginning of our history in the 17th Century. First, in terms of chronology, is the contribution of the Protestant Ethic.

*Good character.* In its effort to return to the inspiration of the Jewish Torah, (the Christian Old Testament) Protestant Reformers conceived of education primarily in terms of the development of a worthy character. The writings of Protestants in the colonies are replete with observations that the “Godly Commonwealth” the Pilgrim Fathers prayed for could only arise from a thorough acquaintance with the Word of God. Although lists of character traits thought to be desirable could fill many pages, at the very minimum Protestant Reformers hoped for a connection between education and respect for authority, pious observance, obedience to God’s will, frugality, hard work, intellectual cultivation, sobriety and belief in the primacy of the family and the importance of the community. We will not resurrect the ancient Catholic-Protestant conflict over good works versus faith as the ground of salvation; the traditional view is that right belief, which would lead directly to good acts, is a function of education. In short, the Protestant
Ethic is based upon the ancient Hebrew dictum that one ought to “train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart therefrom.”

Locke. The learning theory of John Locke—in which passivity of the organism in the face of an active environment is the hallmark—also included ideas about the ultimate goal of education. From Locke's point of view, the rigorous training, the self denial, the “cold shower and rugby” regimen that found its way into both British public schools and some American prep schools is based upon the conviction that all schooling is preparation for a good character. We are not going to debate the extent to which Locke's philosophical position found its way into the thinking of American educators; obviously most teachers have only the dimmest recollection of Locke. However, the idea that he developed in a number of his works (principally his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* and *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*) that teachers must bend their energies to the cultivation of worthy character is clearly a most significant part of the thinking of both the public and the profession.

In brief, then, Locke contributed two ideas which found their way into educational practice in that they provided a rationale for practices that were already ancient when Locke described them. The idea that individuals are blank tablets on whom the environment writes provides the impetus for teachers to perceive young people as neutral objects who can be molded as desired. Combined with the idea that schools exist to shape worthy character, we see the basis of a good deal of practice. The problem, of course, is that while teachers and text authors have always talked in terms of active citizenship and critical thought, the emphasis has been upon passive acquisition and character development.

Industrialism. One need not be a Marxist to believe that schools, as the product of society, were created to meet the needs of that society. One of these needs was the requirement to train those who would fit into the shops, workplaces, offices and factories of an essentially commercial society. As we have already commented, there were at least two senses in which the industrial-commercial model of schooling, teaching and learning shaped classroom practices. First, the model emphasized the passivity of students and accordingly teaching was reduced to a set of mechanistic responses. Indeed, the frequently given definition of education as change in behavior accompanies that notion that the very best indicator of learning is the right response.

In yet another sense, the commercial-industrial model of education generated passivity. If, as a number of critics have pointed out, the goal was to prepare students to assume their proper roles in an industrialized society, it is important to inquire into the nature of that society and those roles. For some—those who are in creative endeavors, art, some of the professions
and the like—there is novelty, fulfillment and interest. For many, however, neither the assembly line nor the office typing pool fulfills the notion of meaningful work. One of the most frequently repeated objections—other than the monotony, repetitiveness and dullness that go with many jobs—centers around the inability of individuals to assume a major role in making those decisions which affect them. In many jobs, important decisions are made elsewhere and even the most minute of job functions is prescribed in advance. In such vocations, the individual is no longer an individual in any philosophical sense of the term; he or she is an interchangeable part, a cog. The hallmark of such work, then, is passivity in which the person carries out the demands of others, made elsewhere. While this analysis is hardly novel (it has been made before, often in the context of industrial democracy or the lack thereof\textsuperscript{19}), we wish to discuss the phenomenon in terms of the passivity necessarily involved.

What is appropriate, it seems to us, for work as we have described it is promptness, neatness, compliance and conformity, thoroughness, efficiency and the ability to perform without becoming demoralized, depressed or resentful. These, it would appear, are not only characteristics of many vocations, they are also good descriptions of some social studies classrooms. Such classrooms, it need scarcely be pointed out, have nothing to do with creativity, joy, problem-solving, insight or even understanding.

Thus, in the process of preparing the young to take their normal place in adult society—which is essentially the goal of all educational systems—our own has apparently decided that to get students ready to live in an unstimulating, dull, repetitive society, it is essential to create classrooms that have precisely these characteristics. As we have already stated (Shermis, 1974, p. 403-406), the dullness about which students and social studies educators complain is useful and practical preparation.

**Social Sciences.** Finally, we must describe a paradoxical development in which the social studies became the action arm of the social sciences and inadvertently doomed students to passivity. Passivity inheres in the very definition of that most critical of all terms, “problem,” and its complement, “social problem.” The 1916 report, as we describe the history in “Nineteenth Century Origins of the Social Studies Movement: Understanding the Continuity Between Older and Contemporary Civics and U.S. History,” (Barth and Shermis, 1980), recommended that students study social problems as a way of both understanding the problems of our society and as a way of learning how to make choices. For many years, both authors assumed that the language and intent was that of John Dewey. However, recently we have learned that the conception of problem as a social problem was not Dewey’s but rather that of 19th Century European positivists who provided the philosophical framework for social scientists. (Lybarger, 1981).

In our judgment the eventual formula can be described this way: social scientists would provide the problem, the relevant data and the proper con-
conclusions. Social studies curriculum experts, text writers and teachers would then reduce the level of complexity to content deemed appropriate for students. But please note: the selection of problems, the choice of relevant data and the conclusions, solutions or answers were provided for students by others. We now ask why this self-defeating process has been institutionalized so thoroughly; so thoroughly, indeed, that few of us even noticed.

The answer we propose: such philosophical assumptions enabled society to believe that students were being prepared to understand and live in a complex society while guaranteeing that no fundamental or basic institution would be disturbed. Consider the “drug problem” for instance, a “problem” studied at great length by students in civics, social problems, health and other courses. The “drug problem” is invariably defined in terms of abuse by the young of marijuana and other dangerous substances. The conclusion is that addiction reflects character flaws and that the solution lies in the passage of tighter laws, tougher enforcement and more pervasive counseling and education. But as long as the “drug” problem is cast in such terms, as long as students are not allowed to focus their attention on a society in which every problem is thought to be soluble by something out of a bottle, as long as students are not allowed to look at the “legitimate” drug manufacturing industry to see how profitable it has become, society guarantees that “drug education” will never change patterns of drug consumption.¹⁷

We are not blaming contemporary social scientists for a pernicious practice. Our contention is that the model developed by 19th century social scientists, a good many of whom subscribed to the philosophical tenets of Positivism, entered social studies theory and practice. This model was not, we believe, consistent with the ideal of the individual who made autonomous decisions based upon thoughtful analysis of many kinds of relevant data. Rather the 19th century social science model provided a prepackaged social problem, with carefully selected information and either conclusions or broad hints about conclusions students should reach.

It is the effect of such a conception of “problem solving” on students that we wish to emphasize. When others define the problem for you, provide all of the data for you and then dictate the proper conclusions, you have become that which is acted upon. The entire process—from conception to true-false evaluation—makes the curriculum creator active, the teacher a neutral conduit of unexamined cultural flotsam and jetsam, and students passive recipients.

**Summary/Conclusion**

The philosophical assumptions of many social studies teachers, at least as we have attempted to identify them, are consistent. Looked upon as a complete system, the component parts reveal a high degree of internal logic. The notion that a reality out there must exist independent of all observers and
must be understood on its own terms gives rise to the idea that there are certain givens which must be learned. This system of philosophical assumptions also suggests that there are values which inhere in the fabric of social life and which must be taught on their own terms. There are no essential differences between values and givens, known widely as facts, nor are there taken to be problems or conflicts among values. The notion that human nature is passive and that humans are lumps of clay that await molding by a sculptor-teacher is consistent with the kinds of school organization and teaching procedures the culture has invented. Both notions are, in turn, perfectly consistent with the idea that the function of schools in general and social studies in particular is to prepare children to take their rightful roles as cogs in an industrialized machine. And the conception of adults as cogs is perfectly consistent with the idea that others will define the problem, provide data and shape conclusions. In short, and to repeat the point, the internal philosophical position described forms a consistent whole.

The entire issue, i.e., criticism of social studies teaching, lies in the eyes of the beholder, the social critic, the social studies educator, those who write methods books and talk about the training skills for real world problem-solving. Judged from premises of social studies critics, most of what social studies classroom teachers have done is unsatisfactory. Thus from a different set of premises we social studies educators carp, complain and criticize. And routinely classroom teachers ignore us. We note with alarm—as one can see in the widely quoted Shaver-Davis-Helburn article—that teachers go their own way, changing but little. When we shake our collective heads in sorrow at the dull, mindless and uninspired true-false questions, memoriter rote recitations and watch passive outlining of chapters, we do not perceive that the goals of critical thinking and decision making are being reached. What is now clear is that social studies by most teachers has nothing to do with teaching the development of critical skills and decision-making. School practices have to do with discipline and the training of future citizens to become passive spectators.

The training of passive spectators is what the founders of social studies thought the field should do, and it is what the field does to this day. Until members of the profession can perceive the distinction between verbalized goals and actual performance, that is what it will always do.

