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Theory and Research in Social Education is the official journal of the College and University Faculty Assembly of the National Council for the Social Studies. Published quarterly, it is a general review open to all social studies educators, social scientists, historians, and philosophers. A general statement of purpose can be found at the end of the journal. Copyright 1997 by the College and University Faculty Assembly of the National Council for the Social Studies. All rights reserved.
CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

All members of the social education community, and CUFA members in particular, are invited to nominate articles previously published in *Theory and Research in Social Education* for inclusion in a planned book commemorating the 25th anniversary of the journal. The aim of this project is to collect articles representative of the full spectrum of theory and research in social education and that have enduring significance. Nominators are encouraged to consider exemplary research studies and articles that have had meaningful impact on theory, research or practice in social education as well as articles that have represented significant, yet under-recognized perspectives on social education.

The 25th anniversary of *TRSE* is an appropriate time to mark the accomplishments of one of CUFA's most visible components, it's journal. This project will provide an opportunity for social educators to engage in retrospective and prospective analysis of the field, particularly the scholarship published in the leading research journal. The planned book will consist primarily of reprints of selected articles from *TRSE*, with brief contextualizing introductions. There will also be a small number of original essays examining the major themes of research in social education over the past quarter century.

The current editor of *TRSE* along with a panel of consulting editors, representing a broad array of scholarly interests and perspectives, will serve as the jury for inclusion of previously published material.

**Guidelines for Submitting Nominations**

Nominations should be submitted via a letter that includes the following: (1) Full bibliographic information for each article nominated. (2) A brief statement describing the significance of work(s) nominated.

Nominations will be accepted via electronic mail. (Nominators please include your postal address, telephone and fax numbers with electronic submissions.) Self-nominations are appropriate. All nominators will be acknowledged in the book. Deadline for receipt of nominations has been extended to: **January 31, 1998**.

Send nominations to:

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The growing consensus on educational reform is that higher standards for core subjects areas, accompanied by rigorous testing programs linked to the new standards, is the best way to improve public education. While expectations are important, the search for a "magic bullet" to solve the problems faced by public schools has produced an approach to reform that degrades the competence of local institutions, teachers, and students to establish their own goals. This approach also diverts attention away from the conditions of learning and teaching that must be changed if schools are to be improved.

New York State is a long time leader in the use of top-down approaches that define what should be taught in classrooms and enforce compliance via high-stakes tests, which drive instruction toward a single set of standards. The logic, of course, is that "what gets tested will get taught," and while high-stakes tests can focus instruction, giving students and teachers specific goals, the educational costs of such an approach outweigh the benefits.

Proponents argue that mandated tests linked to specific standards force teachers to "teach to the test" thus preparing students in the skills and knowledge measured. Unfortunately, this logic fails to distinguish between the skill or knowledge itself and a fallible indicator of them—test scores. When test results are the primary indicator of school effectiveness, we tend to treat test scores, rather than meaningful learning, as the goal of schooling. This distortion of the purposes of schooling produces a number of deleterious effects on teaching and curriculum.

There is tremendous social pressure (from parents, school administrators, and students themselves) on teachers to see that students perform well on high-stakes tests. As a result, an increasing portion of instructional time is devoted to test preparation and "cramming" rather than focusing on learning. Instead of teaching aimed at actively engaging learners' minds through in-depth study of issues, hands-on experience, debates, simulations and inquiry, the focus of teaching becomes "covering the material" that will be tested. To further insure student success on examinations, teachers pay attention to the form of exam questions (essay, short answer, multiple choice) and adjust their instruction accordingly, reducing the skills and knowledge to the level measured by the test. The clearest evidence of the latter is the use of test prep books as textbooks in high school courses. Measurement-driven instruction also narrows the range and depth of learning by

---

concentrating attention on skills and knowledge that are amenable to testing.

The developing consensus on educational reform at the state and national level places its highest value on increased test scores. This is evident in the state-by-state comparisons in the U. S. Department of Education's "Wall Chart" and in New York with Education Commissioner Richard P. Mill's "School Report Cards" initiative. By establishing content standards for local schools and coercing compliance via mandated testing programs this reform effort reduces teachers to conduits for the delivery of pre-packaged knowledge, diminishes their professional judgment, and constrains the creativity and spontaneity of teachers and students.

Instead of merely measuring the success of schools, the current efforts to reform education in New York will allow state-mandated tests to determine what is taught, how it is taught, what is learned and how it is learned. Teachers and local school communities will be without the authority to bring their collective resources to bear on a matter as important as the education of the children in their community. The people who know children best—families and teachers—already have too little power to affect change in their schools. Standards-based reforms exacerbate this by transferring control over the curriculum away from local school communities to the agency that controls the mandated examinations. It is important to note that since most state level testing programs are developed and validated by outside contractors that state education departments may be delegating this power over education to private corporations whose primary concern is profitability.

In an effort to develop more creative, complex thinkers, standards-based reforms produce a form of "educational suicide" by creating an accountability system that blocks attainment of this very goal. This is an irony that was not overlooked by the 1988 New York State Task Force on the Teaching Profession, which stated that "what we have learned...is the system designed and redesigned to perfect top down control has only a limited capacity to respond to individual student needs. Before the structure can be changed to allow those school personnel closest to students—the teachers—to respond directly to their needs, there must be a commitment to establishing trust in teacher competency." Trust in teachers and others in local school communities is exactly what is missing from standards-based educational reform efforts in New York and nation-wide.

My argument is not against raising expectations for students and schools, but rather for allowing local schools and their constituencies to develop goals and standards in specific situations for specific students. The greatest mistake of this and previous school reform efforts is the failure to secure the active cooperation of local school communities in constructing the purposes and direction of reforms. Parents, stu-
dents, teachers, and other community members must participate in meaningful discussions about what kind of schools they want for their children. Of course, everyone will not subscribe to the same visions of what ought to be. Standards-based educational reforms, however, endeavor to create "one-size-fits-all" schools that represent the views and interests of elite policy-makers rather than cultivating multiple visions of schooling that will emerge from public deliberations about what schools should be.

For school reform to be broad, lasting, and effective, local school communities must have the opportunity and authority to address the issues that most directly affect the conditions of teaching and learning, such as: inadequate and inequitable funding; control of budgets, staffing, scheduling, curriculum, and assessment; and broad involvement of parents and community in the school. The focus on test scores merely diverts our attention from the crucial issues that must be addressed if our schools are to be transformed. Rather than relying on the coercive power of tests, people truly interested in improving schools would be better served by placing their faith in the people who know the students best.

*****

Readers' reactions to the series of essays published in this volume under the title "TRSE at a Quarter Century" have been overwhelmingly positive. In the past, TRSE has been almost exclusively devoted to publishing research articles and book reviews, with little space devoted to opinion pieces. I am committed to keeping the journal focused on its original mission. I believe, however, that the field in general and CUFA in particular would benefit from a high profile forum in which researchers, teacher educators, teachers, and others interested in social education could share their opinions on issues relevant to social education. To this end, beginning with Volume 26, TRSE will regularly publish opinion pieces under the title "Viewpoint." "Viewpoint" will typically feature one essay per issue.

Essays to be considered for "Viewpoint" should address issues related to social education in general or the politics of scholarship, teaching or curriculum. Manuscripts should be prepared according to journal style (see Information for Authors) and be approximately 3,000 words (eight to ten pages, double spaced) in length. Opinion pieces will be selected by the editor, but may also undergo external review.

Public discussion allows us to reason together and can improve our collective capacity for making the moral choices that come with our work as social educators. My hope is that this new forum will allow us to sustain a dialogue about important professional and intellectual issues in the field.

E. W. R.
"I just kinda know": Elementary Students' Ideas About Historical Evidence

Keith C. Barton
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Abstract
This study examined fourth and fifth graders' ideas about historical evidence through a year-long qualitative study of two classrooms. It identifies significant strengths in students' understanding of the reliability of sources but also points to drawbacks in their use of evidence to reach conclusions. Although students could examine sources critically, they rarely did so spontaneously, and when developing historical accounts they either ignored explicit consideration of the reliability of sources or treated all sources equally. These findings suggest that the use of evidence should be a continual and explicit focus of instruction, and that teachers should help students clarify the connection between their conclusions and the evidence which supports them. This study also suggests that students would benefit from a more cautious presentation of historical narratives, and that their interest in evidence might be increased by focusing on historical issues that continue to be significant in society.

The use of evidence to reach supportable conclusions is one of the most important objectives of the social studies—or, indeed, of most disciplines. Throughout this century, educators have pointed to the collection, evaluation, and systematic use of evidence as a critical feature of instruction in the field. Dewey's well-known dictum that reflective thought involves "active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it" (1910, p. 6) has been echoed by scholars such as Kilpatrick (1925), Wesley (1937), Bode (1940), Hunt and Metcalf (1957), Massialas and Cox (1966), and Beyer (1971). More recently, national curriculum standards for social studies point to the role of data collection and analysis in helping students make informed decisions (National Council for the Social Studies, 1994).

History educators frequently demonstrate particular sensitivity to such issues. The Bradley Commission on History in Schools (1988), for example, noted that history instruction should emphasize critical judgment in the use of evidence, and the National Council for History Standards
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required that national standards "reflect the principle of sound historical reasoning—careful evaluation of evidence" (National History Standards Project, 1994, p. 3). This concern is well placed, for it is evidence that separates historical knowledge from myths, legends, and fairy tales; stories about Columbus proving the world is round or Betsy Ross sewing the first flag are lacking in credibility precisely because there is no evidence to support them (and considerable evidence to the contrary). Without evidence, stories about the past rapidly deteriorate into various forms of "fanciful elaboration" (VanSledright and Brophy, 1993).

Research on Students' Use of Evidence

Despite its avowed importance to social studies education, the use of evidence has until recently received little attention by researchers in the United States. The only indexed entry for the topic in the Handbook of Research on Social Studies Teaching and Learning (Shaver, 1991) refers to the use of evidence by researchers themselves—not by the students they study. The topic has received somewhat more attention in Britain, where Shemilt (1987) identified four levels of understanding of evidence and methodology in history. At the lowest level, students take knowledge of the past for granted and see no problems of evidence or interpretation; they consider historical information to be true because the teacher says it is, and they think primary sources provide direct, textbook-like accounts of the past. At higher levels, students consider historical knowledge problematic, realize that sources can be biased or incomplete, recognize that historical investigation involves the interpretation of data and the testing of hypotheses against evidence, and see that historical accounts are reconstructions which make connections that contemporaries might not have perceived or even understood.

Recent research in the United States has found that students generally fall on the less reflective end of that continuum. Wineburg (1991, 1992), for example, gave several passages (from primary sources, textbooks, and fiction) describing the same event—the Battle at Lexington Green—to historians and high school students, and asked them to explain how they would rank the reliability of each. He found that unlike professional historians, students typically did not see the passages as human creations: They did not construct a willful author behind the text, did not consider the authors' intentions or social setting, and were unaware of subtexts. (See Yeager & Davis, 1994, 1995, for similar studies with university students.) Students in Wineburg's study even ranked textbooks as more reliable than primary sources, and Gabella (1993) also found that high school students regarded history texts uncritically and failed to see them as human creations. Similarly, while Epstein (1994a) noted that students recognized bias in textbooks, she found they nonetheless regarded them as authoritative sources of factual information.
Studies with younger students have yielded similar results. In interviews with fifth graders, Barton (1993) encountered a highly skeptical attitude toward historical accounts but found that students had no understanding of the kinds of evidence upon which such accounts are based. Brophy, VanSledright, and Bredin (1992) also found that before studying the topic, fifth graders had little understanding of what historians do or of the interpretive nature of history; after completing a unit on the nature of history and the work of historians, they had a better sense of the kinds of evidence historians use but still understood little of its interpretive nature or how to reconcile conflicting accounts. And Levstik (1989) noted that a fifth grader who had read historical fiction tended to evaluate her textbook's account of history in light of the "truth" she had learned from fiction; thus although historical fiction began to acquaint the student with the interpretive nature of history, it failed to provide her with an understanding of the kinds of evidence upon which interpretations are based.

