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Editorial

In this issue, we present for the first time an analysis of submissions to TRSE. We include information about acceptance rates for manuscripts submitted over the past three years, along with a description of our decision-making process and a summary of the reasons given most frequently by reviewers for rejecting manuscripts. We hope that you will find our analysis informative. We also hope that potential authors will consider our comments and suggestions seriously before submitting their articles for publication consideration, to improve their chances for acceptance and to improve the overall quality of the journal. As always, the section at the end of every issue entitled "Information for Authors" provides guidelines and instructions for manuscript submissions.

The feature articles in this issue represent a wide range of research and theory interests: teachers' conceptions about various ideas including their own practices, students' relation to historical learning, and a problem-solving paradigm.

Andra Makler interviewed 18 social studies teachers to explore how they defined justice and how they felt they addressed issues of justice in their classrooms. Although most of the teachers were reluctant to teach justice explicitly or to judge the relative merits of varying conceptions of justice, three themes dominated their discussion: justice as right and wrong, as fairness, and as an ideal or standard for behavior. In their article on citizenship education, Bruce A. VanSledright and S. G. Grant also focus on teacher issues. They present an empirical study of citizenship education in practice, focusing on three elementary school teachers' treatment of citizenship education and the common dilemmas they face in trying to balance what they believe is important for students to learn and what is mandated by external authorities. Wilson, Konopak, and Readence deal with similar dilemmas in their examination of preservice teachers. Their study is an investigation of the gap between what teacher candidates learn in their methods courses and how they behave in the classroom under the guidance of a cooperating teacher.

Peter Seixas describes the changing definition of historical significance and explores students' reasoning about events they consider to be historically significant. He argues that history must relate the past to the present in order to be meaningful. As such, curriculum reform must consist of more than a new framework of historical content; the teaching of history must be informed by an understanding of students' ability to assess and incorporate new knowledge into an existing
framework of historical significance. In a similar vein, Marcy Singer Gabella argues that reform efforts must emphasize a shared process of critical inquiry. She asserts that students acquire misconceptions about historical knowledge through teacher- and text-based learning that posits history in terms that ignore the tentative nature of historical interpretation and representation.

Finally, Steven L. Miller and Phillip J. VanFossen present a problem-solving model adapted from cognitive psychology to render expertise in economics. Their preliminary study compared the responses of three experts and two novices to three principles-based economic problems, and the results indicate that this model effectively distinguishes between expert and novice problem-solving ability.

We hope that you will find these selections thought-provoking, insightful, and timely, and we hope that they will encourage you to present your own contributions to the field. We welcome your reactions to these and any past articles.

Jack R. Fraenkel
August, 1994
In order to help potential authors improve their manuscripts, we present the following discussion of recent submissions to Theory and Research in Social Education.

Table 1 lists the total number of manuscripts submitted in each of the past four years as well as an approximate breakdown of rejections and acceptances. As you can see, the number of rejections far outweighs the acceptances in any given year.

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<td>Rejected</td>
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<td>Withdrawn</td>
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<td>Pending</td>
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The categories in this submission process are not as cut and dried as they may seem. Much of our decision making depends upon the detailed comments of the reviewers. If we feel that a rejected manuscript has merit and that the problems hindering it are surmountable, we frequently encourage the author(s) to rework the article and submit it for a second or even a third review. Similarly, if the reviews of an article are divided in their recommendations, we might accept it tentatively, request revision in accordance with noted concerns, and send it out for another review as well. Although not every accepted article requires a second review, every manuscript undergoes a significant amount of revision and editing before it is ready for publication in TRSE.

The reasons for rejection also vary from manuscript to manuscript, particularly since the types of articles we receive run the gamut; however, there are several common problems that emerge in a large percentage of the rejected manuscripts. In Table 2 we include the results of an analysis of reviews from a random sample (N=15) of rejected manuscripts submitted in 1993 and 1994. In most cases, the main weaknesses reported were related to writing and to the development of ideas (poor organization, lack of focus, superficial analysis, unsupported claims, lack of depth, unclear terms/concepts, etc.).
In general, these articles were imbalanced in their reporting of ideas and findings. Some focused on a specific study to the exclusion of an adequate context or a description of implications and practical applications; others focused entirely on context and were deficient in describing their methodology and linking their data to the issues at hand. Those articles that reviewers claim made no new contribution to the field (60%) were criticized for their perfunctory treatment of the subject matter, and those that were considered inappropriate for TRSE (33%) did not address theory or research directly.

Every article that we receive, whether eventually accepted or rejected, could benefit from a thorough, critical reading by someone other than the author(s) before it is submitted for publication. Ideas that seem obvious to an author are not always presented clearly, and grammatical and spelling errors can distract and confuse (and often dismay) the reader. These are problems that can be corrected with serious attention.

As always, we welcome any comments or suggestions that you may have. We hope that this discussion is useful to any authors wishing to submit articles for consideration in TRSE.

Jean Cheng
Jack Fraenkel
Mary Grant
SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS' CONCEPTIONS OF JUSTICE

Andra Makler
Lewis and Clark College

Abstract
Eighteen social studies teachers were interviewed to explore concepts of justice. Three dominant themes emerged: justice as right and wrong, as fairness, and as ideal or standard. Strong gender-associated differences in language did not emerge, as male and female teachers described both fairness considerations and concerns for context and relationship as integral to justice. When asked to identify justice topics in their curriculum, teachers cited lessons about injustice and the oppression of vulnerable groups. They preferred to let students raise issues of justice rather than organize lessons to explore different models or theories of justice explicitly. Academic knowledge of different societies as well as sensitivity to the relativity of justice as a concept in different cultures and within a single society made teachers hesitant to judge the merits of different concepts of justice. Responses suggest that social studies teachers' education in political theory may be insufficient.

Introduction

As a social studies specialist in a small liberal arts college, I supervise preservice Master of Arts in Teaching (M. A. T.) candidates seeking their initial license to teach social studies in grades 7 through 12. On a routine visit to an inner city high school, I observed a lesson in a required global studies course for 9th and 10th graders and older students who had failed the class previously. Desks stretched from wall to wall; every seat was taken. The students mirrored the city's

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1I would like to thank the following people and organizations for their support: the Special Committee on Youth Education for Citizenship of the American Bar Association; Lewis and Clark College Graduate School of Professional Studies for a faculty research grant; Doug Morgan and Stephen Kapsch for constructive comments; and Carol Witherell, Glennellen Pace, and Ruth Hubbard for their critical reading of earlier drafts of this article.
population mix: mainly white, some African Americans (a few wore medallions showing the map of Africa), some of Southeast Asian origin, and a few of Hispanic origin. The cooperating teacher sat at a desk in front near the door. The lesson was about Ghandi’s use of civil disobedience as a tactic against British officials in South Africa. The student teacher, a lawyer changing careers, described the lesson to me as “teaching about justice,” but the word justice was not mentioned during the lesson. He encouraged students to pay attention and to be polite to one another as he guided them to consider issues of dignity and human rights. He responded courteously to a young woman who challenged him repeatedly and aggressively, treating her comments as serious questions. Suddenly, the cooperating teacher stood up and ordered the young woman to stop interrupting the class and to show proper respect; she delivered what amounted to a mini-lecture on classroom rules, and then turned the class back to the student teacher. I sat wondering: What did that young woman and the rest of the class internalize about justice from the lesson as it unfolded that day or any day? This question provided the impetus for the research described in this article.

Framework for the Study

The dominant paradigm in Western political science and philosophy equates justice with fairness (e.g., Rawls, 1971), and describes justice as a rule-based distribution of benefits and burdens among members of a society to achieve a basic level of goodness for all (as in Aristotle’s Nichomachean Ethics). Lawrence Kohlberg (1980, 1985) drew heavily upon this paradigm when he proposed that schools should be organized as just communities. Studies conducted by Carol Gilligan and others at the Harvard Graduate School of Education Center for the Study of Gender (Gilligan, 1982; Lyons, 1983; Ward, 1989) suggest that adult and adolescent females find the equation of morality with justice and fairness problematic. These studies claim that conceptions of justice are gender associated. When asked to discuss moral dilemmas, males tend to accept the equation of justice with fairness more often than females, while females tend to link justice with a responsiveness to individual circumstances that embodies an ethic of care. Males tend to use a language of fairness, rights, and reciprocity; females speak of care, relationship, and responsibility and feel uncomfortable with rule-based decisions that do not take context into account. These studies and my experience in schools led me to question what conceptions of justice were embedded and/or explicit in curricula and whether male and female teachers held and expressed different concepts of justice.

Teachers teach what they know. Good teaching requires a coherent conceptual framework of academic content as well as an ability to organize learning activities to help students understand content. The
growing research literature on teachers' "personal, practical knowledge" (Connelly and Clandinin, 1985) and "pedagogical content knowledge" (Shulman, 1987) suggests that biography and schooling intersect with teachers' curricular and instructional decisions in complicated ways. When understanding is superficial or incomplete, teachers may rely upon the textbook as a conceptual scaffold or ignore certain topics altogether.

Studies have examined teacher thought processes (see Clark & Peterson, 1986; Shavelson & Stern, 1981) and the relationship between teachers' subject understanding (e.g., of mathematics, physics, English, history) and their teaching (see Ball & Mosenthal, 1990; Buchman, 1984; Carpenter et al., 1987; Grossman, 1990; Hashweh, 1987; Lampert, 1986; Peterson, 1988; Evans, 1988; Wilson & Wineburg, 1988); no study focused on teachers' concepts of justice as a construct or topic of study. Bricker (1989) showed that teachers believe they teach about justice in their daily interactions with students by showing respect for individual opinion, by treating students with dignity, by implementing clearly stated policies about homework, late work, and attendance, and by grading consistently.

Teachers' choices about what to include in their explicit curriculum are in part a function of their knowledge and understanding of particular topics. It is important to ascertain how teachers conceptualize those topics for a clearer picture of what is included in and omitted from actual classroom instruction. This study focused on how social studies teachers conceptualize justice and whether justice is included deliberately in their lessons. It is divided into three phases: (1) interviews with teachers to learn what they think and how they characterize their curricular content relative to justice; (2) observation, discussion, and analysis of the curriculum in use; and (3) interviews with students to determine what understandings (if any) about justice they develop from lessons their teachers believe to be focused on issues of justice. This article reports on the first phase of the study.

Research Questions and Methods of Analysis
Four main research questions framed this study:

- Do teachers believe that they teach about justice in their curricula, and what are their reasons for saying yes or no?
- If justice is part of their curricula, how is it presented?
- How do social studies teachers conceptualize justice? (Are there differences between those with law-related education backgrounds and those without?)
- Do male and female teachers conceptualize and teach about justice in significantly different ways? If so, what do these differences look like?
To find out about teachers' conceptions of justice and their teaching, I constructed an open-ended interview guide (see Appendix), and interviewed 18 social studies teachers. Following Dexter (1970) and Spradley (1979), I took the position that informants are experts about their own knowledge and tell the truth, even when that truth is difficult to fathom. Interviews were conducted between January and August, 1993; teachers chose the place, day, and time. Two teachers chose to come to my office and two to my home; the other 14 were interviewed at their schools. Interviews were typically one hour long, recorded with the teacher's permission, and transcribed by an aide. I sent each teacher a transcript of his or her interview to make any changes, deletions, additions, or corrections. All but two returned corrected transcripts; those two telephoned to say that they wished to make no substantive changes.

Following procedures for qualitative analysis (Agar, 1986; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Schatzman & Strauss, 1973; Fielding & Fielding, 1986), answers to each interview question were filed in separate folders, and topics within each answer were identified, coded by color, and filed separately. Categories of analysis were taken from teachers' expressions of their concerns and labeled using their own terminology. Charts were constructed to display themes and categories of analysis (Miles & Huberman 1984), noting patterns that emerged from discussions of justice and their frequency. Responses also were coded for gender, for salient principles of justice, and for context-specific concerns of care in teachers' discourse. I assumed that teachers might discuss distributive justice, just compensation, punitive justice, and social justice; however, they did not use these terms.

For information about whether justice generally is included as a topic in social studies classes, I contacted the state director of the law-related education (LRE) program, reviewed published LRE curricula, the Oregon Common Curriculum Goals for Social Studies, and school district curriculum guides, and interviewed the social studies specialist for the Oregon Department of Education.

Selection of Participating Teachers

Practical and theoretical considerations guided the selection of teachers to interview. To assure a mix of teachers from suburban and city schools in the Portland metropolitan area with reputations as good social studies teachers and an equal number of male and female teachers (if possible), names were drawn from a list of all social studies teachers with law-related education training in Oregon and from those who had served as cooperating teachers for prospective teachers at my college, many of whom also had participated in LRE workshops. Since many social studies teachers are male coaches, I broadened the sample to include those with middle school experience, those who taught language
arts as well as social studies, and those with as few as three years of teaching experience. Although some researchers caution against interviewing those you know well (Seidman, 1992), I believe that it is easier to have a true conversation with teachers who do not regard me as a stranger (see Carter, 1993), and I did not want teachers to feel I was judging the worth of their curricula or teaching. I interviewed 16 high school teachers (10 male and 6 female) and 2 female middle school teachers. Two high school teachers were African American males; all others were Caucasian. Twelve had mentored student teachers in our program, three were graduates of our M. A. T. program, and two were recommended by teachers selected initially for interviews.

**Education and Experience**

Eight of the teachers held undergraduate degrees from private liberal arts colleges and 10 from large state universities. Prior to 1989, Oregon required all secondary teachers to obtain a standard teaching license based upon completion of 45 graduate hours of coursework in an approved teacher education program within five years of receipt of their initial basic license. Teachers often combine work for their standard license and a master's degree. Eleven teachers held master's degrees, and five were currently enrolled in master's degree programs. Nine teachers had completed substantial postgraduate coursework, including special seminars (e.g., those funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities). Three teachers with the standard license neither held a master's degree nor were enrolled in a graduate program. Five teachers had taken LRE courses; three males had substantial experience developing LRE programs and curricula at their schools. Teaching experience ranged from three to 30 years; 15 had taught for more than eight years. Twelve teachers were certified to teach social studies and another subject.

**Responses**

**Scope**

The interviews elicited rich data about many aspects of curricular practice (see Appendix for full interview guide) drawn from responses to the following questions:

- Do you teach about justice in any of your classes? Describe.
- Have you always done this or is this relatively new for you?
- If a student in one of these classes asked you to define justice, what might you say?
- Please think for a moment: Would you say there were different kinds of justice? Say more about your idea. (Probe: How would you describe or classify the kind of justice citizens are entitled to
expect from their government?...In the work place?...In international affairs?...In relations between individuals?)

The last question was used to permit teachers who were uneasy with the idea of justice as application of a rule or principle to voice their concerns about the need to make exceptions for context and relationship because such differentiation has been associated with difference in gender (Gilligan, 1982; Lyons, 1983). All names are fictitious.

Do You Teach About Justice in Any of Your Classes?
Twelve teachers responded unequivocally that they taught about justice; six claimed they did this “without a doubt” or “in all their classes.” One said, “I hope I do. If I’m not, I’m leading students astray.” The other six qualified their responses with statements such as “While I don’t have a topic called justice, I think I get at the issue,” and “Yes and no; sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly.” A middle school teacher said that in her curriculum justice began with “interpersonal stuff [pause] just teaching kids how to interact and not tell each other to shut up all the time.” High school teachers noted that “justice isn’t something you can cram down people’s throats,” but “the idea of justice certainly comes up numerous times during the school year in a number of different settings.” One high school teacher remarked, “I don’t really know what justice is” and added, “We discuss the concept of ‘just’ but I don’t teach justice.”

Although all 18 teachers claimed to include some notion of justice in their curricula, none taught a unit or lesson focused on an explicit examination of either a specific or a general construct of justice; instead, they described lessons that focused on injustices such as mistreatment of minority groups in U.S. history and the abuses of power in colonial societies, on documents such as the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, or on literature that explores issues such as rape, wife beating, or individuals’ inability to control or shape their own lives because of cultural norms concerning gender or class.

Have You Always Included Teaching about Justice?
This question elicited unexpected stories. High school teacher Sandra Thomas said she had done this “from the beginning. It’s always been part of the curriculum for me.” Her motive was to promote a form of social consciousness among relatively privileged students who planned business and professional careers:

I think it gets back to my initial reasons for wanting to be a teacher...to get kids to examine what they hold dearly for themselves and to understand...what their role is in trying to make a fairer society....Some of these kids are thinking about
being big business people [pause] CEOs. [pause] Maybe we can get them to...think about the injustice that can occur...where there’s fairness lacking. Sometimes government regulation can even the scales out a bit....I would just hope that kids would see that without threatening...what they think is their life style...I think that when you talk about fairness and remedying injustice, it’s threatening to kids too.

Third-year middle school teacher Patricia Dean ascribed her motivation to teach about justice from the beginning to her upbringing and her experience of gender bias:

My dad one time said to me that I’ve always been so preoccupied with fairness....My parents are pretty good liberals and—it’s interesting—it’s not just my upbringing. Cause [sic] my siblings aren’t nearly as concerned with the ways of the world as I am....I think that I had a critical education....I was thinking about this recently—about how it felt good when you first have a teacher who tried to encourage you to get mad at the world, or to look at things really critically...like that was the first time I got really excited about learning.

Dean discussed a shift in her focus away from her own perceived oppression as a woman disadvantaged by the economic and social system in ways her brothers were not to concern with the “worries of a 13-year-old boy who’s in my class.” Dean used her progression from personal concerns to empathy for others as a rubric for organizing curriculum for her students, most of whom were African American youths from one of the city’s poorest neighborhoods. Interviewed at the end of a school year that included the heated media controversy over the rap music of Sister Souljah and the beating of Rodney King, issues that she made part of her curriculum because they were the worries of her students, Patricia Dean was uncertain that she had moved her students towards empathy with others.

Before they felt ready to try teaching about justice, however, other teachers required years of experience in teaching, time to acquire a sense of competence with the complexity of the subject matter of their courses, and time to establish their credibility as good teachers. Kate Harris described the evolution of her teaching from a focus on knowledge transmission to document-based lessons that require students to interpret primary sources and to take a position on “issues of justice” such as the U.S. government’s removal of the Cherokee people from their land and the forced march along the Trail of Tears. Harris ascribed this
shift to her own continuing education in history and to her evolving comfort with relinquishing teacher control of content. One consequence of such a perspective is that students bear the responsibility both for characterizing the ways that events such as the Cherokee removal are issues of justice and for constructing conceptual bridges between the notions of injustice and justice.

In describing his transfer to the high school with the highest enrollment of African American students in the city, African American teacher Greg Bond suggested that justice is a controversial issue that teachers may not address because of personal discomfort:

No, I have not always done it....That didn’t happen at the middle school where I worked, because I never felt comfortable in that basically white, middle-class community in terms of dealing with that as an issue....It just so happens I was a good teacher and most of the kids liked me—to the chagrin, I think, of their parents. Because their kids had never had a black teacher, I mean a really black teacher with an Afro....Even after being there 11 years, in terms of sort of overtly teaching justice there, I wasn’t comfortable with that....To teach about justice explicitly, I had to find my comfort zone first. [pause] It was a gradual change.

How Would You Define Justice to a Student in One of Your Classes?

Teachers amended and extended their responses to this question in two ways: (1) with specific descriptions of teaching justice in their courses and (2) in volunteered stories about the emergence of a justice issue as a dilemma either in their relationships with students or staff or in carrying out the instructional component of teaching (not in selecting curricula or activities for students). Although my intention was to focus on the overt curriculum of chosen content, this study confirmed Bricker’s (1989) findings that justice is a consistent part of the hidden curriculum. The teachers I interviewed raised the issue themselves, telling me that they could not avoid teaching justice indirectly, although they could choose not to teach about justice explicitly. Here is a sampling of their comments:

In my African and African American history class, the topic is always justice because we are always looking at how people have been treated differently based on race, color, class, social domination [trailed off] (Greg Bond, high school).
My gut feeling is that teachers deal with justice every day. A lot of it is modeling—how you treat the kids (Carrie Royce, high school).

If you say teaching about justice as a topic, it’s different than teaching justice. One level is teaching justice and I would say I do that. I think it is critical for students to learn some aspects of justice when they are in a class, in terms of not having favorites. So in teaching consistently, I monitor, or at least I try to monitor, how I do things, to determine if it is just. One has to do that (Mona Dietz, high school).

Teachers’ stories echoed Purpel and Ryan’s (1983) conclusion that moral education comes with the territory of classroom teaching. Purpel and Ryan as well as Bricker were concerned that moral education too often occurred implicitly. This may be the case, but the social studies teachers I interviewed were often painfully cognizant that they taught justice through their implementation of school and personal policies regarding classroom management procedures, their responses to tardiness, absence, late work, and student stories of personal hardship, and through their grading practices. Their narratives suggest that teaching may either attract or encourage individuals whose conception of morality fuses an ethic of care with a concern about justice. Debra Shogan (1992) describes such a moral orientation in her work, in response to what she believes to be insufficiencies in the theories of Kohlberg (1970, 1971, 1983), Gilligan (1977, 1982, 1987), and Noddings (1984). I will return to this issue later.

Analysis and Discussion

The Landscape of Justice

The landscape of justice is a difficult terrain, crisscrossed for centuries by philosophers, lawmakers and enforcers, and ordinary people. Not surprisingly, teachers’ concepts of justice are also crisscrossed by a rich network of interconnections; however, three definitions emerged as primary theme clusters:

- justice as right and wrong
- justice as fairness (of treatment)
- justice as an ideal or standard.

Although these teachers’ views were shaped by the primacy of one of these ideas, they drew upon the other two when the context of their discussions warranted. Furthermore, the ideas of justice as moral action and justice as a relative concept that differs across cultures and for
individuals emerged as secondary issues. All of the teachers interviewed believed that their students held idiosyncratic ideas of justice. Seven teachers claimed that this meant justice was different for everyone; eight spoke of their awareness that students' concepts of justice differed from their own. These teachers felt that part of the concept of justice ought to hold true across cultures and persons, but they also recognized that individuals experience justice differently depending upon their race, gender, and class. They were reluctant to apply their conception of justice as a standard or to ask students to judge the merits or consequences of any of the perspectives on justice expressed by students or in assigned texts. This created a tension that I will discuss after presenting the primary and secondary theme clusters.

**Justice As Right and Wrong**

I will define justice for you, and that’s right and wrong...also, the cultural idea of right and wrong. Justice sitting here in Portland, Oregon, at this high school is gonna be different than justice in [another] high school across town. And it’s gonna be different than justice in China (Carrie Royce, high school).

I start my Criminal Law class off with that. I have them write down what they think [justice] is and we talk about it. But what I end up telling them is that it’s each person’s perception of what’s right and wrong—what’s just—in every situation, the outcome of that situation or the actions involved in that. Every person has to put their own values on that; decide whether that was justice in the end (Mitch Smith, high school).

To me, what is just is what is right....What is right is based on morality, what is right is based on law, what is right is based on whatever the circumstances you’re working in or living in....I don’t think most people see justice as an absolute thing....What is just in American society is not necessarily what’s just in Chinese society....You could have 10 people in here and everybody has a different view of what it is [to treat someone justly] (Kate Harris, high school).

**Justice as Fairness (of Treatment)**

Being fair. [pause] Treating everybody the same—or trying to treat everybody the same....Do I equate justice as being right or wrong? No, I would say I think justice is [pause]
how would I put it [pause] trying to...achieve a sense of fairness, equity (Marc Jura, high school).

I would say, um, [pause] equal treatment. [pause] I want to say "under the law" but I would broaden that, I think. Under...a code of ethics, you know, a code of morals. Because I think that so many laws don't deal with [pause] day-to-day, ah, incidents, which kids have to make some determination about....Is this person being treated fairly or not? (Sandra Thomas, high school).

I think I would have to use the word 'fairness' more than anything else. Justice to me means, uh, not always an equitable outcome but certainly a fair outcome given the variables involved...equal in terms of opportunity, and...you know, a fair chance to gain the same level of material goods or opportunities....Even though you might not insist that the final outcome be equal, the means of getting to the final outcome would be equal at some point (Walt Cochran, high school).

You know, this might seem like I'm describing more do I teach 'democracy' or the notion of do we live in one. But I think it has a real strong connection to justice....I guess I would call it social justice....Is there truly fairness in our society?...There's implied in democracy a certain degree of equality and practiced equality by the government (Matt Lyons, high school).

I think justice...means...fair sharing, [pause] fair and reasonable sharing of the earth's resources [pause], and fair treatment in terms of law, in terms of political treatment (Jon Estes, high school).

Justice as an Ideal or Standard

I'll tell you what pops into my mind is Plato's ideal moral law. That is one of the conversations, of course, that he opens up, talking about the philosopher king in Plato's Republic. He talks about justice and the ideal moral law and all of that....So, that's like an ideal....Probably for every person on this planet, there's an individual interpretation of what this is....I get stuck with the ideal, where there's no answer....I can be very pragmatic....Justice is when you break the law, you get in trouble, and there are consequences to your behavior.
Andra Makler

And that’s just the way it is, based on the laws and mores of the culture (Stan Gray, high school).

Justice is what a society determines, generally through law, and sometimes through tradition. What is fair, moral, has integrity [pause]...I mean, there are some common understandings of justice, but there are also individually some internal beliefs on justice. We either, I don’t know, you either are a just person or you’re not....I think there’s a very limited scope for what collectively we can agree, “This is justice.” [This includes] things that are generally supportable by law, or possibly by tradition, and that exhibit fairness and integrity....Beyond that, I think it’s very individual (Mona Dietz, high school).

That’s a really tough question! [pause] The treatment of all Americans—that’s the context we’re talking about...in a moral, just, equitable way [pause] on the part of individuals [pause] bureaucracies [pause] institutions....I think justice is different for different people....I know that what’s...just treatment for women in this country is different from just treatment for men. I mean, men would see that differently than women would!...My definition is an esoteric, philosophical definition. It is the definition that I wish we operated by, but that’s not the reality of what justice is (Greg Bond, high school).

Secondary Theme Clusters

Justice as Moral Action

Three male and two female teachers emphasized the connection between moral action and justice, but their characterization of this action differed. Jon Estes (a former union organizer) corrected the language in my questions, insisting that he was teaching for not about justice. He and Sandra Thomas (who worked for 12 years as a community organizer) stressed their desire to motivate students to work actively for social change. They deliberately focus their curricula on political issues of distributive justice and try to develop students’ empathy for oppressed groups because they believe such empathy to be the motivation for activism. Matt Lyons especially wants students to learn to make informed judgments on policy issues of particular import to a democracy; he echoed the stress on teaching students to be critical thinkers, but in the context of citizen action. Among the five who stressed moral action as a component of justice was the only teacher with a graduate degree in anthropology. When asked how he would define
justice to students, he did not mention the terms ‘right and wrong’, ‘equal treatment’, or ‘fairness’ used by his colleagues:

My first sense is, I would like to be able to tell them a story, but one doesn’t pop into my mind at the moment....The first thing I think about is, it’s a kind of dance, or a balance game...with the tension between...how much of it is the choreography that’s been taught to you by someone else [and] how much of it is your own individual interpretation?...A just action [pause] I think a lot of it happens in really mundane things. I think it happens in how much tolerance there is for a variety of experiences and points of view, and how much comfort there is with tolerating different behaviors [and] the expression of different points of view (Jim Wright, high school).

After reading the transcript of her interview, middle school teacher Patricia Dean sent me a letter of clarification. In the interview, she said:

I would say that it has to do with appropriate consequences for actions, and access to resources....Justice has to do with more than just saying everybody gets treated fairly....that consequences and access to resources are appropriate to the situation. Because I don’t think it’s equal. It’s not to do with equality for me.

In the letter, she amended her definition as follows, including a diagram:

The idea of justice in the classroom has been floating around in my brain since we spoke at the beginning of June. What seems to be at the core of the issue for me in relation to teaching is the idea that we need to help kids to understand that in our society we have an ideal or value about fairness or justice that is abstract and unobtainable, yet needs to be fought for and worked toward. There is a complicated conflict of interest...between the idea of “justice for all” as articulated by the framers of our Constitution and the need for those framers’ equivalents today, our leaders, to keep spreading that idea while holding on to their own access to power or privilege.

There is a reoccurring image in my head which better explains this idea. Visualize justice in the United States as a ‘V’ constructed from two rays. When we began as a society, “justice” was extended to a very few people who were part
of the society; those filled that very small space where the 'V' begins. As we have grown, the inverted 'V' incorporates more and more individuals, getting larger and larger, yet always excluding somebody.

Issues of Relativity in Teachers' Concepts of Justice

Teachers questioned the idea of a shared notion of justice, both within a society and across nations, even though they acknowledged there might be some shared understandings about justice that permit us to talk with each other and feel we are discussing the same thing. They stressed either their awareness of the idiosyncratic nature of each individual's definition of justice and/or their knowledge that the expression of justice differs according to a culture's values and norms.

Difference Based on Personal Interpretation. Stan Gray's contention that "every person in [my] classroom has a different idea of justice...an individual personal interpretation" of the "pragmatic part of our justice system" typifies the comments of those who seemed to believe that justice was a "31 flavors" problem. Kate Harris argued that "you could sit down and I don't think you could find anybody in this society that would necessarily always agree with your view of justice. In other words, you could have 10 people in here and everybody has a different view of what it is." Reasons for holding this view centered on a belief among these teachers that there is no social agreement about how to implement the national values enshrined in documents such as the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, especially those portions exhorting equal treatment for all.

Mona Dietz attributed the "limited scope of what collectively we can agree is justice" to the differences in peoples' ideas of a just person, as did Stan Gray. The Western political tradition supports the idea that definitions of a just man are socially constructed according to the norms that frame expectations for the proper fulfillment of one's status or role in society, or according to the character traits attached to specific occupations (see MacIntyre, 1984). Teachers, however, attributed the difference to idiosyncratic ideas and to the absence of social consensus. In effect, they were extending the analysis of Bellah et al. (1985) that the social fabric of our communities is unraveling.

Kate Harris recognized in her beliefs a contradiction voiced by all but two teachers that people share "a kind of a core of what the idea of justice means" and that people's definition of justice "depended on the circumstances." Mitch Smith said his students were more likely to agree about issues of historical injustice than about what constitutes justice in contemporary society. He felt students would agree that it was unjust for a group ("slaves, African Americans before the Civil War") to have no freedom, or for a group not to "have the right to vote in this country," but he also noted that just as some Americans living at the time did not
perceive these restrictions as unjust, there were "probably some alive and well today that would say that was not unjust." His experience in the classroom was that if he probed, he and his students would "disagree on what justice is."

Greg Bond introduced an analysis of justice rooted in differences in experience among individuals of different class, race, or gender:

I think justice is different for different people....I mean people as either class or gender or race....It's hard for me to articulate that by example for each one of those. But I know that what's just or just treatment for women in this country is different from just treatment for men. I mean, men would see that differently than women would....Even though they're different situations and the circumstances are different, you could say that William Kennedy Smith got his justice because African Americans would perceive that he's white and a person of [high social] class and he got off. And people look at Mike Tyson, and he didn't get justice, primarily because of his color and his inability to [pause] defend himself....A woman would look at William Kennedy Smith and Mike Tyson, and they may say, "Mike Tyson got justice; William Kennedy Smith didn't....Now, you talk to [African American] women and that's where the schism comes, because...they would say, "He deserves to go to jail; Mike Tyson got justice." Then you talk to African American men and there's a definite difference. (I'm generalizing, of course.) That's what I meant by justice is different for different people. And it's based on our experience.

All the teachers interviewed wanted to create a climate safe enough for students to voice unpopular opinions and to support the value of respect for different opinions. I respect those concerns and teachers' desires to avoid the kind of instruction students would perceive as indoctrination. But it surprised me that social studies teachers did not and were unwilling to delineate an explicit model of justice for students to examine critically or compare with practices in other nations and cultures. Greg Bond's comments provide some explanation for this reluctance, and also suggest a cogent reason for explicitly teaching toward a socially shared definition of justice.