Endnotes


2We base this claim on research reported in a previous article. See both authors' "Nineteenth Century Origins of the Social Studies Movement: Understanding the Continuity Between Older and Contemporary Civic and U.S. History Textbooks," Theory and Research in Social Education. 8 (Fall, 1980) 20–49. We have been forced to reject our previous assumptions that social studies, or at least the Reflective Inquiry tradition within the social studies movement, is based largely on Deweyan premises. We now perceive this to be the result of longstanding confusion.
in terminology. We use the term "naive realism" which is the uninformed and uncritical stance of those who are unaware of philosophical problems in perception. It is not, of course, to be confused with philosophical realism, which is an ancient, complex and many-splendored school that has attracted sophisticated philosophers for several thousand years.

3Here is Karrier's interpretation of Herbert Spencer on this matter. "The natural unfolding of the human flower would be seriously impaired if men tinkered with the natural law of survival of the fittest and allowed the weak to survive. The poor, the weak, the downtrodden, the stupid, and the lazy must be allowed to die off." See Clarence J. Karrier, Man, Society and Social Statics. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1892.


"Most recently, these conclusions were reached by three colleagues. See the summary of research reported by James Shaver, O. L. Davis, Jr., and Suzanne W. Helburn, "The Status of Social Studies Education: Impressions from Three NSF Studies," Social Education 43 (February, 1979) 150-153.

"The origins in both practice and theory of passivity are complex and extend back to the pre-literate world. In recent times, however, Bayles has traced the origins of passivity in a straight line from John Locke through Friedrich Herbart to E. L. Thorndike, with B. F. Skinner and other neo-Behaviorists also in this tradition. In Ernest E. Bayles and Bruce L. Hood, Growth of American Educational Thought and Practice, New York: Harper and Row, 1966, see the chapter entitled "Education as Habit Formation," and especially pages 47-48, a section of which is: "In the reception of simple ideas, the understanding is for the most part passive . . . As the bodies that surround us do diversely affect our organs, the mind is forced to receive the impressions, and cannot avoid the perception of those ideas that are annexed to them." And to this Bayles says, "This means a passive mind, as both the opening and closing of the sentences of the last quotation show." (Both sentences are as have been quoted. Italics in the original.)


deTocqueville, of course, is perhaps the best known and most astute commentator. His Democracy in America, published in 1835, introduced the themes which would attract the attention of Lord Bryce, from Great Britain, a half century later and would continue to interest Dennis Brogan, also from Great Britain, in our own time.

The Federalist, subtitled A Commentary on the Constitution of the United States, New York: The Modern Library, no date, consists of the writings of Hamilton, Jay and Madison on the subject of political philosophy. Here in clear and unambiguous form is the argument that despite the undoubted fact that a check and balance form of government, in which "factions" compete against each other, would result in government that is frequently slow, unresponsive, cumbersome and sometimes paralyzed into inaction, such a government, with all its faults, is still preferable to the unchallenged dominance of a monarch, an oligarch or some other form of despotism.

Our own inquiry into 19th Century civics textbooks, comparing them with those written
most recently, suggests the following generalization: early civics texts tended to be mixtures of
history, Constitutional law and description of the tripartite government; most recent texts—
with several clear exceptions—tend to be exclusively descriptions of structure. See the authors'
"Understanding the Continuity, etc.", op. cit.

13Although, as Professor Emeritus Shirley Engle is fond of asserting with great feeling, "No
bill ever became a law as described by those charts on how a bill becomes a law."

14From Robert P. Ludlum, Franklin Patterson, Eber W. Jeffery, Allen Schick. American

15The authors summarized the critics in a chapter called "Social Studies: Evolutionary
Development," especially pages 41–45, in Barr, Barth and Shermis, Defining the Social

16For a brief listing of some of the more notable "radical" criticisms of American schooling,
see Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis. Schooling in Capitalist America. New York: Basic
Books, Inc., 1976; Joel Spring, A Primer of Libertarian Education. New York: Free Life Edi-
tions, 1975; Clarence J. Karrier, Paul C. Violas and Joel Spring, editors, Roots of Crisis:
Donald W. Oliver. Education and Community: A Radical Critique of Innovative Schooling.
Berkeley: McCutchan Publishing Corporation, 1976; Michael Katz, Class, Bureaucracy and

17Not only is it the case that every variety of patent medicine is easily available in drugstores
or supermarkets, it is also the case that manufacturers have persuaded the public that all
physical, emotional, social or interpersonal problems can be solved fast! by ingesting the con-
tents of a bottle. E.g., bad breath, evil coffee and "the jitters" afflict everyone; a mouthwash, a
change of coffee and sleep inducers are both the solution to the problem and the guarantor of
instant love and gratification. If all of this sounds somewhat exaggerated, please pick up any
women's magazine, or most newspapers, and then watch television commercials for an hour.

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Identifying Representative Textbooks in U.S. History

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New York, NY 10027

The role of the school in transmitting social, political and cultural values to succeeding generations of students has been a topic of persistent scholarly interest. In historical studies of such issues the impossibility of observation has led scholars to the teaching tool that most clearly reflects teaching and learning in the classroom—the textbook. By analyzing the content of the textbook, the values taught to students and the changes in these values from generation to generation can be identified.

Although all school subjects have values embedded in their content and their textbooks, the political socialization function of the school is most overt in the subject of history, especially U.S. History. U.S. History is rightly considered as the subject through which the political, social and economic heritage of the nation is transmitted and, together with Civics, is considered essential preparation for citizenship. It is not surprising that many studies have been undertaken that seek to identify and trace the values embedded in history and its textbooks. The work of Fitzgerald (1979), Cremer (1963), Bechtel (1968), and Fedyck (1979) exemplifies this approach.

However, in such studies little concern is expressed about the methodological problems of selecting textbooks for content analysis. For any given period, in any given subject, numerous textbooks are available for use. Yet, some textbooks are rarely adopted and used while others enjoy widespread
popularity. In a recent analysis of the numerous Annual Reports of school districts housed in the Annual Report Collection of Teachers College, Columbia University, forty-four U.S. History textbooks were cited as used between 1880 and 1930—and no doubt additional textbooks were available for adoption too but not cited in the Annual Reports. However, twenty-eight of these history textbooks were mentioned only once or twice for only one or two years by schools (Woodward, 1982).

The selection of textbooks used in a content analysis is important. In all such research anything less than analyzing textbooks that were widely used in schools must result in less-than-reliable data on the values taught to students through their textbooks. Further, the mixing of 'popular' and 'less popular' textbooks in a textbook sample, and the consequent 'averaging' of the information gleaned from them, can only result in a dilution of data. This paper will describe an alternative to the 'impressionistic' selection of textbooks used in most historical studies of these themes and will compare the sample of U.S. History textbooks used by Fitzgerald (1979) and Barth and Shermis (1980) with the sample that emerges from a more robust procedure for drawing such a sample that I will describe.

Evidence of which textbooks were used in high school U.S. History was collected by Woodward (1982) for the period 1880 to 1930. Data came from two sources. The first was a source already mentioned, the Annual Reports of school districts housed in the Annual Report Collection of Teachers College, Columbia University. These Reports covered the period 1850 to 1950 and contained information ranging from enrollment, courses of study offered and teaching staff, to textbooks used in different courses. The schools these Reports represented were located in all states except California, Oregon, the Dakotas and Montana. Schools in the New England, Mid-Western and Mid-Atlantic states were especially well represented. Although the Annual Report Collection contained no reports from cities such as Chicago, New York and Boston, smaller cities, towns and rural areas were represented. For example, the Collection contained Reports from school districts as diverse as Albany NY (1880–1920), Chester PA (1888–1916), Springfield OH (1887–1925), Spartanburg SC (1903–1935), Madison WI (1880–1911), Elgin IL (1887–1922), Harrisburg PA (1894–1918) and Rutland VT (1886–1904). In total, data on textbooks used in high school U.S. History courses were derived from 443 school districts; 934 Annual Reports reported U.S. History textbooks used in high schools between 1880 and 1930. The second source of data was derived from surveys of schools and their curricula conducted during this period and included Monroe and Foster's (1922) major survey of 356 North Central Association high schools, Smolen's (1970) study of U.S. History textbooks used in all Nebraska high schools between 1899 and 1920, and Murphy's (1923) survey of Massachusetts high schools.

It is important to note that although the data contained in the Annual Re-
ports and surveys of schools seem to be representative of all high schools, such data are by no means definitive. As more Annual Reports and surveys of schools, including those of our major cities, are located and analyzed and the information they contain added to the existing data base, confidence in the representativeness of the data will increase. Data from such sources as publishers' sales records and state departments of education will also provide additional corroborative information.

Given the above limitations, these sources of data yielded a comprehensive picture of which textbooks were widely used in high school U.S. History. Textbooks were identified as 'widely used' if they were mentioned by 20% of reporting schools in a source for a given year (in the case of Texas 20% of textbook sales between 1924 and 1930). This seemed reasonable as it included not only those textbooks that almost dominated the field during certain periods, but also those textbooks that could reasonably be defined as widely used by virtue of being adopted by at least one in five reporting schools. As the data were analyzed a clear periodization of popular textbooks emerged; 1880 to 1899, 1900 to 1910 and 1911 to 1930 were periods in which certain textbooks reached their greatest popularity. This phenomenon might be explained by the publication cycle of textbooks, the stature of 'new' authors of textbooks, and/or the changing nature of the high school and its curriculum between 1880 and 1930 which demanded different types of textbooks. The fifty years between 1880 and 1930 saw the development of the high school from an elite, classical institution to a mass institution. It is possible that the popularity of different textbooks reflected the needs of the high school at different phases of its development.