These studies all point to students' lack of familiarity with the use and evaluation of historical evidence. But while they provide valuable insight into students' conceptualization of historical knowledge, such studies often are limited by a reliance on formal interview techniques. Formal interviews can provide extensive information on students' thinking, yet a more complete picture requires information on how students use evidence to reach conclusions in meaningful settings; such settings might include instruction at school, discussions with relatives, independent reading, or visits to historic sites. Research isolated from the contexts in which students are called upon to make use of evidence—in or out of school—provides only a partial picture of students' understanding of the evidentiary basis of history. Current cognitive theory emphasizes the contextualized nature of knowledge—the ways in which social and cultural settings determine how people acquire and use information and skills (e.g., Brown et al., 1989; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Resnick, 1991; Rogoff, 1990). A more complete portrait of students' approach to evidence requires going beyond clinical interviews with artificial tasks: It requires data from students' use of evidence in the classroom and in other culturally significant settings. Might students demonstrate a less simplistic understanding of evidence if it involved situations that occur in their everyday lives? Would they be more or less critical of historical information that derives from family members? How critical are students when conducting historical research at school?

Some recent studies have looked more closely at the relationship between classroom instruction and students' understanding of evidence (Levstik, 1996; VanSledright and Frankes, 1996; VanSledright and Kelly, in press), and this research has led to a more complete portrait of students' approach to history. In particular, these studies have identified specific stumbling blocks children encounter as they attempt to apply what they have learned in classroom settings. The findings reported here—the result of a year-long investigation combining interviews and extensive classroom...
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observation—overlap in important ways with these recent studies. In particular, this work points to significant strengths students brought to their understanding of historical evidence, but it also identifies serious shortcomings in their use of evidence to reach conclusions. Both the strengths and the weaknesses in students' understanding hold important implications for classroom instruction.

Research Procedures

I conducted this research in the classrooms of Amy Leigh and Tina Reynolds, two teachers who emphasized active involvement, open-ended assignments, and students’ construction of meaning.1 Amy’s was a combined fourth and fifth grade classroom, while Tina’s consisted solely of fourth graders. Their school was near Cincinnati, in a long-established suburban community consisting primarily of stable residential neighborhoods. The students reflected the racial and socioeconomic makeup of the community: All were of European American descent (although several also mentioned Native Americans in their ancestry), and most came from middle or upper-middle socioeconomic backgrounds; a large portion had parents with college degrees and jobs in professional or managerial fields. Slightly more than ten percent of the students, on the other hand, lived in the community’s small public housing projects, and thus the range of socioeconomic backgrounds in the classes was wide. The overall academic achievement of students in the school was high, and the school scored among the top ten in the state in each of the first three years of the state’s new testing program (the year of this study and the two preceding years). Both Amy and Tina described their students as exhibiting a range of academic abilities, but they considered most to be average or above average academically.

Amy and Tina considered themselves interested in history, and both devoted a great deal of time to the topic. Neither used textbooks. Instead, they conveyed content through trade books and their own explanations, combined with student-centered projects, role plays and simulations, and open-ended writing assignments. Their teaching accorded well with the general principles of effective subject-matter instruction identified by Prawat (1989) and Good and Brophy (1994). Rather than attempting to cover a large amount of miscellaneous information and expecting students to remember isolated facts, for example, Amy and Tina took time to plan sustained instruction in a few topics which they considered important. In addition, Amy and Tina consistently engaged in interactive scaffolding of students’ learning. Rarely did they tell students exactly what to do or how to do it; rather, they used questions to help students develop and improve their own assignments. Both Amy and Tina also encouraged class and small-group discussion, and they expected students to respond thoughtfully to their questions and to each other.
Students engaged in a variety of instructional activities related to several historical topics. At the beginning of the year they collected information on their personal histories and developed timelines and presentations about their lives. They also spent several weeks working in groups to investigate changes in aspects of everyday life (sports, work, household technology, cars, etc.) through the use of books, artifacts, and interviews. Students also studied topics such as the Salem witch trials, relations between European settlers and Native Americans, daily life in the Colonial Era, the American Revolution, and immigration to the United States. Studying most of these topics included the use of trade books, primary sources, role plays and simulations, presentations to classmates, and written compositions (often from the perspective of people alive at the time).

Students enjoyed their study of history, and they often greeted the arrival of the history portion of their day with enthusiasm. Throughout the year, every student said she or he thought the subject was interesting; indeed, some students explained that they thought history was a school subject precisely because it was interesting. Many students identified history as their favorite subject, and most had a conscious conception of themselves and others as active learners about history—as people with definite interests in the past. Among the indicators of students' interest and enthusiasm were their diligence in completing classroom projects, their efforts outside the classroom to obtain additional resources, the conversations they initiated with their parents and grandparents on what they had learned at school, and the obvious pride they took in presenting exhibits on their personal histories or other subjects they had researched.

The open-ended and inquiry-oriented nature of these classrooms provided a unique opportunity for the investigation of students' historical understanding. In order to investigate students' thinking, I used three principal techniques—interviews with students (both formal semi-structured interviews and informal discussions), classroom observation and participation (including frequent discussions with Amy and Tina regarding what students knew and were able to do), and analysis of students' written assignments. The first two of these methods proved particularly crucial in helping me gain insight into students' understanding. During the formal interviews, I showed students a series of pictures from American history, asked them to put them in order and to talk about the reasons for their placement, and then asked a series of questions about their understanding of history and about what they had done in class during the year. Because I was also observing in their classrooms, I was able to ask very specific questions in these interviews, and I was able to relate what students said to what they had heard or read in class.

I observed in the classrooms on sixty-three occasions—beginning in August and continuing until March (the last time during the year when formal instruction was devoted to history)—for a total of approximately ninety hours; this amounted to approximately eighty percent of students'
history instruction during the year. A particular advantage of participant observation was that it allowed me to observe students in a wider range of contexts than interviews alone could have done. Rather than seeing only their responses to interview tasks, I was able to watch and talk with students as they engaged in their everyday classroom activities. Because students engaged in so many group projects, and because Amy and Tina actively encouraged open-ended, thoughtful discussion of topics, my presence in the classroom provided me with innumerable opportunities to record informal and spontaneous comments by students.

I drew conclusions from these data through a process of analytic induction. After completing the classroom observations, I scanned fieldnotes, interview transcripts, and student compositions in order to identify an initial set of broad coding categories; these categories were based on the aspects of historical thinking identified by Seixas (1995), on the preliminary impressions I developed during fieldwork, and on emerging patterns in the data. I then subjected the data to a more systematic content analysis, in which I categorized units of data according to these initial categories, many of which were broken down, combined, or added to during the course of coding. I analyzed the coded data using means sometimes referred to as cross-case analysis and constant comparison: I grouped the data from different students responding to the same questions or tasks, identified patterns or regularities occurring in the data, and then looked for evidence of these patterns (including a systematic search for negative or discrepant evidence) across different situations, tasks, and interviews.

This analysis resulted in a set of descriptive generalizations about students' thinking, which I then combined into broader analytic domains; I used these patterns to develop the materials and probing questions used in the final set of interviews with students, and I asked Amy and Tina (and in some cases, students) for their feedback on my observations. (The resulting data were coded and analyzed in the same way described above.) In the following section, I discuss the results related to one of these broad analytic domains—students’ ideas about historical evidence and its use.

Findings

Sources of Historical Information

When I asked students during the early stages of the study how people find out about the past, nearly all thought the information was handed down through word of mouth. As Dwayne explained, "Their mom and dad told them before they died, then they just keep passing it up." Jenny also explained, "Well, like if like adults lived, and if your grandparents or something were alive, at a certain time, they could tell you." Similarly, Kenny noted, "Maybe it's been passed down through families," and his interview partner Curtis added, "Through generations." Even when asked about topics further removed from their own experience, students thought
the information was transmitted orally; Kenny, for example, said, "Maybe an Indian that lives now has it passed on to him from his great-great-great-great-grandfathers, who lived back then, and lived to be ninety years old, and passed down to him, so now he could tell us about that."

Students also occasionally mentioned that people could learn about the past from books (especially after the school year got underway). But when asked how the people who write books know what happened, students described them as little more than written versions of oral transmission; most thought books about the past were written by people in the past, who had witnessed events firsthand. Kenny explained that "somebody just decided to write it down," and went on to say,

And the history of those books is, people have written them a long time ago, and now they’ve lasted until now, and they can tell us about back then [...] Or it’s about maybe a child lived back here [indicating an earlier time], and wrote a book way up there [at a later time], and now it’s lasted until now, so it’s lasted thirty years, from when he was a little child, and he wrote the book about his childhood and what it was like back then.

Similarly, Kathy suggested, "Maybe if people a long time ago wrote a book about theirselves or something," and Tonya explained, "Some people wrote about it back in the past, and they passed it up through the generations, like somebody might have written it back here, and passed it to these people." Reflecting the belief that books about the past had to be old themselves, Nichole maintained that to find out about the past from encyclopedias, a person would have to find some that are "really, really old [...] because they would have to say what they had back then, and in newer ones, it doesn’t have stuff that’s old."

Students sometimes recognized that books about history are written in the present, yet they nonetheless thought those were based directly on accounts which had themselves been handed down through word of mouth. Amber, for example, said, "It could be if their family just sort of, the stories that kept coming up in the family, like if I had kids and I passed the story down, and maybe they would make a book about it." In the following interview excerpt, students demonstrate the same idea:

**Interviewer:** So people who write books about things a long time ago, where do you think they found out how things were different?

**Susan:** Well, probably they lived back then.
Interviewer: What about if somebody wanted to write a book about how things were different three hundred years ago? How would they know?

Jean: They would probably look it up in the encyclopedia.

Interviewer: But how about the person who wrote the encyclopedia, how do you think they found out?

Susan: Probably if they had relatives that were a hundred years old, or eighty years old when they died, and they had a relative, and they find that out, and if my relative was a hundred years old, they would probably tell me.

When pressed to think of other ways to find out about the past, most students made reasonable suggestions. A few mentioned artifacts. Amber, for example, said, “They get a hat from back then, and a hat from now, and they compare.” Similarly, Angie explained that “they might find old stuff, from the old days […] Like if people died or something, you could go to their house to find older things, if they were sorta old.” A few students also mentioned journals or diaries. Jesse, for example, said, “If you could have like a journal,” and Nichole said, “Well, they have like diaries and stuff, like when you go on vacation, like back then, like you would have a boat, well, you would find out, and you would write that in your journal, like ‘We went in the boat today.’” And given that they were sitting in front of a series of historical pictures as I asked them these questions, several students observed that you could learn about the past from pictures.

Once students had more experience collecting historical information in their classrooms, their answers to interview questions like these became much more confident and varied. Having done their own research using people, photographs, artifacts, documents, and a variety of contemporary books, students began to list several of these sources in rapid succession when asked about sources of historical information. The answer to this question eventually became so apparent to students that I dropped it from the interviews altogether.

Evaluating Evidence and Reconciling Conflicting Accounts

When asked what they would do if they were trying to find out about the past and got different answers, most students initially had trouble answering. Some simply misunderstood the question. Angie, for example, thought that different answers might be found because one person was writing about one country, and another was writing about another. Simi-
Students' Ideas About Historical Evidence

larly, Jeremy thought that one person might be talking about Abraham Lincoln, while another was talking about George Washington.

Once I gave specific examples of how the issue might arise, though, most students provided more complicated responses. When I asked what they would do if they got different information from relatives they interviewed for their personal timelines—regarding what their first word was, for instance—they suggested that some people were more reliable as sources. John said he would believe his parents rather than his sister “because my sister probably wouldn’t remember as much as my mom or dad would.” Jeremy also said, “I’d go by what my parents said, because your parents would know, your aunt or uncle wouldn’t know.” Most students pointed specifically to the greater reliability of mothers than fathers. Jeremy said, “I’d go with your mom, because your mom would know and not your dad, because your dad wouldn’t keep all the records. Your mom or the hospital keeps all your records, and your baby book and all that stuff.” Amber agreed, adding, “Your moms are usually around to hear your first word and dads are probably out working.” Jenny also noted that “I just think my mom would know more than my dad would,” and Tonya explained, “My dad is wrong about different things with me all the time, and he gets me and my baby brother mixed up all the time.”

Several students suggested looking at another source. Kathy laughed knowingly when I asked what she would do if her mother said her first word was *mama* and her father said it was *dada*, and said, “I would probably get a baby book and look, and if it wasn’t in there, then ask like your grandma or grandpa.” Dwayne also said to look in a baby book; when I asked him if he thought that would be more reliable, he said, “Yeah, because then it’s *then*, you remember it because it was on that day, and now it’s gone.” One student suggested much the same response but with a very different example: Kenny and Curtis had initially agreed that conflicting accounts could only by reconciled by guessing, but when Curtis mentioned the assassination of John F. Kennedy, Kenny pointed to the use of multiple sources: “They go around, they look for clues, they found people who had maybe seen it.”