Difference Based on Cultural Values. Social studies teachers as a group may be more likely than other adults to stress the relativity of justice because their knowledge of other societies is broader than in most other occupational groups. Teachers with broad knowledge of different cultures (whether grounded in current events, history, or literature) may be more sensitive to the cultural relativity of justice than those less aware
of specific differences in practices and norms of justice. Three women high school teachers (Royce, Henly, and Harris) cited their knowledge of China to maintain that although the idea of justice might be common in all societies, enacting that concept would vary widely. Ms. Royce was the first to raise this issue. She started by saying that "achieving justice in America would be totally different than achieving justice in China," based on her experiences living in both countries and her knowledge of Chinese parables. Carrie Royce thought she might prefer the Chinese conception of justice in the case of car accidents, but not in relation to other issues of harm. Here is the story she told:

There's a traditional Chinese tale, and it's about Judge Li Yo. He is asked to rule in favor of one wife over another wife. Both wives have children and have reasons to have the man support her. And the judge chooses the first wife over the second wife, because the first wife has the recognized value. Even though, as the story unfolds, the second wife really was the nicer person, the better person, more giving and understanding, less manipulative, etc. And so, she dies in the end. Now I think the judge rules for justice, according to continuing the social agreements in Chinese culture. But...I feel really badly about the right person, the good person, dying. And indeed, the Chinese also do.

I pressed Carrie, saying I heard something that I thought was part of the Western concept, that the judge in this tale was attempting to balance something that otherwise would not be there. She replied, "The balance is that the wife who is recognized survives....The judge is kind of in the same situation as Solomon." Ms. Royce also noted that her students often tell her that "there is no truth in the legal system we have." She discussed a student's reaction to a scene in Zora Neale Hurston's novel, Their Eyes Were Watching God, where "Jamie is on trial for killing Tea Cake."

The girl was putting herself in that situation. I asked her what she meant and she said that if you're figuring out what is fair on a majority vote [our jury system], it might not be really fair. And I had no answer for that. I said, "Well, it's a question you'll probably ask yourself a lot....I'd rather trust a majority vote than one person,"...and I shared what I know about the Chinese judicial system, which is much different. And students weren't so sure they agreed with the Chinese definition of justice....Up until 1985-86, there was no such thing as suing for personal injury in the Chinese legal system. The person who hurt you [e.g., in a car accident] was
financially bound to care for you until you could go back to work. Say they ran over your bicycle. To decide who is at fault—if that’s what you mean by justice—it’s a committee. There’s the person from your neighborhood, a person from the other person’s neighborhood, the judge, and the two lawyers [who] present cases, present the facts. And in the traditional system, the judge could beat everyone to make sure everyone was telling the truth. If your story stayed the same, then he might [decide in your favor]. I use that example.

Kate Harris focused on the American reaction to the events in Tiananmin Square:

We looked at that and said, “This is unjust. Why is this happening? Why are they sending in the tanks?” Because people didn’t deserve it. My husband was in Beijing not too long after that on business and he had dinner with a good friend who lives there. Her comment was, “This has nothing to do with right or wrong or just; this has to do with ‘These folks don’t understand that they’re getting in the way of our economic progress.’ These people are getting in our way. It is absolutely ridiculous for them to be out there protesting and wanting democracy when all we’re really concerned about is having a better lifestyle.”...My view of justice is, this was a terrible thing that happened. Her view, and she’s a college educated woman, is, “These guys got what they deserved.”

Kate continued:

Here’s this woman who’s lived in the United States and loves the United States, and certainly has an understanding of values that the people would have in this country, being just totally disgusted with these protesters, and I think she represented a lot of Chinese people—not everybody—but she really felt the most important thing for China was to move forward economically....You could have an intellectual conversation. She could understand why we felt it was unjust what happened, but she didn’t agree with it. [pause] So, at the core of treating people justly [pause] I think that’s where it becomes real culturally relevant—not relevant, but it’s culturally dependent, I think.
This anthropological view forms the basis of an essay by Nader and Sursock (1986), who nevertheless note that varied notions of justice are not limitless:

The same categories are noted so regularly from culture to culture that the concept of just behavior seems to revolve everywhere around the choices that so many authors in this volume have isolated: harmony, need, equality, and equity. As revealed in writings about revolutions, however, when translated into ideology, such gentle terms may often result in grotesque behaviors involving violence, albeit justified by ideas of fairness, equality, and the like; limited concepts of justice may lead to limitless consequences (p. 228).

The Difference between Cultural Relativity and Moral Relativism. Teachers who included moral action as part of justice (e.g., Jon Estes and Sandra Thomas) were willing to push their students to condemn blatant instances of oppression (e.g., the practices of colonizing powers in the Americas and Africa) and to equate democratic participation with social activism. Those who believed (as Stan Gray told me) that “justice isn’t what you do, it’s a way of being” were reluctant to suggest that some ideas about justice were more valid than others. Teachers who defined justice as part of a person’s character were expressing an idea common to heroic societies eloquently explored by Maclntyre (1984). The later Greek position, found in Aristotle’s works, included the importance of working towards founding a community to achieve “a common project,” defined as a shared good recognized by all (Maclntyre, 1984, p. 151). Although teachers recognized the unraveling of a shared sense of community, they did not see their role as helping students to actively construct a shared sense of justice.

It surprised and disturbed me that teachers were reluctant to include as part of their teaching their own judgments that some conceptions of justice are flawed or inconsonant with their values, and opted instead only to encourage students to express their views. In Actual Minds, Possible Worlds, Bruner (1986) argues that although “meaning...is an enterprise that reflects human intentionality and cannot be judged for its rightness independently of it,...[i]t is not a relativistic picnic” (pp. 158-159). In my view, teachers fail to exercise appropriate responsibility when they refrain from including their viewpoints in discussions; such silences remove their views from public examination and testing by students. It is crucial that social studies teachers join with students in exploring the consequences of different conceptions of justice so that adolescents develop an explicit understanding of the values and principles of justice that undergird our system of law and a sense that they are informed and competent to make judgments about matters of
justice. (Teachers may do this when faced with specific classroom events, but this is not what was reported in the interviews I conducted).

Male and Female Teachers See Empathy as Central to Justice

Students want teachers to be fair. Constructing a trusting relationship with students and building a sense of community are essential aspects of teaching. Male and female teachers spoke about dilemmas they faced in trying simultaneously to be fair to a particular student and to the entire class as a justice issue. They experienced conflict because they felt an obligation to treat all students equally (not play favorites) and also to respond to special circumstances of individual need. But they also recognized that evaluation of a relationship (whether between individuals or nations) as just or unjust depended upon the circumstances of the relationship. This section explores the ways teachers represented these issues in their discussion of justice.

Greg Bond was especially concerned about how the presence or absence of a relationship between individuals influenced his sense of justice. His language mirrors the orientation of care that Gilligan (1977, 1982) describes as more often creating ethical dilemmas for females:

A class I had [on moral education] has really caused me to think about the individual morality that we have with one another in relationships. And I think that that's the justice. It is an individual sense of right and wrong, based on how you relate or who you're relating to [pause] and what is the context of that relationship. Context meaning time, place, circumstance [pause] who the relationship is with. Is it with an intimate person, like your wife? Is it with a child, where there's some deference to respect and authority and [pause] parenting and all of that? Is it with a student?

Matt Lyons wanted his students to develop empathy for officials charged with delivering justice as part of their job. Although he recognized the salience of context, he focused more on the way individuals decide whether an outcome is fair to them personally:

Justice, that's [pause] these people [government officials] are trying to do the best job they can in those situations under those circumstances. The definition of justice to me is just each person's mind as to 'Was this action, was this decision, was this law just to me? Was it fair from my opinion, my experience?'

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Other teachers also articulated a blend of the justice orientation with the care orientation, leading me to wonder whether something about the nature of teaching as an occupation supports a view of justice as a continuum sometimes requiring principled responses (from duty or obligation) and sometimes requiring more sensitivity to context and relationship. This view is proposed by Debra Shogan (1992) in her critique of the work of those who view justice as distinct from care. Shogan argues that different kinds of moral situations call forth different types of moral response. In one situation, "the welfare of others is at stake as a result of some predicament or circumstance which does not require a process of adjudication" (p. 17). In such situations, caring persons have a benevolent desire to enhance others' welfare. In the "other type of moral situation," where "there is a conflict between sentient beings or between sentient beings and a standard," a moral response requires resolution through adjudication "so that those in conflict are treated fairly" (p. 17).

Shogan takes issue with Noddings' (1984) idea that caring is contrasted to justice. For Noddings, an ethical sense is grounded primarily in a reciprocal relationship between "the one caring and the one cared for" that is responsive to the particulars of specific situations rather than on rule-based (justice) reasoning. Shogan believes that a caring person is motivated both "by welfare and fair treatment of those in a moral situation" as the situation requires (p. 18). She notes that some situations require impartiality and some require knowledge pertinent to the relationship of individuals and the situation, agreeing with Iris Murdoch that "impartiality does not demand indifference" although it does require detachment (Shogan, 1992, p. 22). Sometimes adjudication is the appropriate way to settle the conflict; sometimes the welfare of one of the parties requires a particular response. Determining which response is more appropriately just often depends on whether friends or strangers are involved. Shogan also cautions:

Recognizing that situations differ according to certain important features is not to claim further that moral situations can be interpreted any way one wishes. On the contrary, features of moral situations are conceptually connected to what makes either a benevolent or a just desire appropriate as a motivation for a particular situation....[Claring people have certain character traits. This is an important point because consistency is often thought to be characteristic of principles which are universal and not of desires which are often portrayed as fleeting and not dependable (pp. 24-25).
Shogan's conception of a moral response as requiring a fusion of justice and care is visible in the conflicts that these teachers described in their relations with students; for example, Marc Jura described as a justice dilemma his belief that he could not be fair simultaneously to a specific student and to an entire class of students when deciding whether to make allowances for a personal hardship if a student was unable to meet a deadline or in calculating a student's grade. Shogan notes that in some situations, "the desire to do one's duty to be fair takes precedence over a benevolent desire to assist a particular individual" (p. 33). Her position differs from Noddings (1984) because she views benevolence as part of justice. She differs from Gilligan (1983) insofar as this folding of care into justice provides a different perspective on studies that show females and males as both articulating positions of justice and care. Instead of seeing these as primarily gender-associated responses, Shogan views the difference as appropriately elicited by different kinds of situations. Teachers' conceptions of justice closely mirrored Shogan's idea that fairness and caring are part of justice.

Justice Combines Fairness as a Principle with Care for Persons

Male and female teachers connected fairness to an equally important need to be sensitive to an individual's specific situation. Stan Gray (high school) tried to find a way to define justice that would cover all cases. He felt that "either you are a just man [sic] or you aren't....It's not what you do; it's a way of being." Gray believes that every student in his classes has a basic right to express his or her own opinion and to "be themselves." He described himself as fair because (1) he treated all of his students the same whether they were passing or failing, and (2) he accepted all of their comments as equally worthy. Laura Henley, who team teaches integrated high school language arts and social studies classes, initially quoted Thurgood Marshall's perspective on equal treatment as her definition of justice. Later in the interview she amended her definition to voice her concern that universal standards somehow needed to account for the impact on specific persons:

I guess there's some sort of an abstract justice, like kind of a standard...something that is in, like...the guarantees of the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, which are sort of [pause] abstract...as justice that is, you know, provided in the Constitution is actually applied to, or played out, or experienced by the individual. [pause] I don't know if it would be [pause] sort of [pause] the basic right of the individual?...Human dignity, I don't know [pause] but as it's applied...to every single person [trailed off].
Every teacher that I interviewed acknowledged that for justice to be implemented in any culture, it would be necessary to take into account the special circumstances of the relationship between parties; furthermore, both male and female teachers specifically referred to principles of justice as the salient touchstone within the concept. Their sense that justice included the principle of equal treatment created conflicts for them when they tried to be fair in implementing their own policies about absence, completion of missed work, and grading. Conflicts arose because they wanted to take a student’s special personal circumstances into account and simultaneously be fair to the rest of the class. Teachers’ concepts of justice in this study thus support Gilligan’s (1982, 1985) position that adults articulate both a morality of justice and a morality of care (see also Lyons, 1987); however, these teachers’ concepts challenged Gilligan’s finding that males most often use the language of justice as a principle while females most often use the language of care or responsiveness to individuals. Teachers stated specifically that the situation determined whether they drew more on the principle or on the responsiveness part of their idea of what justice required, but that both of these ideas were primary to their concept. Lyons (1987) notes a “third pattern...an equal use of justice and care considerations,” but this has not received much attention from researchers. It seems teachers construe justice differently depending upon whether the issue concerns what is just for society in general (the public domain) or what is just for the individual (the private domain), as the comments below illustrate.

Carrie Royce used justice language in discussing her idea of a just relationship between nations:

Well, for me, relationships have obligations and responsibilities. And so, justice would be trying to balance...the relationships and the obligations that you have in that relationship, and so then [pause] it sounds kind of [pause] what is it [pause] patronizing? [pause] But you know there would be certain obligations that the U.S. might have to a protectorate.

I commented that “there might be legal obligations that both parties had agreed to” and Carrie, who had studied and lived in Vietnam, replied:

You know the issue right now with Vietnam? The Vietnamese see that we have an obligation that we’re not fulfilling, and their definition and our definition are different. They have an obligation to make restitution for people who are missing, [and] they say, “There’s no way that we would feed a foreigner....Why would you think I would hide a foreigner and then feed him when my own
family is starving?”...There’s the agreement that there’s the obligation, but it’s like the obligation is not the same. There’s no way [that the U.S. citizen’s sense of] the responsibility would be met.

Laura Henley teaches a high school class on the literature of colonialism. She includes social science perspectives (e.g., Memmi, 1967) and novels by Indian and African writers. Readings explore the differential impact of colonial societies upon men and women of different classes. Henley spoke of her sense that there was a kind of justice specific to international affairs that depended upon differences in power:

Is it just, for instance, to expect a Third World country to turn down storage of toxic wastes if it means feeding your people? Is it just, you know, for a country like Germany or the United States to even ask? Is it just, in this country, for us [pause] to encourage or to ask Native Americans...when almost all the applicants for nuclear waste storage are...Native Americans? It seems to be there’s a basic injustice there, and it’s an injustice of rank or, you know, position, in terms of power and wealth and so forth.

I pressed Laura for clarification, “Is there a difference between that and, I don’t know, is there a justice that would hold between individuals? Like in husband/wife relationships, or between parent and child?” She replied:

Probably, if it’s in terms of a power difference. Either because of economic power or physical power. And it may be the distinction between, like [pause] public justice [pause] the abstract declarations of human rights and so forth. And this may just be another aspect of that....I don’t know whether they’re different. I’d have to think about that.

Greg Bond struggled to explain his sense that there was some “sort of moral universality stuff,” some “sense of moral right and wrong that goes across race [and] gender.” Although asserting strongly that even in cultures that practiced infanticide, there was a sense “that taking a life is not right,” Bond questioned the idea of a moral universality because he did not see it at work “at the nation-state level.” He said, “Perhaps the Jehovah’s Witnesses have it right: Maybe men really can’t rule themselves.” The behavior of nations had convinced him that morality meant
something greater than a human sense of right and wrong...because of how we’re organized....In order to have justice, you have to have some sense of right and wrong and I see that that’s arbitrary, based on somebody’s national interest....That same type of morality was used to drop the bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. To save our boys.

Greg said firmly, “The treatment of all Americans in a moral, [pause] just, equitable way” is an ideal. He does not believe that “we can get to that level of justice, and we call ourselves a civilized country!” Later in the interview, Greg acknowledged that finding the right or just way to treat students who did not turn in work might require opposing responses from him as a teacher:

One student may say, “I didn’t turn in my research paper because I had too much to do and I waited ‘til the last minute.” And I’d give that student an ‘F’ or an ‘Incomplete.’ And another student may come to me and say, “I don’t know why I didn’t do my paper.” And I may say, “I’ll give you another day to do it.” And the justice may simply mean that I understand one student more than the other. And that’s not fair. I mean, they’re not equal situations....It’s based on the relationship that I have. Not the quality of the relationship....Could be bad. I mean, I’ve done the same thing for kids that I just really don’t like. Somewhere in my being...my intuition...says, “Eh, for some reason, this kid deserves another shot.” I don’t know why I do that.

Matt Lyons defined justice as “treating people fairly,” and said, “There are certain kinds of, I guess, universal principles that tell us if there is truly justice in a country.” In his interview, he defined those universalities as based on “a cultural standard...there is probably some universal kind of principles that would determine if there was a just relationship or not.” On the copy of the transcript mailed back to me, he circled the word ‘universal’ and drew a line linking it to this written comment: “The universalities I’m thinking of are equality, respect, honesty, liberty, fairness.” Elsewhere in the interview he said a just relationship between a parent and a child “would mean there’s respect, that there’s care, that there’s time spent with that person. If you want to title all that under the umbrella term...of a just relationship, then, okay.” When asked, “Does that make sense? Would you do that?” he replied, “Yeah. I think the concept of justice is so broad that we can look at a social level...on a school level, community level, one-on-one level.” Then he reflected that
the notion of justice probably, at least in [my] government class, doesn’t reach down that far. I mean, I don’t think I’ve ever really thought about it much in terms of justice being that broad [but] I would agree...that it does....I don’t think a curriculum in any of the disciplines does that.

The teachers’ responses to my questions about whether there are different kinds of justice lead me to wonder whether perhaps Gilligan and her associates (1987) do not hear much talk about public justice because in their interview questions they ask respondents to discuss a personal moral dilemma, and therefore they elicit responses about private relationships. When thinking about themselves as citizens, however, most individuals wish to be guided by a set of principles or rules, including legal procedural safeguards for human rights. Judith Shklar (1990) offers this reason: She recalls Cicero’s view that “justice is primarily a citizen’s virtue” because “it alone joins communities together, while injustice tears them apart” (p. 105).

In their book on *Everyday Justice*, Hamilton and Sanders (1992) compare “responsibility and the individual in Japan and the United States.” Arguing for a historical perspective on justice as tied sociologically to the size of a community and the strength of ‘solidary’ relationships, they build a carefully documented case that societies have different norms for justice among those who know and care for and about each other and justice among strangers (pp. 153-156). They situate justice within the context of “calling a person to account” involving “conceptions of the responsible actor,” language used by none of the teachers interviewed (p. 185). Several teachers (especially Laura Henley and Carrie Royce), however, specifically noted the importance of legal standards of justice in promoting social stability, a point Hamilton and Sanders stress in their discussion of American and Japanese conceptions of justice.

**Summary and Conclusion**

The social studies teachers interviewed in this study believe they address issues of justice in two primary ways: in the choice of topics and materials actually used in class and in their relationships with students. While two thirds of those interviewed claimed to teach about justice directly and intentionally, one third felt they taught about justice indirectly. All teachers felt teaching justice was important, and were able to cite specific topics and materials in use in their curricula (Makler, 1994). Teachers who claimed to have taught about justice always, even in their first year of teaching, attributed their strong interest in justice to a combination of personal values, family background, and life experience; among this group were a former labor union organizer and a former
Andra Makler

community organizer. Other teachers who described themselves as deeply committed to exploring justice issues said they incorporated justice issues gradually because they first needed to find their comfort zone within the school community, and/or acquire sufficient knowledge in several areas of the secondary curriculum, as well as gain experience in teaching.

In responding to interview questions, teachers exhibited complex notions about justice and acknowledged confusion. Although only three (all male) were able to name a specific theory of justice and only Smith alluded to the influence of a particular theorist (John Locke) in his curriculum, all had developed complex theoretical rationales to support their concepts of justice. Three definitions emerged as primary theme clusters: justice as right and wrong, justice as fairness, and justice as an ideal or standard. Although individual teachers tended to focus on ideas related to one theme cluster, they all drew upon ideas related to all three theme clusters as the context of their discussions warranted; thus, as Mona Dietz noted, she might focus discussion on justice in her government class on law on issues of right and wrong, but would address justice in her psychology class by looking at how communities treat the homeless or the mentally ill.

Two secondary themes emerged as interconnected to the three primary theme clusters: the idea of justice as requiring moral action and a belief in the relativity of justice. Teachers' "personal, practical knowledge" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1985) of the idiosyncratic nature of ideas about justice among students and Americans in general combined with their academic knowledge that concepts of justice differed across cultures. Individuals struggled to rationalize their belief that some aspects of the concept of justice were universals with their knowledge that individuals experience justice differently depending upon their race, gender, and class. While Gilligan (1982) and others (Lyons, 1987; Ward, 1989) have found that females tend to favor the language of care and males favor the language of fairness when discussing their concepts of justice, a strong gender-associated difference in language did not emerge in these interviews. Male and female teachers used the language of justice and the language of care, depending upon the context and situation they were describing. The consistency of language and examples across interviews with males and females raises the possibility that social studies teachers may represent a special occupational group.

In their teacher education programs and on-the-job training, teachers are socialized to be responsive to students as individuals while they also must be cognizant of the needs of the class as a group. Social studies teachers' knowledge about other cultures and governments and about individual and cultural differences differs from the norm among even educated adults because the secondary curriculum requires this. An individual social studies teacher may well teach five different academic
disciplines within a two-year period (e.g., U.S. history, global studies, economics, government, and psychology); thus, social studies teachers as a group may be more sensitive to the relativity of ideas of justice across history and within contemporary society than other occupational groups. It also is possible that the diversity required of an accomplished social studies educator may attract adults already disposed to recognize this relativity.

Claiming lack of knowledge about theories of justice (only two mentioned formal coursework including this content), teachers nonetheless felt it would be appropriate to introduce students to theories of justice, but said they would need further study to do this themselves. Teachers had specific and often extensive knowledge about instances of injustice and oppression of vulnerable groups in world and United States history, in current events, and in literature, and they deliberately included examples in their curricula.

Finally, although none of the interviewed teachers claimed academic expertise about matters of justice, their conceptions of justice paralleled the range of philosophical debate on important issues and themes within the concept of justice (see Barry, 1989; Shklar, 1990). Teachers described a concept of justice closest to Debra Shogan’s (1992) position that fairness and caring are both essential aspects of the concept of justice. These teachers seem to believe that justice in the public domain should be construed differently from justice in the private domain of personal interactions. This belief mirrors sociological theory that societies and individuals have different norms for relations among strangers and friends. Their responses also suggest that the education of social studies teachers may be particularly lacking in the area of political theory; this may partially explain the teachers’ reluctance to present criteria for judging the merits of different cultural conceptions of justice. If this is the case, it seems that concerted efforts to help teachers develop more elaborate and detailed conceptual schema about justice are needed to improve the knowledge base of both teachers and adolescents and to avoid the pitfall of moral relativism. The dangers of this position for democratic education are clearly expressed by Amy Gutmann (1987):

Treating every moral opinion as equally worthy encourages children in the false subjectivism that "I have my opinion and you have yours and who’s to say who’s right?” This moral understanding does not take the demands of democratic justice seriously....Schools have a much greater capacity than most parents and voluntary associations, however, for teaching children to reason out loud about disagreements that arise in democratic politics and to understand the political morality appropriate to a democracy (pp. 56, 58).
In my view, inability to judge other systems of justice as wanting (despite the inconsistencies in our own) is likely to promote confusion among adolescents and make it harder for them to develop reasoned ideas about the relationship between care and justice.

Appendix
Justice Interview Guide

Background/General Information
1. Where do you teach? How long have you been there?
2. How many years have you been teaching social studies?
3. Are you certified to teach any other subjects?
4. Please describe the school and the kids. [Probe as necessary.]
5. What courses are you teaching now?
6. Do you enjoy teaching one of those subjects more than the others? Please describe [or say why not]. [Probe as necessary.]
7. Please describe your educational background after high school [colleges, degrees, etc.].
8. Did any courses, or topics you studied, really stand out for you? Tell me something about that, please.

Questions Specifically Related to Concept of Justice
As I told you, I am interested in whether social studies teachers teach about justice in their courses.

10. Do you teach about justice in any of your classes? Talk about this....
11. Have you always included teaching about justice in this course...or is this relatively new for you? [Probe: What motivated you to do this? What do you think students get out of this?...How do you know this?]
12. Do you think some social studies courses lend themselves more to teaching about justice than others? Please explain....
13. If a student in one of your classes, for example, your history class [Pick a class that teacher has identified as one where s/he teaches about justice if possible] asked you to define justice, what might you say?
14. Let's take one of your courses. Can you think of a part of the curriculum that could lend itself to teaching about justice, even though you may not be doing that now? Please talk about this for a moment....What might you do?
15. I'd like your reaction to a hypothetical situation, okay? Suppose your building principal came to you and said, "The Oregon Legislature just passed a new law. Now, along with consumer education and everything else, we have to teach about justice! I'd like you to chair a committee to help us figure out how to implement this new mandate in our school." What recommendations might you make? For
example, would you favor creating a separate course on justice? [Probe here as necessary.]

16. As you think about it now, are there some specific topics or activities that you would want to include?

17. Are there some specific theories about justice that you are familiar with that you might wish to include?

18. Can you think of anything specific you might want students to read...or a movie or videotape you'd want them to see?

19. Please think for a moment. Would you say there are different kinds of justice...? [If no, Say more about your idea, please] [If yes, What are some of those kinds?] [Probe: For example, how would you classify, or describe, the kind of justice citizens are entitled to expect from their government?...In the work place?...What about in international affairs?...In relations between individuals?]

20. Are there some concepts related to justice that you think would be essential for students to understand or examine?

Questions Related to Expectations about Students
I'd like to switch gears just a little now....

21. In your experience, are students interested in learning about justice? Please explain....

22. Where do you think high school kids develop their ideas about justice?

Questions Related to the Study of Justice
23. Have you ever taken an LRE course? [How many: A few? A lot?] 24. Was justice a topic in any of that work? In any of the courses you've taken in college or graduate school? Talk about that, please.

25. Do you have any questions for me?...Any comments you want to make?

Thank you. [Explain I will send transcript for review and any comments or changes.]

References


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STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Peter Seixas
University of British Columbia

Abstract
In order to write meaningful history, historians work implicitly with criteria of historical significance. In the past 20 years, those criteria have shifted considerably. In the first part of this article, the author discusses issues raised in attempting to define historical significance. In the second part, he asks what phenomena students understand to be historically significant, and how they reason about their choices. Based on a small exploratory study with 14 tenth-grade students in a middle class Canadian school, he finds two predominant forms of reasoning about significance: narrative and analogical. He concludes that attention to students' understanding of historical significance would enhance the teaching and learning of history, and makes suggestions for further research.

The more negotiable, the more invented the past becomes, the more intense its hold, the more central its invention becomes in the art of making a self.

Michael Ignatieff

If there is any meaning to history, then that meaning has to be discovered and defined from within the maelstrom of change.

David Harvey

One of the historian's key tools is the concept of historical significance. Studying everything is impossible; significance is the valuing criterion through which the historian assesses which pieces of the entire possible corpus of the past can fit together into a meaningful and coherent story that is worthwhile. To say a phenomenon is significant is thus to say that it is worthy of historical study. As Lomas (1990) states, "One cannot escape from the idea of significance in History.
History, to be meaningful, depends on selection and this, in turn, depends on establishing criteria of significance to select the more relevant and to dismiss the less relevant” (p. 41).

This selection occurs in historians’ research, in history teaching, and in the historical representations of popular culture (Lowenthal, 1985; Lipsitz, 1990). In each case, someone makes the selection for some purpose. The issue of whose purposes are served in this process shapes what Michael Olneck (1993) calls modern society’s symbolic order. The producers of history are not the only ones who select and structure historical knowledge, however, so too do the consumers of history; that is, all of us who attend to the ubiquitous historical allusions in contemporary culture, from school texts to television ads, as we construct a sense of our lives in historical time (Carr, 1986).

In the interest of exploring how young people conduct one aspect of historical thinking, this study is an initial attempt to investigate how they make selections and how they think about the selections they make. Which phenomena from the past do they consider worth knowing, and what kinds of reasoning do they offer in support of their choices? As is common in first attempts, however, the contribution of this study may lie more in exposing previously unseen difficulties and problems than in arriving at definite answers. These difficulties lie both in the definition of historical significance (explored here as a problem in historiography), and in examining student ideas (explored as a problem in empirical research).

Historians and Significance

A person might have a passionate interest in insignificant phenomena from the past, to which he or she might devote considerable time and energy. Historians categorize such interests and activities as antiquarianism and distinguish them from the pursuit of history. Furthermore, historians occasionally write about topics that their colleagues consider to be insignificant; thus, a historical topic does not become significant simply on the basis of someone’s interest in it.

Is it possible, then, to define objective criteria for historical significance (see Burston, 1963, pp. 109-142; Lomas, 1990, pp. 42-43)? Perhaps phenomena that affect a large number of people in an important way and for a long period of time are historically significant. Using this objective definition, a world war is more historically significant than a small local skirmish, but local events and historical details also become significant when their relationships to larger phenomena are drawn or made explicit. Our ability to establish certain kinds of relationships among historical phenomena, and perhaps ultimately to ourselves in the present, thus becomes a key to historical reasoning about significance. That historical significance arises from a relationship between our lives
Students' Understanding of Historical Significance

in the present and various phenomena in the past constitutes a problem for our objective definition of the term.

Problems of Significance: Microhistorians and Martha Ballard

Some historians who study apparently insignificant subject matter make strong claims for the importance of their studies. An examination of two such claims helps to clarify how historians think about the issue. Microhistory aims to explore small episodes lost to traditional history that took place among ordinary people with no apparent direct consequences for contemporary politics or ideology. Muir (1991, p. xii) suggests that "the proper goal of the historian is not to explore the historical implications of a contemporary theory or problem, but to write about things that are totally forgotten and completely irrelevant to the present, to produce a history that is 'really dead'.” But microhistorians are not antiquarians. In The Cheese and the Worms, microhistorian Carlo Ginzburg (1980) asks readers to recognize "an unnoticed but extraordinary fragment of a reality, half obliterated, which implicitly poses a series of questions for our own culture and for us" (p. xii). The accomplishment of this genre ironically is that its practitioners achieve such significant historical writing on topics which are prima facie so obscure, so distant, and so laced with a "residue of unintelligibility" (Ginzburg, 1980, p. xxvi).

One of the most successful recent examples of this is Laurel Thatcher Ulrich's (1990) exploration of the life of Martha Ballard, an eighteenth-century midwife in the small town of Hallowell, Maine. Using a diary that had been dismissed by a succession of historians as "not of general interest," or "filled with trivia about domestic chores and pastimes" (pp. 8-9), Ulrich constructs a rich picture of Ballard's life and her social world. But she also claims:

Martha Ballard's diary connects to several prominent themes in the social history of the early Republic, yet it does more than reflect an era. By restoring a lost substructure of eighteenth-century life, it transforms the nature of the evidence upon which much of the history of the period has been written (p. 27).

Ulrich, like Ginzburg, makes claims for significance based on the connections between her small historical piece and a much larger puzzle. But in the passage above, Ulrich is overly generous to Ballard and her diary. The accomplishment of "restoring a lost substructure" and "transforming the nature of the evidence" actually belongs to Ulrich and not to her source. The significance of this history lies in Ulrich's own work with the traces of the past, rather than in some quality inherent to certain aspects of the past itself. This is significant history, but its
achievement lies in the kinds of connections Ulrich, the historian—not Ballard, the midwife and diarist—made to other phenomena, and ultimately to some of our own contemporary concerns. Significance emerges out of the activities of the historian working with her sources.

In discussing her assignment to write an entry for Ballard for the *Dictionary of American Biography*, Ulrich (1992) exposed a piece of the conundrum of the historian's role in creating historical significance. She noted the difficulty of writing a piece on Ballard that would stand convincingly next to "Lincoln, Abraham, 16th president of the United States," and the like. In one sense, reference works such as these define what is historically significant. Lincoln deserves a place because of his unique achievements. Does Ballard? Part of the power of *A Midwife's Tale* lies in our being able to imagine that many women like Ballard worked in similar ways in other small towns in eighteenth-century North America, and that prior to this book the historiography had presented a wholly inadequate picture of their lives; thus, Ballard's historical significance was that Ulrich chose to write about her.