We can see in Table 1 the textbooks which were widely used in high school U.S. History courses. Between 1880 and 1899 Higginson's *History of the United States* (published at least seven times between 1875 and 1905), Anderson's *A Popular School History of the United States* (published at least six times between 1879 and 1892), and Barnes' *A Brief History of the United States* (published at least eighteen times between 1871 and 1917) were widely used. Between 1900 and 1910 Montgomery's *Leading Facts of American History* (published at least nineteen times between 1890 and 1930 and also known as *Students American History*), McLaughlin's *A History of the American Nation* (published at least fourteen times between 1899 and 1919), Fiske's *A History of the United States for Schools* (published at least nine times between 1895–1923), Hart's *Essentials in American History* (published at least four times between 1905 and 1919), Channing's *A Students History of the United States* (published at least twenty-four times between 1898 and 1926), and McMaster's *A School History of the United States* (published at least nine times between 1897 and 1930) were used in at least 20% of reporting schools during this period.

Between 1911 and 1930 seven textbooks appeared to enjoy widespread popularity: Forman's *Advanced American History* (published at least nine
Table 1: Widely used U.S. History textbooks: Annual Report and survey data indicating textbooks used in at least 20% of reporting schools—1880 to 1930.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Textbook 1</th>
<th>Textbook 2</th>
<th>Textbook 3</th>
<th>Textbook 4</th>
<th>Textbook 5</th>
<th>Textbook 6</th>
<th>Textbook 7</th>
<th>Textbook 8</th>
<th>Textbook 9</th>
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<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>Anderson 1,2.</td>
<td>McLaughlin 1.</td>
<td>Hart (NAH) 1.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Barnes 1,2.</td>
<td>Fiske 1.</td>
<td>Latane 9.</td>
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<td>1910</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hart (EAH) 1,3.</td>
<td>Fite 9.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1911</td>
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<td>Channing 1,3.</td>
<td>Forman 10.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td></td>
<td>McMaster 3.</td>
<td>Muzzey (AH) 1,5,6,7,8.</td>
<td>Muzzey (HAP) 9.</td>
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</table>

1. Annual Reports 1880–1930; n = 1 to 62 high schools in any given year.
2. New York Board of Regents Reports 1879/80–1891/92; n = all high schools in the State of New York.
3. Smolens 1899/1900–1919/1920; n = all high schools in Nebraska.
4. Brooks 1916; n = 32 Georgia high schools.
5. Monroe & Foster 1922; n = 356 North Central Association high schools.
6. Hartwig 1922; n = 89 Missouri high schools.
7. Murphy 1923; n = 92 Massachusetts high schools.
8. Smith 1923; n = all Colorado high schools.
10. Malin 1927; n = all Kansas high schools 1925–1930.

Times between 1914 and 1927), Fite's *History of the United States* (published at least six times between 1916 and 1926), Latane's *A History of the United States* (published at least four times between 1918 and 1926), Adams and Trent's *A History of the United States* (published at least four times between 1903 and 1922), Hart's *New American History* (published at least five times between 1917 and 1930) and Muzzey's *American History* (published three times between 1911 and 1923) and *History of the American People* (first published in 1927 and numerous times thereafter).

When we compare these data with the textbooks used by both FitzGerald (1979) and Barth and Shermis (1980), we see a clear difference in both the samples these authors analyzed and those identified in Table 1. For the period 1900 to 1930 FitzGerald identified fourteen U.S. History textbooks which then formed the data base for her discussion of changing values and content in that subject during that period. As can be seen from Table 2, of the fourteen textbooks listed, only two—Muzzey's *American History* and Hart's *New American History*—appear in Table 1 as widely-used textbooks. Moreover, the representativeness of FitzGerald's sample for 1900 to 1930 must be questioned because of the fourteen textbooks analyzed nine were first published during or after 1917 and the other five were first published between 1900 and 1916. Inexplicably, Montgomery's *Leading Facts of American History* (cited by FitzGerald as *Students American History*) and McMaster's *A School History of the United States* were placed in the nine-
Table 2: Comparison of U.S. History textbooks used by Fitzgerald (1979) and Barth & Shermis (1980) with widely used textbooks identified in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fitzgerald (1979)</th>
<th>Barth &amp; Shermis (1980)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1880-1899</td>
<td>Higgenson</td>
<td>Montgomery</td>
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<td>Anderson</td>
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<td>1900</td>
<td>Ashley</td>
<td>Montgomery</td>
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<td>Beard &amp; Bagley</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Beard &amp; Beard</td>
<td>Hart (NAH)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Bourne &amp; Benson</td>
<td>Hart (St HUS)</td>
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<td>Fish</td>
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<td>West</td>
<td>Tryon &amp; Lingley</td>
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<td>Muzzey (AH)</td>
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<td>1874-1899</td>
<td>Sadlier</td>
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<td>Ridpath</td>
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<td>Muzzey (AH)</td>
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(Hart—identified as ‘widely used’ textbooks in Table 1)

teenth century period even though McMaster’s publication date of 1897 and Montgomery’s relatively low popularity until the turn of the century would indicate that their major impact was to be in the period after 1900. The inclusion of Hart’s *School History of the United States* appears to have been an error; this textbook was written for upper elementary school students.

Of the thirteen textbooks used by Barth and Shermis (1980) in their analysis of changes in U.S. History textbooks (the authors also analyzed civics textbooks), two of the textbooks—Woodburn, Moran and Hill (1930) and Vannest and Smith (1937)—were omitted from consideration because they were published after 1930. Of the remaining eleven books only four, Barnes’ *Brief History of the United States*, Montgomery’s *Leading Facts of American History*, Fite’s *History of the United States*, and Muzzey’s
American History were widely used in schools. The remaining seven textbooks did not appear to enjoy widespread use between 1880 and 1930 (according to the University of the State of New York Regents Annual Reports, Ridpath's History of the United States was widely used prior to 1880, and Beard and Beard's History of the United States (1928) may have been widely used after—but not before—1930).

**Conclusion**

Although the ten sources used as the basis for identifying those U.S. History textbooks used in 20% or more of reporting schools between 1880 and 1930 could be increased, the method we report here does represent a reasonable first step to drawing an adequate sample of such texts. And while we can acknowledge the significance of the work of Barth and Shermis (1980), FitzGerald (1979) and others for our understanding of the role of history teaching in the civic socialization of America's youth, the lack of representativeness of the samples they use must raise serious questions about the reliability of their conclusions.

It may well be that all U.S. History textbooks used in a particular period were broadly similar in character. However, until we are able to state with certainty that content was not a variable in textbook popularity and can be sure that the data base used by researchers is truly representative of the period of study, we must, of necessity, treat the generalizations derived from such work with caution. The method outlined here offers the basis for the development of more robust samples in both history and other subjects.

**Endnotes**

1Some Reports covered only one year, others covered several decades and while these Reports contained a great variety of information on the high school, ranging from enrollment data to the curriculum and the qualifications of teachers, only history textbook and history course data (Ancient History, Medieval and Modern History, English History, World History, and U.S. History) were identified and then only for the fifty years between 1880 and 1930. For a fuller description of the scope of the collection, see Woodward, 1982.

2These included major surveys such as Monroe and Foster's survey of the curriculum of North Central Association high schools as well as less ambitious surveys of states or certain schools within a state.

**References**


**Bibliography of U.S. History Textbooks**


Small Group Instruction in Social Studies Classrooms and the Corruption of Critical Thought

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Introduction

The purpose of this essay is to expose a faulty relationship between two metaphors that are believed by most curriculum experts and teachers to determine what ought to occur in social studies education and the classroom practice that is assumed to be guided by them. The metaphors are "critical thinking" and "individualization" and the practice is typically called "small group instruction."

The student as critical thinker was a central metaphor of the "new" social studies which gained prominence in the United States and Canada in the 1960s. Critical thinking is closely associated with the notion of teaching learning which is based on the assumption that students should discover knowledge and develop understandings for themselves as opposed to their being mere receivers of information. To some, inquiry has meant a position toward child-centered learning, with inquiry referring specifically to the natural inquiry of the child. For the majority, inquiry has meant either the use of the modes of inquiry of the academic disciplines or the use of problem-solving techniques to investigate one's personal and social life. Central to all of the inquiry orientations is critical thought. All inquiry pro-
ponents talk or write about the hypothetical or uncertain nature of knowledge, the role of evidence, logical or rational thought, understanding, information processing, concept development, and what Suchman (1966), not too originally but concisely, termed "the pursuit of meaning," all qualities of what we understand to be critical thinking. (p. 178).

Individualization as a metaphor finds some justification in the research on human learning which found that learning is highly idiosyncratic. The metaphor is also grounded in common sense awareness about the uniqueness of all human beings. As a consequence of the popularity of the writings of famous schooling critics of the sixties such as Silberman, Holt, and Illich, who argued with a vengeance that teachers were insensitive to the needs of their students and schools were little more than "blackboard jungles," individualized instruction became a major theme in the schooling and curriculum innovations in the 1960s. Most notable were advances made in individualized reading programs for the primary and elementary grades.

Individualization as a metaphor implies that the concerns of the individual students should be center stage in the schooling process, and has as a purpose the goal of students developing on their own terms their unique possibilities. The role of the teacher is to nurture students to their self-determined learning objectives.