Near the end of the year, students had a chance to apply their ideas on evaluating and reconciling sources in class: They read twelve different accounts of the battle at Lexington Green, and ranked the reliability of each (adapted from Bennett, 1967). When Amy introduced the activity, she compared it to a controversy that had arisen in a recent basketball game involving several of the students (and with which the entire class seemed to be familiar). They were excited about discussing the differences of opinion involved, and Amy explained that in this exercise they would be doing much the same thing: They were going to look at several different accounts of the same event and decide what they thought happened.

In their initial discussion, students suggested several factors that might influence the reliability of the accounts. Even before Amy compared it to
the basketball game, Jenny had asked her, "Are all these colonist people?"; when she found out they were not, she said that the ones who were colonists would probably think the British started it, and the British would probably think the colonists did. John also said that it would be important to know whether they were actually present at the event. Amy asked whether it would matter how long afterward the accounts were written, and students agreed that it would; Darren said if they were written more recently they would know exactly what happened, but if someone wrote them a long time afterward, they wouldn't remember as much. John said that knowing who won the war might also influence what they wrote, since they would tend to favor the winners; Jenny added that if the two sides were still mad at each other after the war, that would affect what they wrote as well.

Students had no trouble applying these principles once they began reading and discussing the individual accounts. The first was that of a "Colonial onlooker" who asserted that the British fired first. Some students thought being a colonist would make him more likely to blame the British; others noted that since he was only an "onlooker," he probably wasn't on either side, and that since he was actually present, he might be reliable. The second account came from a British officer's diary. Like several other students, Nichole pointed out that since it was a diary, he wouldn't know other people were going to read it and he would be more likely to tell the truth.

The third account was that of a captured British soldier who claimed that the British fired first. Students thought that the fact that he was "going against his own side" made him more reliable, but several also pointed out that he might just be telling the colonists what they wanted to hear so he wouldn't be killed. As Nichole said, "He's going against the British, so it might be reliable, but it also might not be, because he's just saying that so the colonists won't kill him." The fourth account was a deposition sworn to by thirty-four Colonial militiamen, who claimed that the British fired first. Angie argued that if thirty-four people all had to come to agreement on the same statement, it wouldn't be very reliable, because each person would have had to make compromises for the group to reach consensus; her explanation was so well argued that no one suggested an alternative interpretation of the reliability of that source.

Several students thought the report of the British commander—based on the reports of the officers who had been present at the battle—would have been unreliable; they thought the officers might have lied about who fired first so that they would not get in trouble. Others, however, thought they would be likely to tell the truth because the general would eventually find out from others what really happened, and the officers would be in even bigger trouble if they lied. In one group, Angie explained, "If they told a lie, and he found out, he might kill them, because army people aren't supposed to lie." (Donny noted, "But they do.")
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Students agreed that an account from a London newspaper would not be very reliable, both because it would be more likely to support the British side and because the information might have been changed by the time it was published (two months after the battle). Students agreed that a Colonial newspaper would be just as biased in the other direction. Students also thought that another account, written fifty years later by a former minuteman, would be unreliable because he wouldn't be able to remember very well and because he would want the colonists to look like heroes.

Using Evidence to Reach Conclusions

In some ways, the Lexington Green activity described above was one of the most successful of the entire year. The exercise was at just the right level of difficulty: The accounts contained enough archaic language that students had to work to decipher the meaning of some passages, for example, but not so hard they gave up. Similarly, students were able to evaluate the reliability of the sources, but these evaluations were not so immediately obvious that they required no discussion. Students also thought the exercise (which lasted several days) was fascinating; they were constantly engaged in the task, and at the end of the first day were shocked at how quickly time had gone by when lunch time arrived. Travis pointed out that he thought it was interesting because he liked looking at the differences of opinion and putting them into categories; Susan thought it was interesting to read someone's diary.

In helping students understand how historians interpret evidence, however, the exercise was less successful. Despite understanding and enjoying the activity, students never saw the connection between what they were doing and how people know what happened in history. At the beginning of the task, Amy had explained that they would be doing just what historians do—looking at several different accounts and trying to figure out which are the most reliable. From an instructional perspective the purpose of the exercise was to give students a better understanding of how historians work, yet that was precisely what students failed to understand: They never realized that historical accounts are based on the kinds of evidence they were themselves examining.

Several indications of this lack of understanding arose during the exercise. Jenny noted after reading the first account, for example, that they should write on their worksheets that it was "just his opinion"; she seemed to think that some of the accounts would not be an "opinion," but would be the actual description of what happened. Similarly, when Tonya came to an introduction which read, "The London Gazette printed this version of the incident on June 10, 1775," she concluded immediately that it was not reliable because it was a "version." I asked her if that made it different than they others, and she said, "Yeah, because it's just made up."

More strikingly, one group was discussing an account described as being written by "an English author" in 1811. The consensus among the
students was that he might be making it all up. When asked how he would have gotten the information for his description, one student said, “Study it”; another explained that since it was the shot heard round the world, “he would have heard about it.” One student thought the author himself might have been at the battle, but the others were convinced that the account was just “made up.” None of them understood that his account would have been based on some of the sources they themselves were looking at; they thought he either made up the account or just “heard about it” from other people. At the end of the exercise several students agreed that any account identified as having an “author” had to be less reliable, because authors make things up in order to make them more exciting.

Students’ lack of understanding of the evidentiary basis of historical accounts was clearest the day after they finished working through the sources. Amy asked students who they now thought had fired the first shot at Lexington Green. All the students had an opinion, but all agreed that none of their opinions were based on the accounts they had just read: Since they thought none of the sources was completely reliable, they simply explained what they thought “must” have happened—without any reference to the sources. (Most thought that the colonists had fired first since they had more incentive to start the war.) Amy was surprised that students had chosen to ignore these sources; moreover, when asked whether they thought that was what historians do—just decide what they think “must” have happened—all agreed that they did. The idea of basing an account on evidence was completely lacking in their explanations.

While the Lexington Green activity compressed issues of historical interpretation into an easily observable time frame, such issues were by no means lacking at other times. Throughout the year, many of students’ assignments required the use of historical evidence—creating personal and family histories, making displays on changes in everyday life, and designing museums of colonial life. In completing these assignments, students rarely attended to issues of reliability or the evaluation of conflicting sources. Despite their valid, common sense ideas, most students never considered such questions, even when the task involved the collection and interpretation of evidence. When completing personal and family histories, for example, students simply collected and recorded the necessary information, and never attempted to verify what they found. Similarly, when developing displays on the history of everyday life, students had a wide range of sources from which to choose, but they failed to consider whether they should compare sources or seek confirmation for what they learned. Most groups, in fact, found one book they liked and based their entire presentation on it; when they did include information from more than one source, each was given equal weight, with no attempt to evaluate its reliability. Since these projects did not explicitly require verification of information or comparison of sources, students can easily be forgiven for not doing so—but it is important to note that in spite of their understanding that sources
might be inaccurate or might disagree, they never considered the issue on their own initiative during classroom projects.

More striking were the occasions when students neglected evidence altogether. Just as they had ignored the primary sources in reaching conclusions about Lexington Green, students sometimes developed their projects without making use of any of the information available. A group developing a display on the history of household technology, for example, brought in numerous artifacts and placed them into categories according to their age; when Tina asked them how they found out in which category each belonged, they said they "just knew." Another group had used several different books to investigate changes in work, but when they started to develop their presentation, they began by creating new information—based on no sources whatever—and completely ignored the research they had done on the topic. And when designing museums of colonial life, students frequently responded to questions about the source of their information by saying, "I just kinda know." Despite the presence in the room of books on the colonial era, photographs of preserved colonial homes, and reproductions of artwork dating from the period, no student attempted to use these sources to supplement or verify what she or he already thought. Just as in the Lexington Green activity, the idea of using evidence to support conclusions did not appear salient for students.

Discussion

This study demonstrates the complexities of students' understanding of historical evidence. Having previously had minimal formal exposure to history—and even less to the work of historians—students understandably began the year with little idea of how evidence is used to create historical accounts. Most thought that historical information was handed down by word of mouth—an assumption reflecting the family context in which much of their previous historical learning had taken place (Barton, 1995). But this personalized understanding of historical information also provided students with reasonable ideas about what made some sources more reliable than others, as well as how to reconcile conflicting accounts: They knew that people sometimes remember differently, that personal bias can influence accounts, that direct sources provide different insights than indirect ones, and that contemporary sources are more reliable than later memory. These findings are similar to those of VanSledright and Kelly (in press), who found that some fifth graders understood that texts could vary in their validity, and that students considered authors' points of view important in making judgments about those texts.

Students in the present study made impressive use of their understanding in analyzing primary sources describing the battle at Lexington Green. These fourth and fifth graders engaged in precisely the kinds of historical thinking that eluded the high schoolers studied by Wineburg
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(1991, 1992) and some of the university students described by Yeager and Davis (1994, 1995): They saw each account as constructed by a willful author, and they carefully and systematically analyzed the potential bias in each source—the political leanings of the author, the goal the author was trying to achieve, the recentness of the event, even the effects of peer pressure. Students' experiences with disagreements, with bias, and with memory—all developed outside the context of school history—equipped them with the critical skills needed for sound historical reasoning. But just as importantly, these students regarded texts so critically they considered them pure fiction. Faced with conflicting sources, students despaired of establishing any reliability and thus rejected them all. VanSledright and Kelly (in press) and VanSledright and Frankes (1996) found similar difficulties among the students they studied; the fourth and fifth graders in those studies knew that sources could disagree, but they knew of no strategies for dealing with such disagreement.

But while the students in this study regarded sources critically, they paradoxically regarded information—abstracted from the texts that carry it—uncritically: They acted as though knowledge of the past existed independently of evidence. Thus in developing their projects on the history of everyday life, students had no interest in establishing the validity of their information: If they came across information somewhere—anywhere—they included it, and they rarely considered the possibility of looking at more than one source. Students working on "Colonial museums" or other projects often included information that came from no source at all, but which they just "kinda knew." Most revealingly, students in Amy's class based their conclusions about the battle of Lexington Green on none of the evidence they had been considering, and they thought historians did the same. These findings are similar to those in a recent study by Levstik (1996), who found that when third graders who had completed extensive historical research were asked to put their findings into a narrative form, they quickly abandoned the information they had acquired and "resorted to wholesale fiction" (p. 2).

For educators, the crucial question is why?—why do students have such difficulty employing evidence when they reach conclusions about the history they study in class? Because the present study was primarily descriptive, answers to this question must remain speculative; nonetheless, the experiences of these students suggest that three factors may have been crucial. The first is the most obvious: Students had little or no prior experience in using historical evidence to reach conclusions in classroom settings and thus were not very skilled at such tasks. These students had not previously studied history systematically at school, and the history they had encountered there did not focus on questions of evidence. It is not surprising, then, that their initial attempts at historical analysis did not always accord very precisely with the work of professional historians. Rather than being seen as a failure to think historically, students' performance should
be seen as an early point on a continuum of historical thinking, a starting point along a path which will involve expanding exposure to historical sources and instruction in their evaluation and use. Some might object that fourth and fifth graders are simply not capable of such analysis, but that view is not supported by this research. Students in this study enjoyed working with primary sources, could evaluate them critically when asked to, and sometimes consulted them in creating their own historical accounts; those achievements seem reasonable for beginners, and there is no reason to think that with increased exposure students could not further refine their use of historical evidence.