In this way, Ulrich's assignment for the *Dictionary of American Biography* involved a confounding of historical significance and historiographic significance. Historical and historiographic significance are always tangled; this case simply makes the problem more obvious. In fact, significance always emerges out of a particular kind of relationship between ourselves in the present and various phenomena in the past. The historical thinker (historian or other) draws that relationship (Carr, 1986). Who we consider ourselves to be and what kinds of relationships these are remain to be explored (see Hollinger, 1993).

**Historiographic Change and Significance**

Ulrich's task exposes a problem in the ways we think about and deal with historical significance, but it is only one particularly clear example of a broader issue arising from the changes in historical writing over the past 25 years. Historians have aimed self-consciously at bringing to center stage the actors, developments, and events previously relegated to the margins, in a determined effort to challenge older assignments of historical significance now seen to be ideologically and historically limited (Seixas, 1993). Indeed, the problem is more profound than the metaphor of a more inclusive center stage implies (otherwise, simply including Ballard and her sisters in the *Dictionary of American Biography* would be straightforward). What Kaye (1991) calls the "crisis of the grand-governing narratives" suggests the construction of multiple historical stages for multiple audiences defined by social positions of class, gender, and ethnicity. The other alternative is to seek a radically different basis for a more inclusive synthesis (Bender, 1986; Harvey, 1990; Hollinger, 1993). In either case the conception of significance based
Students' Understanding of Historical Significance

on a single, objective standard of historical impact becomes more contested and problematic.

Let us revisit the objective definition proposed above in order to explore another problem: Phenomena that affect a large number of people in an important way and for a long period of time are significant. The second term, 'in an important way', introduces an element of circularity into the definition of significance. Perhaps we can specify further what we mean by this.

The first topical table of contents of book reviews in the American Historical Review (introduced in volume 98, issue 1, 1993) includes a range of topics that did not garner such attention in the historical literature of 25 years ago. They include among others the following categories: cultural history (41 reviews); family (6); gender (6); labor (9); race relations (17); sexuality (3); social history (25); urban history (8); and women (24). In these topics, important historical phenomena and contested contemporary issues are clearly related. Historically significant topics change with changing times.

An explanation of historiographic change is fraught with more difficulty than the limits of this discussion allow (see Carr, 1965; Novick, 1988; Perkins, 1992). Its importance here is that more and different areas of historical study have been undertaken in recent years, and the new work historicizes areas that have not previously been treated historically. Like the study of previously marginalized peoples, these studies provide contested opportunities for historical understanding particularly relevant to our own contemporary communities (see Schlesinger, 1992).

Historical significance, then, is a quality determined by the historian or other historical thinker, but is not something created out of nothing or woven out of fiction: A historical phenomenon becomes significant if and only if members of a contemporary community can draw relationships between it and other historical phenomena and ultimately to themselves.

Students and Significance

Which phenomena do students see as significant? What kinds of connections do they draw to their own lives, or to their contemporary community? Students structure their own historical understandings according to the schemata of their historical knowledge: the phenomena to which they assign significance and the connections they can articulate among them (Schallert, 1982).

Even in their most naïve structuring of historical information, young people can establish these connections and define themselves through new knowledge of their relation to the past (Clark, 1967; Carr, 1986; Rogers, 1987; Holt, 1990; VanSledright & Brophy, 1992). Recent constructivist theory and research directs us to attend to the meanings...
that students construct as they learn in any area (Resnick & Klopfer, 1989; Gardner, 1991). After extensive constructivist investigations of mathematical and scientific understandings, educators lately have begun to deal with problems of historical understanding (Wineburg, in press; Downey & Levstik, 1991). Drawing upon a longer tradition of British work in this area (Shemilt, 1980; Dickinson, Lee, & Rogers, 1984; Portal, 1987; Booth, 1993) researchers have asked how students make sense of the historical information they receive from instruction (VanSledright & Brophy, 1992; Gabella, in press), from the reading of textbooks (McKeown et al., 1992; Epstein, 1994), and from the reading of historical sources (Ashby & Lee, 1987; Wineburg, 1991).

In this investigation, I draw from constructivist learning theory in considering the ways students organize knowledge; however, I also attempt to leave the discussion considerably more open ended than much of the research that has been conducted to date: I begin with students' articulation of a past that is significant to them and not with their understanding of a particular text or event whose significance is assumed. What account do they give of historical significance (i.e., what makes an event significant)? Conceptually, how do they join the significant past to their own lives? What aspects, if any, of the contemporary world do students attempt to historicize?

Method

I approached two 10th-grade social studies teachers in an middle/upper middle class urban Canadian school in search of students. Mr. Z teaches a social studies class for students enrolled in a district-wide outdoor education program for which students are chosen on the basis of academic performance, involvement in extracurricular activities, and ability to cooperate with the group. Mr. W teaches two mainstream 10th-grade social studies classes. Both teachers called for volunteers from their classes for the study. Mr. W's students were much more reluctant to participate than Mr. Z's. Mr. W explained that his classes had a high percentage of English as a second language (ESL) students who would hesitate to participate in such a project. Those who did volunteer were not ESL students. I did not attempt to compare interview responses from the two classes.

I anticipated that soliciting volunteers from the two classes would provide variation in grades and interest level in social studies. Teachers administered the questionnaires (see Appendix). I instructed them not to discuss the questions with the students, and they later reported that they had not. In order to select a sample of approximately 12 to 15 interviews, I scanned the 38 returned questionnaires for responses to question six (why the student ranked interest in social studies as he/she did). The purpose was to interview students who would provide diverse examples.
Students' Understanding of Historical Significance

Table 1
The Interview Sample: Number of Students in the Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Total students</th>
<th>Volunteers</th>
<th># who returned questionnaire</th>
<th># interviewed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. W</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Z</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

of thinking about the significance of the past. The responses that led me to choose the 14 students for interviews thus included the following:

1. "It's very interesting to see the patterns of life and people's beliefs."
2. "I like learning about the geography and the history from where I came from."
3. "I don't like to remember dates of a special occasion....I like doing activities on today's society and not the past [sic]."
4. "Sometimes it can be a bore but...you get to learn about other places and cultures."
5. "Interesting, always different."
6. "I enjoy learning about past histories and how it [sic] relates to us."
7. "It makes me think."
8. "I love learning about [all aspects of] history and Western Civilization."
9. "I just have fun in the class."
10. "I find it interesting to learn about historical events that took place in Canada and my families home land Brittain [sic]."
11. "I like looking at the cause and effect of certain events in history."
12. "I find it hard to remember all the events because they aren't always in the same order."
13. "I would prefer learning more about Canadian history, knowing how Canada started."
14. "I am bored by Canadian history."

Table 2 compares responses of the interviewees and noninterviewees to the key item on the written questionnaire concerning the most important events in the past 500 years. With the exception of "the rise
and fall of communism” which had significantly less frequent mention among the noninterviewees than among the interviewees, patterns of responses were similar.

Individual interviews were conducted using a naïve technique for each of a short list of questions, in which the interviewer refuses to accept anything as understood, declining to invent meaning for the subject’s responses. Interviewees were asked repeatedly for clarification and amplification until they could contribute nothing more (Ginsburg, 1981). Interviews were taped and transcribed. Transcriptions were reviewed for instances in which I did not adhere to the principle of declining to invent meaning. These instances were noted so that they could be discounted in the report of findings. Two closely related aspects of the question of historical significance were explored: important events and developments and events and developments important for x to learn about. Reviews of the transcripts revealed some shifting back and forth between the two.

A coding scheme was developed and revised during a preliminary round of transcript analysis. While the coding helped to classify students’ responses, the methodology would not support, nor did I attempt to draw, conclusions based on a quantitative analysis of the coded transcripts.

Findings

Content

Several patterns emerge in students’ responses to the question of the three most important events and developments of the past 500 years. These patterns provide context for analysis of the interview data, and they suggest additional analytical questions that might be asked. As can be seen from Table 2, the 38 students who returned questionnaires had very strong clusters of responses. Fifty-four (or 50 percent) of the 108 item responses indicated one or both world wars (30), European expansion to the Americas (14), or the rise and/or fall of communism (10). All of these had broad, international implications. None apparently acquires its primary significance from its place in national history (although one cannot predict how students thought without examining the interview data). Moreover, the provincial social studies curriculum does not prescribe any treatment of two of the three topics (world wars and the rise and fall of communism) prior to the 11th grade.

At the other extreme, it is worth examining the 15 responses each mentioned by only one student. (Here I am not including the four asterisked topics, as they overlap.) Once we move away from global impact as a criterion for historical significance, there is a question about how personal the criteria may be. In this sample, only one response indicated local history as significant. Other single responses included a
Students’ Understanding of Historical Significance

Table 2
The Three Most Important Events and Developments of the Past 500 Years (N=38)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Interview sample</th>
<th>W's class</th>
<th>Z's class</th>
<th>Total responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World wars</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rise and fall of communism</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding of New World</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Confederation and/or independence</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Revolution</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam War</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Revolution</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial revolution</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idea of democracy and freedom*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's rights*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The recent referendum</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renaissance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of Canada</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War of 1812</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian settlements</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current events</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murder of John F. Kennedy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Napoleon Bonaparte's empire</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summit Series 1972 (hockey, Canada vs. USSR)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gulf War</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greeks and Romans</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space program</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinking of the Titanic</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Berlin bridge breaking apart&quot;</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Bringing together of multiculturalism&quot;</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Multiculturalism/freedom/women's rights</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Jays win World Series</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver becomes a city</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total                                       | 42               | 40        | 26        | 108              |

*num: overlapping topics

number of idiosyncratic items whose analysis would be difficult without the interview. Should we interpret the two sports responses, for example, in the same way? Are these students thinking that what is personally interesting is, ipso facto, historically significant, or can they provide an explanation for the significance of these events that moves beyond what is personally interesting?
The middle group of responses (from 2 to 9 mentions each), unlike either of the others, is dominated by topics covered in the school curriculum, many in the immediately previous 9th-grade year. In this group, only the Vietnam War lies definitely outside of the curriculum. The constitutional referendum, while not part of the history program, took place in the previous year and was discussed in many social studies classrooms. Unlike the top three responses, with their global impact and ubiquity in popular culture, most of these items may well have gained their presence in the minds of 10th-grade students by occupying a place in the 9th-grade curriculum. The women's rights item occupies a different niche suggesting gender consciousness and the importance of historical understanding related to that consciousness. These concerns will be explored in the interview responses.

Narrative Explanation as the Source of Historical Significance

Most frequently, students offered narrative explanations as accounts of historical significance. In these instances, students linked the past to the present through some indication that they understood conditions in the present as growing out of or caused by events and developments in the past. In narrative explanations, historically significant events and developments were those that could be identified as having made the greatest impact on the contemporary world. Knowledge of the past is thus essential to understand the present. All but one of the students (#5) made at least one comment indicating that this was the source of historical significance. The ubiquitous choices of the world wars and the rise and fall of communism were frequently explained in this way:

So World War II, I don’t know, I guess it still has a little effect on today’s society, too (#2).

[Fall of communism] I think that’s important because it affects the world a lot (#3).

It’s pretty much the destruction of the Eastern world so we’ve been affected quite a bit....It’s like a major step in political things in the world (#7).

Little things can have like effect that will go all around the world, like a signing of a treaty can do something and affect another country across the ocean or something like that (#11).

In the above examples of the most prevalent tack, students historicize political arrangements and identify key political events as
moments of significance. Two students identified economic developments as those that were "important in the development of what we are today" (industrial revolution, #7) or "how we became to be like now" (communication and transportation, #13). Three students ventured into intellectual history. In one formulation, Napoleon "changed a lot of the earth and a lot of the earth's philosophies" (#9). In another, Columbus

found out so many different things. We thought the world was flat, it wasn't. We didn't know about a whole other side of the world but it was there and we just didn't know about it (#8).

The most sweeping historicization of thought is apparent in this statement:

Like all those ideas [in the Renaissance], it totally shaped the Western world as it is today so I think that was important...like realize [sic] how that's the way we think, that's why we think the way we do (#7).

This response offers a contrast to the generally narrow range of human affairs that students historicized in this set of responses.

The thinking expressed by students in these statements about politics, economics, and intellectual life concerns historical significance on a world scale, or at least on the scale of Western civilization. Implicit or explicit in each statement is a notion of a universal we in the contemporary world (although the intellectual legacies of the Renaissance, Columbus, and Napoleon are problematic because they address the West rather than the world); however, a number of the students' explanations of significance cast history as precursor to a far more limited contemporary community.

Five of the 14 students interviewed chose one or more Canadian topics as the most historically significant. All five at one point or another justified their choices on the basis of the impact on contemporary Canada.

...so you know what's been happening in Canada and how it was, where it originated from...(3).

I think, because that's like part of Canada, that's part of our heritage. And I want to know where we come from and how things are developed (#12).
It affects our economy if Quebec [separates]....If Quebec leaves, then Canada won’t be like quite a country, a full country (#13).

It affects us in some way because it’s our past, it’s where our country was made up or our society is made up (#14).

In addition, one student used the impact on contemporary Canada as the reason why global events were significant:

I think World War II is important because it affected us a lot....We are more peaceful with [the] United States (#3).

When one considers that most of what the students had studied in social studies over the past year (and would study over the coming year and a half) concerned Canadian topics, this seems a relatively small showing. After the first two interviews with those who mentioned no Canadian topics, I noted the omission, and explicitly asked the remaining interviewees at the end of the interviews about significance in Canadian history (#5, 7, 8, 9, 11). This responses was typical:

I feel that nothing really happened recently, within the last 500 years that is worth, up in the scales (#9);

or, with more elaboration,

...well, pretty insignificant actually, pretty small part of the world. Large geographically but you know, small population and we’re relatively recent in history, 125 years old compared to thousands of years of other histories. Not too important in the overall picture (#5).

For these students, the question of the most important events connoted significance in terms of masses of people affected. Others ventured an even more restricted contemporary community than the nation. Ethnic communities surfaced in some students’ explanations:

I was brought up with the Turks were [sic] occupying Greece and everything. When I went to Greek school we learned all that and I guess I got on to that....If I was Chinese, if I was Italian, I’d learn about the other empires that happened and all the events that happened, but I wouldn’t be so interested in Greece maybe (#8).
Students' Understanding of Historical Significance

It's such a major part of European history and a lot of North American descendants come from Europe (#9).

I think that we're all descendants, well, I am at least descended from English and I find that interesting to find where my, [sic] get as far back as I can about my roots and that's why I'm very interested in English heritage and...I think it's important for people to learn about where they came from (#14).

The following were even more circumscribed:

So I want to know something like why my hair would be brown and I want to know exactly where I came from and how my ancestors came to be and stuff like that (#2).

I'm fifth-generation Canadian and I want to find out more about my family because they're part of when Canada just began and stuff (#13).

Significance is of an entirely different order here. These students judged historical events and developments to be worth studying because they contributed to understanding personal circumstances or family situations in the present. The students did not hold these events to the measure of affecting masses of people or the entire nation—only those people close to home.

There are other ways to carve up the contemporary world. The fifth-generation Canadian also framed historical significance in terms of gender. In explaining why women's rights were one of the most important developments, she said, "Before, women didn't have much, like, say. Right now we have a lot to say" (#13). Finally, the same student also expressed an interest in local history, "because this is how like Vancouver came to be and stuff" (#13).

No student defined his or her own contemporary frame of reference in terms of class and therefore none evidenced the need for a narrative development of his/her own class identity.

Historical Significance as Analogy

Peter Rogers (1987) asserts that historical knowledge gives us a frame of reference, a fund of knowledge through which we contextualize the present by using analogies. In a strategy distinct from the one described above using narrative to explain the present, students spoke of the importance of learning about significant events in the past in order to learn lessons from it. Students #1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 11 all recited the
utility of history for its lessons, particularly in relation to the world wars and the Holocaust:

It's very important that we remember how it happened so that it would never happen again. [Y]ou can learn from the mistakes of past generations (#1).

I'm sure we can take steps to prevent it from happening again because I'm sure people, like some will think if there's another war everyone will be thinking, oh, no, will there be another Holocaust or what type will it be and whatever (#2).

You could prevent if you knew how something happened, you could prevent that from happening again in the future (#5).

You can prevent it from happening in the future. Like the Holocaust now. We know what happened and how bad it was and we should try and prevent that kind of thing from happening (#11).

They generally spoke of these policy lessons as if history were now under control. Moreover, they spoke as if it is important not only for political leaders but for a broad range of the population to learn these lessons in order to guide human affairs away from the errors of the past. One might infer that these students held dual faiths in (a) progress based upon rational learning and decision making, and (b) democratic control by the people as the agents of history; however, it remains equally plausible that the students in this instance are repeating platitudes about uses of the past, to whose problems they have given little critical thought. The similarity of their language lends credence to this interpretation, but the interviews do not provide conclusive evidence.

More complex are students' discussions of historical analogies for another set of purposes, to give meaning to their current situation by comparison with some historical condition. These analogies are distinct from the two kinds of statements discussed so far in that (1) students do not draw a direct, developmental (narrative) connection between the past events and themselves in the present and (2) students do not draw policy lessons from the analogies. Rather, the importance of the events derives from their contribution to understanding, a concept that students articulated explicitly and frequently. Six of the 14 students made this kind of observation.

Part of the understanding they achieve comes from their ability to distinguish themselves from others through knowledge of history.

Explaining the significance of the War of 1812, one student thus noted:
Students' Understanding of Historical Significance

I just think there's quite a difference between Canadians and Americans and that sort of showed the difference....I think it's important for me because I live in Canada and I always thought that it's important that I'm not an American, I'm a Canadian (#14).

For many of these students, the distinction between themselves and others was achieved in implicit or explicit evaluative judgments:

[World War II] established the downfall of the idea of fascism...and to tell the world that this sort of idea is outdated....You should understand the past to help you understand [the present] (#5).

Another student used the same historical incident to distinguish past from present in moral terms:

...the Nazis and atrocities against the Jewish people and all the people that they slaughtered in the gas chambers: It showed that racism is bad. But I don't think people too much realize that racism was that effective in thinking and it could do that much. Like I feel the world isn't as racist now as it was before that happened. It shed a light on it, a big one (#9).

Another made the same kind of statement about a different historical episode:

It just shows how it used to be, how people, how racist people used to be with the slave trade and Indians, they didn't give them any respect, things like that. You just have to you know, understand what it's like (#11).

According to each of these students, historical memory has helped to bring about a more enlightened society (see Carr, 1965, p. 165). Their own historical positions are defined in part by contrast to less moral times. Defining their identities may come, however, from other kinds of historical contrasts:

Because we should feel fortunate....They're having so much hard time [sic]. We have a good system and they didn't [under communism in Eastern Europe] (#8).

Other historical contributions to current understanding include Napoleon, who "shows some of the effects of what one person can do"
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(#9), and the demise of communism “because we, like, we see that, like we can resolve problems sometimes” (#11).

Like the analogies as lessons for current policy, these analogies for understanding entail a high degree of optimism. In all cases, the knowable present emerges in a more positive light than the past. In the minds of these students, understanding the past helped them to identify themselves as people whose story had moved forward towards a moral end.

Other Grounds for Claims of Significance

Students expressed a variety of other reasons for significance in history. One position was simply that historical knowledge is important for its own sake.

We should know about the world and places and what happened at certain places (#2).

This justification was expressed most frequently in the context of Canadian history, and thus often sounded like a piece of the argument for national cultural literacy.

I just find it important to learn about your past, your country’s background, I guess (#3).

They should know how [the Canadian Confederation] happened, not just the individuals, but what it was like before and how it’s changed and everything (#6).

I just think people who live here should have knowledge [of Canadian history] (#10).

A different approach was expressed in statements revolving around personal interest. Unlike the kind of personal interest that seeks the roots of personal identity in the past, some students appeared unable to distinguish between the concepts of importance and personal interest. Others added expressions of personal interest to other grounds almost as a parenthetical comment: “It’s interesting, it helps me to understand exactly” (#2); or on the 1972 Summit Series, “I put that down because I love hockey. That’s the most important thing that ever happened in hockey” (#6).

One student frequently conflated historical significance with personal interest; thus, World War II was important because his grandfather fought in it, the Vietnam War was important because he knew people who had come to Canada to avoid fighting, and the assassination of John F. Kennedy was important because he “thought it
was interesting why they did it....I guess it’s still up in the air, it’s not really solved” (#10).

Egan (1990) has noted young people’s interest in learning about records set, extreme conditions mastered, or the first, biggest, smallest, farthest, or oddest of any particular category of event. These were articulated as grounds for historical study by six of the 14 students for a variety of events:

[The Holocaust] was the worst thing that’s happened to mankind in the past 500 years, that’s the worst example (#2).

I put that down because I love hockey, that’s the most important thing that ever happened in hockey....It seemed to unite Canada. I don’t think they’ll ever be so, Canada will never be so close (#6).

That was the first time that anything like that [the Holocaust] happened (#7).

[The world wars] stand out...like a major event, so many people, everyone was fighting with each other, there’s virtually no peace. So it really stands out, I guess (#11).

[The Americas are] such a vast space and to think that people lived for hundreds of years around Europe and China and then they found this brand new vast space (#14).

Finally, four students understood the choice of events to study in history as part of an obligation to their ancestors. Historian Michael Ignatieff (1987) expresses a similar impulse: “I owe to [my grandparents] the conviction that my own life did not begin with my birth....It is up to me to pass on their remembering to whoever comes after” (p. 20). Ancestors made sacrifices or expended effort from which we benefit, and we should therefore credit them:

They [soldiers in World wars] died for their country (#4).

Our forefathers worked for something quite hard....They should understand why it happened (#5).

You should enjoy how it is now because people worked hard to get it like this. Like we’re living in a good time but if it wasn’t for all the work ahead of us, the people like our ancestors and stuff, it will be a lot harder (#6).
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So many people gave their lives and lost them and lost them in the war and it’s fitting to give them some tribute for all the sacrifices they made, for all their efforts (#9).

Discussion and Conclusion

Within the North American history profession, challenges to the historical canon have amounted to a concerted assault within the past 20 years on traditional concepts of historical significance. Analogous challenges are being mounted beyond the academy in popular film and in what Roger Simon (1993) has called “counter-commemoration.” These developments, along with pedagogical interest in identifying and building upon students’ prior knowledge in various subjects, initially appear to provide an opportunity for new forms of historical meaning-making on the part of students. While the door may be opening, this preliminary research suggests that students will need guidance moving through it. Such guidance might ultimately constitute a new pedagogy of history. Only at rare moments did the students interviewed in this study articulate a broad understanding of the possibilities inherent in the new history.

Students’ articulation of the grounds for historical significance fall primarily into two categories. Some described history as a development ending in the circumstances of the present, thus providing explanations for the current state of affairs. While this is a legitimate use of history (Hexter, 1971; Polkinghorne, 1988), the circumstances of the present that they sought to historicize were for the most part bound by traditional notions of the realm of history; thus, international politics and war were the big issues, rather than gender, procreation, work, childhood, diet, art, or thought. While students in this study apparently did not consider the latter as suitable topics for historical questioning, further research might explore what is needed for students to begin to articulate historical questions stemming from these contemporary concerns. Students generally saw development as moral progress and in no case did a student articulate historical development as decline. Seeing the present as an outgrowth of the past, one student expressed the outlook thus:

Things seem almost more civil nowadays than they were in past times. At least now it’s not just war, war. It’s more, there’s more, some try to reason first (#1).

The theme of history as progress was even more prominent in the second category of historical significance: historical knowledge as analogy to the present, as a fund of lessons from the past either for policy guidance or for understanding who we are in contrast to others from past eras. Again, there is nothing fundamentally problematic with this
approach to historical knowledge (Rogers, 1987), but the underlying faith that historical knowledge can be used to guide human affairs for rational, moral progress is at least questionable in a post-Holocaust era of impending ecological and demographic catastrophe. In such times, facile professions of faith in human uplift through historical study are open to challenge (Harvey, 1990; Marrus, 1993). It is possible that students’ expressions of faith in progress and reason were products of the research situation, and that my questioning failed to reach beyond the kinds of responses they thought a researcher might want to hear. This research may not have captured fully the extent to which secondary school students actually are grappling with the fundamental shifts in the symbolic order of popular culture (Seixas, 1992).

Further research should utilize methods other than the one-to-one clinical interview technique used here in order to accommodate this set of research effects. Checklists asking students to prioritize historical phenomena on the basis of significance and conceptual mapping, as well as questions asking students to explain their choices, could supplement open-ended questions in a written instrument. Further insight into students’ reasoning could be attained through analysis of video recordings of discussions among small groups of students as they attempt to resolve questions of historical significance (see Ashby & Lee, 1987).

Not surprisingly students’ prior historical thinking shows clear limitations when compared to academic history. On the other hand, even the kinds of limitations that are exposed by this exploratory research are far more useful pedagogically than, for example, those presented in Ravitch and Finn’s (1987) widely cited study of 17-year olds’ factual knowledge deficits. Rather than asking students to learn more facts better, educators who understand how students attempt to use the past as part of the construction of meaning for their own lives (however partially, incompletely, inaccurately, or sporadically) are in a much better position to design curriculum and instruction that builds upon students’ earlier attempts (Clark, 1967; Holt, 1990).

Much of students’ historical meaning is oriented around key historical events, using analogy and narrative to connect aspects of their understanding of their own lives to the past. The events that students understand as historically significant, along with the narrative and analogical strategies that they use to relate those events to their own lives, constitute the schemata for historical understanding. If we ignore these schemata, our history teaching is likely to fail altogether in helping students correct their misunderstandings and build more complex, sophisticated bases of knowledge. The facts we teach will remain inert knowledge, and students will miss the potential for adding to an understanding of their relationship to the past.
In view of the fact that students occupy a variety of social positions with respect to class, gender, ethnicity, and nationality, future research also should explore how such positions affect reasoning about historical significance. Such research might provide a foundation for curricula that build student understandings of the links between their more particular histories and a larger historical narrative.

Ultimately, this research program directs us towards a curriculum defined neither by the interests of students in the classroom nor by content specified by historians or curricular experts outside of the classroom. The curriculum would aim to teach, among other aspects of historical thinking, reasoning about which events are historically significant and how they became that way. That task is impossible, of course, without students learning and knowing a great deal about the past (Rogers, 1987; Lomas, 1990).

Crucial tasks in teaching history include, then, not only expanding the range of historical events and developments accessible to students, but also subjecting to critical scrutiny the strategies by which they accord significance to those events. The question of why an event, person, or development is important—a question aimed not infrequently by bored students at their teachers—might then be asked of students as a fundamental part of historical investigations. Questions about historical meanings would be addressed explicitly and framed by debates among historians and others about the uses of the past (Vaughn, 1985). Finally, more areas of contemporary life might be historicized.

Perhaps ironically, a pedagogy which holds that personal meaning making is central to historical understanding requires from teachers more ease and familiarity with the range of recent historiography and historical methodology. Again, it will take more knowledge about the potential for meaning in historical thinking for a teacher to recognize and work with students’ prior historical thinking.

The curriculum planners and developers who bear responsibility for setting the overall framework for historical study in the schools have a difficult task. It lies beyond the scope of the individual classroom and outside the usual thinking of most historians. No matter how well chosen, a simple framework of historical content—organized either as a state or provincial curriculum or as a national standard—does not necessarily provide students with a significant past. The curriculum cannot be based upon the accumulation of prescribed content whose significance remains a mystery to the students who learn it. It should be informed instead by a conception of progression in students’ ability to assess and incorporate new historical information into an increasingly well-articulated structure of historically significant knowledge. Finding out what students believe to be historically significant is only thus the smallest part of our task. Discovering how they think about historical significance and how to foster that thinking is the larger task. By so
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doing, we will be in a better position to help them link their genuine, contemporary concerns with the broader range of human experience over time.

Appendix

Preliminary Questionnaire

1. Sex: M F
2. Grade level: 8 9 10 11 12
3. Age:
4. What is your average social studies grade over the past two years?
   A B C+ C C- D E F
5. Among your school subjects, where would you rank social studies in terms of your interest over the past two years?
   A. My favorite subject
   B. One of my favorite subjects
   C. It's all right, but not among my favorite subjects
   E. One of my least favorite subjects
   F. Unquestionably my least favorite subject

7. Think briefly about all of the events and developments which have happened in the past approximately 500 years. List three which, in your opinion, are the most important.

References


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CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION AND THE PERSISTENT NATURE OF CLASSROOM TEACHING DILEMMAS

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Abstract
The field of social studies has labored to define its central purpose chiefly through endorsements of citizenship education. Although scholars have provided extended conceptual accounts concerning citizenship education, few empirical studies exist to provide portraits of this education in practice. Searching for contextualized, classroom-based images of citizenship education, the researchers mined data on the pedagogical activities of three elementary school teachers, and present vignettes of classroom practices "read" using Cornbleth's (1982) three types of citizenship education: the illusory, the technical, and the constructive. The findings demonstrate variations both within each teacher's treatment of citizenship education and between their approaches. In trying to understand these variations and to address the question 'Can citizenship education be taught?' the authors conclude that the persistent classroom teaching dilemmas the teachers encountered (e.g., content coverage, decision-making authority, time demands) clearly influenced how they constructed citizenship education opportunities for students.

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Introduction

In their recent book, Richard Gross and Thomas Dynneson (1991) define the good citizen as someone who

cares about the welfare of others, is moral and ethical in dealings with others, is able to challenge and critically question ideas, proposals, and suggestions, and, in light of existing circumstances, is able to make good choices based upon good judgment (p. 4).

Earlier, Shirley Engle and Ann Ochoa (1988) stated the matter more simply: "The democratic citizen must be a skilled and responsible decision maker" (pp. 17-18).

Despite the surface differences in their definitions, these authors share two perspectives. First, they define the substantive issues of citizenship in terms of conscious decision making. Gross and Dynneson (1991) list some of the requirements of the citizen decision maker: a moral and ethical concern for others, knowledge of ideas, a questioning nature, and good judgment. Engle and Ochoa (1988) use skill and responsibility as stand-ins for similar ideas. Both statements highlight decision or choice making as the defining characteristic of citizenship. Second, they define the creation of good citizens; that is, citizenship education as social studies' raison d'être. Here they find common ground with many social studies educators (Barr, Barth, & Shermis, 1977; McFarland, 1990; Parker, 1989; Parker & Jarolimek, 1984) and the latest broad-based definition by the National Council for the Social Studies (1993).

Many conceptions of social studies have been offered: as history and geography (Hirsch, 1988; Ravitch & Finn, 1987); as issues-centered problems (Evans, 1992; Shaver, 1992); as structures of the disciplines (Bruner, 1960), and as sociopolitical involvement (Stanley, 1981). These conceptions vary considerably and suggest radically different approaches to curriculum, teaching, and assessment. Yet each is cast invariably within a rationale that promotes a view of the good citizen and the need for citizenship education; for example, Hirsch (1988) suggests that the good citizen in America knows a host of common cultural terms. The study of U.S. geography and history especially are useful in bringing about this knowledge and facility. For Evans (1992) and Shaver (1992), good citizens know and think about issues and problems of our society and of the world. These citizens are willing to act upon their knowledge as they strive to make that society and world a better place. Shaver (1992) puts it this way:
From this position, encountering public issues—that are a source of tension and concern at the societal level—is central to citizenship, and such issues should, therefore, be at the heart of social studies education (p. 96).

Conceptual statements about citizenship can help teachers construct viable social studies programs. But even more helpful are the powerful images of teachers and students engaged in the real work of learning to be citizens. Conceptual statements are legion, but descriptions of citizenship education in practice are not. According to some, the explanation for this deficiency stems from a lack of consensus about what constitutes good citizens and what teachers might do to cultivate them (Cornbleth, 1982; Leming, 1989; Longstreet, 1985). Field research in classrooms is difficult enough without the added burden of an uncertain and unstable construct.