These two metaphors have come to represent fundamental ideals in social studies education. They communicate expectations about what social studies classrooms should be like and what goals they should have. These metaphors have become a kind of lens that allows us to identify good classroom practices from bad. While they are used as powerful criteria for teaching and evaluation, they are actually considerably vague concepts. By that I mean that they have influenced the nature of social studies curriculum goals but have disclosed little about the means to those goals. Because of their minimal disclosure value they have not prescribed too much by the way of classroom practice, particularly teacher actions. Perhaps one way of classifying them is to label the metaphors hortatory rather than prescriptive. Whatever, these metaphors of critical thinking and individualization have been projected by scholars, curriculum makers, and teachers as a form of argument justifying the way social studies classrooms ought to be. Because of this, the metaphors have embedded in them an element of persuasion, a persuasion to which many social studies educators' ears have turned.

Because the metaphors are somewhat inapt in guiding classroom practice, teachers have had to contrive idealized practices obviously mediated by practical realities. While teachers do adapt considerably their teaching in response to student needs, planning individual programs for and individualizing teaching for thirty or so students in a class is an awesome, if not impossible task. The resources necessary alone would make it, particularly in this age of fiscal restraint, prohibitive. Current instructional research has a poverty of prescriptions about how individualization can be done. Given
such a dilemma, teachers have modified the individualization metaphor to mean partial rather than total individualization. Partial individualization has become defined as small group instruction which is assumed to be the best possible (and most desirable) means to the individualized end.\textsuperscript{7}

While critical thinking as a metaphor implied ends for teaching, the metaphor suggested, as did individualization, little about the means. Critical thinking has been written about in depth in the literature and has appeared in elaborate curriculum rationales, but has made little impact on the teacher's typical way of behaving in the classroom.\textsuperscript{8} Suchman's (1962) picture of critical thinking goals via inquiry teaching is a good example of noble persuasion lacking prescription. He writes,

> To develop the cognitive skills of searching and data processing, and the concepts of logic and causality that would enable the individual child to inquire autonomously and productively; to give the children a new approach to learning by which they could build concepts through the analysis of concrete episodes and the discovery of relationships between variables; and to capitalize on two intrinsic sources of instruction, the rewarding experience of discovery and the excitement inherent in autonomous searching and data processing.\textsuperscript{9}

What is interesting here is that critical thinking as a metaphor is juxtaposed with individualization. Clearly critical thinking can only occur in an individual, that is autonomous, fashion. Perhaps critical thinking is a totally personal experience of autonomous searching and data processing. Perhaps critical thinking requires an instructional method that nurtures but does not prescribe particulars.

While words such as Suchman's were well and good as a tome of sorts, they did little to assist a teacher in actually teaching for critical thinking. Few teachers were comfortable with critical thinking or the inquiry method to provide for it. As Jarolimek (1981) put it,

> Some teachers feel insecure with inquiry procedures, probably because they do not understand them and lack the skills needed for implementation. Others find them time-consuming and unproductive in terms of knowledge transmission, a major concern for most teachers. (p. 11)

One thing was clear, however. If inquiry had something to do with personal meaning (which Suchman and others made perfectly clear) and if individualization as an instructional means was geared to provide for the personal development of the student in search of self-understanding, then individualization surely could be a route to critical thinking. Because total individualization was somewhat of an impossible dream and grouping was a next best and a clearly reasonable practice, then grouping as an instructional method should also provide for critical thought because encouraging students to talk among themselves would promote critical dialogue and
develop skills of critical thought. Consequently, because of their inapt but influential natures, the two metaphors, in their juxtaposition, rather than prescribing small group instruction, became its justification. And from justification came cause. Grouping was good because it caused critical thinking while providing for individualization.

Unfortunately, the assumed causal relationship between grouping and critical thinking is faulty. This is the central claim of this essay. In order to support this claim, it is necessary to show that small group instruction as it typically is practiced in social studies classrooms does not have as a probable goal critical thinking. In fact, small group instruction most likely will corrupt critical thought.

In order to support this claim, it is necessary to examine the social realities of teaching and the type of groups that occur in this environment. To interpret such group behavior I will turn to some of the literature in group dynamics. Then, I will compare the qualities of these typical groups to those qualities necessary for critical thought in order to show that the qualities of typical classroom groups are not the conditions necessary for, nor even conducive to, critical thought. As a postscript, I will consider the relationship between typical classroom groups and one other fundamental social studies goal, namely socialization.10

The Realities of social studies Teaching

Three characteristics typify the understandings social studies teachers have about social studies education. I will call these understandings the "realities" of social studies teaching. The first is that classroom control is essential for learning, and the second is that the teacher is the source of social studies knowledge. Both of these understandings are justified because the teacher is the authority in the classroom. Teacher as authority is the third reality for social studies teachers.

It is customary to assume that a teacher lacking authority is no longer a teacher—a follower perhaps, but not a teacher. The sources of a teacher's authority are many. The status of a teacher as adult and that of student as child or adolescent and as dependent creates for the teacher some authority. The respect a teacher has for her students, represented usually through her caring about her students, usually earns her the respect of her students and concomitant recognition of her authority. However, the three sources of interest here are the teacher's authority as knower, manager, and instructor.

Good teachers, so the saying goes, "know their stuff." Good teachers are not only in total command of their material and find some of their authority in their knowledge, but are able to make this material "interesting as to make it appear relevant." (Gray, 1973, p. 176). Or, as Frye (1982) put it, the primary source of authority "is neither the teacher nor the student but the subject being taught." (p. 128).

The loss of authority arising from a teacher's ignorance is an almost
tangible thing. If the particulars are forgotten, or a minor problem or an exciting new one challenges, teachers rarely lose any authority in the eyes of their students. When the essential meanings, the underlying structures, and the organizing concepts are not understood and this is communicated to students, then teacher authority is eroded quickly, often accompanied by little student pity.

If a major source, Frye (1982) would argue the dominant source, of a teacher's authority in a social studies classroom is knowledge of social studies content, then it behooves us to question what that content is. This is a question to which sometimes there is silence, other times a conflicting roar of answers. Social studies, it seems, is "adrift with little notion of boundaries and no shared understanding of its legitimate concerns." (Jarolimek, 1982, p. 9). The new social studies of the '60's in the United States confused many about what ought to be taught and what knowledge was of most worth. As a consequence, most "new social studies" curriculum products were rejected or abandoned by teachers, often with great and somewhat relieved glee. No single set of ideas about what is central social studies knowledge has emerged. Unfortunately, the "back to basics" movement has left social studies in some situations as the "odd-man out" because teachers are giving more attention to reading, writing, and arithmetic at the expense of social studies. The purposes of the social studies are in question, usually with academic knowledge acquisition vying with citizenship goals.

In Canada, the situation is not better and not too dissimilar. A decade ago the National History Project, in its report entitled *What Culture? What Heritage?*, condemned the teaching of social studies, particularly Canadian Studies in the schools. According to the report,

Canadian history in our schools is a shadowy, subdued, unrealistic version of what actually happened—a bland consensus story, told without the controversy that is an inherent part of history. Thus Canadian history becomes a too-nice, straightforward, linear, dry-as-dust account of uninterpreted political and economic progress. (p. 24)

What was being taught was boring at the very least, and painful at the very most. With the advent of the Canadian Studies movement shortly after the publication of the National History Project's report, confusion reigned as to what was the proper content for social studies. Clearly Canadian history and geography were in, but in a more appropriate form using new methods, but should not sociology, economics, political science also make their appearances? Should world history be taught? What other geography to include? World physical geography seemed imperative, so should it not also be a part? They all appeared in a variety of guises, further compounding the problems about proper social studies goals and content.

Far too often teachers have walked into classrooms claiming their authority not from their knowledge of history, geography, or the social
sciences, but from their knowledge of instructional technique. The cause of this was their ill-preparation as social studies teachers, stemming in part from their pre-service and in-service training which focused on "how to" teach rather than "what to" teach. Instructional methods courses clearly are the most popular in most Faculties of Education. Perhaps this is not altogether too surprising as we seem to be living in a society littered with "how to" books ranging from "how to" train your dog and "how to" make a million in real estate to "how to" make love to a man or woman. In Canada, it is not hard to find a teacher who has graduated with a major in European or American history (or English or Phys. Ed.) trying to teach Canadian history by keeping a page ahead of the students. Clearly, appeal to authority on the basis of content knowledge in such situations is tenuous.

This condition that teachers are in, either not understanding the content, that is not "knowing their stuff," or questioning "the stuff they do know" because of the confusion over what should be social studies content and what the content's purpose ought to be, leaves them in a situation in which student questioning of social studies content cannot be tolerated. This has resulted in both countries in teachers' slavish adherence to and use of textbooks as instructional technique. Textbook conclusions have been taught far too often as truth, with the processes of arriving at those conclusions forgotten, ignored, or, often, not understood.13

Social studies content, taught not as certain but as justifiable knowledge, has become transformed in classroom talk into certain truths to be believed as reported. The content tells the story "the way it was," omitting such important conditions as "according to" or "on the basis of such and such opinion, ideology, or evidence." Content of this sort places students in a situation in which information accumulation, not understanding, is the goal. Learning becomes unpleasant and boring. Boredom results in restlessness, leading to disorder. The result is that teachers find themselves in a situation in which they become overly concerned with maintaining the physical order of the classroom, that is maintaining control. Control in such situations replaces knowledge as the teachers' source of authority, a source that can be well-justified.