A second reason for students’ difficulty in using evidence may lie in the narrative form in which they had previously learned about history. When students had encountered history at school before fourth grade, it was in the context of reading or listening to stories of famous people. Outside school, they had heard relatives tell stories about the past, watched television shows or movies set in historic time periods, or read historical fiction or biographies on their own (Barton, 1995). In each of these instances, the form of presentation was a narrative one: Students learned about characters who participated in causally connected chains of events. Any narrative involves the intentional selection and arrangement of elements, as well as an interpretation of the connections among those elements—but rarely do narratives (particularly for children) invite speculation into the basis for such interpretation. More commonly, a narrative presents its audience with a single version of events, arranged so that it appears to be the only one possible; the audience typically judges the validity of the story’s interpretation not by comparison to empirical evidence (irrelevant anyway in the case of fiction) but by its verisimilitude—its congruence with their understanding of the norms of human motivation and behavior (Bruner, 1986). Children realize that fictional narratives are imaginative creations and do not need to be validated by factual evidence—but what are they to do with nonfiction narratives such as history? Lacking previous instruction in the topic, the students in this study assimilated their understanding of historical narratives to that of fictional ones: Since they thought anything that had an “author” was inherently unreliable on empirical grounds, they supplied their own details on the basis of what they thought “must” have happened. Rather than attempting to reconcile or choose from among conflicting accounts, students regarded all such accounts as equally unreliable and reached their judgments on the basis of a more general understanding of human motivation and behavior.

Finally, explaining students’ readiness to assert historical knowledge that has no evidentiary basis may require placing their historical thinking into a broader context than the school setting. Like adults, children are most likely to acquire the skills considered significant in the society of which they are a part (whether or not those match the instruction they receive at school). Students in Amy’s classroom may not have perceived any cultural
importance in basing conclusions about the past on evidence; they may not have recognized that as a valued skill, or one that they are likely ever to need. After all, what difference would it make which account of Lexington Green was best supported by the sources? This is not to say that students did not care about the exercise, or about history more generally; in fact, they enjoyed the subject immensely, and the Lexington Green activity was a particular favorite. The one aspect of the lesson that mattered little to them, though, was the connection between conclusions and evidence, and their indifference to this aspect of historical reasoning may well reflect a similar apathy in the broader society of which they are a part.

Indeed, one could argue that students' performance closely mirrors the general lack of concern in American culture with questions of evidence. In many areas of life—politics, economics, religion, and popular culture, for example—the uncritical acceptance of conclusions appears to be more highly valued than their analysis in light of the grounds that support them. The popularity of psychic telephone lines, weekly tabloids, urban legends, and UFO sightings suggests that people do indeed accept many propositions without regard to their supporting evidence. This tendency to base firmly held beliefs on grounds other than empirical evidence is also apparent in popular perceptions of history, as demonstrated, for example, by resistance to alternative interpretations of the bombing of Hiroshima (Nobile, 1995) or by nostalgic remembrance of times that never were (Coontz, 1992). Given this general discomfort with examining the evidence for beliefs, students' indifference to the issue seems unremarkable: They appear to have internalized their society's lack of interest in this aspect of history.

Yet this simplified picture may also obscure important facets of historical reasoning, for there is not one American culture, nor any one popular historical understanding—there are many. A great deal of research in history, sociology, and anthropology has demonstrated how communities retain, pass on, and commemorate perceptions of the past that may stand in contrast to official stories encountered in school or other institutions (Bodnar, 1992; Cohen, 1994; Gillis, 1994; Kammen, 1995; Schwartz, Zerubavel, and Barnett, 1986). Recent studies with children confirm the pervasiveness of these alternative historical perceptions. Epstein (1994b, 1997), for example, found that African American high school students often used the historical information they acquired in their neighborhoods and from their families to construct an understanding that stood in active resistance to what they learned at school. Similarly, Barton and Levstik (1997) found that middle graders drew on the historical memories of people they knew to provide alternatives to more progressive and benign versions of American history. Because families and communities can retain memories that stand in contrast to official interpretations, the connection between historical evidence and conclusions has the potential to assume great cultural importance; issues that continue to matter in society, but
whose interpretations have not yet been firmly established, may spark more interest in historical evidence than do less controversial issues. The fact that some students in this study were already familiar with debates over the assassination of John F. Kennedy suggests that issues of evidence may indeed be salient for children when they relate to questions that retain their importance in the wider culture. Rather than concluding that students' lack of interest in evidence-based conclusions reflects a general deficiency in American culture, it may be more accurate to conclude that it reflects our society's lack of interest in documenting colonial military encounters. Instead of seeking to explain why students are not more inclined to use historical evidence when they draw conclusions, perhaps we would be better served by seeking to establish which topics are most likely to stimulate them to do so.

**Instructional Implications**

These findings carry several significant instructional implications. First, students need systematic exposure to the collection and evaluation of historical evidence. Most students initially suggested that historical information was handed down by word of mouth, or perhaps by its written equivalent—books written a long time ago. These students did not know that people in the present use a variety of sources in order to reconstruct accounts of the past. Without a more complete understanding of the basis of historical knowledge, students are ill equipped to participate in the kinds of "sound historical reasoning" required for meaningful learning. Amy and Tina, however, engaged their classes in assignments in which students themselves were responsible for collecting historical information, and thus they came to see the variety of sources people today use to learn about the past. Projects which required students to engage in historical inquiry—creating personal and family histories, making displays and presentations, recreating historical events—led them to a more complete understanding of the sources of historical information. Elementary students need the opportunity to examine historical evidence firsthand—not the tertiary and evidence-free accounts in textbooks, but documents, photographs, objects, oral accounts, and a wide variety of secondary sources.

Second, elementary students have important skills in historical reasoning that can be built on and expanded. Students already were aware of numerous ways in which sources could be biased, and they easily applied their understanding to historical documents; their analysis of the Lexington Green sources far outpaces the older students described in previous research. These students' greater facility with the task perhaps resulted from its completion in a classroom setting: Students were able to discuss the task beforehand, compare it to what they already knew, and work collaboratively with teachers and peers. Evaluating evidence in that kind of familiar context resulted in more sophisticated responses than in the
more clinical settings used in previous studies. Given students' interest and ability in evaluating evidence, instruction should incorporate many more such exercises, in the elementary grades and later. Through such exercises, students could move beyond their generalized understanding of bias to consider the specifically historical circumstances which produced the sources they examine. They might, for example, learn about political or economic events that influence the subtexts of documents, or they might investigate how historical attitudes toward gender, race, religion, or other aspects of society influence the ways historical documents are worded. Students' prior understanding of conflict and bias in present day accounts provides a solid basis for such an undertaking.

But students also need much more experience connecting historical evidence and conclusions. Despite their critical strengths, students did not spontaneously bring these to bear on their historical studies. Although they learned during the year what kinds of sources historians use and had no trouble evaluating sources critically when asked to do so, students failed to recognize that conclusions about what happened in history must be based on critical examination of sources. Students recognized that any source is potentially biased, but as a result they either treated all sources equally or threw sources out altogether and based their conclusions on what they "kinda knew." But historical knowledge requires a more complicated response—considering which sources are more credible and evaluating which claims are better supported by evidence. In order to engage in this kind of reasoning, students need more practice in the "active, persistent, and careful consideration," in Dewey's terms, of the evidence for historical claims. Such consideration cannot be a simple add-on to a fact-based curriculum, nor even a central component of the only occasional inquiry project; evidence-based reasoning must be a continual and explicit focus of instruction. Most importantly, students need systematic and ongoing practice with using evidence to form conclusions, and teachers must help students clarify the connection between their conclusions and the evidence which support them. These efforts must become such a common feature of instruction that students demonstrate careful reasoning as a consistent habit of thinking (cf. Meier, 1995; Sizer, 1992).

But helping students develop these skills also requires considering the factors which may hinder their application in historical contexts. First, educators need to be extremely cautious in their use of historical narratives. The power of narrative to stimulate students' interest is well-established, and for several years it was fashionable in some circles to refer to history as "a story well told." As a device for teaching students history, however, the uncritical presentation of stories about the past has serious drawbacks. Because stories usually omit any mention of the evidence upon which they are based, teachers should make sure that they are accompanied by projects which require the examination of evidence. Students might, for example, use sets of historical sources to decide which elements of a
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given story are most likely to be true, and which may have been invented or exaggerated. Whenever possible, students need to read works of history whose authors describe their sources of information, and who indicate conflicts among those sources; an essential criterion for the evaluation of children's nonfiction, in fact, is the extent to which an author makes such issues clear (Levstik and Barton, 1997). Students could also use primary sources to create their own stories, and teachers could help them reflect on the connections between the evidence and their interpretations. In addition, when students encounter the larger narratives which comprise the substance of most textbooks and curriculum guides, they should have the chance to use historical evidence to create alternative interpretations—to describe the story of westward expansion from the perspective of Native Americans, or women, or African Americans, for example. Unless students' exposure to historical narratives is accompanied by familiarity with the way those narratives are created, they are unlikely to develop a meaningful understanding of the difference between evidence-based historical accounts and "fanciful elaborations" (VanSledright and Brophy, 1992).

Finally, students' encounter with history should focus on issues that retain their significance in contemporary society, for those are the issues most likely to inspire students to support their conclusions with reliable evidence. Instead of well-crafted "academic" exercises on safe topics such as Lexington Green, students should examine the evidence surrounding more meaningful historical events—World War II, the Vietnam War, the Civil Rights movement, and so on. Even topics more typically found in primary classrooms have the potential to inspire strong reactions today. Stories about Columbus, the Pilgrims, George Washington, and Abraham Lincoln still matter because they are central to the American mythology of "our" origins as a nation, and evidence which challenges popular perceptions will be treated skeptically; many people, for example, are highly resistant to hearing that Columbus was directly responsible for the mutilation and murder of countless Native Americans. Students who examine the evidence surrounding deeply-held American myths may be more likely to develop an appreciation for the necessity of linking conclusions to evidence—particularly if they share their findings with those outside the classroom. If students have to overcome skepticism toward their claims, they may see more clearly the necessity of basing those claims on reliable evidence.

Conclusions

The students in this study initially had little knowledge of the evidentiary basis of historical accounts, but after participating in several historical investigations they developed an understanding of the range of sources which can yield historical information. Students also had valid ideas about how to evaluate sources: When placed in the historical context they
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knew best—talking to relatives—most understood that some sources are more reliable than others and that conflicting sources could be reconciled by evaluating their reliability or by referring to other sources. Furthermore, students were able to apply these common sense ideas in evaluating primary sources on the battle at Lexington Green. Yet students never fully understood the connection between critically examining sources and forming conclusions. Although they could examine sources critically when asked, they rarely did so spontaneously, and thus when developing accounts of what happened in history they either ignored explicit consideration of the reliability of sources or treated all sources equally.

Several factors may have contributed to students' difficulty in basing their historical accounts on evidence—their lack of previous experience with such skills, their exposure to history primarily in the form of narratives, or their perception that the use of historical evidence has little importance in the wider culture. Each of these factors could be addressed systematically in the elementary classroom: Teachers could provide students with more practice in using historical evidence, could make sure that historical narratives are accompanied by critical analysis of the evidence on which they rest, and could focus on issues significant enough to make the question of evidence an important one. Thus while this study shows that elementary students possess important skills needed for historical reasoning, it also indicates that instruction should focus more systematically and explicitly on helping students make use of these skills; students need practice weighing historical evidence, examining biases, synthesizing information, and reaching conclusions. In perhaps no other area of the school curriculum is content so thoroughly divorced from attention to the methods of investigation and creation of knowledge; especially at the elementary level, students rarely have the chance to collect historical information, examine primary sources, or consider conflicting interpretations. More attention to such activities is needed in order to help students develop a more complete understanding of the sources of historical knowledge.¹

Notes

¹ With their permission, I have used the teachers' real names. Students' names have been replaced with pseudonyms to protect their privacy and that of their families.

² While educational researchers often take the role of nonparticipant observers who attempt to position themselves unobtrusively and not to interfere in instruction, I explicitly took a much more active role. In addition to working with the teachers to plan lessons and locate resources, I frequently taught or cotaught lessons, and even more frequently interjected comments, questions, and observations during class—a practice which the teachers actively encouraged and which fit well with the discussion-oriented nature of their instruction and with the generally open feeling of
their classes. When students were engaged in individual or group work I often took on the same role as their teachers—probing students' understanding, asking them questions about the way they carried out the assignment, and providing them with the help they needed.

3 The author wishes to thank Linda S. Levstik, Bruce VanSledright, and Michael Whelan for their valuable comments on earlier versions of this paper.

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Toward a More Thoughtful Professional Education for Social Studies Teachers: Can Problem-Based Learning Contribute?

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Abstract

The data presented here show that prospective social studies teachers perceived Problem-Based Learning to provide a significantly more thoughtful learning environment than their other university level experiences. The results can be explained, at least in part, by PBL's capacity to overcome barriers to thoughtful teaching and learning identified in previous research. If social studies teachers are to provide thoughtful classrooms for their students then their own professional education must provide them with appropriate models to emulate and it is proposed that PBL might well constitute one such model.