This deficiency deserves attention for two reasons. First, we need to understand better the experiences of teachers and students if for no reason other than to account for what is or is not occurring in classrooms (Armento, 1986; Brophy, 1990; Marker & Mehlinger, 1992). Theorists frequently criticize schools for their neglect of citizenship education and/or their narrow definitions of citizens (Shermis and Barth, 1982). While this criticism may be justified, we need be more comprehensive in finding out about citizenship in practice. In examining teacher and student experiences with citizenship education, we may learn more about how citizenship education actually is taught in schools. Theorists have suggested numerous definitions of and rationales for citizenship education, and curriculum specialists have offered numerous programs of study, but both rarely acknowledge the tangled contexts in which teachers work. By looking into classrooms, we may develop a better sense of the most viable instances of citizenship education.

What does citizenship education look like in school classrooms? In this article, we present one cautious approach to that question. We resist the temptation, however, to construct yet another theoretical conception of citizenship, preferring instead to draw upon existing accounts and to couple them with empirical data collected in three elementary school classrooms. We examine teachers' views of and approaches to teaching citizenship, vignettes of classroom practices, and the array of messages that those practices may send to students. This study also suggests that in the context of teaching citizenship, an array of teaching dilemmas or tensions arise. These tensions—time management, content coverage, controversial issues, competing district policies—inhere to teaching regardless of subject matter (e.g., Cuban, 1992; Jackson, 1986; Lortie, 1985) that no solid theoretical or research base exists to support citizenship education.
In the context of citizenship education, however, they pose particular problems. As a consequence, the nature and persistence of these tensions urges consideration of the larger question: Can citizenship education be taught in genuine and intellectually honest ways in American schools?

Context of the Study

This paper draws upon three broader case studies of classroom teaching. The first involves Carol Sheldon who teaches a split class of third and fourth graders in an elementary school in a small midwestern city (Grant, 1991).³ The second involves a fifth-grade teacher, Ramona Palmer, who teaches in the same school district as Sheldon but in a larger elementary school (VanSledright, 1992a). The third features Sara Atkinson (VanSledright, 1992b), also a fifth-grade teacher, who teaches in the same school with Sheldon. All three are middle-aged teaching veterans. Sheldon is African American; Atkinson and Palmer are Anglo-Americans. The schools serve middle to upper middle class communities, and the students are primarily Anglo-American; however, ethnic minorities (African and Asian Americans) are present in all three classrooms, approximating 12 percent of the students in each school.

Data for the case studies came from classroom observations, interviews with teachers and students, and analyses of classroom, school, and district documents. Carol Sheldon and her students were observed three times per week over an eight-week period, as she taught a variety of subject matter. Sheldon and a sample of her students were interviewed about their citizenship ideas and attitudes.⁴ Ramona Palmer's classroom was observed daily for six weeks during an extended unit on the American Revolution. In interviews she was queried about her teaching philosophy, ideas about social studies and citizenship education, and educational background and experiences. All of Palmer's students completed a three-part questionnaire to document what they were learning and what they found interesting about the American revolutionary period. A subsample of six students was interviewed to explore the influence of Palmer's treatment of the war period and its aftermath.⁵ Sara Atkinson's teaching practices also were observed daily for six weeks as she covered the same American Revolution unit. The same data-gathering methods used in Palmer's case were used with Atkinson, and relevant curricular documents were collected in each case.

³All identifying names of people and places are pseudonyms.
⁴Nineteen of the 22 students were interviewed. All were interviewed first in groups of two and three. Eight of the 19 students were then interviewed individually. A total of eight formal and informal interviews were conducted with Sheldon.
⁵Six of her 28 students were interviewed. Each was interviewed individually and in depth on two occasions, once before the unit was taught and once after it.
Sheldon's case study was conceptualized specifically to understand how she thought about and taught citizenship across subject matters. Palmer's and Atkinson's cases were developed as concomitant studies of their respective curricular-instructional gatekeeping practices (Thornton, 1991), situated in the content area of American history and having that content vis-a-vis citizenship education as a primary focus. The teachers were selected because they (and their students) were amenable to participating in the studies so defined, and because they were recommended by district administrators as effective teachers. Following the completion of the two separate studies, we met regularly to discuss research design similarities and to compare interview and observation data. Although the studies diverged in some ways due to context differences (e.g., focus on all subject matters as opposed to history alone), they were very similar in design regarding observational lenses and protocol questions concerning citizenship education. Using an inductive process of cross-case comparison, patterns relating to how the teachers dealt with citizenship education were identified. These patterns formed the basis for the following analyses and report of findings. For more specific research design characteristics of each study, see Grant (1991) and VanSledright (1992a, 1992b).

The data on the three teachers and their approaches to citizenship education suggest that each defined and dealt with the subject somewhat differently. For Sheldon and Palmer, citizenship education involved a generalized and tacit process. Teaching about citizenship was woven into the fabric of daily activities rather than discussed explicitly. For Atkinson, the process tended to be more specific and overt. Citizenship lessons occurred throughout the day, but most often they were tied to topics in the American history unit.

As a result of the inductive comparison process, we also noted that all three cases illustrate examples of impediments to teaching citizenship in an elementary public school context. This realization led us to wonder about the possibility for citizenship education of the kind, for example, that Gross and Dynneson (1991) and Engle and Ochoa (1988) advocate. As a point of discussion, we use this data to discuss the impediments to and, alternatively, the potential vitality and viability of citizenship education in contexts similar to the ones presented here.

Teaching about Citizenship

We begin here by presenting classroom vignettes from the three teachers' classrooms, and we discuss each teacher's view or approach to citizenship education, the connections she makes to citizenship issues, and the possible messages those connections hold. Then, we consider the issues of teaching dilemmas and impediments to citizenship education defined across the cases. It is important to emphasize here that this study is about teachers. Although we are interested in citizenship messages...
and how they might be perceived by students, a full discussion of student perspectives goes well beyond the scope of the present analysis, and would involve a separate article.

Carol Sheldon: Citizenship by Example

I guess I don’t think of citizenship as a topic in and of itself. All aspects of the curriculum relate to it. I think it’s built into our curriculum....You just can’t walk into a classroom without dealing with it.

In this statement, Carol Sheldon indicates her principal approach to citizenship education: Citizenship is an important but implicit part of her teaching practice. Four conditions support this approach.

First, Sheldon believes that the process of becoming a good citizen is continuous and ongoing. Asked how one would teach children to be good citizens, she replied, “I don’t know....It’s not something they are going to learn in third grade or second grade. It’s something that builds up as time goes on.” Arguing that people evolve into their citizenship roles, Sheldon suggests that one becomes a good citizen, at least in part, as a function of time. She implies that good citizenship is not a product, something that can be learned once and exercised consistently thereafter. Sheldon believes her third- and fourth-grade students have just begun their development as good citizens. Granting this argument, however, does not necessarily explain why Sheldon does not think citizenship needs to be taught explicitly.

A second condition involves Sheldon’s sense that teaching citizenship is less a matter of content than presentation. She stated emphatically, “[Citizenship education] is not so much what you do, but how you do it.” “The bottom line is your demeanor,” she said, “It’s really more the nonverbal cues you send off than the verbal.” Citizenship is taught, Sheldon contends, not through content but by example. This point was discussed several times. On each occasion, she consistently dismissed subject matter as important in teaching about citizenship.6

6This seems curious. Curricular materials related to citizenship were available and were used regularly. The social studies textbook Our Communities makes specific references to what might be considered standard citizenship fare: how people live together, the rules and laws of a community, how leaders are chosen. The Famous Americans series presents vignettes of people, many of whom (e.g., Martin Luther King, Jr., Susan B. Anthony) would be considered prime examples for teaching about citizenship. Sheldon also showed a number of videotapes on subjects ranging from recycling and the environment to famous black Americans (e.g., Jesse Jackson, Paul Robeson). Interestingly enough, students made frequent reference to these materials as they talked about citizenship. Sheldon, on the other hand, discounted their value in teaching citizenship. Instead she reiterated her position that students learn about citizenship through her example.
Third, Sheldon's implicit approach to citizenship education reflects the view she holds of her students. "I realize that I'm working with a group of children who have been appropriately socialized," said Sheldon, "I don't think they come to school to learn citizenship. It's something they've already begun to learn at home." Sheldon believes most of her students hold proper citizenship attitudes and skills, so she feels no particular need to enact an explicit citizenship agenda; it could be otherwise. She notes, "If I had a different type of class, with kids who didn't have that type of upbringing, maybe I would do things differently." As an example, Sheldon thought she would make cooperative learning rules more explicit. "If I had a group of kids and they couldn't get along and they were fighting all the time, then I could see me getting into that aspect."

Finally, an implicit approach to citizenship education makes sense given the ambiguous nature of citizenship. In several interviews, Sheldon made it clear that she found this construct difficult to discuss:

I think [citizenship] is very subjective. It's a word that means more than one thing depending on how you're using it. I don't think we really know [what citizenship is]. We've heard it and linked it up somehow to what we think and now we're asked to say what it is. And I don't think anyone is really sure.

Now I'm thinking back to when I was in college. You'd hear it or see it [citizenship] in the title of a book, like *The Making of a Good Citizen*. But it was never defined. It's always sort of a term thrown in. I don't think any of us really have any good sense of it. And it's gotten even looser now because seldom do you say, "Are you kids being good citizens?"

Sheldon made several references to the ambiguity and elusiveness of the concept of citizenship, and she frequently alluded to her lack of familiarity with the term. She said, "I remember when we were in school. We had a little chapter on citizenship, you know, 'What is a good citizen?' But it was so brief that it didn't mean much....I guess I'm still not clear what citizenship is!"

Implicit messages can be very powerful. Sheldon is right to believe that she communicates much about citizenship through her demeanor and nonverbal cues. Relying on implicit messages, however, can be problematic. At the very least, by not making citizenship goals and instruction explicit, opportunities for multiple interpretation (and misinterpretation) flourish. With a construct as rife with complexities and dilemmas as citizenship, miscommunication seems inevitable. There are other problems as well. By keeping citizenship beneath the surface,
Sheldon foregoes the teachable moment. Important opportunities to explore relevant ideas arise throughout the school day, both within and without the formal curriculum. In not making these ideas explicit, Sheldon may miss the chance to help students wrestle with genuine citizenship concerns. Sheldon may also miss opportunities for self-reflection, an oft-cited characteristic of good teachers (see, for example, Schon, 1983, 1987). Sheldon avers that students can learn to be good citizens by her example, but it is not clear if and how she thinks about the example she sets.

Two Vignettes of Classroom Practice

Although Sheldon makes no explicit references to citizenship, many of her lessons evince ostensibly explicit citizenship issues. The following two vignettes revolve around the concept of voting. The first is from a mathematics lesson.

Sheldon finished giving a spelling test. She introduced the next activity, a problem-solving lesson: "Class, I'm going to explain the next assignment to you, then you can vote to do it in groups or individually."

Sheldon asked the students to bring their desk chairs to the front of the room. The children formed loose semicircles around the overhead projector upon which Sheldon wrote:

Days in a week 
Weeks in a year 
Months in a year 
Hours in a day 
Minutes in an hour 

"I want you to answer each of these statements," she said, "Then I want you to use the data to create word problems involving multiplication of a one-digit factor times a two-digit factor." She gave an example:

Kelly visits her grandfather once a month. How many times will she have visited her grandfather after six years?

She then asked what the problem would look like. From the forest of hands, Tina answered, "Twelve times six." Sheldon nodded, turned on the overhead projector, and wrote the equation. She asked if everyone understood. All but a few students nodded in assent. Sheldon then said, "All right, given what you have to do today, would you like to work in groups or individually?" She paused before announcing, "Okay, let's vote. All in favor of individually?" No hands went up. Sheldon continued, "All right, in groups?" Students quickly and enthusiastically raised their hands.
Smiling, Sheldon directed the students to form work groups. She said, "Now you will need to decide on a recorder and a materials person. And when we share later on, I will randomly select someone to present from each group." Before the students began their task, Sheldon called for their attention. "What are the responsibilities of a group?" she asked. Kirby said, "Make sure everyone understands the problem." Joel added, "Include everyone’s ideas." Sheldon nodded, "Good. I want you to take turns talking. And I don’t want to hear two people talking at the same time." After 20 minutes, Sheldon called the students back to order to present, solve, and discuss the problems they had created. When the discussion ended, she directed the students to "go back to your groups, sign your sheets, and hand them in to me."

A month later, a second instance of voting occurred. The class had been working on a science lesson in their textbook dealing with rocks and minerals. Before the students closed their books, Sheldon directed their attention to a picture on the first page of the next section, one depicting a harbor scene at dusk. There were no people in the picture. Instead, there were several fishing boats of various sizes tied up to a dock with a large mountain in the background.

Students looked at the picture with various degrees of interest. Sheldon explained that they were to write a story or poem based upon what they saw. The assignment clearly excited a few students; they immediately began taking out pencil and paper, talking quietly but enthusiastically with their neighbors. Most, however, appeared uninspired. They rolled their eyes, shook their heads, and groaned. These protests escalated when Sheldon, perhaps feeling the need to raise the stakes, announced, "Maybe we’ll have show-and-tell at the end. Maybe I’ll have you go to the front of the room and read your story." She paused, "That’s what I’ll do."

A chorus of complaints filled the room. Even some of the students who appeared to favor the assignment added their voices to the fray. One student quickly called for a vote. The suggestion was immediately supported by several classmates. Calling for order, Sheldon stated, "No, there is no choice this time. There won’t be any votes. We already voted once today. We’ll vote on something later today." She paused as the students quieted. Continuing, she said, "You vote on the things you like, not on the things you don’t." She paused again, "Besides, I know I’ll get outvoted."

Reading the Vignettes from Sheldon’s Class

Citizenship themes. If we read these vignettes as examples of citizenship education, what might we note? Several ostensible references

7 The observer was not present for that vote. Sheldon reported that it concerned which group would use a piece of playground equipment.
to citizenship attitudes and behaviors emerge. Sheldon highlights issues of responsibility to others when she reviews group rules such as making sure that everyone understands a problem and that all ideas are included. The notion of equal opportunity surfaces when she explicitly elevates the issue of turn taking. She raises issues of participation and decision making when she offers opportunities for students to vote.

These examples suggest an obvious connection between classroom life and citizenship education. But there are subtle citizenship lessons as well; for example, Sheldon indicates that she values cooperation as well as individuality when she allows students to complete assignments in groups. She promotes freedom of expression by giving students an open-ended writing assignment, and she fosters public conversation when she asks students to share their math problems and stories aloud.

Obvious or not, Sheldon’s class is alive with citizenship lessons. But what message does Sheldon convey about citizenship? What are we to make of her different actions regarding voting? And what do these sketches suggest about students being “able to challenge and critically question ideas, proposals, and suggestions,” or becoming “skilled and responsible decision maker[s]” (Gross & Dynneson, 1991, p. 4)?

Citizenship messages. The first vignette suggests elements of a democratic classroom. A challenging assignment is given and students are asked to decide how they prefer to do it. One can imagine students understanding and responding to this opportunity from a number of perspectives. Some would consider the nature of the task; others might see a chance to talk with friends. Regardless of what goes into their decision, students would undoubtedly understand that they were being presented with a viable opportunity to make a decision about their immediate future—a real chance to make a real choice.

Other messages also seem evident in this vignette. One is the concept of majority rule. The outcome is unanimous—students show support only for the group work option; the majority rules. Of course, we cannot know what would have happened if a minority of students had voted for the individual option. Perhaps Sheldon would have invoked the strictest interpretation of majority rule and assigned all students, regardless of preference, to a group. Or she might have interpreted majority rule more loosely—those students who prefer to work in groups might do so, and the others might work individually. In either case, Sheldon would support the concept that what the majority wants, it gets.

Another lesson is that students should have choices about real matters. From the students’ responses, it is probable that they saw this as a choice of some consequence, more important than, for example, whether they would use pen or pencil on a spelling test. The point, of course, is that choices about unimportant things are not really choices at all—the outcome is immaterial.
If these lessons—having choices about important matters and majority rule—are evident in the first vignette, they seem dramatically absent in the second. Set against the first vignette, the second seems to offer a much different lesson on decision making. In this case, students ask for a say in their participation in what they appear to consider a frivolous task. Students ask for a voice in the decision, but this time Sheldon denies that opportunity. The classroom majority clearly wants to pursue another course. As the classroom authority, however, Sheldon circumvents majority rule in favor of a more direct authority role. One can imagine students coming away from these experiences with conflicted messages and without much chance to sort them out.

**Ramona Palmer: Indirect Citizenship through Historical Study**

Asked about how she cultivated citizenship dispositions in her students and provided them with opportunities to make classroom decisions, Palmer noted:

I have to tell you that there's usually just two rules. I just make it simple: Respect for one another and safety. Those are the two things....I used to, as a young teacher, get them [students] all involved and it [decision making] was their project and stuff like that....I think expediency wise, because of the amount of work and academics, discipline problems among the students in the classroom; for me, expediency dictates. Most of them feel that if there's a problem...they can talk about it and it will be taken care of. I guess in a lot of ways this is an autocratic society in my room....They know that there are choices to make and it is their choice to make it, but it is also their responsibility to make the correct choices or there are consequences.

In interviews, Palmer defined citizenship education in a fairly narrow, traditional way: good or correct classroom conduct. In her view, one constructs expectations with or for students at the beginning of the year. Citizenship education consists then of attempts to hold students to these expectations. The degree to which students observe and follow the expectations closely constitutes the cultivation of good citizen dispositions. This view is similar to the one that informs the citizenship category on report cards. Thus, citizenship education appears as a subject matter that can be taught as a unit at the beginning of the year. After that, it blends almost invisibly into everyday classroom life.

Palmer could have focused on citizenship education during the study of American history, but she chose not to do so. Instead, she moved her students through the American Revolution in a systematic
way, following the chronology of the period and using it as a structural guide. Although Palmer varied her teaching strategies in interesting and often captivating ways (a simulation exercise, a game-like review of content), lessons consisted of a steady march from details of the French and Indian War, changes in British tax policy, the revolutionary war itself, and finally to the Constitution. Generally, citizenship education became obscured by this march of history and disappeared within the necessities of expediency.

Like Sheldon, however, Palmer did fill her classroom with ostensible references to citizenship attitudes and appeared to be fostering a broad array of citizenship dispositions in her students; for example, near the conclusion of the unit on the American Revolution, Palmer spent two and a half class periods discussing, often heatedly, the ramifications of the Bill of Rights for the lives of Americans in general and her students in particular. It is important to stress that for this unit at least, the discussion of the Bill of Rights and the clear citizenship themes invoked by it remained unusual and enigmatic in Palmer’s overall treatment of the content.

Vignettes of Classroom Practice
Palmer called six students to the chalk board. They wrote down responses from the class as she discussed the first 10 amendments to the Constitution.

Palmer: The First Amendment in your own words. [calls on several students]
Jarron: Choose your own religion.
Jessie: Freedom of opinion.
Junior: Freedom to say what you want.
Lydia: Freedom of assembly.
Palmer: Okay, good! Number two? [calls on a number of students]
Marvyn: Military.
Palmer: What does that mean?
Marvyn: That we have to have the citizens help...with the army.
Frederic: Weapons.
Palmer: Do you mean the right to have an army? [Frederic nods] Okay, number three.
Junior: Citizens don’t have to house and feed the army during peace time.

Palmer: Good! Number four?

Jarron: You must have a warrant to search someone’s house.

The class quickly worked through the first 10 amendments in this fashion. By the Fourth Amendment, many students had their textbooks open and were quoting directly.

When they reached the Eighth Amendment (forbidding cruel and unusual punishment), Palmer asked for a show of hands on student opinions concerning the death penalty. Four students committed themselves as proponents while the same number indicated opposition. The majority remained undecided. Palmer then summarized the Ninth and Tenth Amendments quickly, noting that they would be discussed in more detail in middle school. As the class concluded with an assignment to choose which amendments students would forego if forced, Barry asked Ainsley which one he would give up. He said he was not sure. Excited, several other students asked each other as well.

The following day, the discussion of the Bill of Rights continued. To begin the lesson, Palmer asked students to write down the amendment they were willing to forego and their reasons. After five minutes, she said, “If you’re willing to give up the First Amendment, then stand up.” Cameron rose. He stood alone. Palmer smiled and said, “That’s all right, Cameron. There are no right or wrong answers with this; it’s what you believe.” Palmer repeated the process for each of the next seven amendments. For the Second Amendment, two stood. For the Third Amendment, four; the Fourth Amendment, zero; the Fifth Amendment, one; the Sixth Amendment, zero; the Seventh Amendment, two; and the Eighth Amendment, seven. Some students remained seated throughout the discussion.

A discussion of Cameron’s willingness to give up the First Amendment ensued. Palmer asked him to read the amendment from the book. He did and as he finished, he shrugged, smiled, and claimed he had changed his mind; he no longer wanted to give this one up.

Palmer: But why were you willing to give it up in the first place? I’m really curious. This amendment protects the rights of free speech, the press, and personal opinion.

Cameron [bashfully]: Well, I just liked the other ones better.

Palmer: If you gave it up, how would this affect you?

Davey [interjecting]: You wouldn’t be able to give your opinion!
Palmer: How many of you think that if we gave up this right it would infringe on some very basic American principles? [Almost everyone's hand goes up immediately] Who knows about things in the news that relate to this amendment right now?

Brent: The governor...is cutting jobs.

Palmer [rhetorically]: What if you didn't know about this?

Frederic: The Japanese are saying that American workers are lousy.

Palmer [again rhetorically]: What would it be like if we didn't know about this, couldn't read about it in the newspapers. I'm taking Cameron's position for a minute. What about those papers like the Star or the Enquirer?

Several students: Yeah, they exaggerate!

Palmer: Yes. Should there be rules for supplying evidence in these papers?

Cameron: No!

Addie: I think there should be guidelines for what they can print.

Palmer: What about 2 Live Crew [a rap group]?

Marvyn: They're okay! If it bothers some people, they don't have to buy it. They put those labels on there that say there's obscene words and stuff on the record. I guess that's okay.

Sam: I think that the swearing and the words that they use are okay. Everyone does it.

The class erupted into a cacophony of voices. Palmer told them to stop. She asks them to raise their hands and speak one at a time. Hands waved the air.

Davey: I agree with Sam.

Jarron: You could bleep out the bad stuff.

Palmer: But then some records would be all bleep.

Davey: Well, it's okay because people are doing it. It's not really hurting anybody.

Palmer: But it's not really okay to say so just because everyone is doing it. What if everyone was murdering? Is that okay?
Citizenship Education and Classroom Teaching Dilemmas

Students: No!!

Abigail: I think it's unfair to people who like their music.

Palmer: Davey, you said it doesn't hurt anybody. I disagree with you. The lyrics in some songs—I'm just arguing with you—make me out to be a bimbo. I'm offended.

Davey: But you don't need to listen to it.

Palmer: But what if people start to believe this stuff. I'm just giving you an example.

Adam: But in PG movies, they all swear. What's the difference?

Frederic: I've never heard a song about women's right to vote.

Palmer: I'm just saying, what do you do if it insults women? What about blacks?

Marvyn [a black student]: Well...well, if you want to listen to it, it's okay.

Palmer: Marvyn, are you hedging? Should we allow it if it insults blacks? Yes or no, Marvyn?

Marvyn: Well, if...yes.

Adam [a white student]: There's a movie out right now called White Men Can't Jump. And some black people call each other niggers.

Palmer: Should that be allowed?

Addie: You should be allowed to do it in the privacy of your own home.

Palmer: Should we allow a parade...if someone was a member of the KKK and wanted to have a parade down the streets of our city, is that allowable? [five hands go up]

Barry: That's freedom of speech!

Palmer: I want you to talk this over with your parents tonight. We have to go on to number two, the right to bear arms. Lots of you are ready to give this one up, why? Brent?

The class shifted to a discussion of the Second Amendment (the right to keep and bear arms). This amendment created as much disagreement as the first. Throughout the give and take of the discussion, many students sat up in their desks on their knees.
The next day, Palmer began by returning to a discussion of the amendments. She asked Adam to read the Third Amendment from his book. Four students had elected to drop this amendment the day prior. Palmer noted this and asked why. Several students objected to the fact that if they gave this up, soldiers could enter and live in their homes. Drew argued that the soldiers could be controlled. Sam raised the possibility of personal harm affecting civilians if our enemies knew soldiers were quartered in their homes. Palmer acknowledged Sam's point, then pushed on to the Fourth and Fifth Amendments (search and seizure limitations) and Sixth and Seventh Amendments (right to trial by jury). Animated discussions occurred around each amendment. Here Palmer rushed her treatment of each amendment, curtailing the discussion.

Looking at the clock, Palmer asked Cameron to read the Eighth Amendment. After he finished, several students sang out, "Oooh, cruel and unusual punishment!"

Palmer: We could discuss this one [Eighth] for a long time. Some people would object that capital punishment is cruel and unusual.

Several students: So what's your opinion? Tell us!

Palmer: The district says if I tell you then I run the risk of letting my values influence you. I can't....

Students [objecting]: Oh, we won't tell....Tell us anyway....Just get on with it!

Another student: My mom will understand!

Palmer: Okay. [Students fall completely silent, watching Palmer] But this is just my opinion. I have a lot of trouble with this. It's not a black and white issue for me. I really struggle....It seems very cruel to me on the one hand, but if it was my child....I think then I'd want to have capital punishment.

After a moment's pause, Adam argues his eye-for-an-eye approach. Then Palmer turns to an analogy. One of her female friends was murdered in an altercation with an individual being pursued by the police. Her friend's brother objects to paying the taxes that keep this murderer alive in prison.

Sam: Is he in prison for life?
Palmer: Yes. And he had a record for killing others. The reason I'm telling you this is to explain how opinions about capital punishment vary a lot.

Frederic: What if it was your job to pull the lever?

Palmer: It wouldn't be! I could never do that! I'm too afraid of the possibility of executing the wrong person. That's a strong argument against capital punishment.

Adam: What if someone killed your kids? Could you do it then?

Palmer: I don't know! My emotions might have the better of me. That's so hard for me to say. But we could talk about this all day. We need to move on.

Reading the Vignettes from Palmer's Class

Citizenship themes. As in Sheldon's case, this discourse from Palmer's classroom (although unusual for her) is rife with powerful citizenship education references and themes. Students are engaged and the level of discussion is intellectually stimulating and challenging. Students participated in the lesson concerning the complexities involved in the issues raised by the Bill of Rights, and Palmer led her students to the brink of realizing the responsibilities involved; however, she stopped just short of their full consideration. Palmer appeared more concerned with teaching about the transhistorical value of these rights than about their direct relationship to making thoughtful choices based on reasoned judgment (Gross & Dynneson, 1991) or to becoming skillful and responsible decision makers (Engle & Ochoa, 1988). To this end, she focused primarily on getting through the first eight amendments before time ran out rather than on pursuing them in depth in order to explore the full range of their moral and democratic manifestations. In fact, when students pressed for her position on capital punishment, a position that could open the way for a much wider and more critical examination of different ideas and positions, she averred to district policy. Only under continued pressure did she offer her opinion and suggest the complications facing decision-making citizens. Even then, she was concerned about time.

Palmer primarily sought to tell a story of the Revolutionary War period. By her own definition, she intended to teach history, not necessarily the dimensions of citizenship that emerge from the study of history. After their conclusion, she noted that the discussions of the Bill of Rights were designed to increase student interest, to make history appear alive by connecting the past to the present. Developing the exercise of good judgment and responsible decision making in the presence of conflicting viewpoints generally appeared as an unintended
consequence. As noted, most of the previous activities of the unit (24-27) were tightly controlled. The type of discourse highlighted in these vignettes was never matched in preceding lessons. Most of what occurred involved either direct instruction or student presentations on the results of closely structured activities and assignments designed by Palmer (VanSledright, 1992a).

Was the extended discussion of the Bill of Rights and its relationship to citizenship education only an aberration? What messages do the students receive about the value and vitality of their education as budding citizens? How are we to read these messages? Do they offer students enough opportunity to challenge ideas and suggestions critically and to develop as responsible decision makers? Are they too young? Or should more time be spent with the content (e.g., history) to prepare them for the complexities of that decision making in democratic America?

Citizenship messages. The messages about citizenship in Palmer’s class seem connected to her treatment of citizenship as a subject matter unit considered at the beginning of the year; that is, citizenship is concerned with appropriate and inappropriate classroom conduct and the study of history has little to do with this type of citizenship; history is history, citizenship is citizenship whatever its intended purposes, however, this discussion of the Bill of Rights did permit students to gain an appreciation for the complexities of issues affecting their lives. An opportunity to examine these complexities through discussion proved valuable to them as citizens. That students consequently learned to make direct connections with their roles as informed decision makers seems less clear.

The messages here are linked to developing a compartmentalized view of knowledge: Subjects have names, they fit into slots, and they derive their value essentially from their unique way of looking at the world. Such a view is consistent with curricular designs that divide the school day into disciplinary categories (one that had special currency at Palmer’s school). Such plans encourage teachers to present these divisions in unrelated pieces. Palmer appears to do an efficient job of teaching this way, and thereby fits well within her school. There, such tactics are rewarded by administrators and also parents, who wish to know how their children are doing in science or social studies or math. But are there alternatives? Can direct citizenship messages be wedded to historical study without so blurring the boundaries that, for example, citizenship education becomes equated with a narrow, right-thinking, and Anglocentric view of American history? Can historical study be used to inform skillful citizen decision makers, those critical and ethical in judgment, without losing the uniqueness of history as a disciplined mode of inquiry into the world? To further assess this figure-ground relationship, we turn to the third case study.
Sara Atkinson: Direct Citizenship Implications

We have a democratic classroom from day one. Hopefully, I'm giving examples from day one what a democratic classroom is like by giving them some responsibilities for the way this class runs. Also...they understand that there are times when they have prime responsibility for something and times when I have prime responsibility for something, so it's not always a democracy in this room. The first rule in this room is respect. Respect is the only rule I've got, and everything kind of generates from that. If I'm respecting your point of view, I'm going to give you time to generate that with me. We're not going to interrupt people, and we're going to give people time to have their say and...welcome their point of view. It may not be my point of view, but you are welcome to yours. We make a lot of decisions in here together. A lot of decisions that don't work originally are when people don't voice how they really feel. You might end up with a decision based on how your friend voted, and then you have to live with a decision that in reality wasn't yours....It doesn't take them long to figure out it's okay to have a diverse opinion in here. So they've got a feeling for how this classroom works long before you get into the kinds of democracy in social studies. Hopefully, [they learn] this through participation.

In interviews, Atkinson spoke often about her interest in history, democracy, and the importance of decision-making practices for her students. Her goals, she explained, turned on constructing a classroom as a participatory democracy. While also noting that her classroom was not always democratic, Atkinson did say that she tried to build the classroom context around opportunities where individual rights and responsibilities could be debated, discussion of knowledge claims could occur, and decision making and informed action might be cultivated; for example, as social studies began one day, she told her students, “People in a democracy need to know how to argue their points. I want you to learn how to use what you know to argue and win in this class, with your parents, and with the principal here at school.” She followed with a short discussion on how this would work in the context of winning approval for a school field trip recently denied by the principal. She ended by challenging her students to pursue a course of action and to “act on it soon.”

In contrast to Palmer, Atkinson explicitly attempted to teach the revolutionary period for the purpose of using it to enhance students’ ideas about decision making and participatory involvement. She argued that her main unit goal involved making historical events problematic,
inducing students to grapple with how decisions are made and how consequences are experienced. The American Revolution, she reasoned, held promise for providing a historical setting in which to face the problems of life in a democracy (VanSledright, 1992b). But achieving her goals, through the time-consuming activities that they required, was not without a number of difficulties, the sort similarly encountered by Sheldon and Palmer. Building a democratic classroom context with fifth-grade citizens turned out to be problematic and dilemma laden.