Classroom control is considered by teachers as a necessary condition for learning (Martin and Macdonell, 1978), and as a necessary condition for what they refer to as their own "survival." Teachers work hard to develop a set of norms in the classroom that both they and their students can live with and by. This reality of the necessity of control norms predisposes teachers to dominate all aspects of the social life of the classroom, to the point that a good teacher is one who has "eyes in the back of her head," who knows what is going on in all parts of the classroom, and can deal with several events simultaneously. Students who fail to comply with classroom norms are disciplined swiftly. For example, two of the most important things that a child in kindergarten learns are who is the boss and what happens when
the boss' rules are not followed. In fact, the acceptance of social rules or norms, or what can be called principles of conduct, and actions according to them by students represent two fundamental purposes of schooling (Dreeben, 1968).

The social reality that control norms are necessary in teaching becomes quickly apparent to the teacher who cannot discipline a class. It is at the point of control breakdown that supervisors appear and the teacher is quickly reminded that one aspect of her professionalism is her ability to manage instructional situations. Discipline is repeatedly found to be the primary concern of student teachers and is often a major factor in some young people choosing career paths other than teaching. Moreover, time and time again, discipline is the prominent concern in the public’s mind when schools and teaching are considered. Clearly, teachers believe they will ultimately fail without some form of control norms regulating classroom life. An interesting corollary is that teachers feel guilty and often personally responsible for all instances of misconduct in their classrooms. Teachers also tend to reward those students who are not only bright but those who behave well (Murphy, 1979). It is not uncustomary for teachers to give marks for good student behavior or to promise special treats such as cookies or events such as a film if the rules are obeyed. It is important to note that classroom control norms typically apply to all students, and not to a select few. In fact, the latter probably would be considered as unfair discrimination and would result in a breakdown of the desired classroom control.

Control in the classroom, then, usually occurs through the imposition of external standards on students. This type of control is justifiable because schools are in the business of socialization and students must learn those standards of conduct that are approved and tolerated in any culture. Control is also believed necessary for normal personality maturation—for acquiring such adult personality traits as dependency, self-control, self-reliance, persistence, and ability to tolerate frustration. Standards such as moral standards and obligations, it is thought, cannot be internalized unless they exist in external form. And, as Ausubel (1973) explains, even after standards and obligations are “effectively internalized, universal cultural experience suggests that external sanctions are still required to insure the stability of the social order.” (p. 160). Therefore, external discipline is necessary for social continuance and is also necessary for a young person’s emotional security. Without the guidance provided by external controls that are unambiguous, the young tend to feel bewildered and apprehensive. External controls are well rationalized as “needs” of the student and of course in the definition of teacher as authority figure.

To recapitulate, I have argued that a teacher’s authority in the classroom is grounded in her knowledge of social studies matters or as manager of a controlled classroom in which control normally means the imposition of ex-
ternal standards. If, however, a teacher's knowledge is suspect, weak, or confused, the tendency will be for that teacher to resort to the teaching of social studies' uncertain knowledge as certain conclusions to be accepted and remembered, knowledge that is somewhat useless and irrelevant to students and which does not render much authority to the teacher. Consequently, she will resort to a well-controlled classroom as her main and ultimate source of authority. Any questioning by students of suspicious knowledge claims will be perceived as a challenge to the teacher's authority and force her to maintain even more stringent controls as her method of classroom management.

What is often the result is a condition in which social relations in the classroom emerge as being what Giroux (1978) describes as "authoritatively hierarchical." Students are powerless because they do not determine the rules, do not enforce them, and undergo negative sanctions if they fail to conform. The picture that eventually is painted is of the teacher in charge, dominating, controlling, enforcing, even threatening, and of students, passive, conforming, orderly, attentive, and subordinate.

The use of small student groupings as an instructional technique will tend to aggravate this situation. Groups not immediately under the watchful eye and managing tongue of the teacher could begin to bend or break the rules. These groups could undermine the teacher's authority, perhaps erode it dangerously. Therefore, small group instruction tends to prompt from the teacher even more precise rules for classroom conduct and more diligent enforcement. The slogan, "a quiet classroom is a good classroom," assumes even more stature in the teacher's mind. With the preservation of the teacher's authority uppermost, classroom groups operate in an environment in which freedom to dissent and to create new roles for conduct is minimal. Although individualization is generally considered a desirable goal and grouping its possible and realistic practice, the teacher is placed in what might be labelled a Catch-22 situation. Grouping places two classroom realities in juxtaposition, namely, the instructional technique of grouping, and teacher as authority figure. The juxtaposition reveals a condition that is endangering. If a teacher whose authority rests in her control, not her knowledge, groups students in social studies then the teacher as authority figure will be in jeopardy. A plausible preventive measure is to manage classroom groups in such a way so as to minimize the threat to the teacher's authority.

**Characteristics of the Controlled Classroom Group: Lessons from Group Dynamics**

The question to be asked here is what are the probable and typical characteristics of student groups in social studies when functioning in a very controlled environment, meaning controls to regulate conduct are external and imposed by an outside person, the teacher, and the knowledge the
The first expectation of the teacher for the group will be that of group cohesion. A group that functions well is described by Cartwright and Zander (1960) as a cohesive group. To be a cohesive group, the members must first establish the common ground upon which they rest. The earliest steps are for the members to reach a consensus on the way the group will operate and what its goals will be. In the controlled classroom, the rules for conduct and the goal will be established. The groups will be told to tackle a teacher-provided question or problem, group roles are usually assigned, and time and other operating conditions defined. This means that what Mannheim (1943) calls a group common life will begin to appear. An essential part of this common life will be a common knowledge base in the form of given social studies knowledge.

A central concern of the student group will be the nurturing and protection of this common life. Groups tend to reject those who threaten this common life (Stogdill, 1959). Fine (1979), for example, has studied the common life (or idioculture) of a small group and concludes that it consists of customs, behaviors, beliefs, and knowledge shared by members. Willingness to share or pressure to share results in strong group cohesion. This common life also creates the ways in which the small group will interact with its context, and the context, in turn, places constraints on the group. The longer a group works together in harmony, the more influential the common life becomes. However, and not surprisingly, the more cohesive a group is, that is the more pronounced the common life, the greater the pressure for uniformity becomes. Uniformity, though, serves three major functions. It helps the group accomplish its goals, assists the group to maintain itself as a group, and provides for the group members a validity or "reality" for their opinions and assumed knowledge. The notion intrinsic in the statement "Five Thousand Frenchmen Can't Be Wrong" gives group members security in their group developed meanings and an immediate and tangible source of reference for their believed truths. Such a group puts pressure on members for uniformity in action (dress codes in high school peer groups is illustrative), belief, and thought, and is one that is eager to protect its standards and meanings. A challenge to the group's standards and beliefs is not only a challenge to what the group members believe in and adhere to, but a challenge to the common life of the group. If standards and beliefs are challenged, and found in error, the group may have to cease its existence.

Cohesive groups offer significant security for less able, less popular, less accepted group members. Those who have not been able to create their own meanings about their world may easily buy into a group's definition. The group offers to some members a conception of themselves and the world that is not open to much question and modification. Agreed upon conclusions and methods of working become a social reality for many participants.
because cohesive groups share and maintain their common socially deter-
minded conception of the world. It is interesting to note that the less secure
an individual is in a group, the more that individual will accept the group's
position. (Jackson and Salstein, 1958).

Communication is the process through which a group's common life
forms and maintains itself. In small groups in classrooms this communica-
tion most likely will be in the form of discussion. Discussion is one main
way that groups can perform intellectual work; hence the group members
can develop meanings. Via discussion, group members analyze problems
and determine what is needed as information, how decisions will be made,
and what alternatives are probable. Perhaps the lessons that group dy-
namics have to teach can be somewhat aptly summed up by Cooley's (1964)
poetic conviction about the nature of group common life: "Each to each a
looking Glass. Reflects the other that doth pass." (p. 184)

From this can be inferred that the type of groups to be fostered and
tolerated in a teacher controlled classroom would be those that would be
clearly cohesive. Working well together would be a classroom norm, and a
教学 and learning goal which would create a condition in which a pro-
nounced group common life would emerge. While there is much in common
among the students to begin with, such as similar ages, interests, peer
groups, experiences, communities, language, and such, common external
control norms and a given knowledge base to process would exaggerate this
quality. All of this would foster consensus and uniformity as a dominating
group characteristic, having, as consequence, consensus and uniformity in
thought. Thus, the teacher's expectation for the group would be for it to
agree upon the answer to the question or the resolution to the problem.
Teachers, whose authority rests not in their knowledge but in their manage-
ment, expect previously stipulated conclusions as a result of group activity
because that is the nature of social studies knowledge to them. New con-
cclusions emerging from a student group would be a threat so controls im-
posed on the group must be of the kind to hinder or prevent such a happen-
ing. All of this results in students accepting given conclusions as bona fide
social studies content, believing in the certain nature of knowledge, and en-
joying the security of shared group or social meanings about the ways things
are. Such is antithetical to the spirit and practice of critical thought.

Critical Thinking or Beyond Certain Knowledge

If one believes that critical thinking is one ideal of and goal for social
studies education, then it is best to begin by questioning what critical think-
ing is and how, or in what manner, it can come about.