In this study we investigated the links between Problem-Based Learning (PBL) and the level of "thoughtfulness" (Newmann, 1991a; 1991b) experienced by prospective social studies teachers in their professional studies. The focus on thoughtfulness stems from a desire to engage prospective teachers in a potent educational experience; one that would exhibit many of the features associated with powerful rather than weak social studies teaching in schools (NCSS, 1994). Our interest in PBL rests with whether it provides an educational opportunity that is qualitatively different from the alternatives. Here, we present data showing PBL to be perceived by prospective social studies teachers as essentially thoughtful in nature and significantly more so than their other university level experiences. Furthermore, we propose that the intrinsic features of problem-based learning make it possible to overcome some of the obstacles that often render teachers' own professional education less than a model of thoughtfulness.

Problem-Based Learning

As developed in medical schools, beginning with the work in the new Faculty at McMaster University in Canada in the mid-1960s, PBL has sought to reorient the way in which physicians are introduced to their craft. In-
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Instead of the traditional approach in which the study of basic sciences predominates initially and is then followed by clinical studies (Scheiman, Whittaker & Dell, 1989), a sort of theory into practice paradigm, PBL makes the resolution of a professional problem the central educational event. It requires a problem that is typical of those that the professional will encounter in practice, and it is the problem that must be encountered first in the learning process. Beyond that, there can be considerable variation in the types of learning objectives, the degree of teacher directiveness, and the size of the learning group. Indeed, the variety of forms that PBL can take has led Barrows (1986) to develop a taxonomy of problem-based learning methods.

The curricular justification for problem-based learning in medical education lies in both the patent deficiencies of traditional programmes (Muller, 1984; Walton & Matthews, 1989; Barrows, 1985) and in the accomplishments and possibilities afforded by PBL itself. Certainly, the preliminary evidence suggests that PBL curricula can enhance the transfer of concepts to new problems, can heighten intrinsic interest in the subject matter, and can strengthen self-directed study skills (Norman & Schmidt, 1992). Furthermore, a potentially important mechanism to explain the effects is to be found in contextual learning theory (Coles, 1990). Simply put, the problem establishes a context for learning, engages students' intrinsic interest in the subject matter and by encouraging the self-directed quest for the knowledge and insight needed to resolve the problem, establishes the learning habit. The prima facie evidence for the effects of PBL is so compelling that it has become the dominant mode of instruction in leading faculties of medicine worldwide and has managed to find its way through all of the other health professions and into virtually every professional field (Wilkerson & Gijseelaers, 1996).

Problem-Based Learning and Pre-Service Teacher Education

The approach that we have employed with our prospective social studies teachers conforms to the essential attributes advocated by Barrows (1996) and others in medical education: problems form the organizing focus and stimulus for learning; learning is student centered and occurs in small student groups; teachers are facilitators or guides; problems are a vehicle for the development of problem-solving skills; and new information is acquired through self-directed learning.

In the four years that we have been using PBL, our work with students has taken the form of a series of units, each one commencing with the presentation of a problem. Problems are presented in person by experienced social studies teachers, or in video, in the form of letters from parents or from educational professionals, as well as through scenarios presented in written format. The essential attribute that we seek in each problem is that it has to be one that these prospective teachers are likely to face in their daily work in school. For example, one problem reflects a typical
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situation confronted by teachers when helping students to develop basic thinking strategies:

John Smith is in his fourth year of teaching. He is a member of the social studies department in a junior high school. Since the first day of his teaching career he has worked hard to help his students think deeply about the subject matter that they are learning in his classes. He relates to the prospective teachers the following experience.

Recently, I reviewed a set of assignments that required my students to compare and contrast the achievements of two important historical figures who feature prominently in the grade 8 course. Almost all of my students show that they know the information but what I find in their papers is a description of the achievements of one of the figures followed by a description of the achievements of the other one. There is little systematic effort to actually engage in the process of comparing and contrasting. I wonder how I can help my students become more skilful in completing the task?

There is a powerful resonance here for the students. They can see the problem in their own work and/or they have heard ‘real’ teachers talk about the same problem. We might just as easily have selected a problem dealing with distinguishing between fact and opinion, or with warranted and unwarranted conclusions, among many. In essence the problem serves as a prototype for all problems in the same class: in this case, problems that address the development and refinement of intellectual abilities. Other problems address the role of social studies in the context of the total curriculum, the learning and teaching of information in its various forms, monitoring student progress and assessing the learning potential of instructional materials, among others.

The task confronting the students, of course, is to help the teacher solve the problem. Working in small groups of five or six, with the guidance of a tutor who is an experienced teacher, they develop a way of investigating the situation. In the case of our example, they typically explore the key literature on the teaching and learning of cognitive abilities; they visit classes and observe or interview teachers about their approaches and experiences; they identify discrepancies between the recommended best practice of the research literature and the actual practice of schools; they design and try out in schools teaching strategies that they believe will work; they reflect on their practical experience; and finally, they make a presentation to their classmates and to invited experienced teachers on what they have learned about this particular problem and how to address it. While this is the typical sort of experience, only the presentation at the end of the unit is
mandated and the learning teams are free to explore the issues in whatever ways they see fit.

As instructors, we have experienced a number of dilemmas as we have developed the process: What is the appropriate level of direction? How much effort should we give to team building? How can we assess both the process of instruction and the performance of the students? How can we address the needs of those students who are not self-directed and who experience high levels of anxiety throughout the process? The questions are moot, of course, unless we are confident that the process, in general, offers a relative advantage over other instructional procedures. As an initial step, we have sought to determine whether the students perceived the problem-based learning experience as an essentially thoughtful one, at least in comparison with their other learning opportunities that teachers encounter in their initial professional education.

**Classroom Thoughtfulness**

In their work on the teaching of thinking in social studies, Newmann (1990a; 1990b; 1991a; 1991b) and his colleagues (Ladwig, 1991; King, 1991; Onosoko, 1991;) have established an empirical foundation for distinguishing between those classrooms that promote higher order thinking (thoughtful classrooms) and those that neglect or even undermine it. Based on their analyses of a variety of high school social studies departments, they have focussed on a set of generic qualities that can be expected to promote higher order thinking across a range of courses (1991b, p.411). These qualities, they argue, can form “the basis for assessing the degree of thoughtfulness”(p. 257) displayed in a given classroom. In particular, they propose six criteria that are essential in order for a learning situation to be described as “thoughtful”:

- a sustained examination of a few topics rather than superficial coverage of many;
- a substantive coherence and continuity among lessons;
- students given an appropriate amount of time to think and to respond;
- teachers who pose challenging questions and/or structure challenging tasks;
- teachers who are models of thoughtfulness; and
- students who give explanations and reasons for their conclusions (p. 257).

They have identified other qualities that might well contribute to the creation of a thoughtful learning environment but the six listed above seem “...so essential that one could not imagine judging a lesson ‘thoughtful’ unless the criterion were met”(p. 257).
The image of the ‘thoughtful classroom’ generated by Newmann et al is one that is largely supported, conceptually and empirically, by the work of Barrell (1991) and Brown (1991). Analyses of actual classroom practice (e.g. Boyer, 1983; Cuban, 1984; Goodlad, 1984; Hodgetts, 1969; Sutherland, 1986), however, show that thoughtful classrooms are, in reality, the exception rather than the rule in social studies and across the spectrum of school subjects, and that, for the most part, the school curriculum is devoid of serious intellectual challenge. Furthermore, the situation appears intractable in spite of the considerable recent advances concerning what to do and how to do it in the teaching of thinking (Costa, 1985; Glaser, 1984; McPeck, 1981; Presseisen, 1986; Schrag, 1988; Walsh and Paul, 1987). Our collective incapacity to move toward a more thoughtful classroom can be explained, at least in part, by the presence of barriers that restrict both teachers and learners to less thoughtful forms of learning. A number of barriers identified by Onosko (1991) take the form of robust teacher beliefs and institutionalized teaching practices.

Barriers to Thoughtful Classroom Learning

As part of the research program led by Newmann (1991a) examining the teaching of higher order thinking in social studies, Onosko (1991) identified a number of barriers that clearly impede the development of thoughtfulness as a significant dimension of classroom culture.

*Teaching as Knowledge Transmission.* Here teaching is construed narrowly with overarching attention being given to the intellectual products of others whether in the form of facts or full-blown theories. The dominant goal is to transmit this rhetoric of conclusions to students and to ensure that they reproduce them. The worry is that “a steady diet of narrative, authoritarian accounts of subject matter...can produce uncritical consumers of facts, events, ideas...”Onosko (1991, p. 346) There might sometimes be lip-service to a broader range of goals but the daily emphasis is on the learning of “the facts.”

*Broad Superficial Content Coverage.* In this situation, the emphasis is upon covering the course. The usual result is that students learn a little about many things rather than a great deal about relatively fewer things. The view seems to be that “it is possible to teach a reasonably comprehensive sample of all the worthwhile knowledge that is currently available”(Newmann, 1988, p. 346). The problem with this perspective is that “the attempt to implant vast amounts of information in the minds of students leaves little time for students to explore it, to reflect upon it, to recast it—in short, to think about rather than mindlessly absorb information”(Onosko, p. 348).

*Teachers’ Low Expectations of Students.* In spite of the absence of any supporting evidence, there is a widespread view among teachers that students possess neither the ability nor the inclination to engage in significant thinking about the academic subject matter that they confront in school.
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(See, for example, Brown, 1991, p. 240 and Onosko, 1991, p. 253). Brown argues that the prevalence of the view has cultural roots. Americans, he explains, believe that performance is related to intelligence, unlike the Japanese who associate high performance with hard work. The effect of such beliefs is that teachers' expectations for the vast majority of students are low with the focus placed on factual information requiring minimum reasoning.

Large Numbers of Students. Onosko reports that many of the teachers in his sample perceived large classes and the total student load to be significant factors in limiting their ability to focus on higher order thinking. In large classes, they point out, they cannot engage in a lengthy exploration of an idea with one student “for fear of losing the rest of the class.” (p. 355) Similarly, they suggest that using discussion with a larger number of small groups likewise provides occasion for off-task behavior. Onosko's illustrations lend support to the view that teachers and schools often give primacy to control over cognition.

Lack of Teacher Planning Time. Lack of planning time was the most widely cited obstacle to efforts to increase attention to higher order thinking by the teachers in Onosko's sample. They referred to the competing demands created by large numbers of students, the extensive subject matter to be covered, and the perceived deficiencies of the available textbooks. They also pointed out that the lack of time made “the exchange of ideas and practices between teachers very difficult.” (p. 358) especially when relegated to the status of an after school activity.

A Culture of Teacher Isolation. Strangely, one of the more intriguing of Onosko's findings is that while most teachers do not address higher order thinking in any significant way, there are examples of teachers who do it in an outstanding fashion. Furthermore, they do it in the same schools and in face of the same obstacles as teachers who have been thwarted in their efforts. One might expect some sort of ripple effect from the successful teachers but half the teachers in Onosko's study reported that they “spent less than one hour per week with colleagues discussing educational concerns of any kind.” (p. 359) In spite of the fact that teachers face similar instructional tasks, there is little by way of collective action and very little evidence of best practice cascading or even trickling from one classroom to another.

The barriers identified by Onosko help explain why it is that the vast majority of social studies classes fail to provide the opportunity for higher order thinking. For the most part, teachers appear to consider current dominant practices to constitute the natural conditions of schooling which are themselves largely immune to significant change. A possible explanation for their position is that teachers' own educational experience, at all levels, has been considerably devoid of thoughtful teaching and learning. Brown (1991) claims that “they did not see (it) in their own elementary and secondary education. They probably spent most of their undergraduate years listening
to lectures" (p. 242), including their years of professional teacher education. Even their experiences as student teachers might have acculturated them to what teachers believe schools cannot do rather than the potential of what they might do. By not serving as a model of thoughtful teaching and learning, colleges and universities, it can be argued, become accessories before the fact in limiting the vision and the practice of public education. It is the question of whether Problem-Based Learning might serve as a model of thoughtful teaching and learning in their own professional experience that is the focus here.