Two Vignettes of Classroom Practice

The following vignette illustrates how Atkinson used the subject matter of U.S. history in part to support and augment her citizenship goals. It reveals a portion of the introductory lesson on the American Revolution in which she taught her students about a phrase tied closely to her goal framework and her conceptions of history: “There are always at least two sides to every issue.”

This afternoon late in November marked the beginning of study about the American Revolution. Atkinson had been preparing her students to study this period in U.S. history for some time. She made allusions to the growing tension between the colonists and their British rulers throughout the preceding topic, the study of colonial expansion.

She began this lesson by telling students to bring out their social studies textbooks, but not to open them. She wondered aloud about why she enjoyed the topic of the American Revolution so much, and concluded that it was based upon the idea of misrepresentation. She asked her 26 students rhetorically what came to mind when she mentioned the Boston Tea Party or the French and Indian War. She queried, “Who was fighting?” Several students responded in unison, “The French and the Indians!” Her eyes sparkled and the corner of her mouth turned up wryly as she feigned success in conveying how the title of this war misrepresents the combatants.

She shifted quickly to the word massacre. “What does this mean?” She asked, “What comes to your mind when I say massacre?” A girl called out, “Like a riot or something....” A boy followed this with, “Oh, lots of killing, blood!” Atkinson with a tinge of irony in her voice claimed that she had trouble imagining why anyone would call such events a Boston Tea Party or a French and Indian War or a Boston Massacre.

Then, Atkinson reviewed how early colonial life, while both rugged and dangerous, could be characterized by relative peacefulness between British control from afar and colonial self-rule. Only recently had students learned that tensions had stirred and open debate had arisen. Atkinson asked Lisa to read an account beginning with a crowd gathered at the Old South Meeting House in Boston. Atkinson stopped Lisa after the first paragraph. She then commented on how the term tea party seemed misleading. She wanted to know why misleading terms
were necessary, who intended to misrepresent events, and for what purpose. Clearly, she admitted, something is wrong. "Our goal today," she declared, "is to figure what went wrong and why."

Atkinson proceeded to explain the nature of colonial "propaganda." She discussed with her students how point of view and interpretation of events bear importantly on reading and understanding this period of history. In short, she prepared her students for at least two sides of the issue, complementing her goal to get her students to listen and read arguments carefully before they voted (both figuratively and literally) to accept or reject a perspective.

Atkinson intended to teach her students how to interpret history (and link it to newspapers, a topic she teaches in language arts) in order to build a type of understanding upon which to base their decisions. From her perspective, teaching them how to be inquirers and careful readers served her goal of teaching them how to make informed decisions. But such practices require more time, for example, than simply covering content or having the teacher, as knowledge authority, supply the correct answer. Decision making and citizenship role responsibilities became the focus of several lessons on the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Here is a second vignette on the balance of powers and the branches of government.

Atkinson began, "The other day we were talking about how people were nervous giving too much power to the central government. We talked about compromise. I have a diagram [holds it up] I want you to do. Do it quickly." Students were given approximately three minutes to work together as tables (of four or five students) to finish the exercise (which involved matching branches of government with their unique responsibilities). After several minutes, the following dialogue ensued:

Atkinson: There are charts in the book that help you with this assignment. Darron knew right away which one went in box number one. How did he know? [five hands go up immediately]

Elena: There's only one branch that has two bodies.

Kristine [objecting]: It could be the judicial. The federal court could go in one box and all the other courts in the other.

Elena: No. The federal courts would have to go below the Supreme Court, not next to it.

Atkinson: Yes. What would go below the federal courts?

Several students [calling out]: The local courts.

Atkinson: [providing an analogy to hierarchical court arrangements] If I had a case in the local courts that needed
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to be questioned, it could be debated eventually in the Supreme Court.

At this juncture, Adrienne offered an anecdote about a Supreme Court case involving the Girl Scouts of America. Some have claimed that their practices discriminate based upon gender. Atkinson explained that the Supreme Court often hears discrimination cases and the results of those cases affect many people. Because of this, Supreme Court justices are chosen very carefully. She reminded the class about the importance of the recent Clarence Thomas confirmation hearings. She then asked about the terms of Supreme Court justices. Gary stated that they are appointed for life.

Atkinson: That means we have to be exceptionally careful about who we choose. [shifting] If you had legislative for the first box, that's right. Which are the two houses?
Zach: Senate and House of Representatives.
Atkinson: What's the legislature's job?
Gary: Make laws.
Atkinson: Yes. Give me another branch.
Kent: Presidential.
Atkinson: What's the big body called?
Gary: The executive branch.
Atkinson: Okay. Put the names in the boxes. [circles the room checking student papers] A lot of people don't seem to know the difference between the two houses of Congress. What are they, quickly?
Aimee: One has two representatives from each state.
Atkinson: What's this one called?
Aimee: The Senate.
Atkinson: What's the other one called?
Brett: The House of Representatives. They choose these reps by the population in each state; the larger the population, the more reps.

James asked about how the two senators are elected. Atkinson explained that they are chosen in popular elections. She then returned to the relationship between population and house members. Pushing on, she
asked “If the legislature makes the laws, what does the executive branch do?”

Emma: Signs the laws.

Atkinson: Yes, and enforcement. What about the judicial?

Jerome: Enforcement too.

Atkinson: The executive does that. There’s some confusion here. Let’s make this more clear. What is the judicial branch?

Jerome: Judges and courts.

Atkinson: What do the courts do? [pause; students seem unsure; no hands are up]

Elena: They make sense of whether the laws are constitutional.

Atkinson: Yes! They interpret the law. They decide to accept, uphold, or reject the laws based on the Constitution.

Atkinson told students that people who work in each of the branches do very different things. Stressing the importance of this understanding, Atkinson asked the class why three branches of government were necessary, why one would not do as a central decision-making body.

Jeb: If you had only one, then that group would make all the decisions.

Allen: Yeah, one group shouldn’t be allowed to do it all.

Atkinson: What if I made all the decisions as the teacher? What’s wrong with that?

Adrienne: You’d have all the power—we couldn’t make any of the decisions.

Atkinson: So how do we have input now?

Latrice: We can vote and write letters. [pauses]

Atkinson: We can write to our representatives. Why would this work?

Gary: We have power through our votes!

Dan: And we [the people] have lots of votes!

Atkinson: Yes! Congressmen might not get re-elected if they don’t pay attention to the voters. But we have a problem: A lot of people don’t vote. Apparently, it’s too much trouble.
But you know what? I can’t just sit around and complain. I have to do something! I have to exercise my rights by making a contribution.

Atkinson went on to ask students to give her examples of how they might get involved. Students made a number of suggestions such as letter writing, recycling, and working on someone’s campaign.

A number of Atkinson’s lessons included these references to civic action (and later translated into action itself in the campaign to change the principal’s mind about the field trip). For her, teaching history meant connecting it to the decision-making process and taking that process seriously. She attempted to give substance to this purpose by giving students opportunities to negotiate and decide about matters important to them, up to and sometimes including what they were to learn and how. On the one hand, Atkinson’s approach goes somewhat further than the more indirect style of both Sheldon and Palmer, but on the other hand, it also resembles aspects of their teaching as well.

Reading the Vignettes of Atkinson’s Class

*Citizenship themes.* One might argue that Atkinson comes close to helping her students directly confront the types of citizenship requirements that Gross and Dynneson (1991), Engle and Ochoa (1988), and others suggest. She attempted to use the subject matter of history to assist her students in examining the citizenship dimensions embedded in the Revolutionary War period. She also tried to make these dimensions clear to her students and, given the way she had constructed the classroom learning context, expected her students to act upon these dimensions; that is, she expected them to raise questions, to query not only the history they were learning, but each other, Atkinson herself, the textbook, and even school policies (VanSledright, 1992b). She exhorted students to “vote” according to their beliefs. Consistent with the expectations of democratic citizens, she asked them to read carefully, to think and to discuss, and then to act.

*Citizenship messages.* Several possible citizenship messages may open up to Atkinson’s students. They might see citizenship directly linked with history subject matter. They, in turn, may see then how their study of history is also connected to facets of their personal and communal lives, that history if read, weighed, and interpreted carefully can be used to help them make informed choices. As a result, Atkinson’s goals and her efforts at attaining them also may foster a view of knowledge that is more novel, more consistent with current views of knowledge, contestation, construction, and reconstruction (see Newmann, 1990; Resnick & Klopfer, 1989). Citizenship, therefore, seems more alive here: Students are supported to exercise decisions affecting their school life, and often are asked to be active learners; thus, students
may receive opportunities to explore consequences of unthoughtful choices in the relatively safe atmosphere of a classroom, and students can see that at least some adults believe in and are spirited by democratic practices, which in turn may foster optimism and social hope.

The question remains: Are these citizenship messages clear and direct enough? Does Atkinson make a practice of always sharing her authority for classroom decisions, of submitting them to a vote? If students elect "not to study social studies today," is that acceptable to Atkinson? What happens when she must invoke her authority as Sheldon did? Also, content coverage goals and authoritative book knowledge—serious concerns for Palmer—hardly were de-emphasized by Atkinson. What message does this send? Furthermore, is the value and uniqueness of history as a disciplined way to look at the world lost in Atkinson's treatment? Is the study of history corrupted or diluted by too narrow a focus (i.e., presentist, utilitarian forms of citizen action)?

Two vignettes cannot entirely convey the extent to which Atkinson tried to build most of her practices around her democratic classroom and citizenship goals. What distinguishes her from Sheldon and Palmer is her reflectiveness about citizenship education and her ongoing commitment to it, whereas in the other cases, citizenship themes appear almost serendipitously or as unintended consequences. Nonetheless, as we have noted, Atkinson is not immune from the authority-sharing conflicts and expediency dilemmas that influence and constrain the citizenship education practices of the other teachers.

Can—and if so how should—citizenship be taught and learned? Addressing this question depends on how citizenship education is conceptualized, a conceptualization that we believe must be sensitive to the texture of actual classroom contexts and to the range of citizenship practices found in them. To read citizenship education in the classroom, we turn to three useful definitions.

**Citizenship in Classroom Context**

Cornbleth (1982) contends that classroom-situated citizenship education often emerges in one of three forms: (a) the illusory, (b) the technical, and (c) the constructive. She states:

> An illusory form of citizenship education incorporates a limited range of political content and learning activities. Consideration of citizen participation, for example, is often restricted to voting. The students' role is [generally] a passive one. Proper behavior—cooperation with school and

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8Cornbleth acknowledges her debt to Litt (1965) and Popkewitz, Tabachnick, and Wehlage (1981).
teacher demands, attention to assigned tasks—and espousal of democratic norms take precedence over meaningful political learning (p. 261).

About the technical form of citizenship education, Cornbleth notes:

[It] offers a carefully preplanned series of activities intended to yield measurable competencies that can be checked off as students demonstrate mastery of them....The range of political content is limited to discrete skills and bits of information. For example, one assigned task might have students list the rights guaranteed by the First Amendment, and another might have students describe two ways in which citizens can participate in government and influence political decision making. Later, students might discuss the relationship between First Amendment guarantees and political participation, but this would be considered an extra activity. Technical citizenship education reflects a political orientation that would likely support change in the interests of efficient management but would not otherwise question the status quo (p. 261).

And in the constructive form, Cornbleth suggests:

Students are encouraged to pursue their own interests, engage in a variety of activities, and examine a broad range of political content and activities. Constructive citizenship education assumes that knowledge is tentative, that there are multiple ways of learning and knowing, and that different perspectives ought to be considered. The student’s role is an active one; learning activities are designed to foster students’ exercise of rights and responsibilities, and students are expected to demonstrate independence and initiative. In sum, constructive citizenship education reflects a questioning orientation, one that encourages critical examination of the political system as well as effective participation in public affairs (p. 261).

In the first vignette, Carol Sheldon appears to embrace a version of the technical form of citizenship, while in the second vignette she demonstrates aspects of the illusory form. By the same token, Palmer assumes the technical form in her discussion of the Bill of Rights, and while certain elements clearly point to the constructive approach to citizenship education, she argued that she was more concerned with efficiency considerations, such as managing student interest in the
Citizenship Education and Classroom Teaching Dilemmas

content and completing the first eight amendments, than with an in-depth and critical analysis of their implications for the political lives of her students. Finally, several aspects of the vignettes from Atkinson’s class assume the form of the constructive approach to citizenship education, yet even in her case, more illusory dimensions emerge, especially, in one of the illustrations where students vie to define the branches of government and their various powers by identifying the “right answers” to Atkinson’s questions.

The Problem of Varied Approaches to Citizenship

Cornbleth’s definitions help us to understand these three teachers, but they take us only so far. A closer examination of the teachers and the classroom environments they create indicates that all three employ various forms of citizenship education. The vignettes suggest that different forms or approaches emerge from one lesson to the next and even within lessons. The actual citizenship education practices of these teachers are complex and eclectic. Why is there so much variation? A reasonable response is to note that teachers are working in climates thick with teaching dilemmas that must be faced, negotiated, and mediated. Teaching practices (e.g., approaches to citizenship education) are responses to how each teacher in her own way reads the nature of the dilemmas she faces and must manage. Here are three brief examples.

Carol Sheldon. Sheldon takes the matter of citizenship education across the school day rather than as a function of social studies. This approach has both pluses and minuses. On the plus side, it is more realistic and probably more appropriate to think of citizenship as a function of the total class environment other than as a single subject matter. Yet if it is treated implicitly as Sheldon’s case, opportunities for crossed messages arise. It is difficult to know what sense students make of them. In Sheldon’s case, we see degrees of difference in the way she applies the voting maxim from one classroom vignette to the next. She appears to encourage more active participation in the process of deciding in the first vignette. In the second vignette, she withdraws a good measure of this participation, invoking her authority as teacher and ultimate classroom arbiter. In each instance, she wrestles with the dilemma of classroom authority—how much control to allow her students over their own learning environment.

Ramona Palmer. Palmer seems to endorse a view of active citizenship by encouraging her fifth graders to seriously examine the implications of the Bill of Rights for their lives; however, she organizes her classroom around concerns with technical matters of classroom management and coverage of the material. Efficiency considerations tend to shape her curricular decisions. These decisions in turn are supported by the school policy and culture. Students may receive messages that citizenship is demarcated from other classroom subjects. They may judge
citizenship education (as an area of the curriculum) to be less important because Palmer dispenses with it at the beginning of the year. A possible consequence is that they miss the citizenship implications embedded in the discussion of the Bill of Rights.

*Sara Atkinson.* Despite her philosophical orientation toward active, participatory citizenship, Atkinson, like Palmer, pays homage to the need to cover the subject matter. She fights an often losing battle with the clock and the district policy that mandates coverage. She foregrounds active citizenship education but refuses to abandon coverage in favor of, for example, a post-holing approach. Students probably receive mixed messages here as well. At best, they conclude that important citizenship lessons are nested within the study of subject matter. At worst, they are confused over what is important in their study of school knowledge—reproducing it and/or constructing their own readings from it.

These varied approaches make clear that at least for these three teachers, citizenship education is difficult to teach. The teachers must weigh complicated issues of authority, control, content coverage, time constraints, and community standards against their own images and visions of the goals they wish to accomplish with their students. Looking at their classrooms, one sees complex, contextualized environments that defy easy categorization. There is a need for a more penetrating assessment of the dilemmas teachers face as they educate their students as citizens. What follows is a *first* effort at providing this assessment by expanding on the previous examples. In doing so, we hope to come closer to addressing the question: Can citizenship education be taught and, if so, how?

**The Persistent Dilemmas of the Classroom**

The vignettes point to conflicts and contradictions arising from a complex matrix of at least three sets of interrelated teaching dilemmas:9

(a) *Curricular Design.* Who will decide the learning opportunities provided to children in the classroom? What role do teachers have in this process vis-a-vis district policies, curriculum developers, and other colleagues? How do teachers read the context of their teaching environment (school, community), and how does that influence their own personal educational philosophies concerning citizenship?

(b) *Classroom Authority.* Who should have the authority to decide which learning opportunities are most appropriate?

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9 Teaching dilemmas are myriad. Our selection of these three areas around which dilemmas may cluster is designed to be representative of some of the most pressing issues facing teachers. The selection is not meant to be exhaustive.
How much authority should students, teachers, principals, and district policies have in making choices?

(c) Classroom Management. How should the classroom be controlled or managed? How much democracy can elementary schools (or middle and secondary schools) tolerate and still accomplish their goals and purposes? Should the purpose of schooling involve transmission of citizenship ideals, or critical, reflective democracy, or something else?

Teachers have some autonomy in deciding how to resolve these questions; however, that autonomy is circumscribed by a range of contextual factors—the principal’s leadership style, history of the school, other faculty members’ ideas and expectations, concerns about subject matter coverage, children’s fairness ethos, to name several. Which factors weigh most heavily upon these teachers as they court some measure of student choice and engagement in the activities they pursue?

In the first vignette of Sheldon’s case, choice pivots upon the question of how children will accomplish an assignment. The key phrase reads “given what you have to do today.” There is no question about what the students will do. Rather, it turns on the matter of “groups or individually.” In fact, the choice here also appears limited to two options. A whole-class discussion or question-and-answer activity seems ruled out (at least until after students have worked on the assignment for a time without Sheldon’s direct help). Sheldon has constrained the options, discursively controlling what students may choose. She is clearly in control. Students will do the required assignment, and they will do it either individually or in groups. In this vignette, she allows her third-grade and fourth-grade students some authority to make decisions, but opts to control what is taught and the parameters within which it will be learned. One might call this a compromise of sorts, one that draws in students, gives them a portion of control over decisions, but carefully refrains from giving away the store, so to speak.

In the second vignette, we encounter more of the same decision-making practices on Sheldon’s part. Here, however, the stakes are higher, and the options less circumscribed as students quickly ask questions that directly involve choosing what will be studied and who will choose. The classroom activity perhaps by its very nature leads to a confrontation between Sheldon and the students. Students, having experienced some of the power inherent in the voting protocol, want to use it to choose what, not just how. Sheldon balks. She withdraws the right to vote as its exercise threatens to cross an invisible boundary into her authority. The dilemma she manages faces all teachers: How much voice can and should students possess in decisions about their own
education, and conversely, how much power should adults exert over students? Again, dilemmas about learning opportunities, decision-making authority, and classroom management confront practice, making citizenship education difficult and problematic.

Palmer confronts these same difficulties. Although she wishes to intrigue her students with the ramifications surrounding the historical and always potentially contentious Bill of Rights, she also must present her fifth graders with a survey of American history. District policy mandates it, and she has signed a contract agreeing to accomplish this survey. When the discussion—motivating and engaging as it was—threatened to exceed a mental time limit she had set, it infringed on her ability to accomplish the task. This implies that taking citizenship education seriously involves adding layers of learning opportunities for students to an already overcrowded curriculum. Palmer may believe that such layers, while stimulating and important for students, wander too far from what she said was her primary mission: content coverage via district policy. As in Sheldon's case, an invisible line is crossed.

Atkinson too faces a similar array of dilemmas: content coverage, engaging her students in citizen education, and time constraints. Despite a philosophy that values active, involved citizenship, she too must teach a history survey course and answer to others if she does not. The difference is in the degree to which each teacher openly contends with the situation the dilemmas present to them. Given her interest in expediency and autocratic control, Palmer more often than not used coverage of chronological history to maintain control over classroom events and student discourse. Atkinson appeared more willing to deviate from this historical narrative and to pause to explore citizenship education dimensions directly.

In deciding to make the study of history serve active citizenship purposes, however, Atkinson paid a price. During the six weeks it took her to teach about the American Revolution, Atkinson struggled to cover the specified material. Compelled by district policy to offer her students a survey of American history from Native Americans to Watergate, she was constantly mindful of the curriculum units to follow, and the fact that time was working against her. On a number of occasions, she, like Palmer, was observed truncating interesting discussions heavy with citizenship implications in order to move forward. Doing so produced a constant tension in the classroom, palatable to the degree that Atkinson seemed to represent a bundle of nervous energy, always consulting with and rushing against the clock on the wall. This situation was aggravated by the fact that history was taught as the last period of the day and students departed at the 3:15 p.m. bell. Atkinson was unable to take time from another subject matter to foray deeper into the citizenship implications raised by historical study.
What sense can we make of Atkinson’s approach? She attempted to take citizenship education seriously, but it cost her. It produced a psychic tension between her philosophical commitment to build a democratic classroom and the constraints of curricular policy. Surveying American history and building a democratic classroom environment simultaneously made her teaching decisions and the way she mediated the curriculum problematic. Because of her movement back and forth between learning about the revolution as historical narrative for a test (e.g., the three branches of government) to addressing the implications that the story has for participating citizens, Atkinson’s students may have found her approach confusing. ‘Was she teaching about history, about citizenship responsibilities, both, or what? What’s most important here?’ they may have asked. It was as if they had confronted a running mixed metaphor.

Exploring the citizenship dimensions of subject matter study is fraught with difficulties. It appears likely that both Sheldon and Palmer, recognizing the dilemmas they invoked, understandably pursued different courses. Both tried to avoid the quicksand of citizenship education; perhaps they assumed that getting through the subject matter was challenge enough. To take additional steps may have added interesting and powerful yet complicated learning opportunities for students, ones that citizenship education advocates deem necessary and essential; however, such steps open up classroom environments to discussion and debate and potentially to questions of authority over classroom rules, of what is to be learned, and of students’ rights. Sheldon and Palmer appeared more reluctant than Atkinson to take these steps. Why? What helps account for the differences we observed in the approaches of these teachers?

The Role of Citizenship Education in Schools

Can citizenship education become a serious contender for a central role in the learning experience of elementary school children? This is a very difficult question. If we define citizenship education along illusory or technical lines, then perhaps the answer is yes. In the vignettes, we see some evidence that it occurs. Yet if citizenship education is defined as constructive, then there is good reason to be doubtful. Teachers such as those described here must constantly contend with teaching dilemmas that conspire to reduce opportunities to reinvent their classrooms and engage their students in active forms of citizenship education. There are a number of reasons why this might be the case.

First, elementary school climates and the goals they promote do not fully embrace democratic tolerance and the authority-sharing characteristics necessary to engage students in an active, critical, and
constructive examination of what they are learning and why. Adults seldom share authority very effectively: Administrators and experts decide, teachers implement, and students comply. In environments organized this way, democracy rarely flourishes.

Second, as long as extensive subject matter coverage is mandated by curricular policy and perceived as an important goal of school learning, constructive citizenship education and the layers of learning opportunities added to the curriculum will remain entrenched in a losing battle with traditional academic content unless powerful ways of wedding the two are developed that do not consume additional time. Related to this second limitation is the epistemological view of knowledge that subject matter coverage embraces, that knowledge is fixed and children's responsibility is to learn it as it is presented by teachers and textbooks. Such a view seems at odds with an understanding of active, participatory citizenship education that pursues knowledge as a mutable and metaphorical tool to be debated, evaluated, and tested (Dewey, 1916/1944; Grant & VanSledright, 1991; Newmann, 1990; Rorty, 1982, 1985).

And third, as long as authority for choosing subject matter is shared by teachers, administrators, and the community at large, teachers will be unable to involve students actively in the process of shaping them as citizens responsible for their own choices about learning. This dilemma or tension about control goes to the core of disputes about rights and responsibilities in a democracy. As long as the public debates the range of applications (see Gutmann, 1987) of these rights and responsibilities for adults, it most assuredly will continue to circumscribe their applicability to children. The maxim that one needs to be ruled in order to rule (Gutmann, 1987) seems especially salient to this policy.

Conclusion

We have only scratched the surface in attempting to address the question: Can citizenship be taught? What additional work might be helpful? Briefly, from many possibilities we suggest three issues that need close attention. First, this study clearly is limited by its interesting but small and unrepresentative sample. We need many more context-specific classroom studies to explore other possible portraits or images of citizenship education in progress. Second, we believe that Leming (1989) and Longstreet (1985) were right to call for a systematic study of citizenship. Longstreet advocated making it a discipline. If social studies insists on hitching its cart to this construct, then it must be explored in much more detail. Both empirical and theoretical efforts need to drive this study. Empirical efforts would be more powerful at this stage.

10See the recent reviews by Angell (1991) and Ferguson (1991).
because they may help produce a grounded theory of citizenship education. Last, the field needs a much more polyvocal conversation about the meanings and applications of citizenship education; that is, teachers, students, theorists, policymakers, academic disciplinarians, and others need to engage in a conversation about the meanings and applications of citizenship (Grant & VanSledright, 1992; VanSledright & Grant, 1991). Theoretical and classroom images of citizenship education need to be the work of the entire community. Short of this, social studies will continue to endorse a construct without much contextualized substance and, as a consequence, will remain distantly removed from intersubjective agreement.

References


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Beyond the Looking Glass: Bringing Students into the Conversation of Historical Inquiry

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Abstract
This article is an examination of the divide between high school students' conceptions of historical inquiry and those articulated in current proposals for curricular and instructional reform. The author argues that students acquire stubborn misconceptions in the course of schooling about what constitutes historical knowledge; specifically, students learn that historical truth is taught by teacher and text, and that photography and film provide a mirror of the facts. Such learning impedes students' grasp of the contextualized, creative, intentioned, and tentative nature of historical interpretation and representation, and so constitutes a significant obstacle to reform. Drawing upon data from a case study of one class that seemingly exemplified the spirit of reform, upon theoretical perspectives of inquiry and representation, and upon empirical research about teaching and learning across the curriculum, the author maintains that successful reform requires instruction that both shifts the locus of authority from the teacher and text to a shared process of critical inquiry, and through this process of critical inquiry directly challenges students' beliefs about knowledge and representation.

Introduction
In the 1990s as in decades past, calls for educational reform decry students' ignorance of basic subject matter. Research on teaching and learning describes a breach (Wineburg, 1991) between disciplinary inquiry as pursued by scholars and learning in the schools (American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1989; Goodlad, 1984; Lampert, 1990; Mathematical Sciences Education Board National Research Council, 1990). This breach, researchers claim, results in both strong misconceptions among students of what it means to know the major subject areas and also weak conceptual understanding. Rather
than viewing the academic disciplines as complex systems of understanding achieved through particular modes of inquiry, students regard them as bodies of inert and unrelated facts to be memorized and reproduced for the unit test (American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1989; Commission on Standards for School Mathematics, 1989; Goodlad, 1984; Shaver, Davis, & Helburn, 1980).

To close the breach between scholarly inquiry and school learning, researchers and educators in universities and professional associations have renewed efforts to articulate standards and to develop innovative curricula for their subject areas. A core aim of these efforts is to develop instructional strategies and curricula that will provide students with a more vital and accurate sense of disciplinary inquiry (American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1989; Commission on Standards for School Mathematics, 1989; Gagnon et al., 1989; National Council for the Social Studies, 1989). In the area of history, collaborative efforts among historians, teacher educators, and teachers have resulted in the publication of several statements of standards and curriculum frameworks, including the Bradley Commission's Historical Literacy: The Case for History in American Education (1989); the state of California's History and Social Sciences Framework (1987); the Berkeley Clio Project's History in the Schools (1988); and the National History Standards Project Progress Report and Sample Standards.1

In the following pages, I explore the proposal to incorporate a broader array of historical sources and symbolic forms in the curriculum. I argue that students' inadequate understanding of historical inquiry is due in part to their misconceptions about the forms in which historical inquiry is presented, as well as about the process by which historians transform their encounters with artifacts of human experience into historical narrative. Students' limited and stubborn conceptions of what count as legitimate sources of evidence—conceptions that impede them from grasping fundamental characteristics of historical studies—are shaped by the content and methods of instruction, the institutional culture of schooling, and by the broader communities within which students and schools are situated; therefore, simple inclusion of diverse sources will not suffice.

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1Note that these groups and their general aims are not new phenomena in the domain of history/social studies education. Indeed, similar collaborations go back at least as far as the American Historical Association Committee of Seven of 1899, and the NEA Committee of Seven in 1913-1916. Interspersed throughout the twentieth century are very similar, albeit narrowly adopted efforts, most prominent among them Edwin Fenton's induction approach for the New Social Studies, and Jerome Bruner's interdisciplinary approach, MACOS.
In history, as in other disciplines, the past 50 years have seen fundamental changes in the way scholars conceive of knowledge and inquiry. Among these changes is a renewed concern with the context, commitments, and methods of the inquirer as well as with the structures available for presenting one's interpretations. As an illustration, consider the following passage in which William Cronon (1992) shares his struggles to incorporate the insights of postmodernism into his work as a historian:

I assembled a small collection of stories about the Great Plains to see what narrative theory might tell me about the way those stories shape our sense of a landscape and the people who live upon it. The exercise persuaded me that plot and scene and character, beginnings and middles and ends, the rhetoric of storytelling, the different agendas of narrators and readers all permeate our activities as historians. To deny the richness of this insight would be an evasion of self-knowledge, a willful refusal to recognize the power and the paradoxes that flow from our narrative discourse.

And yet despite what I have learned in writing this essay, it has also been a frustrating struggle, because I, like most practicing historians, am only willing to follow the postmodernists so far....My goal throughout has been to acknowledge the immense power of narrative while still defending the past (and nature) as real things to which our storytelling must somehow conform lest it cease being history altogether (p. 1372).

In other words: if we accept the creative impact of narrative upon our constructions of the past, are we to give up on finding "a there, there" (Stein, 1937, p. 289) altogether?

Among historians, such epistemological dilemmas are far from resolved; however, it is possible to identify rough agreement about the methods and common characteristics of historical inquiry. Collaboration among historians, teacher educators, and teachers has resulted in the appropriation of these commonplaces into the reform proposals for secondary school history curriculum and instruction. Let me briefly outline these characteristics by drawing upon the four major reform documents on history education mentioned earlier.

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First, it is broadly recognized that history is a human construction, an interpretative framework through which we organize and interpret human experience through time. Learning history is not simply a matter of fact finding, but a process of finding meaning in facts sought and encountered, of relating and relating to a web of actors, events, and interpretations. Note, too, that this interpretive framework is speculative and tentative, and new information and fresh perspectives may well lead to revised interpretations.

Second, historical interpretation is not only tentative, but also intentioned; that is, the frameworks we construct serve some utility, and they answer questions deemed critical or interesting at a given point in time. Nathan Huggins (1988), member of the Bradley Commission on History in the Schools and participant in Berkeley’s Clio Project writes, “Different moments, we all know, urge different necessities; and in a different time, a different historian will ask different questions, discover significance in data others believed dross, construct different order, and tell a different story” (p. 115).

Third, removed in time and often space from their subject, historians must bring persistence, imagination, and empathy to their inquiry. Their role is to comprehend and render the circumstances and intentions of those whose words, images, and creations have survived to our own time. Hence, good history offers a window on human character and inclination, a view of the motives and principles of human action (Berlin, 1966).

Fourth, while historians typically present their interpretations through narrative, the sources upon which they build their interpretations exist in a variety of forms, including oral testimony, music, art, and (in the last 150 years) film. All of these forms are means by which human beings have rendered their experiences of the world; each of these sources contributes to efforts of those attempting to make sense of the past (Handlin, 1979; Davidson & Lytle, 1982).

As with past reforms, historians and teacher educators have worked to sketch out the implications of these commonplaces for elementary and secondary school instruction, teacher preparation, and curricula. In making recommendations for the improvement of history instruction, Wilson and Sykes (1989) assert that a “disciplinary-based conception of history teaching sets as its major goal the communication of knowledge about both the most significant substance of the discipline and the nature of the methods employed by historians; for example, their modes of interpretation, of the use of evidence, and of the integration of new realms of scholarship” (p. 269). There is wide agreement that to meet the challenges of this task, prospective teachers must have strong

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3 Again, the degree to which historians create the events upon which they focus remains a key issue of debate.
undergraduate backgrounds in history and related social sciences; this preparation should introduce them not only to both the products and the methods of inquiry. Practicing teachers who lack such experience will need in-service opportunities to develop their skills and their curricula. Finally, those who have focused on curriculum concur that students must have access to a broad array of primary and secondary sources including oral testimony, music, painting, and poetry. Here is one case of a classroom in which the teacher seemed to have developed such a curriculum.