Siegel (1980) associates critical thinking with rationality. He put it this
way:

Critical thinking is best thought of as an embodiment of rationality,
and rationality is understood to mean a form of thought in which rea-
sons are primary. (p. 8)
A rational thinker is one who has good reasons to support conclusions, and one who thinks according to rules or principles which are justifiable.

Critical thought is nonarbitrary thought; it is thought that conforms to fundamental principles of logical relationships among ideas and actions and evidence. A critical thinker is one who continually subjects the reasons that are used to support arguments to scrutiny and evaluation. Additionally, a critical thinker must have a critical attitude. That is, an attitude that encourages the search for reasons, the continual questioning of existing reasons in order to develop or find better reasons to support judgements; an attitude that fosters the search for justification—one that is predisposed to seek out new information and search for better questions in order to make the world sensible. The critical thinker questions others and the conclusions drawn by others.

The critical thinker is one who has theories that make meaningful and sensible the world. A theory is simply an attempt to provide a possible way of thinking about a segment of reality so that the segment makes sense. A rational theory is a possible way of thinking that is justifiable according to good and proper reasons (Kekes, 1976). Theories are the way human beings make sensible the problems of their worlds. Because we are creatures capable of thought, we find ourselves in a world that can be comprehended, that can be made meaningful, that can cease to certain degrees to be problematic. Life is a process of solving the problems that the world presents to us. That is simply one condition of being human.

A critical thinker, writes Giroux (1978), must understand the relationship between theory and facts. Theory represents the conceptual framework that mediates between people and the objective nature of their social and political reality. This theoretical framework operates like a conceptual screen through which people view information and select facts, interpret social reality, define problems, and develop solutions to those problems. As Giroux (1978) put it, “it is theory that permits students . . . to see what they are seeing.” (p. 298)

A critical thinker must also understand that knowledge cannot be separate from human presuppositions, norms, interests, and values. How people view the world determines how they select, organize, and sequence information so that they explain what was previously perceived as problematic, thus creating their pictures of their personal, social and historical reality. Critical thinkers must also engage in a process of moving outside their frames of reference in order to understand this “contextualization of information” (Giroux, 1978, p. 299).

If we accept critical thinking as an aim for social studies then critical thinking becomes a problem not only of content but of method. Perhaps a direct clue to the appropriate manner of teaching is that famous statement by Nietzsche who said that a “great truth wants to be criticized, not idolized.” Dewey, in this regard, wrote that “the problem of method . . . is the problem of establishing conditions that will arouse and guide curios-
ity." Siegel (1980) proposes a critical manner in teaching that will facilitate the development of a critical spirit or what might be termed a critical attitude. To Giroux (1978) such a critical attitude summons a theoretical and dialectical approach to understanding the world, with attention placed on learning as well as on what is learned. Questions such as what do I know and how did I come to know are essential. A teacher adopting a critical manner would make problematic what had hitherto been treated as given. Accepted conclusions would have a place in such a classroom, but their place would be a resource into which questioners can tap. Critical thinkers would recognize the uncertain and problematic nature of all knowledge and would attempt to understand the contextual conditioning of such knowledge. A curriculum intending to teach critical thinking would present social studies knowledge as problematic to students, knowledge demanding “constant searching, invention, and reinvention.” (Giroux, 1978, p. 299).

Having a critical thinking goal implies that teachers must recognize the right of students to ask questions and to require reasons for the answers provided. Teachers must be willing to submit their reasons to the independent criticism of their students. For example, a teacher adopting a critical manner for teaching American history would not teach the traditional interpretation of, say, the Reconstruction period as truth. Instead, that teacher might encourage students to read the traditional interpretation, as typified by Bowers’ *The Tragic Era*, in which Carpetbaggers and Scalawags, in collusion with a newly freed and inept Negro populace, exploited the shattered South. This could be contrasted with newer positions, such as that of Franklin, which is opposed to this traditionally accepted interpretation. The students could examine the facts underpinning each theory in order to understand how they are organized to present a coherent whole offering a plausible explanation of a problematic period in American history. They could examine the social and political context within which each historian wrote in order to understand each theory. They could attempt to build their own theories of explanation and challenge each other’s interpretations. Or, a teacher of Canadian history might present a traditional constitutional interpretation of early Canadian history and contrast it with a more current social or economic interpretation. The aim could be to have students determine why historical viewpoints change and understand the degree to which some of the central conceptions, such as Turner’s thesis concerning the role of frontier in American development, that have shaped the writing of Canadian history have been imported. Perhaps a teacher whose aim it is to have students understand the way the various approaches to Canada’s past have become associated with particular views of national character might have students compare Underhill’s reflections of the liberal tradition, Lower’s expression of faith in French-English co-operation, and Brunet’s rejection of the traditional interpretations of the British conquest.
Critical Thinking and Small Group Instruction

A critical manner of teaching is one that is antithetical to that manner of teaching associated with small group instruction that typifies social studies classrooms. Teachers teaching in a critical manner claim their authority not in classroom management, that is from externally imposed classroom controls on students, nor from claims that social studies knowledge is certain, to be taught as accepted conclusions about social events. Rather, their authority as teacher is claimed from their intimate and sophisticated social studies knowledge and their understandings of the nature of critical thought. These teachers know the reasons that justify the conclusions they present and consider them to be as essential as the conclusions. These teachers also find their authority rooted in the shared inquiry that occurs in the classroom. Clearly, norms for conduct are still present in the classroom, but norms of a different kind than those previously described. Norms such as the respect for evidence and argument, the suspension of judgement that precedes the actual judgement, the continual examination of choice, the toleration of freedom of thought, and subordination not to "de jure" authority, but rather to "de facto" authority, that "kind of authority which, like the authority of the repeatable experiment of the great work of the creative imagination, does not diminish but enhances the dignity of everyone who assents to it" (Frye, 1980, p. 132). Teachers can only acquire this authority by having some sense of the total subject in their minds and the ability to be a transparent medium for it.

A teacher's authority within a critical manner does not come from simply asking questions. A teacher can play the role of guru responding to such cartoon-stock questions as, "What is life?" with a series of subsequent questions such as "What is life to you?" or "What do you mean by "life"?" but nothing really happens until the questions start to be answered. We can judge the worth of the questions partially in the answers they provide and the solutions they bring. In part we judge their worth in terms of the body of knowledge they emerge from and to which they contribute. In order to contrive such questions and to transcend the guru, the teacher must have an intimate understanding of the knowledge intended to be taught.

The road travelled for the student and teacher adopting a critical manner will be one in which the boundaries of the normal form of life in the ordinary world are pushed back to reveal another world, one which Frye (1982) acknowledges

has an authority because it lies beyond our ordinary mental capacities of time and space, and hence leads us to understand how we can be what Proust calls "giants immersed in time" (p. 135).

It is too easy perhaps to suggest that classroom groups, given the conditions for their existence and practice that I have outlined, produce students
that are alike, that is, students become what others become. It is also just as
easy, and a little tempting, to propose that critical thinkers become what
others do not become. Clearly, people are not that simple, nor are teaching
practices that perfect. However, classroom groups as I have described them
are not unusual but are unfortunately typical, and any notions that when
students get together in these groups they will challenge each other and
engage in critical dialogue and thought are false. Grouping as an instruc-
tional practice corrupts critical thought in our social studies classrooms.

Postscript and Conclusion

In classroom groups, however, some student learning most definitely
does occur. Students can learn, for example, how a group can function well
and effectively, can learn the importance of group cohesion in completing
tasks, and that dissension can damage the common life of the group. Stu-
dents could learn necessary group skills and how to be a 'good' group
member. They could probably learn about the often necessary supremacy of
group activities over individual pursuits; that an individual action not con-
ducive to the group's welfare should be sanctioned under certain conditions.
They could also realize what group activities are good (i.e., those that con-
tribute to the group's welfare, cohesiveness, unanimity, and so on) and
those that are decidedly bad (i.e., those that challenge the group's processes
and conclusions and those that put individual concerns ahead of group con-
cerns). They could develop a social awareness and acquire general "interac-
tion tactics" which are necessary in order to function within groups and
larger communities (Martin and Macdonell, 1978, p. 64). Students could
also learn how a group's solidarity can be maintained in the face of indi-
vidual self-initiatives that threaten the group's established meanings, ac-
tions, and goals. Finally, they could understand why groups, as they
become more cohesive provide shared explanations of the world that, while
being consistent with the group's needs, goals, history, aspirations, and the
larger classroom context's norms, can challenge one's own understanding of
the world. They could also learn about the necessity of group life to the sur-
vival of a national group, that a common footing and shared social reality is
some of the glue that holds people together as a nation, and that consensus,
cooperation, and uniformity are necessary at certain times and under cer-
tain conditions. Such students could be learning about responsible and
necessary social activity that fits comfortably within what most social
studies teachers call civics.

One of the purposes of schooling is to socialize young people to become
competent social beings within their given social contexts. In this way they
are initiated into a world which expects them to become useful and respon-
sible, to adhere to its rituals, standards, and norms, to subscribe to its pro-
cesses of participation and methods of distributing wealth, resources, justice,
and opportunities, and to recognize the necessity of unity, consensus and
commonality. Schools provide for this by simulating in form and substance the nature and qualities of their social context. This simulation is partly in organizational procedures within and without the individual classroom, in the acceptance of the culture carried in the heads and hearts of the people who come to schools to work and learn, and in particular curriculum offerings, the most notable being vocational training, business education, and civics.