Assessing Thoughtfulness

The prospective social studies teachers in this study participated in a problem-based learning experience that comprised approximately forty percent of their course load for a single semester of approximately fourteen weeks. At the end of the experience, they responded to a questionnaire based on the dimensions of thoughtfulness identified by Newmann (1990, 1991). The approach taken by Newmann and his colleagues focuses upon general qualities associated with the thoughtful classroom rather than discrete techniques to teach particular thinking skills (1990b, p. 272). Essentially, they were concerned with "what observable qualities of classroom activity would be most likely to help students achieve depth of understanding, intellectual skills, and the dispositions of thoughtfulness" (1991, p. 329)? They rated 162 social studies classes along 15 dimensions of thoughtfulness and identified six as being fundamental to classroom thoughtfulness (p. 330-331). With minimal modification, the 15 dimensions of Newmann's observational rating scale were adapted to questionnaire format (see Table 1).

As with Newmann's observational scale, the ratings were based on a Likert-type scale. The prospective teachers were instructed to apply each item of the questionnaire to three different aspects of their university experience: (a) the problem based learning course; (b) other professional courses that they were pursuing in the Faculty of Education; and (c) courses that they had taken in the various other Faculties of the University. We were interested in knowing whether the PBL course was perceived as providing a more thoughtful learning environment than their other educational experiences.

Results and Discussion

In the first instance we analysed data for all 15 of the initial dimensions proposed (Table 2) by Newmann and then, secondly for the six fundamental criteria (Table 3). The results from both measures show very high scores for PBL on the measure of thoughtfulness (4.47 and 4.30 respectively on a five point scale.) Furthermore, the results of a set of dependent t-tests revealed significant differences.
Table 1
Criteria of Classroom Thoughtfulness

(Beginning teachers rated their own experience in the PBL course, in other professional courses in the Faculty of Education, in other college or university level courses: 5 = the statement is very accurate; 1 = the statement is very inaccurate.)

1. There was a sustained examination of a few topics rather than a superficial coverage of many.*

2. There was progress toward the logical development and integration of ideas opposed to the accumulation of unrelated fragments of knowledge.*

3. Students were given an appropriate amount of time to think about the issues at hand.*

4. Instructors carefully considered students' explanations and reasons for conclusions.

5. Instructors posed challenging questions and/or structured challenging tasks.*

6. Instructors pressed students to justify or to clarify their assertions.

7. Instructors tried to get students to generate original and unconventional ideas, explanations, or solutions to problems.

8. Instructors were models of thoughtfulness.*

9. Students assumed the roles of questioner and critic.

10. Students offered explanations and reasons for their conclusions.*

11. Students generated original and unconventional ideas, explanations, hypotheses or solutions to problems.

12. Student contributions were articulate, germane to the topic, and connected to prior discussion.

13. Students were active participants.

14. Students engaged in thoughtful discourse with each other a large proportion of the time.

15. Students showed genuine involvement with the topics discussed.

* Items included in the six fundamental criteria
### Table 2
Summary Data And Dependent T-Tests For The Relationship Between Type Of Course And Level Of Thoughtfulness
(Using all 15 criteria)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>x</th>
<th>sd</th>
<th>PBL</th>
<th>Other Educ.</th>
<th>Other Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem-Based Learning</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>0.380</td>
<td>-6.68*</td>
<td>-7.41*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other education courses</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>0.516</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses in other Faculties</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>0.707</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*2-tailed test (p ≤ .0001; df=29)

### Table 3
Summary Data And Dependent T-Tests For The Relationship Between Type Of Course And Level Of Thoughtfulness
(Using 6 fundamental criteria only)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>x</th>
<th>sd</th>
<th>PBL</th>
<th>Other Educ.</th>
<th>Other Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem-Based Learning</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>0.509</td>
<td>-5.01*</td>
<td>-4.64*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other education courses</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>0.449</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses in other Faculties</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>0.599</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*2-tailed test (p ≤ .0001; df=29)
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The PBL course was perceived as providing a significantly more thoughtful learning environment than either other professional courses in the Faculty of Education or courses in other Faculties (p ≤ .0001 for both the measure using all 15 criteria and that using only the 6 fundamental criteria.) The similar results for both scales provide support for Newmann's claim that a valid measure of thoughtfulness can be obtained using only the six fundamental or minimum criteria. There were no differences between students' perceptions of the thoughtfulness of their other education courses and courses in other faculties. Further analysis showed that the results were consistent for males and females, university graduates and senior undergraduates, students who were history or social science specialists and those who were specializing in other disciplines.

The results clearly indicate that the beginning teachers perceived PBL as offering a significantly more thoughtful learning environment than their other experiences. Indeed, there was not a single student who scored their "other courses" more highly than the PBL. Even those who were generally critical of their whole educational experience, saw PBL as more thoughtful than the alternatives. This is particularly important in view of the fact that the "other" experiences were by no means homogeneous. Students had pursued undergraduate studies at several different universities and in several different faculties, and anecdotal data shows that their learning experiences ranged the full gamut from lecture oriented to active participatory learning. Given that PBL is clearly perceived as "more thoughtful", can the finding be associated with overcoming the barriers to the thoughtful classroom identified by Onosko?

To the outside observer, the dominant structural feature of the PBL experience is its organization around a small number of problems, usually six in the four years that we have now offered the course. Each problem has an intended focus but students are free to explore what they perceive as related issues. On average, the beginning teachers are expected to devote about 36 study hours to a problem, and with five or six members in a group the products are the result of some 175-200 person hours of work. When students ask what is expected of them, as they inevitably do, we often respond by saying, the same quality of work that you would expect from a legal or architectural firm that had devoted 200 hours to your interests—and no doubt billed accordingly.

This organizational framework, we believe, addresses two of the barriers. First, it provides an opportunity for a considered response to the problems that students are asked to engage (overcoming the absence of 'think time' that teachers find so rarely available); and second, it provides the opportunity to get to the bottom of an issue rather than placing emphasis on a broad, superficial coverage of material. From the prospective teachers' point of view, however, we find an interesting paradox. Students found that PBL focuses upon "the sustained examination of a few topics rather than a superficial coverage of many" but it is perceived to be no different
from their other experiences in terms of "the amount of time to think about
the issues at hand" (item #3). By deliberately limiting the number of topics
to be addressed in a fixed time period, the PBL model assumes that partici-
pants will have the time to reflect upon the related issues in a more sus-
tained and focused way. What may be happening, though, is that while the
number of topics may be reduced, the number of issues associated with
each topic is increased. Furthermore, there is a constant pressure on the
students not simply to reflect upon issues but to work deliberately and
systematically toward resolving them. The resulting high pressure envi-
ronment is something commented upon with regularity by the students.

The pedagogical problem that the finding poses is that of determin-
ing the optimum amount of time that students should have when dealing
with an issue. In our operations, there is no doubt that so far we have been
inclined to structure the situation so that too little rather than too much
time is available. The rationale, or perhaps rationalization, is that a scarcity
of time more accurately reflects the actual working situation in which these
prospective teachers are likely to find themselves.

The use of small teams as the basic learning unit would seem to help
overcome the barriers associated with large student numbers and the cul-
ture of isolation that pervades the working situation of most teachers. The
normal size of this course is approximately 40 students; not particularly
large as far as university classes go but large enough to discourage the sort
of thoughtful interaction that we think necessary. The use of the small group
provides both the expectation and the opportunity for every team member
to become intimately involved in all of the activities and decisions of the
group and it also helps establish the expectation that the normal mode of
operation for teachers should be collaborative rather than separate. The
fact that the "teaching" of the course rests with a permanent team of three
university instructors and a rotation of three or four experienced social
studies teachers working on graduate degrees reinforces with the begin-
ning teachers the image of teaching as a collaborative enterprise.

Still, we should not leave the impression that an ethic of teaching as a
collaborative activity is easily accepted or achieved. Our faculty adminis-
trators have had considerable difficulty in determining how our PBL re-
sponsibilities should be weighted in our teaching assignments, and some
beginning teachers have thought that the emphasis upon developing their
team skills is misdirected. Commenting on the emphasis upon team work
during a debriefing session, one student said "...perhaps in a business en-
v
vironment, if you're in a legal firm or in business, or if you're on a sales
team you have to work with other sales people. Fine, but as a teacher you're
usually on your own." As teacher educators, we find ourselves on the horns
of a dilemma. We have become advocates of teacher collaboration; we de-
liberately and systematically introduce our students to like-minded teach-
ers — those who are working as part of teams. But the students know a
truth! In the real world you are on your own. Or, at least, in many schools
you can be on your own. However, there is another truth. If you insist upon being on your own there is a good chance that your classes will be less thoughtful, less mindful.

We sense that the performance aspect of PBL serves a crucial function in overcoming the barriers associated with knowledge as transmission and the low expectations that can be held for students. Keep in mind that at the conclusion of each problem, the beginning teachers are required to demonstrate what they have learned. Importantly, this is not simply a demonstration to their instructors but also to the professional educators whom they will shortly join as colleagues. Final problem conferences have involved briefs to a provincial curriculum advisory committee on the selection and application of criteria in the selection of instructional material; meetings with parents and administrators to examine the role of social studies in the total educational experience of children; demonstrations to and discussions with teachers concerning 'best practice' in particular instructional situations. While something less than best, or even sloppy, might serve their needs in meeting course requirements in university, being seen as a professional becomes important when their work is subjected to public scrutiny. And scrutinized it is, sometimes we feel too harshly, by experienced colleagues who forget what it was like to be a beginner. Significantly, though, the expectations that are communicated are high and they are not those simply of the university but of the public and the profession. Rote learning is soon exposed for what it is by colleagues who demand to understand not just what these beginning teachers know, but how they know it and whether they can use it.

From the instructors' point of view, we would be inclined to say that PBL contributes to overcoming all of the barriers except for the absence of preparation time. If anything, the collaborative work with other instructors and the on-going close liaison with the learning teams demands more time than standard classroom instruction of whatever form. What seems to compensate for the increased demands, however, is an apparent increased level of satisfaction that stems in part from productive collaboration with colleagues (overcoming the isolation syndrome), the capacity to address significant issues with the time and energy that they deserve (getting beyond broad, superficial coverage), and the sense of an altogether more thoughtful approach to the task of educating our future colleagues.

Conclusion

Problem-based learning, as we have applied it in pre-service work, appears to have the potential to contribute significantly to the development of a thoughtful learning environment for prospective teachers. As such it helps to provide a model that transcends, at least in part, many of the obstacles to thoughtful teaching and learning that teachers themselves have identified. It provides, as part of their professional experience, an al-
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ternative to the limited conception of education that pervades much social studies teaching. Of course, no instructional strategy on its own, can inspire educators, at whatever level, to pursue only the best in professional practice. In this regard, we might do well to keep in mind Commager’s observation in his essay on the necessity of freedom (1954). “Up to a point,” he says, “...we can tolerate with good humour those who deny the axioms of Euclid, and we can tolerate them because they are harmless. But we do not allow them to teach mathematics” (p. 6). By analogy, we might suggest that up to a point we can tolerate those who deny the possibility of thoughtful teaching and learning but we should not allow them to teach social studies, for they are not harmless. But in order to make the possibility for thoughtful teaching and learning a plausible and viable alternative for beginning teachers, we must ensure that it constitutes a significant part of their own educational experience. Problem-based learning might well afford one such opportunity in the realm of professional education and provide features worth emulating in the realm of public education.¹

Note

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References


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Conserving The Status Quo In Social Studies Teaching: The Case Of Second Career Military Teachers

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Abstract
This study examines the educational perspectives and careers attractions of second career teachers with prior military career experience. The study is framed within the context of research that attempts to explain why traditional pedagogical practices persist despite reforms designed to transform teacher education and classroom practices. Well-entrenched lessons from military experiences concerning on-the-job and apprenticeship training, as well as successful institutional socialization, suggest these second career teachers will be a conserving force within the teaching profession. This study also suggests that second career teachers rely on personal life experiences, rather than content or professional education preparation, as the primary knowledge base for teaching. In addition, this study found that many assumptions concerning the desirable traits these individuals bring to the teaching profession are unexamined and misleading.

Introduction

A persistent question troubling researchers and policy makers alike is why the core pattern of teaching practices in the social studies and other subject areas has endured over most of the 20th century. Cuban (1991) argues that although there have been small, incremental changes in teaching practices, what he calls first order changes, most social studies teachers, as well as teachers in most other subject areas, teach in a fashion similar to that which has persisted throughout the century. This traditional pattern of teaching continues despite voluminous research that calls for change in pedagogical practices and teacher education.