**Students' Visions: The Truth of the Text, the Factuality of Film**

In the fall of 1989, I joined an 11th-grade U.S. history class in a San Francisco Bay Area public school. In many respects, the teacher, Ms. Kelly, and her instruction embodied the spirit of the reform proposals. Ms. Kelly's undergraduate background was in American studies, and included solid training in history and literature as well as the visual arts. From the first day of class, Ms. Kelly stressed the interpretive nature of history, drawing a Venn diagram on the chalkboard and identifying history as the intersection of past events and human interpretation. Throughout the year, she modeled analytic techniques aimed at understanding questions such as "What is the underlying view here?" Her unit assignments typically required students to analyze, synthesize, and represent material, for example, through visual metaphor.

Ms. Kelly's classroom presence was warm, energetic, and deeply respectful of her students. Her concern for students as "total human beings," as she puts it, not only was apparent in her casual interactions with them, but also infused her curriculum, through which she sought to help students establish personal connections in their studies of history. Toward this end, Ms. Kelly drew upon a wide variety of historical sources including music, painting, photography, film, and poetry to illuminate the human element of past events. By involving students in careful examination of these forms, she sought to enable students to construct a richer portrait of the past and to provide more student access to the curriculum. On unit tests, she consistently included questions about relevant music, painting, poetry, or film, thus re-affirming their importance.

The primary goal of this research was to determine if these different forms of representation might provide unique kinds of understandings to students; therefore, in addition to observations of every class session and analysis of students' tests, papers, and projects, I met weekly with six students (both individually and in pairs) throughout two major units in an attempt to track their understandings of class unit
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topics, themes, and representations. We scheduled interviews typically lasting 35-50 minutes during lunch and after school. During these semi-structured sessions, I asked students to reflect upon classroom activities and also to consider representational forms not examined during class. Typically, interviews included the following questions:

1. What strikes you about this (representation)?
2. What is this about?
3. What is the mood?
4. When do you think it was created?
5. What does it tell you about the time? the artist/author?
6. How does it fit in with your understanding of the unit so far?

In posing the same questions for each representational form I sought to highlight the differences in students' concerns and experiences of different forms and also to identify students' shared understandings about the historical era they were studying.

Although over the course of the year interesting differences emerged in students' responses to and understandings of different representational forms, more striking was the resilience of their beliefs about what constitutes historical knowledge and the degree to which various forms of representation could provide it. Let me briefly describe several examples that sparked my curiosity, and then use these examples as a launching point for a discussion of the implications of students' beliefs for curricular reform.

On one hand, students said they enjoyed and benefitted from their explorations of painting, music, and poetry in history class. From these works, students derived an intimate sense of and identified with the human experiences, desires, and frustrations depicted by various artists throughout U.S. history. Typical of the comments about painting, music, and poetry was Sunny's response to Langston Hughes' "Dream Deferred":

You know, when you're a little kid, and you're dreaming and you say, "Oh, I want to be a doctor," and then all your life you hear you can't be a doctor, you gotta be a housewife, or you can't be a doctor, you're not smart enough. And finally, you know, if you really want something so bad, you just go crazy, explode.

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4 Students were selected to represent an approximate cross-section of the class with regard to academic achievement, gender, and ethnicity.

5 See Singer (1991) or Gabella (in press) for a fuller presentation of this research.
Over time, students generated increasingly complex interpretations of the artistic forms they encountered. While initially students focused on surface features and mood expressed in painting, toward the end of the year they entered more readily into an exploration of the relationship between artistic style and meaning. In music, they not only heard pitch and tempo, but were able to draw analogies between musical qualities and political and social events. In their final interviews, students noted that it was the music, painting, and poetry they would remember one or two years after history class ended.

Yet by the end of the year, it also became clear that students did not recognize such forms as providing truth about the past; at most, these forms expressed the artists' feelings: They were of sentimental rather than historical value. In fact, several saw the excursions into the arts as interesting diversions from the real work of history class. Not surprisingly, therefore, unless explicitly asked, students failed to refer to painting, poetry, or music in building their interpretations or making historical arguments. Instead, they drew their evidence from the textbook, from Ms. Kelly's mini-lectures (often an explanation or extension of the text), and from documentary films.

In trying to understand the contradiction between students' engagement with nonpropositional forms (i.e., music, painting, and poetry) and their distrust of them as sources of historical insight, I began to push students to evaluate the degree to which different forms of representation provided information about the past. One student in the study (by far the most motivated and engaged in the class) followed Ms. Kelly's lectures with the textbook open on his desk, checking her narrative against the printed information before him. During our final interview, I asked him to reflect upon the strengths and weaknesses of the last unit. He asserted that Ms. Kelly should have assigned more textbook reading because there was "a lot of stuff missing that the textbook [did] say." While most other students in the class cringed at the idea of more textbook reading, they believed without exception that the textbook "tells you what actually happened," and that doing well on tests required knowing what the textbook said.

Clearly, a subset of students from one U.S. history class in California is not an adequate sample; however, these students' statements about the textbook correspond with numerous studies of high school students' attitudes about the learning of history (Crismore, 1984; McNeil, 1986; Shaver, Davis, & Helburn, 1979; Wineburg, 1991). We cannot dismiss this belief that the textbook is the exemplar and repository of historical knowledge as a deficit in maturity or ability: My experience with lower and average achieving students are parallel in research with high school students whose SAT and achievement tests
were in the top five percent nationwide and with college/university undergraduates (Wineburg, 1991). Students' belief in the truth of the text was matched by their convictions about the factuality of film. For example, in the following exchange, two students note that a photograph (of a lynching) provides a better understanding of history than Ben Shahn's painting "Sacco and Vanzetti".

Robby: The good thing about [the painting] was that it was metaphorical. Your mind always is trying to figure things out...and that's good....But the bad thing about it for me is that it was a cartoon. I got more out of what you said with the hanging one, the photograph, than out of the cartoon.

MSG: What was it about the photograph?

Robby & Lynn: It was real.

While Robby finds the painting intellectually interesting, he believes that Shahn's art is of questionable historical value, as summed up in the label cartoon. In contrast to the cartoon is the photograph from which Robby and Lynn assert they "got more." Another student, Rebecca, commented that it is important to show photographs and films in teaching history because they "actually show the truth." Note the underlying logic here. Photographs record real life; paintings are products of the artist's imagination; photographs portray history; paintings do not.

Implicit in these comments is a belief that the credibility of a source varies inversely with the degree of apparent human craftsmanship. During interviews, I pushed students to acknowledge the man-made nature of documentary films with the questions, "Do you think this is a good portrait of the era?" or "What do you think the filmmaker's opinion was?" Students' replies ranged from confusion about my question to Lynn's dismissal:

I never thought of it at all. Because when you look at paintings, you automatically think what the painter was thinking or why he drew. But I didn't really wonder about the filmmaker.

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6 I have also found that among the undergraduate and master's level preservice teachers enrolled in my introductory course on teaching, many fail to make the connection between history as a field of inquiry pursued by their professors and the subject area they are expected to teach.

7 Ms. Kelly had spent half a class period guiding students through an analysis of the painting's symbolism as a means of understanding Shahn's critical view of the trial.
As they discussed the documentary film *Eyes on the Prize*, two other students, Anne and Rebecca, noted the possibility of bias, a possibility that Ms. Kelly had stressed throughout the year as she introduced sources to students:

Anne: [The filmmaker's opinion is] to show conflicts between two sides; trying to show both sides, but mainly I think it's more for the blacks....Because they showed black speakers, and didn't show a lot of white people throughout the movie.

Rebecca: He didn't favor anyone. It's more like he showed it more from a black person's side. I mean because he showed how badly the whites were reacting. But it seems like he was showing more of the bad side. So in a way it was biased but not as...it showed the truth.

Even in this discussion of bias, neither Anne nor Rebecca suggested that the images are in any way composed or arranged. Both girls assumed the veridicality of film. In another example, evaluating the documentary on Roosevelt, Rebecca said:

It was good. But you don't know if it was just a bunch of clips put together of his good times. Or it could be, I mean, it could be biased. It could be like this was what he was like with his family. But we don't really know what he was like, I mean, he knew the camera was on, so it could have been an act.

Here, Rebecca seemed to recognize that the content of the film is shaped by the filmmaker and also by the presence of the camera. Yet as she continued, it was as if this recognition was overwhelmed by her belief that what is captured on film is true:

MSG: You picked out something important: bias.

Rebecca: Well they're not going to say, "Oh, he was the worst president of the United States" and show his bad side....I mean, they did show how some people didn't like what he was doing....So I just think there was probably more that went on than they showed in the movie.

By the end of the exchange, Rebecca clarified her stance that the information may have been incomplete, but this would not challenge the veracity of the film's account.
Students' faith in the factuality of film and the truth of the text should surprise no one. If history classrooms are dominated by teacher talk (Cuban, 1991; McNeil, 1986; Ravitch & Finn, 1987), the textbook (Goodlad, 1984; Shaver, Davis, & Helburn, 1980), and an occasional film (Cuban, 1991), then we must expect that after hundreds of hours of instruction, these are what students hold up as sources of historical information or even as history itself. The messages communicated by the school context are further reinforced in the broader culture. In Western society, the written word carries at least the sanction of the individual who supplies the grades, at most the authority of God. Consider, too, the wider foundations for student belief in the reality of photography. As Sontag (1977) observes, we tend to regard photographs as pieces of the world rather than statements of it. In brief, cultural context mediates the symbols through which we present meaning, profoundly influencing our expectations about the meanings that might be conveyed (and are conveyable) in these symbols, and so constraining the range of interpretations we can make of them.

Such unquestioned faith is not unproblematic, however. While written in an objective voice, textbooks represent a compromise among the many interests to whom publishing houses are responsible, and usually reflect significant human bias (Wineburg, 1991; Crismore, 1984; Edmonds, 1994). Documentary films and photo essays no less than textbooks are composed to project a story as persuasively as possible: literally to offer a particular world view. Sontag (1977) reminds us that photographers like Walker Evans and Dorothea Lange, who have provided us with visual icons of historical eras,

would take dozens of frontal pictures of one of their sharecropper subjects until satisfied that they had gotten just the right look on film, the precise expression on the subject's face that supported their own notions about poverty, light, dignity, texture, exploitation, and geometry (p. 6).

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8 On the cultural privileging of different forms of representation, see also Foucault (1972), Goodman (1978), and Rorty (1979).

9 An anecdote related by Ernst Gombrich (1974, p. 248) captures the relationship poignantly: "Some years ago there was a story in the papers to the effect that riots had broken out in an underdeveloped country because of rumors that human flesh was being sold in a store. The rumor was traced to food cans with a grinning boy on the label." Gombrich continues: "Although normally we assume that the fruit, vegetable, or meat pictured on the label describes what is inside, "we do not draw the conclusion that the same applies to a picture of a human being on the container...because we rule out the possibility from the start."
In failing to comprehend the facticity of these forms, students in Ms. Kelly's class could not engage in the questioning of sources and the analyzing of context and intention that are central to the study of history.

Actually, there are two problems here, each presenting a different kind of challenge to history instruction. The first, exemplified in students' reverence for text, concerns conceptions of authority. Students did not view the text or the teacher's explanation of it as open to question. The offered propositions represented the final word. Obviously, however, if students are to achieve the understanding of history as inquiry envisioned by reformers, they must begin to regard the interpretations put forth by textbook and teacher as tentative and to see the authority as provisional. How do we begin to address this challenge?

One strategy has already been proffered in the reform proposals: to reduce reliance on the text as provider of the central narrative. As demonstrated in Ms. Kelly's class, however, the availability of diverse forms of representation is not sufficient. It may be necessary to challenge the textbook not only with other forms of representation, but also with other textbooks; that is, through use of conflicting textual accounts of the same event. While this is not an original idea, it takes on new importance when we recognize the power of the textbook to delegitimize other representational forms, and to impede rather than assist students in developing the skills of historical insight (Wineburg, 1991).10

Another strategy is to unseat the teacher as sole validator of classroom knowledge and participation. Ms. Kelly expressed her genuine concern for students as individuals, valued creativity and divergent thought, and asked numerous interpretive (as opposed to simply factual) questions while guiding students through analyses of diverse representational forms. Like the vast majority of social studies teachers, however, she also maintained both strong control over the direction and format of classroom talk and activity and the power to determine right and wrong (Singer, 1991; Cazden, 1988; Wilen & White, 1991). One might argue reasonably that in order for students to understand the tentative, constructed nature of knowledge, Ms. Kelly needed to deflect the responsibility for defense and justification of interpretation and arguments back to students.

The second challenge, illustrated in students' discussions of photography, pertains to deep-seated beliefs about the nature of historical knowledge. As described above, students consistently asserted that photographs constituted historical truth, and as such were the ultimate source of knowledge about the past. The view of knowledge

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10 Consider, for example, the New Social Studies of the 1960s or the Schools Council History 13-16 Project in Britain (Shemilt, 1980). Unfortunately, research on the impact of such approaches to students views of the textbook or history more generally is virtually nonexistent (Wineburg, in press).
implicit in students’ comments closely resembles what Richard Rorty (1979) has described as the view that knowledge is a Mirror of Nature. In this view, the world is constituted of “clearly and distinctly knowable things” (p. 357), and knowledge is the accurate representation of those things. Given such a perspective, not only students’ faith in film, but also their distrust of forms like painting or music in which the artist’s hand is unmistakable, begins to make sense. If knowledge is a mirror of nature, then forms that show evidence of human manipulation do not offer us knowledge.

An alternative to this position is the view of knowledge as social justification of belief (Dewey, 1916; Rorty, 1979). This second, pragmatic view emphasizes human beliefs about the world and the systems through which these beliefs are explained and related to one another rather than the world’s events and our ability to represent them unerringly. As a consequence, it is the ongoing conversation among a community of inquirers rather than a reality to be mirrored in which knowledge exists. Rorty explains:

If we see knowing not as having an essence to be described by scientists or philosophers, but rather as a right, by current standards, to believe, then we are well on the way to seeing conversation as the ultimate context within which knowledge is to be understood. Our focus shifts from the relation between human beings and the objects of their inquiry to the relation between alternative standards of justification (pp. 389-390).

Note, too, that if knowledge exists within the relationships and actions of a community of inquirers, then ultimate authority can no longer reside within a single figure; e.g., the teacher or text.

The distinction between these two positions illuminates the divide between students’ and historians’ conceptions of historical knowledge. Once one takes the stance that knowledge exists in the conversations or social practices of a community of inquirers rather than in some sort of historical looking glass, human craftsmanship and purpose become givens. This position characterizes both the contemporary historiography and the proposals for history curriculum reform of the last eight years: What historical inquiry pursues is not a mirror of the past but a better way of understanding. This way of understanding is contextual, contingent, creative, and intentioned. Authority rests not with an individual but in the shared articulation of standards for justification.

Given this second perspective, photographs do provide images of the past, but the meaning and importance of these images—our understanding of what they stand for (literally and figuratively)—is embedded in a conversation and practice of inquiry. Photographs tell us
that there was a there, there but what is there is slippery indeed. As Barthes (1981) writes, in contrast to painting or to discourse, "in photography, [one] can never deny that the thing has been there....The photograph's essence is to ratify what it represents" (emphasis in original, p. 76, 85). As such, photographs seem to offer us indisputable evidence of the existence of a thing or a reality. And yet because the photograph transgresses the norms of time, freezing to infinity a moment of the past, it transforms its nature and no longer is part of the same human experience (Barthes, 1981; Gadamer, 1989). The photograph is not quite a piece of the past, nor a thing of the present, but "a new being really, a reality one can no longer touch" (Barthes, 1981, p. 87). And so, the truth offered by photographs is deceptive. They present a reality that once was, but in representation is now something else. The significance of this something else, as with paintings and texts, must be constructed, and this construction is bound up inextricably in the multiple contexts (historical, intellectual, political, social, etc.) of both the photographer and the observer.

The impact on pedagogy implied by the view that knowledge is situated in a community of inquiry is profound. Our task becomes one of providing students with ample opportunities to practice the roles of knower and inquirer, the namer of significance, rather than only receiver of knowledge. In practical terms, this means that in addition to shifting authority away from teacher or text, we are compelled to teach students to thrive in uncertainty: to question, to seek out frameworks by which to justify their answers, and to be prepared to revise.

Beyond the Looking Glass: Conversation, Uncertainty, and the Arts

As is increasingly recognized in classroom research, enabling students to achieve such habits of mind is not a simple matter; student beliefs about knowledge, like their beliefs about text and film, are deeply rooted in the context and culture of schooling. Specifically, student assumptions about the nature and worthiness of knowledge are shaped and reinforced by modes of instruction and assessment, the organization of time and space, and the human and material resources supporting various learning opportunities. For example, problems in history are never solved. Historians are separated from their subject by distances in time, space, and perspective; therefore, historical accounts are ever subject to reexamination and revision. Yet the message conveyed by the ever popular evaluation tool of short-answer (including multiple-choice

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11 This task is obviously fraught with complexity; for an excellent discussion of the difficulties, see Seixas (1993a).

12 For example, see Cornbleth (1991) for an overview of this literature in the area of social studies.
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and true/false) tests is that history is a collection of discrete and absolute facts. At the institutional level, the scheduling and instructional arrangements of most schools implicitly, if not overtly, teach students that the disciplines are unrelated to one another as well as to daily life, that knowledge can be partitioned into 40- to 55-minute segments, and that academic problems and concepts last one year or one semester.

Given the well-documented intractability (Sarason, 1990) of school culture, we ought not be overly optimistic about the possibility of swiftly and radically altering these norms of schooling; however, pockets of research in other disciplines do suggest that classroom norms and practices can help students both become more conscious of their beliefs and achieve more sophisticated understandings of learning. Especially notable are the inquiries into mathematics teaching and learning of Magdalene Lampert (1990), and of Cobb, Wood, Yackel, and McNeal (1992). Both of these lines of inquiries (1) illustrate how, when students assume the role of knower/inquirer, their understandings may become more “congruent with disciplinary discourse” (Lampert, 1990, p. 58); and (2) attest to the necessity of reintroducing uncertainty into classroom experiences.

Influenced by the work of Lakatos and Polya, Lampert (1990) has sought to help fifth grade students reckon with their conceptions about mathematics knowledge and its sources. To establish an environment in which mathematical thinking is a “public and collaborative activity” (p. 41), she has engaged students in complex, open-ended problems, and focused students’ attention on inventing ways of thinking about the problems, rather than on calculating the answers. In reflecting back to students the responsibility for mathematical reasoning, she has enabled them to question the propositions put forth by the erstwhile expert and empowered them to generate their own algorithms and solutions; thus, Lampert has taught students to participate in a shared process of argument and conjecture, shifting authority away from herself or the text to this public, mathematical conversation (Lampert, 1990).

Similarly, Cobb, Yackel, and their colleagues have worked with second- and third-grade teachers to establish classroom traditions such that the teacher and children together “constitute mathematical truths in the course of their social interactions and...the acts of explaining and justifying [are] central to this process” (1992, p. 592). In these inquiry mathematics classrooms (in contrast to school math classrooms), essential to students’ participation in discussions are both the recognition of alternative solutions rather than fixed procedures and the realization of their responsibility to make personal judgments about the effectiveness of any solution. The researchers write that by sustaining a norm of explanation and justification, classroom discourse more closely approximates the discourse of mathematical inquiry than of school math, which focuses on unreasoned procedures.
One need not believe that school mathematics ought to emulate scholarly mathematics to recognize the importance of the social shift described by these researchers. As the last decade of research on cognition across the content areas indicates, the pedagogical accomplishment of enabling students to generate, explain, and assess solutions to complex problems rather than applying algorithmic procedures is crucial if students are to construct useful and enduring understanding (Bransford and Vye, 1989; Cobb et al., 1992; Schoenfeld, 1989; Brown et al., 1994/84). Note, too, that in both lines of research, it is those situations calling for explanation or justification that provide the nodes for understanding. Because the recognition that knowledge is incomplete or uncertain is key to the generation and justification of problems (Cobb, 1992; Dewey, 1929; Lampert, 1990), uncertainty is a basic feature of the learning process. Of course, these conclusions are not new to social studies (see Wilen & White, 1991). What is unexplored is the proposition that the arts, rather than simply playing an ornamental role in the history curriculum, may serve as an invaluable means of helping students question their assumptions about historical knowledge, and to engage in critical reasoning about history and historical inquiry. Bearing in mind the importance of providing students opportunities to construct and test their understandings, the quest to provide students with an alternative vision of history may be assisted, ironically, by the very forms of representation that were so problematic in my research.

In historical inquiry, generating complex algorithms is equivalent to generating interpretations: probing events, naming their significance, and relating them to a larger web of historical understanding. During interviews, I found that although students more readily pointed to the textbook as the repository of historical fact, they seemed more willing and able to generate interpretations about painting, poetry, and music. As illustrated below in their discussions of painting and poetry, when students examined nondiscursive forms of representation, they would immediately begin an analysis of the person, idea, or event depicted and the significance of the art itself. First consider responses to the question, "What strikes you?" about Andrew Wyeth's Day of the Fair:

Robby: It's eerie. It's not a nice place. She looks desperate—looks like she's been violated or she's being interrogated, especially the chair, it doesn't look like there's too much in the room, so it looks like an interrogation. The hold room police have. But you'd have to see the rest. She looks like something happened and she doesn't want anyone to know. That's what it looks like. You know, sort of nervous, something is going to happen.
Sunny: She's looking down. Her hair is short; her clothes are clean. She looks sad.

MSG: Sad?

Sunny: She's in a small room. Is that a necklace she's wearing or just a spot? She's not wearing any make-up, no nothing, no kind of jewelry. She looks like she's at school or something. I mean, not school, she's not at school. Just something like that. I mean, you know, because of the way she's dressed, that kind of thing. Maybe church. I mean she doesn't look like she's dressed to go home and just cook or clean. She looks like this is an outfit that she put on to go out someplace.

Rebecca: It's like she's in jail or something.

MSG: A jail?

Rebecca: I don't know—it's just like a chair, she's just sitting there and there's nothing on the walls. It just looks like a room, she's sitting there by herself. She looks like she's in deep thought because she's just kind of sitting there and it looks like she's thinking about something, like she did something or, you know, she's thinking, Why is this happening? Like she was sent in there.

In attending to details of the girl's expression, clothes, and posture, as well as of the room in which she sits, students are quick to speculate about the girl's predicament: where she is, why, and how she feels about it. Indeed, it is as if they are drawn into the immediate experience of the painting. Similarly, in responding to the question, "What strikes you [about Langston Hughes' 'Dream Deferred']?" students related their impressions of the work, and they began to articulate interpretations of the work's broader meaning:

Robby: This is like why I was saying it's not going to die.

MSG: What isn't going to die?

Robby: That dream of freedom, equality. As long as they don't get it, it's just going to stay around like rotten meat.

Rebecca: Well, I think black people had a dream but they were so—white people just kept them down and it just kinda sat there. It didn't dry up and that's why he said, "Does it explode?" and I think when the black movement started, everything just came out. Because their dream didn't dry up, it's not dried up yet today, it's still going. It's still there.
In contrast, presented with passages from their textbooks, students responded with paraphrases or direct readings of the text. Asked the same question “What strikes you?”

Rebecca: How they passed the Voting Rights Act so they [black Americans] wouldn't be denied their rights as citizens. It's talking about the good and the bad times, you know, black people got to do their march. The laws passed, the Voting Act which helped but at the same time there was the Governor saying, “No, we can't protect them....Don't let them march.” And people thought that he wasn't going to pass the act, but he did.

Sunny: Okay, Johnson said that he can get backing for the march in Mississippi and then how eventually they did get to march. That stood out. Uh, Malcolm X, he stood out.

MSG: Malcolm X stood out. What about him?

Sunny: Just, you know, his name. And, you know, his career ended and stuff like that.

MSG: What if I asked you to explain to me what's going on here?

Sunny: I'd tell [you] it's about when a bunch of blacks in Mississippi wanted to march for their freedom. They were led by Martin Luther King and others, but mostly him. And they were walking, or marching from Alabama, Montgomery to—either to Montgomery or from Montgomery. I know that, hold on, let me tell you where. [reads] From Selma to Montgomery. Okay. So blacks marched from Selma to Montgomery under the guidance of Martin Luther King and they were marching for like freedom, you know, equality, rights, and stuff like that.

In their responses, Sunny and Rebecca did a reasonable job in reporting the information of the passage; however, note the relative absence of interpretation or conjecture. The two students simply summarized what they read. Moreover, while students' readings of the painting and poem reflect a sense of immediacy, their readings of the text suggest a much greater sense of distance. One discerns from their comments that to students the experiences of “a bunch of blacks...marching for freedom” were much more remote than the experiences presented by Langston Hughes of “black people [who] had a dream.”

An especially plausible explanation for the different readings has to do with the mode by which these forms convey meaning. As Susanne
Langer (1953) writes, a crucial difference between discursive forms (like expository text) and nondiscursive forms (music, painting, or poetry) lies in the relationship between the symbol and its semantic content. In discursive representation, symbols are assigned meaning by arbitrary convention. Through the rules of syntax, terms are combined to produce "composite symbols with resultant new meanings" (Langer, 1953, p. 94). The relation between the symbol and its semantic content is that the former stands for or names the latter.

For nondiscursive symbols, in contrast, form is the basis rather than the marker of meaning. Lines, planes, colors, tones, etc., are not basic terms with fixed significance; rather, these elements generate meaning in relation to and through integration with the other parts of the symbolic whole. "We may well pick out some line, say a certain curve in a picture, which serves to represent one nameable item, but in another place the same curve would have an entirely different meaning" (Langer, 1953, p. 95). Because nondiscursive symbols present things directly to our senses (Langer calls them presentational), they enable us to experience phenomena more directly, and leave to us the task of naming the significance.

This distinction between forms that name and forms that present parallels the distinction between students' responses to the textbook and their responses to music, painting, and poetry. As a discursive form, the textbook selects, names, and so objectifies human experiences through time. And in the text, students sought and found the facts: events and ideas already interpreted by authors. From their perspective, not only was the invitation to interpretation foreclosed by virtue of the text's authority, but the immediate nature of the experience was also obscured. In contrast, music, painting, and poetry present rather than name and so allow students to participate in the naming. In presenting students the unnamed relation, these nondiscursive works of art engaged students more closely with the experience rendered, and so invited them to participate in the interpretation of significance. It does not seem a great leap to suppose that through careful questioning about the sense they make students might recognize more fully the intentioned and contingent nature of the interpretative process.

A second reason that the arts may invite students to participate in interpretation is that they make human voice and invention more transparent. Recall Lynn's comment (above) that "when you look at paintings, you automatically think what the painter was thinking or why he drew," but that she didn't think about the documentary filmmaker in watching *Eyes on the Prize*. In fact, when discussing paintings, students often referred to the artists' purposes and activities; for example, in examining Roy Lichtenstein's *Crying Girl*, Evan was clearly aware of the artist's hand in creating the image:
MSG: What might it tell you about the times?

Evan: Simplistic time. Maybe simplistic artist. But there's a reason for her crying, that's kind of hard to find.

MSG: Why is it hard?

Evan: Because the artist doesn't give you really much in the painting to go on.

Similarly, as they considered poetry and music, students attempted to make sense of the experiences of the poet or composer that gave rise to the work. Reflecting on Joni Mitchell's "Woodstock":

MSG: What's your main impression of the poem?

Rebecca: He's [the author's] probably high. I mean it's like, he's against war, because he said they [bombers] were turning into butterflies, so he's obviously against war. And...he's left to find out who he really is.

In contrast, even when specifically asked about the textbook author, as when asked about the documentary filmmaker, students offered a trivial response or no response at all. One clue to their difficulty emerged from their discussions of why the textbook was less effective in conveying human feeling:

Lynn: The [textbook is] just a bunch of words. Like if someone is telling you a story, you get more out of the story than if you just read it out of the boring textbook....Pictures are more interesting. The fact that it comes from somebody rather than from some thing....There's more humanity.

Lynn describes the textbook as "just a bunch of words" and "boring." Missing for her are both the imagery of pictures and the personal voice (literally) of oral narrative that make information compelling. She believes that human images and voice communicate a sense of humanity. Robby expressed a similar idea: "In a book like [the textbook], when they're talking about social problems, you can't feel it, 'cause the book is so cold." Perhaps because students did sense human invention in painting, music, and poetry, they saw these forms more easily as voices to be challenged; they were more willing to enter into dialogue with their human creators. Conversely, the seemingly objective voice of the textbook may well have discouraged such dialogue. In addition to the fact that students had learned to rely on the text as the source of essential (i. e., tested) knowledge, the impersonal tone of the text obscured all traces of human invention: There was no human voice to engage.
If students do sense human voice and intervention more readily in painting, music, and poetry, then these forms might serve as a starting point for critical analysis. Through them, students might begin to see the purpose, delimited perspective, and contextual influence that are inherent in human representation, and eventually recognize these features in seemingly more objective representational forms such as textbooks or photographs. If students can recognize and question their assumptions about knowledge in general, and history specifically, then they might begin to engage in a conversation of inquiry; hence, the integration of diverse forms of representation into the history curriculum may be essential both because they provide different visions and because students more readily see them as voices to be challenged; more readily enter into dialogue with their human creators. In drawing upon nondiscursive forms, we may enable students to partake in the inquiry and also challenge their epistemologies.

Clearly, these hypotheses are speculative; however, they define crucial avenues for research. The call for more inquiring history and social studies classrooms—classrooms in which information is sought as much as it is found, significance is interpreted, and interpretations examined—is not new to the twentieth century. Throughout the 1910s, 1940s, and 1960s, educators from universities and schools were deeply attracted to the concept of enabling students to engage both the substance and methods of historical inquiry through work with primary source documents, evaluation of evidence, and construction of historical arguments. The failure of those past efforts to produce visible change in dominant instructional patterns has been attributed to inadequate resources and classroom support, as well as to a clash between the norms and values of the academy and those of public schools and their communities (see, for example, Lazerson et al., 1985; Seixas, 1993b).

In addition to these recurring obstacles, 1990s reform advocates face a further challenge posed by the evolving discipline of history itself (Seixas, 1993b). As argued in the preceding pages, if our aim is to help students achieve more sophisticated understandings of history and historical inquiry, we must do more than simply find ways to overcome the obstacles posed by uncertain resources or a perceived culture clash between the university and the schools; we must do more than develop rich curricula and identify useful and enduring instructional strategies for teachers and students to explore the substance and methods of inquiry. If students are to step beyond the looking glass and into the conversation of inquiry, then history educators must also grapple with the shifting assumptions about knowledge and representation that drive

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13 See Singer (1991) for discussion of the unique understandings made possible through different forms of representation.
the field. Examination of the insights afforded by nondiscursive forms of representation may both complicate and contribute to the venture.

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Abstract
The present study is an examination of preservice teachers' beliefs and practices about secondary social studies education. Social studies majors were surveyed prior to their content methods course and during student teaching on their conceptions of teaching and learning, and case study data were gathered on one preservice teacher in field and clinical situations. Overall, the preservice teachers held positive conceptions about social studies on both administrations of the survey, stressing active student learning and knowledge construction; however, the case study revealed inconsistencies with these beliefs, particularly during student teaching. Such results emphasize the necessity of meshing theories of instruction with the practical realities of the classroom.

Introduction

During the past 15 years, research on teaching has shifted from a unidirectional focus on classroom behaviors and outcomes to a broad recursive focus on the way teachers think in relation to what they practice (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Shulman, 1986). The underlying assumption is that teachers' beliefs and understandings about content
and pedagogy influence their instructional decisions and actions (Armour-Thomas, 1989). Building upon earlier investigations that examined preservice teachers' thoughts and practices about social studies in elementary classrooms (e.g., Adler, 1982; Wilson & Readence, 1993), the present study sought to examine a similar relationship at the secondary level. Using survey and case study methods, this research (a) examined preservice teachers' conceptions about social studies prior to and during student teaching, and (b) explored one preservice teacher's decisions and practices during his field and student teaching experiences in secondary social studies classes.