Through the existence of grouping practices in schools, students clearly can be socialized to become responsible, participating group members who contribute to the creation of a common life in the classroom. Consequently grouping as an instructional method could not simply be a means to an end, but embody the end itself. Using this method, teachers can teach many of those things that are considered desirable qualities of good group members, such as being good citizens. Yet citizenship training in schools and social studies classrooms more often than not consists of courses in civics that describe how government works, how people vote, what one's citizenship responsibilities are, such as, say, paying taxes, where to vote, and who the presidents or prime ministers were. Nowhere is there much evidence to suggest that teachers are using grouping as a method to teach deliberately or intentionally the fundamental citizenship skills. Instead, and paradoxically, grouping is used to respond to a call to individualize learning and to promote critical dialogue and thought among students by teachers whose claim to authority is rooted in their ability to impose external controls on classroom events and not in their knowledge of social studies content.

Perhaps this essay has done little more than to reveal a not totally hidden problem in social studies education and tease it about for a little while. There is much left to consider and perhaps the best way to conclude is with two questions that prescribe the next tasks to be done. First, what are the implications from the relationship between critical thought and the necessary relationship between teacher authority and intimate understanding of social studies knowledge to teacher education and to the goals of the social studies curriculum? And second, does a continued emphasis on methodology at the expense of content in the curriculum of Faculties or Colleges of Education augur ultimately only socializing goals for social studies? If the answer to the latter is yes, will citizenship training ultimately become the social studies of the future?

Endnotes

1 Variations in terminology can be group work, small group teaching, small group work, task groups, group discussion, grouping.

2 See for example, the Inductive Model developed by Hilda Taba (Teaching Strategies and Cognitive Functioning in Elementary School Children. San Francisco: State College, Coop Research Project. No. 2404, 1966).

3 See for example, Social Inquiry proposed by Byron Massialas and Benjamin Cox (Inquiry


*See, for example, David Hunt’s Matching Model (“A Conceptual Level Matching Model for Coordinating Learner Characteristics with Educational Approaches.” Interchange. June. 1970), or Carl Rogers’ Client-Centered Therapy.

*According to Hunt (1976) this occurs on an average of one hundred times per hour.


*See, for example, Ponder (1981).


*The dominant metaphor here is citizenship education and the practice civics.

*See Marker, Gerald (1981).


*According to Shaver, David and Helburn (1978), much of textbook teaching consists of reading the book, followed by recitation and avoidance of controversial issues. See also Branson (1977).


*This is a central concern of Margaret Buchmann’s most interesting article, “The Flight Away From Content in Teacher Education and Teaching.” Journal of Curriculum Studies. 1982. 14(1). 61–68.

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Books


Reviewed by Bruce Smith, College of Education and Home Economics, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH 45221

The five chapters in this book present recent developments in instructional psychology, as they relate to the design of teaching strategies to promote the acquisition of knowledge and cognitive skills. The book describes research and instruction focused on the cognitive processes involved in problem solving. The theories, models, and research findings presented will be of interest to social educators who develop curriculum materials, teach courses about instructional methods, or conduct research about cognitive learning.

Carl Bereiter and Marlene Scardamalia in chapter one, "From Conversation to Composition: The Role of Instruction in a Developmental Process," consider how a student's cognitive system functions to produce written composition. Their central thesis is that oral language systems cannot transfer intact to enable children to solve the problems involved in producing written composition. The authors' research indicates that elementary students have conceptual knowledge about the structural elements of various types of composition (narrative accounts, opinion essays, and direction giving statements) but lack the processing abilities required to use that knowledge to produce their own composition. The authors describe a series of experimental studies to test the effects of various instructional treatments designed to ease the executive processing burdens young writers face as they compose written text: learning to generate text without a respondent, learning to search memory for content, shifting from local to whole-text planning, and learning to monitor and revise their own products. The treatments provided procedural facilitation of cognitive processes required to write but did not give substantive assistance, such as suggestions about the content or form of composition. While few of the interventions had a global effect on the compositions students wrote, many of the instructional treatments did affect the cognitive processes at which they aimed and improvements in particular facets of composition were observed.

Bereiter and Scardamalia provide an excellent discussion of general instructional implications of their research. The authors describe a teaching strategy called "procedural facilitation," which they believe applies not only to written composition but to any subject in which cognitive learning development involves the pursuit of increasingly complex goals within the same task domain. Procedural facilitation refers to instructional tactics that
reduce the executive process demands of a problem task, permitting stu-
dents to make more complete application of the knowledge and skills they
already have, but does not provide substantive facilitation. "The difference
between procedural and substantive facilitation is that, with procedural
facilitation, the learner still 'does it all' as far as the central information pro-
cessing tasks are concerned, but under conditions that lessen the overall
processing burden, whereas with substantive facilitation, the teacher
shoulders some responsibilities of processing task information" (p. 52).
Bereiter and Scardamalia argue that substantive facilitation hinders learning
because it protects students from engaging in the processing activities that
are most critical for eventual mastery of a task. Procedural facilitation,
however, permits students to make maximum use of their existing knowl-
edge and skills by easing, but not shielding them from, the processing re-
quirements. The instructional treatments the authors used in their own
research illustrate tactics through which the strategy is implemented in the
teaching of composition. In addition, they present seven general principles
describing its potential application across other subject matter content.
Bereiter and Scardamalia do not argue that all instruction should be limited
to procedural facilitation nor do they claim to have a fully developed in-
stitutional strategy. They do have intriguing and empirically supportable
ideas that warrant attention.

The ideas in this chapter are particularly significant for social educators
who are seeking an approach to instruction that is congruent with cognitive
developmental learning theory. While it does not fully answer the important
questions raised by Allan Lockwood (1982), the discussion of procedural
facilitation provides a rich source of ideas for thinking about developmental
perspectives in social education.

Chapter two, "Goals and Strategies of Inquiry Teachers," provides a
detailed analysis of the judgments required during inquiry instruction, and
presents research findings about the tacit knowledge and thought processes
exemplary teachers use to make those decisions. The authors, Allan Collins
and Albert Stevens, analyzed films and transcripts of outstanding teachers
in various subjects (including law, geography, and moral education) who
used discovery strategies to teach problem solving skills. Their findings are
organized in a three part model: the goals and subgoals of the teacher, the
instructional strategies to achieve those goals, and the control structure
teachers use to construct a flexible agenda and to allocate time to the pursuit
of different goals during instruction. Collins and Stevens found the teachers
simultaneously pursued three goals: acquisition of facts and concepts, ap-
plication of rules and theories, and ability to derive rules and theories for a
domain. In all cases the teachers had high level cognitive goals, usually not
behavioralized, and a structured theory of the knowledge domain that influ-
enced their selection of interactive strategies. Three instructional strategies
were identified: case selection strategies to guide the presentation of exam-
pies, entrapment strategies to challenge students with misconcepts, and hypothesis identification and evaluation strategies to elicit and verify solutions to problems. Each major strategy encompassed a repertoire of specific tactics, all of which are defined and illustrated in an appendix to the chapter. The tactics are considered in relation to the conditions (observable features of a student's response) under which teachers implement them. By linking conditions and teacher action, the model captures the interactive quality of inquiry instruction.

Collins and Stevens believe the most crucial element for effective inquiry instruction is the control structure that teachers use to manage their own decisions during classroom interaction. The structure contains an agenda composed of a sequenced list of goals. Once a goal is satisfied, it is removed from the teacher's agenda and the next one is pursued. The agenda is flexible, however, and as student responses to initial questions reveal misunderstandings or gaps in knowledge, new goals are added. There are priorities for adding new goals to the agenda. Generally, it appears that teachers will correct errors before omissions, clarify minor misconceptions before major ones, consider prior elements in a causal theory before latter dimensions, and focus on the most salient factors in a theory before nuances are considered. Control structure also contains an image of the students, and this model guides the teacher's decisions about which parts of a theory to stress, which parts to skim because they are too difficult for students, and which parts to assume students already understand. Teachers confirm the accuracy of their initial model with a few questions. Student responses are used to determine the point to begin consideration of the theory.

Collins and Stevens provide a model and research techniques that systematically address the complex problems involved in inquiry teaching. Their model is notable for its integration of behavioral and cognitive principles of instruction. This chapter might interest social educators who agree with McKenzie (1979) that some indirect models provide too little information to enable students to discover ideas, with Cornbleth and Korth (1982) that social studies teachers often provide only the opportunity but not the instruction necessary for successful student achievement, or with Fenton (1977) that inquiry projects often fail to provide the antecedent conditions necessary for students to use sophisticated intellectual processes. Collins and Stevens provide useful ideas for social educators working to design effective inquiry models of instruction.

The chapter by Robert Siegler and David Klahr considers three questions: how can a student's existing knowledge be assessed, what learning goals are attainable for students at various developmental levels, and how can instruction be designed to promote transition to higher levels? To answer the first question the authors propose an approach called rule assessment, which assumes that reasoning is rule-governed, conceptual development is
an ordered sequence of partial understandings, and rules become more sophisticated (i.e., incorporate more variables) with age. As a diagnostic system, the approach involves identifying problem solving rules at varying levels of sophistication for a task, and then constructing problems at varying levels of difficulty to yield a distinctive performance pattern for each rule.