Change in teacher practice, however, cannot be expected to come about solely as the result of research based on generalized findings concerning what teachers ought to be doing. This type of research does
not speak to the experiences of individual teachers, in particular classrooms, in particular schools (Bolster, 1983). Cuban proposes examining why social studies teachers teach as they do, rather than focusing studies only on how they ought to be teaching. This shift in focus is a recognition that there are many factors influencing teacher action beyond their individual wills to change (Bullough, Knowles & Crow, 1991; Cuban, 1991). The focus of this study is on military career experiences as one possible factor in the lack of second order change among second career teachers from the military.

The study was designed to examine the perspectives that second career teachers with prior military career experience bring to the profession of teaching and in particular the teaching of social studies. By examining the life histories of second career military teachers through a framework of the development of their perspectives on and attractions to teaching within an institutional and career context, I hoped to provide a better understanding of this important, growing teacher population.

The large number of retiring and former military personnel expressing interest in second careers in education, and in particular, in the social studies will have an impact on education (Feistritzer, 1992; Fernandez, 1993). The nature of the attraction of this population to this particular field of social studies teaching was explored. Specifically, the study examined the perspectives selected second career social studies teachers from the military bring to teacher education programs and eventually to the classroom, which then get transformed into pedagogical practices.

The following questions were used to organize this study: (1) What perspectives concerning learning, teaching, and knowledge, can be discerned from the life and career histories of select second career teachers entering teaching from the military? (2) Why are former military personnel choosing second careers in teaching? Why are they attracted to this profession and what is this attraction based on? (3) What are the commonalities between the subject matter of social studies and experiences in the military?

Conceptual Framework

The literature on second career teachers suggests that the assumptions made about the positive traits they bring to their new profession may be overstated and false (Bullough & Knowles, 1990; Crow, Levine, & Nager, 1991; Novak & Knowles, 1992). Those same traits, that may make second career teachers attractive to potential employers, also contribute to their conserving influence and the maintenance of the status quo in schools (Freidus & Krasnow, 1991; Haipt, 1987).
One of the traits that distinguish second career teachers is their understanding of the workings of institutions. There may be an attraction to institutions with particular characteristics on the part of those seeking new careers. Institutions, such as the military, which have been described as both "total institutions" and "greedy institutions" may have compounding influence on career perspectives of individuals who have worked in those settings (Cosner, 1974; Goffman, 1962; Segal, 1988; Shields, 1988).

The educational perspectives of second career preservice teachers developed during their first career and in other life experiences are often well-entrenched and rigid. The apprenticeship model of teacher education, primarily through increased clinical experiences, may act to reinforce entering perspectives rather than provide challenges to them (Goodman 1985, 1986; Grossman, 1991; Schumer & Knowles, 1991). One of those entering perspectives appears to be an overriding belief in the transferability of personal experience (Haipt, 1987).

The knowledge base for teaching contains both personal and professional knowledge (Tamir, 1991). Professional knowledge is further divided into content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986). Without a strong foundation in content knowledge, teachers resort to using personal knowledge and pedagogical knowledge (Calderhead, 1991). It is this general, naive pedagogical knowledge developed during the apprenticeship of observation and reinforced during apprenticeship type clinical experiences, coupled with personal knowledge from career and life experiences, that many second career teachers bring to their teaching career. This knowledge may be limiting and conserving both for the teacher and for the students they come into contact with.

Successful socialization experiences in prior careers may help second career teachers become socialized into the school environment quickly. Strategies used in those other work experiences may be transferred to school experiences, providing a smooth and seemingly unproblematic transition. It is this ability to learn the form of what it means to be a teacher that makes these second career people attractive to those doing the hiring for school districts. This may be counterproductive to bringing about the type of second order changes in teaching that Cuban (1991) and others discuss in the literature. It is second ca-
rer teachers perspectives concerning socialization that may be parti-
cularly problematic.

The educational perspectives second career teachers develop in
other contexts and bring to the teaching profession will impact the way
they view and engage in the act of teaching. They will be used as lenses
through which the experiences of teaching are viewed. If those per-
spectives are as well-entrenched and rigid as the literature suggests
then second career teachers will have a conserving effect on schools
and will help maintain the status quo.

Methodology

Life history research has a long and rich tradition, having been
used extensively in the 1920's, 30's and 40's in the work of the Chicago
School. Sociological life histories of the kind done by members of the
Chicago School often focused on constructing the subjects' stories based
on how institutions, events and significant people helped to shape the
subjects' definitions of themselves and the views or perspectives they
held (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). In recent years, there has been a renewed
interest in life histories. Much work is currently being done on devel-
oping new methodologies and refining old methods for reconstruct-
ing life histories from the oral biographies told to researchers (Rosenthal,
1993). Much of this new work is being done in connection with the
study of teaching and teacher education, especially in relation to the
intersection of biography and educational institutions (Bullough,
Knowles & Crow, 1991). This research is part of that growing tradition.

In keeping with the historical strength of this tradition, a life his-
tory methodology was used in the main data collection phase of this
project. As the researcher, I attempted to capture the important experi-
ences of the four participants' lives, and as much as possible, in their
own words, the meanings that were attached to those experiences (Ta-
os & Bogdan, 1984). Through the telling of the stories, the participants
explicated the implicit meanings that life has held for them
(Widdershoven, 1993). Through eliciting operations I attempted to get
at the participants' emic perspectives of themselves as educators (Har-
riss, 1976). In addition, I used a career history and institutional biogra-
phy focus to elicit the perspectives and proclivities these second career
military preservice teachers brought to teacher education programs
and, subsequently, to classrooms in which they worked.

My constructions of the life histories were based on the life sto-
ries as they were related to me. From these, four case studies were
developed. The case studies were the basis for understanding the so-
cial phenomena of interest to this study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). I
searched for emergent patterns from the life history data (Patton, 1990).
In addition to the military, influences of family, community, religion,
schooling, work, race, class, and gender all emerged as significant themes.

Once the major themes and then the career stages within each theme were identified and coded, I looked for evidence of developing perspectives on learning, teaching and knowledge, as well as evidence of interest in teaching as a career and in the teaching of the social studies in particular. Evidence of the developing perspectives and interests in the data were coded. The potential perspectives and attractions of interest to this study were then analyzed in relation to both the major themes and the career stage categories evolving from the data. The coding scheme used in this phase of the study in displayed is Tables 1 and 2.

The participants selected for this study were chosen by a purposeful sampling procedure that provided information-rich cases for the life histories (Patton, 1990). Selection of the participants was based on prototypes developed from responses to A Survey of Army Personnel Interested in Teaching (Feistritzer, 1992), and on accessibility and location. The prototypes did not represent any particular individual but were created from aggregate data. The prototypes, and hence the participants chosen, were typical of people with prior military career experience who are interested in teaching (Patton, 1990). The prototypes developed prior to the selection of participants are outlined in the Table 3. The actual participants chosen for this study, based on the prototypes, are described in Table 4.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level I</th>
<th>Level II</th>
<th>Level III</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>Career stage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Developing perspectives:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning and learner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching and teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Developing interests:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching profession</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social studies teaching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. This schematic shows the three levels of coding and analysis of the life history data. First I searched the data for the major themes evolving from each participant’s life history. Then each theme was further coded and analyzed in terms of the career stages found to be associated with it. The career stages were then coded and analyzed for evidence of the developing perspectives and attractions of interest to the study’s questions.
Table 2
Example: Data Coding and Analysis Scheme used in Paul's Life History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level I</th>
<th>Level II</th>
<th>Level III</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schooling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career stages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Schooling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Developing perspectives

- **Learning and learner**
  - (OJT, connected)

- **Teaching and teacher**
  - (Facilitator, giver)

- **Knowledge**
  - (Experience)

Developing interests

- **Teaching profession**
  - (Can do it, done it)

- **Social studies teaching**
  - (Geography, experience)

Note. This schematic shows an example of the three levels of coding and analysis of the life history data for Paul. First I searched the data for the major themes evolving from Paul's life history. For the purpose of this example the theme of schooling was used. I then coded and analyzed this theme in terms of the career stages found to be associated with it. The career stages were then coded and analyzed for evidence of the developing perspectives and attractions of interest to the study's questions. For the purposes of this example I used the career stage of military schooling and briefly indicated the learning, teaching and knowledge perspectives and the teaching and teaching social studies attractions associated with it.
### Table 3
Prototypes of Potential Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Degree Major</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>40-45</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Master's History</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>30-35</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>None Military</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Enlisted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>29-35</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Bachelor's Social Studies</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Enlisted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30-35</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Liberal Arts</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>Officer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4
Characteristics of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender (First Name)</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Degree Major</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male (Paul)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Bachelor's Sociology</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>NCO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male (Albert)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Bachelor's Communication</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Enlisted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male (Sam)</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Associate's Social Studies</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Enlisted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female (Kathy)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Bachelor's Political Science</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>Officer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Paul Arnold is a forty year old, second career preservice teacher, recently retired from a twenty year career as a senior chief petty officer in the Navy. In Paul's case, the three institutional or career contexts that appeared to have the greatest impact on his perspectives and attractions are family, prior schooling, and his military career experiences.

Paul viewed knowledge as taking multiple forms and as ever present in the real world. This view came primarily from Paul's extensive travel as a child and during his twenty year military career. In order for school knowledge to be useful, Paul felt strongly that it had to be connected with real world knowledge. Paul saw knowledge as primarily having instrumental value both in terms of helping one do her or his job, as well as helping one gain access to a better position in life.

As a result, Paul viewed education as the amassing of credits needed to advance in life. As he talked about his own education, he spoke with pride about what he had accomplished without traditional schooling. Through an external degree program Paul was able to obtain an associate's degree without much actual classwork:

Interesting, about fifteen of the credits that I used or applied to my degree came from the recruiter training school...I completed, in fact, my entire associate's level with no classroom experience other than the two courses at the community college; everything else was through College Level Equivalency Program (CLEP) tests, non traditional quote/unquote, military education, military training.

Paul also prided himself on having helped others get the credits they needed to advance in the Navy. Paul did this in connection with his duties with the Navy Educational Services Office.

I think I was personally responsible for, in a three year period, probably anywhere from 18 to 25 people actually completing either an associate's or bachelor's degree. I felt good about that.

As a result of those experiences, Paul began to view teaching as a possible career choice upon retirement. He saw a close connection between his teaching in the military and teaching in the schools. "Having been involved with kids all along, having gone through instructor training school, I found I really enjoyed teaching and I thought I was good at it."
Even before he entered the Master’s level teacher certification program, Paul already had a great deal of confidence in his abilities as a teacher. He felt that he had played a significant role in the lives of those with whom he has come into contact. Paul used the Santa Claus metaphor to describe himself as a teacher: “Santa Claus, a giver of the gift of knowledge, of gab, of humor or whatever.” In his opinion, this confidence came from his leadership experiences in the military. Paul explained one key to being a successful leader and teacher as when “without them [the students/the recruits] knowing it, I still controlled.” As part of Paul’s military retirement ceremony he gave a speech in which he equated being a successful leader with being a successful teacher.

This perspective on teaching had deep roots in Paul’s own school experiences as well. Although Paul remembered little about his elementary school experiences, he did recall the regimented and highly structured environment at the private academy he had attended. In particular, Paul had a fond memory of one Academy teacher, a German teacher named Harry Scharonbrock, who influenced his own views on teaching. “He was able to discipline you without you knowing it or resenting it.” This technique was later reinforced by psychology and education coursework at the university level, and Paul applied it in most situations when he worked with youth. “I used a lot of it with my son, who at the time was too young to realize he was being psychologically manipulated, and it worked well in the work environment, as well as the classroom environment.”

To guide his teaching practice, Paul relied heavily on his experiences as a military instructor, which he viewed as his initiation into what he referred to as “pedagogy.” “My instructor training—that was where I got my first exposure to teaching methods, teaching styles, and teaching techniques.”

Paul was attracted to teaching because he felt it was something he could do well, since he had already taught in the military. Paul felt that his experiences over a twenty year military career provided him with worldly knowledge and the leadership skills which he could apply directly in the classroom.

It’s a career thing. It’s directly from the military. I’ve gotten these parenting skills from dealing with children in the military, from the young kids that I used to work with. I find that a lot of the techniques, leadership techniques that were taught in the military are very useful in the classroom.