Recognizing the importance of teacher cognition, research has focused on teacher perspectives or meaning given to practical situations. As Cornbeth (1985) stated:

> How we conceive of curriculum is important to the social studies education made available to students. Our conceptions and ways of reasoning about curriculum reflect and shape how we think and talk about, study, and act on matters of social education (p. 2).

Such a research focus is critical, given reports of the decline in emphasis on social studies in the classroom (e.g., Goodlad, 1984; NCSS, 1989). Atwood (1986) found that students received little or no instruction in social studies subjects, while McNeil (1986) and Palonsky and Jacobson (1988) found that what instruction did exist was dominated by a lecture/recitation approach; thus, understanding how teachers think about social studies is important to understanding their practices.

The majority of research on teacher perspectives has concentrated on practicing teachers at a range of grade levels (e.g., McNeil, 1986; Schug, 1989; Thornton & Wenger, 1990; Wilson & Wineburg, 1988). In general, the results of these investigations reveal that inservice teachers have varying conceptions of social studies and that to some extent they practice their beliefs. Further, these conceptions and practices tend to be negative (e.g., social studies as facts, reliance on text materials), as reflected in the reports of social studies' diminishing role (e.g., Goodman, 1984). Thus, teacher cognition is a critical factor in exploring experienced teachers' perspectives of social studies instruction; however, given that teachers are influenced by a variety of sources (e.g., content knowledge, pedagogy knowledge, personal background), research on preservice teachers is important for understanding how these perspectives may evolve.
Preservice Teachers

Researchers have addressed preservice teachers and how their perspectives of social studies develop (e.g., Adler, 1982; Ross, 1987; Wilson & Readence, 1993). In particular, research in teacher education indicates that the student teaching experience is one of the formative periods of a teacher's career (Adler, 1982). For example, preservice teachers entering the classroom soon discover the lack of congruence between their university courses and practical experience, particularly in the field of social studies (Lacey, 1977). Further, they must contend with other sources (e.g., school climate, cooperating teachers) that may influence their conceptions, attitudes, and behaviors (Palonsky & Jacobson, 1988).

Nearly all investigations at the preservice level have concentrated on elementary social studies preparation and instruction. Palonsky and Jacobson (1988) interviewed 56 elementary education majors on their perspectives toward elementary social studies. Specific topics included (a) their definitions of social studies, (b) their views of the status of social studies in the elementary curriculum, and (c) their views on the cooperating teachers. Palonsky and Jacobsen found that social studies was perceived as having a low priority in the schools. They also found that participants viewed the cooperating teachers as a source of pedagogical knowledge, supplanting the knowledge of the university professor.

In studies involving both beliefs and practice, Adler (1982) and Wilson and Readence (1993) each examined four preservice teachers. In her study, Adler (1982) focused on three areas related to the student teaching experience: (a) conceptions held prior to student teaching, (b) perspectives developed during student teaching, and (c) factors that influenced this development. To determine conceptions, she developed and administered a survey, the Conceptions of Social Studies Inventory (CSSI), that addressed subject knowledge, learning, importance, and teaching methods at the beginning and end of the student teaching experience. Based upon these data, she found that her preservice teachers' conceptions were not substantially different from other social studies educators and the social studies literature. Based on classroom observations and interviews, however, she found that these conceptions did not always relate to the teachers' actual practice. She concluded that their practice was influenced by a number of factors (e.g., biographical background, beliefs, university instruction, cooperating teachers) that helped shape these teachers' perspectives.

Wilson and Readence (1993) also relied on the CSSI survey, interviews, and classroom observations but began data collection at the beginning of the methods course. They found that their preservice teachers entered the methods course with somewhat negative
conceptions regarding social studies, conceptions that were ameliorated by the end of the course; further, these more positive conceptions were carried over into their student teaching. Similar to Adler's (1982) findings, however, the relationship between these beliefs and actual practice varied depending on similar influential factors (e.g., prior experiences, educational background, cooperating teacher, students).

In contrast, very few studies have focused on preservice teachers in secondary social studies; most of these have relied on interviews for data collection. Ross (1987) examined the perspectives of 21 social studies education majors situated at four different points in their teacher education programs. From individual interviews, Ross concluded that teacher education had only a marginal effect on perspective development, with established or cooperating teachers appearing resistant to ideas that originated in their university courses.

In summary, the results of these investigations reveal that preservice teachers hold mixed conceptions about social studies, and they tend to include more negative practices in their teaching (e.g., less instructional time, little discussion) regardless of their beliefs. Further, these practices appear to be influenced strongly by the cooperating teacher, whose own perspectives, as noted above, may be negative. Additional research on preservice teachers is necessary, particularly at the secondary level and with extended interview/observation methods.

Based on these previous investigations, we examined preservice secondary teachers' conceptions of social studies, particularly in relation to classroom practice. Building on Adler's (1982) and Wilson and Readence's (1993) research, this study employed a revised version of the CSSI to determine conceptions and conducted observations and interviews to determine actual practice; however, to extend these findings, this research (a) surveyed a group of teachers during their methods course and student teaching to obtain a general sense of preservice teachers' beliefs and (b) gathered case study data on one representative student as he taught in field experience and student teaching situations.

Method

Participants

Eleven preservice teachers participated in the survey, including five females and six males, seven of whom were seniors and four who were post-baccalaureates, all Caucasians with an average age of 23 years enrolled in a secondary social studies teacher education program at a major southeastern university. For the purposes of this study, only those students who had moved through their social studies methods course and student teaching experience in consecutive semesters were
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asked to participate originally. Of this group, only those students who had completed the survey during both semesters were included in the final data analysis.

The participant in the case study was David, a 21-year old senior who was classified as a comprehensive social studies major. By studying a cross-section from the social studies disciplines rather than a single subject, he would be certified to teach any secondary social studies subject. He also had a concentration in history. After graduation, he hoped to pursue a master's degree in secondary education and history.

Of the 11 education majors who took part in the survey, David was asked to participate because (a) he was taught and supervised by one of the researchers in both the methods course and student teaching, (b) his conceptions were representative of the larger group on the first administration of the survey, and (c) he volunteered to participate.

Materials

For the survey, an adaptation of the CSSI was used. This contained 25 statements focusing on seven different beliefs categories: (a) knowledge as personal vs. public (4 statements), (b) knowledge as process vs. content (6 statements), (c) knowledge as integrated vs. fragmented (3 statements), (d) learning as social vs. individual (4 statements), (e) student input into decision making vs. teacher as decision maker (4 statements), (f) search for alternative resources vs. reliance on text (3 statements), and (g) importance of social studies relative to other areas of study (1 statement).

Of the total number, 14 statements were written in a positive manner (e.g., “Students should be encouraged to be skeptical and to question what they read and learn”), while the remaining 11 statements were written in a negative manner (e.g., “Students will waste time if you let them have some input in deciding what will be done in social studies”). For each statement, the students were asked to rate their agreement on a 4-point rating scale (i.e., 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-agree, and 4-strongly agree).

Originally designed for elementary teachers, the inventory was modified by the researchers to reflect a secondary emphasis. Of the 25 original statements, six required minor wording changes. For example, one original statement read: “It is more important for elementary school students to learn the important facts in social studies than it is for them to learn how to think critically about our society.” For modification, the revised statement substituted the word “secondary” for the word “elementary.” To validate the revised inventory, an expert panel of six professors and doctoral students in secondary social studies education independently reviewed all statements and judged each to be suitable as changed for the secondary level.
For the case study, multiple data sources were used. In the methods course, these included university class materials (text readings, reflective journals, revised CSSI instrument) and field experience materials (lesson plan, student assignments, cooperating teacher evaluation). In student teaching, these included teaching materials (unit/daily plans, written assignments, unit tests) used by the preservice teacher, cooperating teacher evaluation forms, observation and interview tools (handwritten field notes, audio-tape transcriptions), and the revised CSSI instrument.

**Procedure**

The study was conducted over a period of two semesters, with data collected by one of the researchers. During the first semester, all 11 participants were enrolled in a social studies methods course taught by this researcher, while during the second semester, all were enrolled in a student teaching practicum supervised by different instructors.

*Methods coursework and field experiences.* In the teacher education program, the social studies methods course followed a general pedagogy course, thus ensuring that students had an entry-level knowledge of teaching and learning styles as well as peer and field teaching experiences. The content methods course focused on specific pedagogical theory and research in social studies education and on practice teaching in social studies classrooms. On the first day of this course, the researcher administered the revised CSSI to the intact class, asking students to read each statement and to indicate their extent of agreement by circling one of the numbers (1-4) that accompanied it. All students completed the task within 30 minutes.

Then, throughout the semester, students engaged in in-class activities (e.g., selected readings, small-group interactions) and field work (i.e., team planning and individual teaching of a 5-day unit) that focused on current pedagogical issues and approaches. The instructor incorporated a process-centered approach, emphasizing that (a) social studies knowledge should be personally meaningful to the learner, (b) student involvement in the process of critical thinking should be implemented, (c) social interaction is more important than individual learning, and (d) social studies teachers should utilize resources and methods that extend beyond the class textbook.

For the field experience, students were divided into five-member teams to construct and implement a five-day unit. Each team member was responsible for developing and implementing at least one lesson. David's group provided instruction on the American Revolution to an eighth-grade American history class in an inner-city school; his particular lesson focused on the Boston Massacre. Team members were evaluated by their cooperating teacher who focused on organization, creativity, and management.
From the beginning to the end of the semester, the researcher collected university class assignments from all students, such as journal responses, research reports, and unit/lesson plans. In addition, she particularly focused on materials (e.g., lesson plans, cooperating teacher’s evaluative comments) related to the field experience component of the course.

**Student teaching experience.** During the second semester, the students were assigned to secondary schools within the local community for all-day student teaching experiences. Generally, this included initial observations and individual/small-group interactions, followed by whole-class planning and teaching responsibilities. In addition, the student teacher worked with a cooperating classroom teacher and a university supervisor, as well as met with other social studies student teachers for cohort discussion and interactions. For the purposes of this study, students were readministered the same survey instrument on an individual basis during the eighth week of their 16-week student teaching experience by the same researcher.

For the case study, the researcher supervised David in his teaching assignment at a semi-rural high school. This school enrolled grades 10 through 12, with a heterogeneous ability, race, and socio-economic student populace. David’s assignment was to assist with six social studies courses and prepare three lessons on American government, American history, and world history under an experienced classroom teacher, Ms. Willis. During the semester, the researcher observed David weekly in his six classes and asked that he continue his journal writing. In addition, she took field notes, collected teaching and learning materials, and interviewed David, the cooperating teacher, and selected students enrolled in these six classes. Finally, she asked both David and the cooperating teacher, Ms. Willis, to complete the conceptions survey in the same time frame as the other participants.

Ms. Willis had been teaching social studies for 19 years and was described by students, colleagues, and administrators as an “outstanding teacher.” A social studies methods student praised Ms. Willis for her ability to make social studies “come alive by telling stories.” She was also described by a university supervisor as a “traditional social studies teacher that is able to make it work by her ability as a storyteller.”

**Scoring.** The revised CSSI surveys were scored according to Adler’s (1982) original procedure. For each statement written in a positive manner, the number selected on the rating scale (e.g., 4) was the number of points received. For each statement written in a negative manner, the values were reversed; for example, a student circling 4 actually received 1 point. Then, the total number of points was summed.
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across all statements, as well as by category type, for each time of administration.

The multiple data sources collected in the case study, including the CSSI surveys completed by David and Ms. Willis, were analyzed using constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Miles & Huberman, 1984). In particular, the researchers read and reread the data, searching for consistency among beliefs, lesson plans, teaching and learning materials, class interactions, and interview responses. Data sources were triangulated to validate an occurrence and to control for biases. Final interpretation was achieved following searches for meaningful patterns involving the multiple perspectives of the research team members.

Results

Overall, the 11 preservice teachers indicated positive conceptions on both administrations of the survey instrument. David’s responses generally were representative of the large group. Based on the case study data, however, his practice was not always consistent with his espoused beliefs. The following section describes the results of the survey and case study, presented according to the methods course and student teaching experiences.

Survey

According to the survey administered at the beginning of the methods instruction, the 11 preservice teachers generally held positive conceptions toward social studies instruction (see Table 1). Of the seven categories, the group’s highest percentage score was found for knowledge: process vs. content (.85). This indicated that the group strongly believed that students (a) should be asked questions with no definitive answers, (b) should learn to think critically rather than learn facts, and (c) should be skeptical and question what they learn. On the other hand, the lowest percentage scores were found for decision making: student vs. teacher (.68) and importance: social studies vs. other (.68). For decision making: student vs. teacher, the teachers believed that (a) they should use curriculum guides to determine instruction and (b) they alone can best decide what the class ought to do in social studies. The responses selected for importance of social studies vs. other indicated that the preservice teachers believed that (a) teaching basic skills was more important than teaching social studies and (b) social studies should be cut rather than English or mathematics.

During the student teaching experience, the preservice teachers continued to hold positive conceptions about social studies instruction, growing slightly more positive from the methods course to student teaching on five of the seven categories. Specifically, similar to the previous CSSI administration, the group’s highest percentage score was
found for knowledge: process vs. content (.87), while the lowest percentage scores were found for decision making: student vs. teacher (.69) and importance vs. other (.68).

David's scores were somewhat similar. During the methods course his highest percentage scores was for knowledge: process vs. content (.83), while his lowest percentage score was for knowledge: integrated vs. fragmented (.67). For the latter category, David believed that it was important to teach social studies as a separate subject.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Methods Course</th>
<th>Student Teaching</th>
<th>Ms. Willis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Knowledge: personal vs. public (16 points</td>
<td>12.22 (.76)</td>
<td>13.00 (.81)</td>
<td>14.00 (.88)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>possible)</td>
<td>12.00 (.75)</td>
<td>14.00 (.88)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Knowledge: process vs. content (24 points</td>
<td>20.33 (.85)</td>
<td>20.89 (.87)</td>
<td>22.00 (.92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>possible)</td>
<td>20.00 (.83)</td>
<td>19.00 (.80)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Knowledge: integrated vs. fragmented (12</td>
<td>8.88 (.74)</td>
<td>8.67 (.72)</td>
<td>9.00 (.75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>points possible)</td>
<td>8.00 (.67)</td>
<td>8.00 (.67)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Decision making: student vs. teacher (16</td>
<td>10.88 (.68)</td>
<td>11.00 (.69)</td>
<td>11.00 (.69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>points possible)</td>
<td>11.00 (.68)</td>
<td>12.00 (.75)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Learning: social vs. individual</td>
<td>13.33 (.83)</td>
<td>13.33 (.75)</td>
<td>13.00 (.75)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12.00 (.75)</td>
<td>12.00 (.75)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Importance: social studies vs. other (12</td>
<td>8.11 (.68)</td>
<td>8.22 (.69)</td>
<td>11.00 (.92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>points possible)</td>
<td>10.00 (.75)</td>
<td>9.00 (.75)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Resources: alternative vs. text (4 possible</td>
<td>3.11 (.78)</td>
<td>3.22 (.81)</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>points)</td>
<td>3.00 (.75)</td>
<td>3.00 (.75)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>76.86 74.00</td>
<td>78.33 77.00</td>
<td>83.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Like his peers, David generally maintained his conceptions during the student teaching experience, growing slightly more positive in two categories. He even experienced the same category changes. While maintaining a high score for knowledge: process vs. content, his highest score was for knowledge: personal vs. public (.88). In addition,
David believed (a) that social studies is best taught when student’s bring experiences and knowledge to the lessons and (b) that the concerns and interests of students should determine the topics to be taught and the time devoted to study each topic. Again, David’s lowest score was in knowledge: integrated vs. fragmented (.67).

The survey was also administered to Ms. Willis, the cooperating teacher, whose conceptions generally reflected those of the preservice teachers. In contrast to David, her highest percentage score was for knowledge: integrated vs. fragmented (.92). Ms. Willis’ responses indicated that she believed social studies (a) should not be taught as a separate subject and (b) should be taught by incorporating other disciplines, like literature, art, and drama. Similar to the preservice teacher group, her lowest percentage score was for decision making: student vs. teacher (.69), which (a) emphasized the teacher’s control for making decisions in the classroom and (b) indicated that time would be wasted if students made curricular decisions. Further, given the 1-4 rating, she tended to choose more ratings of 4 than the preservice teacher group, indicating strong agreement on several questions.

Case Study

The multiple data sources examined for this study revealed a range of consistency and inconsistency between David’s beliefs, planning, and practice during his methods course/field experiences and the student teaching experience. The main areas will be described below.

David’s most consistent area of belief throughout both phases of the study was that knowledge is personal rather than public. In particular, he explained in an interview that the teacher’s role is “to make information meaningful to the learner.” David attempted to connect new information to his students’ prior knowledge and background experiences. During the field experience, he introduced his lesson on the American Revolution by focusing on the students’ background of taxation and how they had been affected personally by taxes. It is interesting to note that both his instruction and unit plan tended to focus on prior knowledge and background experiences only in the lesson plan introductions.

During the student teaching experience it seemed that his interactions with students had strengthened his earlier beliefs. He stated: “It doesn’t have to be names and dates....[M]ake it interesting to them....It should be relevant to the students.” In particular, his 12th-grade American government students had not been participating in the assignments and discussions. Once David began to connect certain concepts to things in their life experiences (e.g., local events, popular television shows and movies), the students became more interested.
student commented that she enjoyed the class and was reading the material and completing the assignments because “he makes things more interesting...by talking about things we care about.” This was also evident in David’s responses to CSSI statements dealing with the student as decision maker. According to his CSSI responses and interview responses, he strongly supported student input in terms of what is taught and how long it is studied; this indicated a change from the previous semester. This also conflicted with Ms. Willis’ strong belief that teachers alone should make decisions for their classes.

Consistent with his beliefs, David advocated the use of alternative methods and resources in his instructional planning and practice during the methods course and field experience. During one lesson on the Boston Massacre, David asked students to construct their own cartoons and captions and present these to the class as additional learning aids. In his own journal entries, David stressed the importance of using primary documents and literature. He also explained that he hoped to employ reflective journals and writing assignments to address higher order thinking skills.

This was also evident in David’s de-emphasis of the textbook. During methods instruction he described the textbook as a tool: “The students should use the textbook as a source of information but they should also learn to question what it says. The textbook should not become the curriculum.” This was apparent in his CSSI responses to instructional planning and practice as well. In his university class unit plan, he included outside sources (e.g., newspapers, magazines), while reserving the textbook as a resource rather than a source of learning.

As the student teaching experience progressed, however, he began to rely more and more on the textbook as his main resource/method. Although he continued to make meaning personal, his lessons followed a consistent format: (a) return papers and go over assignments, (b) present textbook lecture and write key points on the board, and (c) show film/video or complete a worksheet. When asked about this format, particularly his reliance on textbook lectures, he explained that “the students are complaining that they are having trouble taking notes because I don’t go by the book. From now on, I am going to go by the book.” Consequently, by using this format, David failed to incorporate the methods and activities described and utilized during methods instruction (e.g., role playing, simulations). When other formats were suggested he frequently responded: “I asked Ms. Willis about that and she really liked it to be done this way.”

It is interesting to note that David’s CSSI responses remained in favor of alternative methods/resources throughout the study. For David, reliance on the textbook and lecture were not desirable; he explained: “Lecture...this is hard to get away from....[A]ll social studies teachers use it....There is just too much information in social
studies.” He suggested, however, that teachers should “try to use a variety of techniques because if not, the students get bored and you will [too].” He suggested using videos, simulations, role playing and hands-on activities. When asked why he had not employed some of these activities, he explained that his classroom was small and could not accommodate students moving about the room. Furthermore, when the members of the student teacher group suggested employing other methods (e.g., group activities, simulations) he explained: “Those activities take too much time.” He explained that he and Ms. Willis did not even have time to cover the material in the text. He described additional methods used as “pop quizzes, worksheets, review games (e.g., Jeopardy), and crossword puzzles.”

There were inconsistencies in other areas as well; for example, his CSSI responses throughout the study strongly supported a belief in knowledge as process, placing an emphasis on the processes of thinking, reasoning, and testing to ascertain the truth, although his practice did not reflect this. At the end of the methods course, he wrote: “I would encourage the students to use higher-order thinking skills as much as possible. Many times, using traditional methods of teaching, the students are only required to use lower-level thinking skills and rote memorization. To do this, I will use writing assignments.” Once in the teaching situation, however, he found that this was not as easy as it seemed. After giving higher-level essay questions on his tests, David said that he was “gung ho until the 150th one....[T]he sheer volume was too much.” As a result, although he said “we need to teach them to write and think critically,” David began to model Ms. Willis by giving assignments and tests which focused on literal level questions, focusing on the text and the teacher’s interpretation of it.

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to examine preservice secondary teachers’ conceptions of social studies prior to and during their student teaching and then to explore how one participant manifested those beliefs and ideas in an actual classroom setting. By using case study methodology, the researchers hoped to examine the relationship between how teachers think and what they practice in greater depth than previous studies that did not use teacher observations have been able to reveal. While limited by the small sample, the results support and extend previous research findings.

As revealed by the survey data, preservice teachers generally held positive views of social studies as measured by the CSSI. They strongly believed that students should be taught to think critically through the use of open-ended questions and work in small groups. These generally positive conceptions also held over time as there was
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little difference in findings between CSSI administrations before the methods course and during student teaching. These findings also corroborate those studies conducted with preservice elementary teachers (Adler, 1982; Wilson & Readence, 1993).

Yet the CSSI measures only what teachers believe the social studies to be; it is not a measure of how these conceptions are translated into actual classroom practice. Thus, the case study was undertaken. The participant of this study, David, espoused beliefs that generally reflected those of his methods instructor; that is, de-emphasis of the textbook in favor of alternative methods and materials (e.g., newspapers, magazines), use of social interaction (e.g., cooperative learning) to enhance student learning, and acknowledgement of the teacher's role in making learning personally meaningful (e.g., using students' prior knowledge to connect the new to the known); however, as David's student teaching progressed, his instructional practice tended to become tied more closely to the textbook and less to alternative materials and methodology, even though his conceptions were consistent with those espoused by the university-based methods class. This was reflected in his adoption of an instructional format emphasizing the textbook and worksheet assignments and providing students key information directly without the use of critical thinking strategies. David's rationale for not using the methodology he espoused on the CSSI was that it was too time consuming, it did not allow him to cover the text material, and his cooperating teacher preferred this method.

David changed as his school-based cooperating teacher became more influential in his day-to-day teaching and the university supervisor less so. This corroborates the findings of Palonsky and Jacobson (1988), who stated that the school and cooperating teacher can influence teachers' conceptions and behaviors and that the cooperating teacher can supplant the university instructor as the source of critical knowledge. Additionally, these results give credence to the views of Ross (1987), who concluded that teacher education had little effect on teachers' conceptions of social studies, and established teachers appeared resistant to instructional suggestions that originated at the university.

Why does this chasm between espoused beliefs and actual teaching occur? Researchers (e.g., Alvermann & Moore; 1991; McNeil, 1986) proffered that instructional practices that encourage order through teacher control, expedite student learning, and can be conducted with limited resources will dominate the typical secondary classroom settings. Instructional routines that place a heavy reliance on the textbook, controlled presentations, and individual seatwork prevail; those practices that encourage student participation and cooperative
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learning are less likely to be found in these settings because they are less predictable and pose management/control problems.

Goodlad (1984) has documented that social studies instruction in particular emphasizes authority and memorization, with the activities that students engage in conforming to the passivity characteristic of that emphasis: reading the textbook, listening quietly while the teacher talks, and completing worksheets. This routine became exactly what David chose to use toward the end of his student teaching. He wished to eliminate students' complaints, to ensure that they learned what they should, and to maintain control. At the same time, Ms. Willis indicated that she wanted things done a certain way in her classroom; that is, she wanted David to adopt the practices that had already been successful in her classroom.

It is only logical that David's practice began to change to conform to what had already worked in the classroom, whether or not those practices were consistent with his beliefs and regardless of what the university supervisor espoused. Even though David favored alternative methodology and resources, in practice, he admitted that those activities required too much time and that he and Ms. Willis did not have sufficient time even to cover the text material. Further, Adler (1991) has pointed out that "preservice teachers seem, by and large, to take on a managerial mentality, to use the trial-and-error to determine what works and to define what works by what keeps the class running smoothly" (p. 214).

Such findings bring numerous questions to bear. Can social studies instruction that encourages students to become active learners and teachers to serve as facilitators for that learning be implemented? How can university teacher educators present information so that there is a reasonable chance of that information being accepted and implemented by preservice and inservice teachers? In what ways can teachers learn to be more consistent with their stated beliefs and demonstrated practice? Should the university teacher education programs better reflect the realities of the classroom? Can schools be reorganized in any way to provide more productive learning environments? Answers to these questions will lead to a better coordination of the complexities involved in the best social studies education.

References


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ASSESSING EXPERTISE IN ECONOMIC PROBLEM SOLVING: A MODEL

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Abstract
In this preliminary study, the authors examine the research literature and schematic models associated with the so-called expert-novice paradigm in cognitive psychology. Using this broad base, they develop a model for rendering expertise in problem solving within the domain of economics. Three principles-based economic problems were posed to three academic economists and two novices in the domain. Responses were given verbally; they were recorded, then transcribed, and used by the authors to develop the model. The initial findings and results of this preliminary study indicate that this model effectively rendered both expert and novice problem solving in economics.

Introduction
This article represents an initial effort to explore economic reasoning in depth through a problem-solving protocol. It presents a model for portraying economic problem solving drawn from the expert-novice problem-solving literature, and applies that model in contrasting expert and novice reasoning about economic problems.

Context for the Research
The case for precollegiate economic education most often argues that economic literacy is critical to effective citizenship (Miller, 1988, p. 4). Explicit in this reasoning is the development of students' abilities to
make more effective decisions, both personal and social, about economic problems. This rationale has a long history reaching back at least as far as the 1961 *Report of the National Task Force on Economic Education*, which “pointed to the need for more and improved economic instruction in elementary and secondary schools, (and) stressed the importance of taking a more systematic, reasoned approach to the study of economic problems” (Saunders et al., 1993, p. 3). The contemporary expression of this goal is found in the National Council on Economic Education’s *A Framework for Teaching The Basic Concepts*, the fundamental curricular document in precollegiate economic education (Saunders et al., 1993, p. 3). The framework defines the objective of economic education as “enabling students, by the time they graduate from high school, to understand enough economics to make reasoned judgments about economic questions” (p. 1). Similar rationales can be found in other basic statements of the case for economic literacy by Symmes and Gilliard (1981) and Schug (1985).

This rationale assumes several important links in a chain leading to more responsible citizenship: that more and better precollegiate economic education will lead to greater economic understanding among students, which in turn will lead to more responsible decisions and ultimately, more effective citizenship. It remains to be demonstrated, however, how this assumed chain can be achieved, if at all. To date, researchers in economic education have focused most of their attention on the first link between economic education and economic understanding. Research on the second link, between economic understanding and economic decision making, has been limited largely to examining the relationship between economic understanding, as measured by test scores, with scores measuring how well student opinions match those of professional economists on some broadly described economic issues. To our knowledge, no research has yet been done that examines the last link, between student economic reasoning and effective citizenship.

More importantly for this discussion, no research has yet been conducted that examines student economic reasoning in sufficient depth. As will be described shortly, theories drawn from information processing and cognitive psychology propose that advanced understanding and problem solving in an area can be thought of as a highly developed, complex network of specialized knowledge, interconnections of that knowledge, and powerful analytic procedures for using it effectively. This has significant implications for research and practice in economic education, and casts doubt upon the simplistic link of greater economic knowledge, as narrowly measured by test scores, leading to better economic reasoning. Indeed, the concept of economic knowledge as highly developed schemata suggests a redefinition of economic knowledge as inextricably intertwined in a network that
includes the linkages among bits of economic knowledge and the special procedures for using that knowledge.

Moreover, this new conception of economic knowledge suggests a different approach to assessing economic literacy that is more consistent with the stated objective of economic education, and is based primarily upon student reasoning rather than upon what students know as measured by standardized tests. Economic educators must understand not only what conclusions students reach about issues but also how those conclusions are reached. Toward this end, it is crucial to know how well the patterns of student reasoning conform to those of economic experts. Economic educators then might be better able to design curricula that address the development of economic reasoning based upon a firm research foundation.

Research on Expert-Novice Problem Solving

As a first step toward the examination of questions surrounding the nature of economic literacy, economic reasoning, and economic problem solving, one may turn to the significant body of research in cognitive psychology that has attempted to investigate differences between so-called expert and novice problem solvers. VanSickle (1992) noted that "cognitive psychological research on problem solving has provided the basis for reconceptualizing the problem of teaching students to reason" (p. 56). Further, studies in this area that highlight the interaction of content knowledge and the utilization of such knowledge in the solving of problems provide useful insights for economics teachers (VanSickle, 1992, p. 57).

Early Studies

The nature of expertise and techniques for its acquisition became topics for investigation as a result of studies on human problem solving. Newell and Simon's (1972) seminal work on the information processing model of problem solving incorporated early research on the cognitive processing of master chess players as compared to those of less experienced players (deGroot, 1966). In reporting this research, however, Newell and Simon focused almost exclusively on the knowledge competence dimension of expertise; thus, early work in expert-novice problem solving identified superior domain-specific knowledge as the primary attribute in acquiring expertise.

The Role of Problem Representation

While such knowledge competence is obviously a prerequisite to acquiring expertise (Chase & Simon, 1973), later studies indicate that more than superior content knowledge alone was present in expert problem solvers. Simon and Simon (1978), and Chi et al. (1982) found
that problem representation was a crucial component of expert problem solving in physics. In these studies, novice physicists tended to apply equations quickly and with little discrimination, while experts concentrated primarily on understanding and categorizing a physics problem before applying relevant equations. Further, expert physicists employed a "work-forward" (Simon & Simon, 1978) strategy using straightforward inferences that focus attention explicitly on a particular solution. Novices, on the other hand, employed a "work backward" (Simon & Simon, 1978) strategy that forced them to follow a limiting set of criteria (a sort of checklist of equations), any of which might have been useful in solving the particular problem in question (see also Chi, Glaser, & Rees, 1982).

The Role of Schemata Development

Similarly, Lesgold et al. (1981) demonstrated that content knowledge alone was insufficient for acquiring expertise. In a series of studies investigating how radiologists use x-rays to reach appropriate diagnoses, experienced practitioners were compared to recent interns. In these cases, the level of medical knowledge was approximately equal; however, the experienced radiologists were nearly always more successful with their diagnoses. Lesgold (in Anderson & Kosslyn, 1984) attributed this difference, at least in part to the presence of a series of "specialized schemata" (p. 43) for radiology. These schemata may be defined as "a set of assumptions and rules for interpreting new information that is triggered when certain conditions are satisfied" (Lesgold, in Anderson & Kosslyn, 1984, p. 43); thus, the presence and use of these specialized schemata during the process of problem solving further differentiates expert problem solvers from novices.

Studies on Problem Solving in the Social Sciences

Voss et al. (1983, 1989) have investigated differences between expert and novice problem solvers in the social sciences. Voss posed a question regarding a specific problem in Soviet agriculture to experts in Soviet studies and to novices who had some knowledge of the Soviet Union but whose expertise lay in other domains. Each participant was encouraged to respond orally during the problem-solving exercise, and the responses were recorded on tape. Subsequent analysis revealed that experts generally divided the problem into several relevant sub-problems while searching for possible solutions. Novices tended to attack the problem as presented. The Soviet experts also engaged in more self-evaluation and analysis throughout the problem-solving process. Further, Voss et al. (1983) concluded that the Soviet experts provided deeper and more principled support for subsequent solutions. Finally, the Soviet experts displayed discipline-specific and domain-specific strategies for applying appropriate content knowledge during problem
solving. In this, the conclusion of Voss and his colleagues is reminiscent of Lesgold's discussion (in Anderson & Kosslyn, 1984) of the importance of specialized schemata for the acquisition of expertise.