The bulk of the chapter illustrates the technique through reviews of a series of creative and illuminating experimental studies involving students ranging from 3 to 17 years of age. Several educationally significant findings are reported: instruction about how to encode the important features in a problem situation enabled students to infer and apply more sophisticated problem solving rules, encouragement to take an analytical approach promoted progress to problem solving and instruction about how to infer and how to integrate various mental operations increased level of sophistication. It should be noted that all of the problems involved knowledge about the physical world and encompassed a limited set of rules. Such problems may be qualitatively different than the ones of central concern to social educators. Siegler and Klahr believe their approach can be used to assess more complex forms of knowledge, and they illustrate its use in one open-ended problem solving study among preschoolers. Nevertheless, the rule assessment approach may be of interest to social educators who agree with Ehman and Hahn's (1981) call for research into the sequencing of goals in structured subjects such as economics and geography.

Nancy Stein and Tom Trabasso, chapter four, "What's in a Story: An Approach to Comprehension and Instruction," provide a model to analyze the structure and content of narrative stories in elementary readers, a comprehensive review of empirical studies indicating the effects of variables in their model on the comprehension of children three to ten years of age, and a speculative discussion of instructional tactics to help students comprehend narrative accounts as fully and accurately as possible. Their research focuses on the process of comprehension in an effort to identify what occurs in the minds of children as they attempt to interpret specific events and make sense of the relationships that link those events in narrative stories that depict goal directed protagonists in problem solving situations. The authors' review of literature about the comprehension of causal relations is particularly interesting because of its implications for helping children to understand social studies content and the underlying contribution such knowledge makes to the development of problem solving ability. Stein and Trabasso cite studies showing that even young children can accurately infer the feelings of characters and the causes of events in narrative stories. Their research suggests that the inferential problems of children reported by other researchers are more likely a function of text structure than of children's lack of ability to perform such mental operations. The authors' research indicates that children are very capable of generating appropriate inferences when given only a single focal event from a narrative. Children had little
difficulty discriminating causes from consequences, generating probable consequences from a given cause, and distinguishing both causes and consequences from negative and positive emotional states. Stein and Trabasso also cite research showing that children have skills in detecting inconsistent information in narratives, skills that were thought to develop only in later elementary school years.

The authors, unfortunately, provide only scant discussion of the instructional implications of their work. They conclude that the structure of a text does influence the ability of students to perform the mental operations necessary for comprehension. They argue that highly simplified readers often contribute more to confusion than to comprehension. Their chapter is a useful source of ideas for writers of curriculum material designed to maximize the information processing capabilities of elementary students.

A different perspective on problem solving is presented by James Pellegrino and Robert Glaser in their chapter, “Analyzing Aptitudes for Learning: Inductive Reasoning.” They observe that existing approaches to aptitude fail to provide useful information to design instruction appropriate for different individuals. In response to that problem, they develop an analytical model to identify the information processing components of inductive reasoning tasks. Their approach considers three mutually dependent aspects of inductive thought: encoding processes, executive strategies, and content knowledge. They apply the model in the analysis of the performance of skilled and less-skilled students in solving figural, numerical, and verbal analogy problems of the type frequently found on aptitude tests (which the authors believe are specific instances of general problem solving ability).

The model works well. Pellegrino and Glaser show that the analogical reasoning problems can be analyzed and distinguished on the basis of the processes necessary to solve them. They report important research findings about the strategies employed by students attempting to induce a rule for a data set and identify significant differences between skilled and less-skilled students on all three components of their model. Their research suggests that students, within limits, can be taught to represent problems more complexly and to induce rules more accurately than they would be able to without instruction. Pellegrino and Glaser also present a process model that, they believe, provides a generalizable approach to the solution of all analogous reasoning problems and discuss the instructional implications for teaching students how to use such processes effectively.

References


Reviewed by Jean Dresden Grambs, College of Education, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742

Although the reports of educational research pour forth in journals and at conferences and conventions around the country, researchers must admit that most practitioners pay no attention whatsoever to their findings when decisions about schooling must be made. There are many theories about why this is so, but so far no solution has been found. However, one persuasive view as to why educators ignore the research that might help them resolve many critical educational problems is that the research does not deal with school reality as teachers and administrators experience it.

However, there is one research approach, currently gaining professional support, which may be able to attract the attention of practitioners, i.e., educational ethnography. Ethnography is, in the words of the editor of this book, “The field arm of anthropology”; it is “the collection of data in the field through observation and interviews ...” (p. 2, 3). As the case studies and field reports which make up the chapters of the book demonstrate, educational ethnography reports on what is going on in schools and classrooms as it is experienced by those in it: teachers, students, administrators. What is reported is not only an observer’s view of overt behavior, but the meaning that this behavior has for the actors.

Spindler, one of the leading exponents of ethnographic research in education, has put together a volume which educators will find extremely valuable. He has selected a number of reports of educational ethnographies in a wide range of settings which show how the methodology is utilized, different approaches which can be taken, and the kinds of insights which may be uniquely available through this medium.

The chapters in this book provide an excellent introduction to the variety of ways and settings in which educational ethnography can be conducted, and reveal, sometimes in a shocking manner, how we have missed seeing what has been going on around us. In one classroom, for example, the teacher found that her black pupils, although as voluble and noisy as her white pupils on the playground and during free time, were unresponsive and almost nonverbal in the standard classroom recitation activities. The ethnographer observed student-teacher interactions, talked with parents and observed the white teacher’s interactions with her own children at home. What the ethnographer, Heath, discovered was that the black child had not encountered the questioning mode used by whites in both the teacher role and parental role. The questions teachers asked in school made no sense to the black child. Knowing this difference in questioning experi-
ence and response, the teacher could adapt to the black children and in time overcome what was once labeled stupidity but was, with the help of the ethnographic analysis, seen as a microcultural difference.

In another chapter, Erickson and Mohatt describe the differences between Indian and non-Indian teachers and their relative success with Indian children; Varenne shows that clique structure of a high school is more complicated than usually reported; Gearing and Epstein’s microanalysis of a four-member remedial reading group demonstrates how very different one teacher’s interaction with pupils may be with negative results for losers; Wilcox reports the subtle socialization about future expectations which differentiates middle class from lower class schools; Hanna reports the currents which flow among children in a desegregated school setting. Other chapters, there are 15 in all, make a persuasive case for educational ethnography as a research tool.

Although Spindler, in his introduction, reports an expanding interest in utilizing this methodology in educational research, it is only too evident when one reads Dissertation Abstracts that the overwhelming bulk of such efforts in education utilize other empirical approaches with traditional statistical manipulations of more or less sophistication on some tiny problem. Few reports of research at AERA appear to utilize ethnographic methodology. A recent review of research utilizing ethnographic methodology illustrates the neglect of this approach by educators: although there is a lengthy and valuable bibliography, not more than two or three of the items cite the standard journals which publish educational research. These journals may be unwilling to publish ethnographies, or educational researchers are not using this research tool. I would urge my colleagues to read this book, and others in the field, and to do some needed missionary work among their colleagues. If we don’t hurry up, educational research, like the dinosaur, will vanish because it could not adapt to the changing climate.

Endnote

Abstracts

On the Social Study of Social Studies

In order to reflect the social character of schooling, it is proposed that school research be more social in nature, i.e., contextualized, interactive/dynamic, and sensitive to participant conceptions. To explore the possibilities and limitations of the social study of social studies, a conception of social research is delineated, using recent social studies classroom research as illustration. Social study is then considered in relation to the development of a research base for social studies education and the use of research based knowledge.

Teaching for Passive Citizenship:
A Critique of Philosophical Assumptions

While teachers and text authors have always talked about active citizenship and critical thought, classroom practices have emphasized passive acquisition and character development. For what purpose? So that students would become acceptable workers who are prompt, neat, compliant, who conform and are thorough and efficient—and who can work without becoming demoralized, depressed or resentful. And these words precisely characterize many social studies classrooms. Creativity, joy, problem-solving, insight and even understanding, while celebrated in word, give way to passivity and a passive conception of problem-solving. "When others define the problem for you, provide all of the data for you and then dictate the proper conclusions, you have become that which is acted upon. The entire process makes the curriculum creator active, the teacher a neutral conduit of unexamined cultural flotsam and jetsam, and students passive recipients."

Identifying Representative Textbooks in U.S. History

As the work of FitzGerald (1979) and Barth and Shermis (1980) has shown, the analysis of textbooks provides important insight into schooling and the teaching of history. This paper raises the methodological issue of the selection of textbooks for analysis and argues, using data from school district Annual Reports and other sources, that the textbook samples analyzed by these authors were not representative of textbooks used in schools. Thus, whilst the significance of the work of these authors is acknowledged, it is argued that until the textbooks analyzed are truly representative of those adopted by schools, generalizations about the teaching of history and the development of the curriculum must be treated with caution.

Small Group Instruction in Social Studies Classrooms and the Corruption of Critical Thought

The purpose of the paper is to clarify our understanding of the use of student grouping as a teaching technique in social studies. The assumptions that student
groups, as they customarily operate in most classrooms, facilitate the development of critical thinking is challenged as being false. Examined in order to support the thesis are two typical characteristics of classroom life—the norms of pedagogical control and authority knowledge. It is the existence of these norms that creates the conditions for student groups to develop socially created meaning systems, rather than to develop personal and justifiable meaning systems—the essence of critical thought.
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