**Knowledge Differentiation**

While many of the previously noted studies have focused on the types of cognitive processing necessary for expert problem solving, the role of knowledge as a critical variable in the acquisition of expertise has also been well documented and should not be overlooked (Voss, 1989; Glaser, 1987; Voss, Tyler, & Yengo, 1983, Curtis & Glaser, 1983). Indeed, VanSickle (1992) noted that "research on problem solving...demonstrates the importance for education of understanding how experts' knowledge differs from that of novices" (p. 57). VanSickle identified various categories of knowledge that experts use in the problem solving process. Of these, three—declarative, procedural, and schematic knowledge—warrant brief discussion.

Declarative knowledge refers to the discipline-related content knowledge of a particular field of study; that is, the body of facts, concepts, and accepted generalizations associated with a particular domain (e.g., economics). Voss (1989) concluded, as one would assume that expert economic problem solvers have more declarative knowledge, more knowledge about economics, than do novice economic problem solvers. VanSickle stressed that such declarative knowledge is "a valuable resource for solving economic problems" (p. 58).

Procedural knowledge may be described as the "knowledge of how to" do something (Voss, 1989). This category involves correctly invoking appropriate domain-specific knowledge and "the ability to apply it...to questions for which answers are not immediately obvious" (VanSickle, p. 58). VanSickle concluded that "experts generally have extensive procedural knowledge in their areas of expertise; novices are likely to have little or none" (p. 58).

Schematic knowledge denotes the network of rules and assumptions surrounding particular examples of declarative knowledge. These networks of ideas (Cornbleth, 1985) may be thought of as interconnected cross references between concepts and generalizations within a particular domain. Such schemata "can be represented graphically; common economic examples are supply-and-demand graphs and diagrams of the circular flow of economic activity" (VanSickle, p. 58). Moreover, VanSickle intimates that "experts have more schemata than novices, and experts' schemata are developed more fully in their areas of expertise" (p. 58).

It should be noted that while VanSickle's discussion of knowledge differentiation provides useful insight, we have some concern over the categories of knowledge outlined above. In particular, VanSickle's use of the term schematic knowledge is potentially confusing and perhaps even
Assessing Expertise in Economic Problem Solving

misleading. VanSickle implies that schematic knowledge is one component of domain-specific knowledge and that as such, it is separate in some way from the declarative and procedural components. As Lesgold et al. (1981) noted, however, it is important to recognize that the development and use of schemata involves both declarative and procedural components; that is, schemata consist of both the specific declarative knowledge associated with a domain and the procedures associated with accessing and applying such knowledge. Indeed, schemata are the networks of interconnections between knowledge and process. This is an important distinction that might be confounded by VanSickle’s use of the term.

Table 1
Attributes of Expert Problem Solvers

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<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Experts excel mainly in their domain.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Experts perceive relevant patterns in their domains. These meaningful patterns assist in the application of domain-specific knowledge.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Experts see and represent problems at a deeper, more principled level than do novices.</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Experts spend more time on problem representation. Experts employ a work-forward strategy that requires greater time allocation for problem identification before the application of theory or knowledge.</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Experts have strong self-monitoring and self-evaluation skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Experts demonstrate more flexibility in the process of problem solving.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Experts possess more domain-specific, declarative knowledge.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Experts have extensive procedural knowledge.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Experts have more highly developed specialized schemata than novices.</td>
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Attributes of Expert Problem Solvers

Other studies on expert-novice problem solving have focused on the nature of expertise in cab drivers (Chase, 1983), baseball fans (Chisei et al., 1979) and children identifying and classifying dinosaurs (Chi, 1978). While this research in expert-novice problem solving may appear
quite disparate, Glaser and Chi (1988) characterize these studies’ findings as “robust and generalizable across the various domains that have been studied” (p. xvii). Given this, Table 1 depicts attributes or characteristics that, according to the research literature in this area, expert problem solvers are likely to possess.

The Voss Problem-Solving/Reasoning Model

The model presented by Voss et al. (1983; hereafter the Voss model) suggests “that social science problem solving is an integration of two processes, problem solving and verbal reasoning” (p. 171); thus, the model used to analyze the protocols developed in response to the Soviet agriculture problem consists of a problem solving control structure (labeled by Voss as G) and a reasoning structure (R). Subsequent analysis using this model has as its goal, according to Voss et al. (1983), “a reasonable exposition of the problem-solving processes found in (problem solving) protocols” (p. 173).

Within the Voss model, G is “viewed as a goal structure which controls the problem-solving process” (p. 171) and that contains a series of operators that direct the existent knowledge base and assist the solver in generating the problem solution. These G-structure operators are noted in Table 2. Voss and his colleagues transformed the protocols of all respondents into a G-structure flowchart representing the sequence in

<table>
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<tr>
<th>G Structure</th>
<th>Operators</th>
<th>R Structure</th>
<th>Operators</th>
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<tr>
<td>GCON</td>
<td>State constraint</td>
<td>RARG</td>
<td>State argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSUB</td>
<td>State subproblem</td>
<td>RSAS</td>
<td>State assertion</td>
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<tr>
<td>GSOL</td>
<td>State solution</td>
<td>RFAC</td>
<td>State fact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIPS</td>
<td>Interpret problem</td>
<td>RPSC</td>
<td>Present specific case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSUP</td>
<td>Provide support</td>
<td>RREA</td>
<td>State reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEVA</td>
<td>Evaluate</td>
<td>ROUT</td>
<td>State outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSUM</td>
<td>Summarize</td>
<td>RCOM</td>
<td>Compare and/or contrast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>RELA</td>
<td>Elaborate and/or clarify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>RCON</td>
<td>State conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>RQUA</td>
<td>State qualifier</td>
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which G-structure operators are used. An example of such a flow chart is presented in Figure 2 (see Appendix).

The second structure within the Voss model is that of reasoning; that is, the R structure. As with the problem-solving structure, the reasoning structure is acted upon by a series of operators. These are also found in Table 2. According to Voss et al. (1983), “typically, application
of the R structure begins with an argument (RARG operator) made by
the solver" and "subsequently, a combination of the remaining operators
is applied to the argument development" (p. 172); thus, the Voss model
represents respondent’s problem-solving protocols by highlighting the
order in which both key problem-solving operators and key reasoning
operators are invoked. An example of such a reasoning structure may be
found in Figure 9 in the Appendix.

The Frequency of Transition Model

In an attempt to identify the level of knowledge integration that
expert children possess in comparison to that of novice children, Gobbo
and Chi studied the ability of a sample of children to correctly categorize
and describe a set of dinosaurs. Five experts and five novices (all seven-
year-olds assigned by pretest) were asked to identify by name a set of 20
dinosaurs and then group them together by appropriate characteristics.

One technique employed by Gobbo and Chi in developing the
protocols generated by respondents in this study was to code all of the
propositional statements contained within the responses into six salient
categories (physical description, defense, biological information, family,
social activity, and habitat). The authors found that the defense category
was discussed by both experts and novices with relatively equivalent
frequency; thus, Gobbo and Chi “coded the absolute frequency with
which the discussion of defense led to the discussion of another theme”
(p. 228). The frequency at which the discussion of defense led to a
discussion of another of the five remaining categories is depicted in
Figure 3. Obviously, the relative thickness of the line connecting defense
with another category represents the frequency of transitions to that
category.

The Node-Link Network Model

Chi, Glaser, and Rees (1982) compared expert and novice
performance in solving elementary physics problems. The content of
participant responses was represented by a node-link network “in which
the nodes are simply the key terms and concepts mentioned and the
links unlabeled relations that join the key terms mentioned
contiguously” (Glaser, 1987, p. 85). One may view these connections as
parts of schemata and the key terms and concepts as slots of such
schemata.

Figure 4 represents the protocol of an expert physicist responding
to a problem involving an inclined plane. Using the conceptualization of
the node-link network as put forth by Chi, Glaser, and Rees, it is
apparent that the expert physicist began the problem-solving process by
invoking the underlying principles of energy conservation and Newton’s
force laws, and then proceeded to elaborate on the appropriate
conditions for application of such principles (if acceleration, if
equilibrium, etc.). Only then did they return to the original problem to describe the salient features involved in solving inclined plane problems (such as block, surface property, and friction).

Given this example then, the node-link model may be characterized as a map of the interconnections among or between schemata. The protocol created by this model represents the sequencing, and in some sense the direction, of these connections.

Relative Strengths and Weaknesses of the Analytical Models

Each of the three models briefly outlined above possesses its own merits and deficiencies. More importantly, however, these models focus on either the analysis of general problem solving or, as with the Voss model, very domain-specific protocols. None, however, is necessarily best for developing economic protocols; thus, the following section provides a brief discussion of the perceived strengths and weaknesses of each model with respect to these issues.

The Voss Model. Due to its singular application in the analysis of social science protocols, the Voss model would seem to have significant potential for use in the analysis of economic problem solving. Indeed, relative to the other models, an analytical precedent for the study of problems in social science has been set. Further, the Voss model allows one to perceive easily any developing patterns that may exist in the use of problem solving and reasoning operators; however, little about the role of knowledge integration and schemata can be gleaned from this model. Based as it is upon the information processing model of problem solving, the Voss model takes on a very top-down, stepwise character. While this may be useful for discerning the structure of expert problem solving, some question remains as to its ability to render accurately the complex interaction of both process and knowledge that expert-novice research indicates.

Most significantly, the Voss model, with its associated structure operators, was developed for analysis of a specific problem: the Soviet agriculture problem. We believe that the structure operators associated with problem solving in this domain may in fact be somewhat different than those employed in the field of economics. It is essential that any analytical model render these economic reasoning and problem-solving operators (e.g., the application of economic models during the problem-solving process) accurately and explicitly.

The Frequency of Transition Model. As with the Voss model, this model seems best suited to characterize only one aspect of problem solving. Unlike the Voss model, however, this model focuses upon integration of knowledge and its association with expertise in a domain. Again, this rendering is quite useful for presenting information about the level of knowledge integration found in experts in a specific domain. Unfortunately, this analytic ground is purchased at the expense of
learning more about the process experts use in solving problems. Despite this failure to model process variables well, the frequency of transition model succeeds in demonstrating the relative strength of connections between knowledge structures. This ability would appear to be crucial in representing economic protocols. It should also be noted, however, that the problem statements and resulting protocols generated using this model are quite dissimilar to problems of economics; that is, the act of classifying dinosaurs based on salient attributes is of a fundamentally different nature than that of addressing problem statements in economics. As such, the frequency transition model is far too limited for use in analyzing economic problem solving.

The Node-Link Model. Of the three models briefly discussed here, the node-link model comes closest to representing both the process and knowledge components of problem solving. By incorporating both a flowchart format and a depiction of relevant schemata as used by the respondent, this model seems to render most accurately the process of problem solving; however, the node-link model is not without its faults. Most significantly, this model fails to differentiate among types of nodes and linkages. This lack of discrimination results in the loss of important insight about how interconnections among schemata and domain-specific knowledge impact the problem-solving process. Moreover, the node-link model fails to provide any indication of the sequencing—the order in which significant node-link connections are made—employed by the problem solver.

Model Development

Since none of the three models described above seems entirely satisfactory for rendering economic protocols, we have developed a new model to depict problem solving in economics, one which employs the following criteria:

- The model should display as many of the identified attributes of expert problem solving (see Table 1) as possible.
- The model should display any domain-specific characteristics peculiar to economic problem solving.
- The model should display the domain-specific knowledge, knowledge integration, and domain-specific procedural knowledge aspects of expert problem solving.

To develop the model, we created the following three problems for our study, one each in microeconomics (hereafter minimum wage), macroeconomics (hereafter, Great Depression), and international economics (hereafter trade deficit):
Minimum wage: Suppose Congress were to double the current minimum wage of $4.25 an hour to $8.50 an hour. Analyze the economic impact of this policy and discuss whether you believe such a policy would be a good idea or not and why.

Great Depression: In 1929, the so-called Great Depression began. Discuss what you believe caused the Great Depression and what, if anything, the federal government should have done to keep economic conditions from deteriorating so badly.

Trade deficit: Trade among nations is a perennial economic issue. Suppose that you are the recently appointed secretary of commerce, and assume that our trade deficit has been growing (the U.S. has been buying more goods and services from foreign countries than they have been buying from the U.S.). As the secretary of commerce, your problem is to design and defend the new administration's trade policy. How will you respond?

These problems were crafted to allow us to detect important differences in economic problem solving that might be specific to the individual problems; for example, two of the problems are hypothetical, while one is based on historical events. Hence, the Great Depression might reasonably be expected to elicit more specific factual information than the other two. The level of theoretical agreement among economists varies among micro-, macro-, and international economics; thus, experts might distinguish among different theoretical approaches in some problems. Also, different problems might permit goals to be identified in varying degrees, since it might be more important to establish specific policy goals in some problems than in others. The three problems were first submitted to an academic economist and to an undergraduate student who had taken an advanced-placement economics class in high school, but no college economics. The procedures described below were first applied to the responses of these two individuals. As will be noted later, the same problems were submitted subsequently to three other individuals to confirm the findings of the original analysis.

Both the experts and the novices responded to all three problems using the oral response procedure commonly used in this area of study and described earlier in this article. In this study, we used the same procedural format to present the problems to both expert and novice problem solvers. Their responses were recorded, and a verbatim transcript of each response was produced.
In developing the model, we determined that we should begin with the responses of the first expert. We developed sequential diagrams similar to the node-link model for each of the three responses independently, showing all relevant statements linked to subsequent statements. We then compared diagrams for all three problems and discovered a high level of agreement in the protocol representations. With the limitations of previous models and the criteria for development of the economic problem-solving model in mind, we next established the following in order to more fully represent the problem-solving process: (a) a series of categories to classify the type of statement made; (b) designations of the kinds of links between statements; and (c) numbers between the links to portray the actual sequence of the statements. Some examples may help to clarify how and why this was done.

The first expert made extensive comments that defined, clarified, or classified the problems in some way. These statements were similar to some of the Voss G-structure operators; however, for the sake of simplicity in depicting the model, we decided to denote all such statements as aspects of problem representation. It was clear that the expert made extensive use of economic models, invoked particular economic concepts and generalizations, and cited specific facts in support of arguments. Moreover, the expert frequently specified goals to be achieved and monitored the progress of the answer towards a solution in terms of these articulated goals; thus, the model places statements into seven categories (also noted in Figure 1):

- Problem representation
- Use of an economic model
- Use of an economic concept or generalization
- Use of a specific fact
- Goal statement
- Monitoring statement
- Other statements

We also noted that the links between statements varied significantly; for example, in responding to the trade deficit problem, the first expert stated:

If you're living in a world of fixed exchange rates, that sets up one problem. If you're living in a world of flexible exchange rates, that sets up a different set of problems.

The first expert proceeded to explicate a chain of reasoning from each of these possibilities. We classified the links to all such statements, which often resembled the if part of an if...then statement, as propositional. In the chain of reasoning begun with the then part of such statements (and
in other instances as well), the first expert clearly established links of causality, which we designated as causal links, usually of the 'A causes B' type. Other links between statements were not specifically designated in the model (see Figure 1). Having established these categories, we followed the same procedure that was used in depicting the original diagrams, comparing our independent depictions of each problem and resolving any differences. The resulting protocols from the first expert are presented in Figures 5, 6, and 7.

It might be helpful to examine one expert protocol in more detail (note that the key to the model is found in Figure 1). Consider the simplest of the three, the minimum-wage problem (Figure 5). The numbers on each link indicate the order of the sequence of comments; thus, the first statement made by the expert was to describe the minimum wage as social policy of "good intentions." Note that this comment begins to develop aspects of problem representation (Indeed, most of the expert's statements in this protocol defined, clarified, categorized, or in some other way represented the problem to be solved). The first expert quickly established the goal of minimum wages as a social policy to boost income through both propositional and causal links: If (propositional) the problem is one of low real wages, then this causes (causal link) some people to have difficulty maintaining minimal living standards; thus, the goal of minimum wages is to boost real incomes (goal statement A).

The first expert further developed the problem by distinguishing proportionally between people with high and low skill levels. Low skill levels can result in market wage rates for these people that are lower than minimum wages (another causal link). At this point, the first expert invoked a labor market model to arrive at the general proposition that minimum wages above the market rate can cause unemployment. The expert then returned to the specific problem of doubling the minimum wage rate, concluding through the labor market model that such a policy would create even more unemployment. Having finished representing the problem, he then used the labor market model to establish two results, that some would receive higher wages and be better off, but that this would be at the expense of those who were unemployed by the policy. The latter result was a demonstration of self-monitoring as the expert compared the result of his analysis with the goal statement (designated by the letter A in the inverted triangle).

Finally, the first expert began a new line of problem representation based upon the effect of work on skill acquisition, of which he gave several examples. He reasoned that those unemployed by the minimum-wage policy would not acquire skills, and as a result would have less chance of boosting their incomes, once again monitoring progress towards solving the problem relative to the previously established goal.
The success of this problem-solving model as a device for portraying economic problem solving can be judged by the extent to which it depicts the 10 attributes of the expert problem solver as developed in the relevant research (see Table 1). In the section that follows, the researchers examined differences between novice and expert as a function of these 10 attributes. Note that in this discussion we also comment on the results of an analysis of the responses from three additional persons: two academic economists and a high school student who had not taken economics. Only the models for the original two respondents are included, however. Presenting the full models for the additional persons complicates and lengthens the article without changing the results. As mentioned earlier, these three were added to the study to confirm that any differences detected were not idiosyncratic to the two original participants. Differences between experts and novices were evident across all five respondents.

The first of these, experts excel mainly in their domain, cannot be determined without comparison of two of the expert’s protocols, one within and the other outside her or his area of expertise and, as such, is beyond the scope of this study. Of the nine remaining attributes, some may best be assessed by comparing the expert protocol with that of the novice and others by examining all three of the experts’ protocols. Recall that the same three problems were presented to a novice, whose protocols for the minimum-wage and trade deficit problems (rendered in the same way as the expert’s) are presented in Figures 8 and 9. For purposes of comparison, two of the three original novice protocols are sufficient. The two selected are the most detailed, given by the first novice.

By comparing the three protocols from the first expert, one can see patterns developed from within the domain of economics (expert attribute number 2, Table 1). The best example is the striking similarity in the way the first expert quickly developed a theoretical structure relevant to the problem. In the minimum-wage problem, the expert invoked a labor market model upon which he based further problem development. In the problem concerning the Great Depression, the first chain developed was an exemplar of demand management as a basic theoretical structure; it was then more fully developed. In the first expert’s response to the trade deficit problem, the theoretical cases of fixed and flexible exchange rates were established rapidly. In all cases, the first expert deepened these basic theoretical structures and applied

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1 The models generated from the analysis of the other three participant responses are available from the authors.
them to the specific problem. This same pattern is evident in the
protocols of the two other experts.

Indeed, it may be that in economic problem solving, experts
present the basic theory early in the problem-solving process. This
tendency might be a manifestation of expert attribute number 9
regarding superior procedural knowledge. In responding to the first
problem, for example, all three experts used basic economic theory as a
primary analytic device. Having done so, they then used procedural
knowledge to classify the problem. Moreover, they established and
revisited goals to be met by policy options as an integral part of the
problem-solving process. This was illustrated best in the minimum-wage
and trade deficit problems, where goals clearly dominated the direction
taken in solving the problem for all three experts. This was less evident
in the Great Depression problem where, one might assume, the phrasing
of the question left little doubt about the goal(s) to be pursued. The two
novices displayed neither of these procedural knowledge attributes; thus,
for the experts examined in this study, the specialized procedural
knowledge in economics plainly includes developing theoretical
structures and establishing goals early in the problem-solving process.

Related to this point is the use of models by the three experts
(expert attribute number 7) relative to the two novices. In the minimum-
trade deficit cases, the first expert invoked economic models 5
and 10 times, respectively. For the same two problems, the other experts
referred to models 8 and 6 times (problem 1), and 14 and 7 times
(problem 3). The first novice used models 3 times in response to problem
1 and 2 times in response to problem 3; the second novice used just one
model while responding to all three problems. Moreover, the experts' use of models was always more detailed and structured than that of the
novices.

That the experts' view of a problem is clearly deeper and more
principled (attribute number 3) is evident from a comparison of the
expert and novice protocols on the minimum wage problems (Figures 5
and 8). All of the experts viewed the problem in terms of social policy
and the intended goal of minimum-wage law, based upon predicted
outcomes for an entire class of people with a relevant distinction; i.e.,
population with market skills too low to justify the minimum wage. The
novices proceeded quickly to some predicted results for a narrower class
of individuals (teenagers) without recognizing any general social policy
or goals.

In the minimum-wage problem, all three experts spent vastly more
time representing the problem, and worked relentlessly forward
following the path cleared by the problem representation (expert
attribute number 4). The novices spent little time portraying the problem
and quickly reached a predicted conclusion. The novice was then forced
to work backward to the basic problem of whether the policy was a good
idea or not. Without a clear method for assessing the predicted result, for example, the first novice was forced to an inconclusive statement that assessing the value of doubling the minimum wage "depends on why they raised it."

The distinction between the experts and the novices was nowhere clearer than in the case of self-monitoring and evaluation (expert attribute number 5). In every problem, the first expert checked the conclusions reached for agreement with the problem, goals established, the particular subproblem currently being analyzed, or all three. A few examples should demonstrate this point. In the minimum-wage problem, at the end of both reasoning chains (links 14 and 17), the first expert checked his conclusions against the avowed goal developed earlier. In the Great Depression problem, the first expert monitored his conclusions and reasoning on numerous occasions. Links 28-32 (Figure 6) show this quite well. He established the theoretical role of monetary policy, checked the validity of this point against the problem by noting the failure of the Federal Reserve Bank (Fed) to increase the money supply, monitored that statement by admitting that he was not sure why, further checked the validity of this point by analogy to the Fed's actions in 1987 following the stock market crash, and then tied this back to the problem by connecting policy to avoiding recessions. As before, this pattern held for all three experts studied. In contrast, neither novice displayed self-monitoring.

The relatively greater flexibility of the expert (expert attribute number 6) is easiest to see in the comparison of protocols on the trade deficit problem (Figures 7 and 9). The first expert in this problem explicitly demonstrated flexibility by stating that, from the point of view of the secretary of commerce, policy depends upon the goals of the administration. The first expert also addressed the problem in no fewer than three separate ways: as a general economic problem of exchange rates, in terms of specific economic goals, and in terms of the administration's goals. Similarly, the second expert examined the problem in terms of both economic theory and the specific policies of the current administration. The third analyzed a litany of potential policies, from intervention by the Fed to jawboning trade partners. Again, in stark contrast, the first novice had one line to follow based on the assumed superiority of purchasing American goods, albeit without any specific supporting goal. The second novice's response was completely based on her father's employer, in this case a Japanese automobile company.

Both comparisons clearly display the experts' superiority in domain-specific knowledge (expert attribute number 8). The experts frequently displayed the specific use of economic concepts, generalizations, and models; for example, in the minimum-wage problem alone, the first expert introduced economic concepts or generalizations in 10 of 17 statements, the first novice in 2 of 7. This
pattern held for the other experts and for the second novice, who invoked but a single concept in all three responses.

Similarly, an inspection of the experts’ protocols compared with those of the novices reveals far more highly developed schemata (expert attribute number 10) among the experts. This is evident not only in the difference in the number of domain-specific knowledge statements made, but also in the interconnections employed in the use of causal links and propositional statements. Consider a comparison of two protocols on the minimum-wage problem: the first expert made six propositional statements and established five causal links; the first novice made two and established one. The difference is even greater in the protocols for the other two problems. Once again, this pattern was confirmed in the protocols of the other three participants.

In sum, based on the attributes of expert problem solvers established in previous research, it appears that the model developed in this study both displays the relevant attributes of economic problem solving and distinguishes between expert and novice problem solvers.

Conclusion and Implications

The research in cognitive psychology on differences between expert and novice problem solving has the potential to reshape research in economic education, the manner with which we teach economics to students, and our conception of what is meant by economic knowledge. Examining economic problem solving through the protocols described above might be a more direct measure of the objectives of economic education than assessment through test scores of economic knowledge (as traditionally conceived) or through economic opinions. To the extent that they capture schemata that include domain-specific knowledge linked in a network and the specialized procedures for using that knowledge, these economic problem-solving protocols can also be thought of as a more complete and more fully conceived representation of economic knowledge. Further research in this area might well reveal more effective ways to teach economics that may develop these economic schemata more quickly and in greater depth.

This study focused on the first step to integrate research on expert problem solving with economics and economic education. The model developed here captures the attributes of expert problem solving that are more directly applicable to problem solving in economics and avoids some aspects of other models that seemed insufficient for this purpose. This model appears to render the attributes of expert economic problem solving and successfully distinguishes expert from novice protocols.
Figure 1
Key to Economic Problem-Solving Model Protocols

- Propositional links: If...then statements
- Causal links: A results in B
- Other links: neither Propositional nor Causal

Problem Representation Statements

Employing an Economic Model

Other statements

Use of an economic concept or generalization

Goal Statement
(letter differentiates among goal statements)

Self-Monitoring/Self-Evaluation:
(letter indicates connection with goal statement)

Use of a specific fact
Figure 2
Soviet Expert Protocol: Voss G-Structure Model

Problem Statement

\[ GCON \]
10% arable land

\[ GSUB \]
Blackland in Ukraine

Climate

\[ GCON \]
Historically Achilles heel

\[ GSUB \]
Lack of technology for mechanization

\[ GSOL \]
Invest in technology

\[ GEVA \]
Presently low-level mechanization

\[ GSUB \]
Hard to fight decision making circles

\[ GSOL \]
Convince them of need for self-sufficiency

\[ GEVA \]
Do this by supporting infrastructure

\[ GSUB \]
Lack Education

\[ GSOL \]
Develop education programs

\[ GEVA \]
Tech. useless w/out know-how
Assessing Expertise in Economic Problem Solving

Figure 2 (continued)

Wages too low
Private property is temporary
Marginal payoffs for increases arable land
Market mechanism insufficient
Collectives more rewarding

Raise wages and other benefits
Make this part of system
Identify land and irrigate
Identify land and irrigate
Collectives and other system
Identify benefits and irrigate more
Rewarding
Will work as incentive
Need irrigation
Increase subsidies

(from Voss, et al., 1983)
Figure 3
The Frequency of Transition Model

(EXPERT)

(NOVICE)

(from Gobbo and Chi, 1986)
Figure 4
Expert Physicist Protocol: Node-Link Model

(from Chi, Glaser and Rees, 1982)
Figure 5
Expert One Protocol: Minimum-Wage Problem

1. Social Policy of Min. Wage
2. Low Real Wages

MINIMUM WAGE
3. Work develops skills
4. Examples of skills
5. Skill Levels & Wages
6. High Skill Level
7. Low Skill Level
8. More Unemployed

9. Some get higher wages
10. Better off at expense of unemployed
Figure 5 (continued)
Figure 6
Expert One Protocol: Great Depression Problem

What happened to demand?

Consumption

14. Gov't Action

19. Fiscal Policy: Taxes

21. Monetary Policy

13. Reduced consumption

25. Voluntary

24. 1932 Tax increase

23. Large income tax

17. Gov't Action

18. Gov't Demand

20. Fiscal Policy: Expenditures

16. Gov't Action

12. Gov't Action

15. Gov't Action

29. Don't know why

30. 1987 Stock Market Crash

31. Fed increased Ms

32. Avoided Recession
Assessing Expertise in Economic Problem Solving

Figure 6 (continued)

GREAT DEPRESSION

1. Variety of Explanations

2. Decrease in Demand △

3. Definition of Demand
   \[ C + I + G \] △

4. Decrease in C △

5. Government Options

6. Increase Expenditures

7. Increase Money Supply △

8. Decrease in interest rates △

9. Increase personal spending

10. Offset decline of AD △

11. Gov't did neither of these

12. Decrease in Cp
Figure 7
Expert One Protocol: Trade Deficit Problem

1. Advice to President
2. LR economic growth
3. Floating
4. Trade deficit reduced
5. Adjusting ex. rate
6. Floating
7. Fixed
8. Trade Deficit
9. Larger Question: Is deficit a problem?
10. What's the issue?
11. Policy depends on goals of policy-makers
12. Getting re-elected
13. Policy designed to meet administration goals
14. SR stimulus
15. LR growth
16. Eliminate trade deficit
17. Auto industry
18. Subsidize exports
19. Deficit perceived as bad
20. Restrict imports
21. Policy: impose tariffs
22. Think about it awhile
23. Design policy for constituents
24. Accept the results of the market
25. Lower tariffs
26. Greater free trade measures
27. Free trade agreements with other countries
28. Exchange Rate Systems
29. Depends on the constituency
30. LR economic growth
31. 0
32. 0
33. 0
34. 0
35. 0
36. 0
37. 0
38. 0
39. 0
40. 0
41. 0
42. 0
43. 0
44. 0
45. 0
46. 0

Arguable
Figure 7 (continued)

Cyclical nature of deficits and surpluses

10

Question assumes deficit is a problem

11

Most economist would dispute

12

Investment abroad

13

SR

History of high fgn investment in US

14

LR

Trade deficits

15

16

Good or bad?

17

0

18

Depends on point-of-view

0

19

20

21

22

Investment abroad

Trade surplus

Good for foreigners

0

Lr Growth

Distribution of Wealth

23

24

25

Most economists would dispute

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Figure 8
Novice Protocol: Minimum-Wage Problem

1. Minimum Wage

2. Economic Impact

3. Take away jobs

4. Fewer jobs offered at this price

5. Won't invest in teenagers; jobs go to older workers

6. Good idea? Raise Min. Wage to $8.50

7. Depends on why they raised it: style of living?
Figure 9
Novice Protocol: Trade Deficit Problem

1. Trade Deficit

2. US buying more goods from other countries

3. Sale on goods that they trade with

4. Increase incentives to buy American goods

5. What should President do?

6. Increase incentives for people to buy American goods

Some kind of benefit for people to buy American
Figure 10
Example of R Structure for Soviet Agriculture Problem Response

(GIPS) Interpret problem statement

(RARG) Historically, agriculture has been a problem in the Soviet Union
(RFAC) Problem has been inherited from the time the czars freed the serfs
(RFAC) Agricultural production was low even before then
(RREA) Historically, the aristocracy had no need to fend for itself
(RCOM) Was not like English aristocracy
(RPSC) Never introduced modern methods of fertilization
(RPSC) Never went to enclosures or consolidation of land
(RPSC) Never experimented with crop rotation
(RFAC) Agriculture problem was passed onto peasants so they could do what they willed with the land
(ROUT) They responded with old, inefficient ways
(RFAC) USSR had three different policies to increase agricultural production
(RPSC) Exhortation
  (RELA) Campaign for more effort on the part of the peasants
  (RCON) Was waste of time and energy
    (RREA) Only gave the party a sense of false importance
    (RREA) It is incumbent upon the party to develop these campaigns (but they haven't paid off)
    (RREA) Party believes that ideological policies can overcome objective limitations
  (RCON) I would not use exhortation
(RPSC) Reorganization
  (ROUT) Leads to confusion, mismanagement, makes peasants laid back
  (RPSC) Reorganized collective state farms, machine tractor stations
  (RSPC) Now have agroindustrial complexes, reducing number of collectives and making farmer a wage earner
(RQUA) Have always allowed private crop to exist
  (RQUA) Except in stringent ideological periods
  (REL) Is taken to be a more primitive form of production
  (RFAC) Private crops account for 40% of food staples
(RPSC) Mechanization
  (RCON) This is where I would start my solution
  (REL) Have tried to mechanize agricultural production more
  (REL) Tried to introduce scientific advances in agricultural production

(from Voss, Greene, Post, and Penner, 1983)
References


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