Although Paul understood that the curricular content was different, he felt that the methods of teaching he used in the military were also applicable to secondary schools. “I find that a lot of the teaching
skills, teaching techniques that I used with a 130-man function, or 80-man division, or a 13-man division are very beneficial in the classroom as well."

In addition to a sense of his own success as a teacher, Paul was attracted to what he saw as the individual, isolated nature of teaching. As a result of numerous travel experiences during childhood, coupled with a long term military career, during which people constantly came into and went out of his life, Paul saw himself as someone who does not make many friends. "I'm not a very big social person. I've never had a lot of friends. Over a twenty year period in the military, I have learned that it is much easier to not make very close friends because they are going to go away." Although Paul did not connect his non-social behavior to reasons for choosing the teaching profession, he did attribute it to his avoidance of other more social professions.

In terms of subject matter attraction, it appears that Paul was interested in teaching more than in teaching social studies, specifically. He had considered the idea of teaching either early childhood education or English, as possible alternatives. His decision to teach social studies seemed to have been determined by how efficaciously his previous coursework would allow him to complete a teaching certification program, rather than by a love of the social studies.

As far as social studies is concerned, my background had a lot to play here. My degree is in sociology. Math and science, I would have had to start all over again, but English or social studies were the only two that were even close. Social studies was the one I enjoyed more, the one I felt I had more experience with.

Paul felt that teaching at the secondary level might not be something he would continue to do on a long term basis, although he felt that school administration was definitely out of the question. His primary goal was to get a teaching job, and he hoped to eventually be able to teach advanced placement classes. But, according to Paul,

my ultimate goal, and I hope to attain it in the next five to seven years, is to get my doctorate and work my way up into the university system.

The Structured Conservative

Sam Schultz is a forty year old preservice teacher who recently completed his student teaching experience in western New York State. He entered an undergraduate teacher education program after a thirteen and a half year career in the Air Force.
Examining Sam's educational perspectives in relation to his life history, revealed some strong patterns and themes. Sam's early family influences, memories of former teachers and educational experiences, and Sam's military career all appear to have had an impact upon his educational perspectives and interest in teaching social studies.

In Sam's perspectives on learning, teaching and knowledge, the overriding themes appeared to be structure, discipline and standards. Sam attributed his academic success in high school to the structure of both his school and his home life. He describes the school structure as typical for the time period:

Direct education, direct instruction type thing. Sit there and listen, basically. I didn't feel bad about that. I felt I learned pretty well.

Closely connected to structure was discipline. Sam's parents were strict disciplinarians and although Sam resented it, he had a sense that he had "turned out all right," so this must have been the right approach to take. Also, one of Sam's favorite teachers from his own schooling had been a strict teacher who made him "work [his] ass off."

By contrast, when he left home for college and those structures were no longer in place, Sam experienced so much difficulty that he dropped out of school. After working in a tanning mill for several years, Sam enlisted in the Air Force, where he again found structure. Since he felt that he as well as others had benefited from a structured environment, Sam saw one of his roles in the classroom as a provider of that structure, which he felt students needed in order to be successful. In fact, Sam felt that in order for the students to accomplish their work "probably the most important thing is structure." His military experience convinced him that a highly structured environment would minimize classroom management problems. "Because of the structure of the military, there was very little discipline to worry about." In his view, such structure is lacking in contemporary schools, and he felt this could have a negative impact on learning.

I am still amazed at how little control there is on kids. When it gets right down to the bottom line, there is not a very structured control system on the kids.

While Sam realized that the military discipline model would be too stringent for schools, he felt that schools go much too far in the direction of leniency.

In addition to structure and discipline, Sam's life history revealed a third theme, standards. This theme was found throughout various experiences in Sam's life, but it may have come primarily from the
Second Career Teachers

military. Sam felt that someone should set clear goals and standards, as well as the means of measuring their attainment. Otherwise, there would be chaos. Consequently, in terms of education, Sam supported national and state curriculum standards, as well as New York State Regents testing.

Consistent with these themes, Sam’s view of himself as a teacher was that of a structured conservative. Regarding learning and teaching, he viewed structure, organization, and a step-by-step approach as best.

I am very structured when it comes to doing something new. I go from step one, in fact from page one, and read and do it like it says.

Consistent with this view, Sam set up classroom structures, in which his students could experience learning by “actually do[ing] things... This is similar to on-the-job training in the military.” A significant example of this was a unit on the industrial revolution, for which Sam organized his class to simulate a factory model. The students actually participated in an assembly line, designing, manufacturing and assuring quality control for products made of leggos. There were “foremen” and all student progress was recorded on time cards. In Sam’s view, this activity gave students practical experience for real life, while accomplishing state-mandated curriculum guidelines.

When Sam talked about his view of himself as a teacher, he spoke in terms of being a role model for his students. If Sam believed that particular experiences were good for him personally, he justified them in that way as being good for his students, as well. This logic also applied to Sam’s own experience in learning to teach, for he modeled his own student teaching on the practices of his cooperating teacher.

Sam’s structured, conservative perspective on teaching may have been reinforced by his own limited study of history and the social sciences. Most of the knowledge Sam saw himself using in the classroom came from his life experiences rather than from his coursework. Much of his academic coursework was not recent, and, he felt some of it was irrelevant to what he was teaching. In addition, his content area coursework had not been completed prior to his student teaching experience.

Right now, I’d say 90% of my knowledge is just my experience. You know, I have taken some courses at college, but as of right now, those courses have not paid any dividends.

For mandated content, Sam relied heavily on the textbook and materials supplied by the cooperating teacher. He learned along with his
students, reading at their level but feeling unable to provide enrichment. Perhaps because of discomfort with his own lack of content knowledge and his over reliance on "knowledge authorities," Sam discounted as opinion, the personal knowledge students brought to the classroom.

Sam’s attraction to teaching resulted primarily from his positive experiences as an instructor in the military. After completing a course in leadership, Sam was offered an opportunity to teach in the military.

I was teaching a class every day and having a ball. It was like the greatest thing I had ever done. When we weren’t teaching a class, that was even more than the greatest thing I had ever done. I mean basically, we could sit around and do nothing all day.

An instructor from Denver had come to the base and given a six week Technical Training Instructor Course (TTIC). The course was designed to teach instructors how to instruct recruits to work on planes. "He taught us how to do lesson planning, what to plan and how much, voice presentation, body language, do’s and don’ts, etc."

This may speak to why Sam felt it to be the responsibility of the state and national governments to select and set goals and standards, and to provide frameworks and guides for teachers. In his military teaching assignment, Sam had been given explicit direction on how to teach. Then, for content, he relied upon prepackaged materials, designed to teach recruits how to work on the electronics in airplanes.

In discussing what was attractive to Sam about becoming a teacher, working conditions and benefits came up repeatedly.

I can’t say I overlooked the benefits. I mean the benefit of teaching is that if you want to, you can take the whole summer off. I mean that’s a nice perk. I don’t care what anybody says, if you don’t have to work for three months, that’s not a bad deal.

Sam intends to remain a social studies teacher for the foreseeable future. He was not interested in school administration, primarily because of the additional coursework and what he saw as his advancing age. Another attraction to teaching was automatic monetary advancement, based on years of service, unlike the military in which, according to Sam, "we worked hard for advancement." What Sam appeared to be looking for would be to stay in the career long enough to become vested in the retirement system and to take advantage of what he saw as good benefits.
Second Career Teachers

Time to Give Back

Kathy O'Malley, a thirty-two year old mother of two, was expecting her third child at the time of our interviews. Kathy was also active in the Air National Guard, which she joined at the end of a nine year career in the Navy, and was enrolled in an MAT teacher certification program. However, after completing three weeks of her student teaching experience at an upstate New York middle school, Kathy dropped out of her MAT program for family-related personal reasons.

In looking for connections between Kathy’s life history and the perspectives and attractions she has concerning knowledge, learning, and teaching, the two themes coming most readily to the forefront were: (1) a sense of personal responsibility to others, which Kathy called “giving back,” and (2) a hope to foster in young women the attitude that a world of opportunity exists for them. For Kathy, these ideas were closely tied to the values she had learned from the institutions of family, community, religion and the military.

Kathy’s only year of public education was in the public kindergarten in her town; after that, Kathy had attended parochial schools for twelve years. Kathy and her eight siblings had attended Saint Catherine’s Elementary School, and this was the school to which Kathy hoped to send her own three children once they became old enough to attend. It was also the school in which she hoped to be able to teach one day.

According to Kathy, as a child she had not known many public school students; she had associated primarily with extended family members, with whom she felt she shared a certain set of values. It appears that her parents’ decision to educate their children in Catholic schools, and subsequently, Kathy’s decision to do the same with her three children, was a values-oriented, rather than an academics-oriented decision. Those values were related to family, community, and religion.

I just like the values and just being Catholic and having the faith. I want my children... I want it to be part of their education.

One way to teach those values which Kathy developed from her military experiences, was for the students in the classroom to become actively involved in their own learning. According to Kathy, students learn best:

when they can relate to their own personal life or their own experiences, or it’s an actual activity where they aren’t just sitting and listening and watching, but they’re actually doing something.
Kathy felt that such practical applications and hands-on learning best described the way she had learned in the military. She used the example of learning to fly as this type of connection between class work and field work.

It's all actual hands-on stuff, and even once you start flying and even after you get your wings and you go onto your squadron, every flight is like you learn something new; you learn a new skill or you fine tune one.

The military, the family, and schooling are all institutions requiring a great deal from those who exist within them, and the family may even be a more demanding institution for women than for men (cf. Cosner, 1974). This would seem to be particularly true for women like Kathy, coming from a large nuclear family and having lived in close circles with extended family members. The institution of family has had a very different impact on Kathy than on the other participants in this study.

In fact, the impact of family created significant tensions for Kathy, as she attempted to balance her sense of responsibility to her family with that of her sense of responsibility to the other institutions to which she wanted to make a personal contribution. The idea of giving back through teaching did not emerge for Kathy until late in her military career. As Kathy began to experience tensions between family and the military, she left active duty and joined the National Guard. At this point, she decided to redirect her career focus toward school teaching, and she entered the masters level preservice education program. However, Kathy soon found that she had only added another tension to those already existing in her life. Once she began the student teaching phase of her program, she felt that she had to withdraw from the teacher education program. Kathy's decision to leave the program was a difficult one, but she had been making too many family sacrifices. She was troubled by the additional burden being placed on her husband to perform household duties; she also missed spending time with her children.

I gave up time with my children. A lot of time. Well, I'd leave at 7:00 AM and I wouldn't pick them up until 4:00 PM. Between 4:00 and 8:00, I was doing dinner and homework, and then I would get into my homework right away. So it put a big strain on my husband; he picked up a lot.

Even though Kathy expressed the idea that women should not be limited by stereotypical roles, she also felt a conflicting tension in
the societal expectations which are placed on mothers. She contrasted her situation to that of the expectations of family responsibilities placed on the males in her M.A.T. program. In addition to providing care for the children, she had faced the expectations of “getting dinner, doing laundry, cleaning house etc.” Yet, Kathy was clear in saying that she did not feel constrained by her duties as a mother and homemaker. Her roles as a mother and homemaker were important to her and was what she wanted to be doing. Her decision to leave teaching, at least temporarily, was one in which she exercised one of many options she saw to be available to her.

Through teaching, Kathy hoped to work with young women, in order to instill in them the same personal empowerment she had experienced. Kathy felt that young women in our society are not often encouraged to pursue their options, as she had been as a young girl. In fact, Kathy felt that many young women may not even be aware of the options available to them. One aspect of teaching which attracted Kathy was the opportunity to influence young women. “I want to get under their skin and tell them they can do anything they want.”

One gets the sense that Kathy was more interested in teaching values to students than teaching social studies content. Although she was a political science major in college, Kathy’s love of social studies seemed to evolve from the reading of biographies of famous people. She shared this love of reading biographies with her father.

I read books most of them biographies, those little short ones, like Ben Franklin. There was a whole series of them. I really enjoyed it.

Kathy was also influenced by her seventh and eighth grade social studies teacher who was a male and a lay person, “one of the few in both categories.” It appeared that social studies was a vehicle that would allow Kathy to teach the stories that she loved while also instilling the other lessons that she felt were important.

In summary, Kathy’s desire to give something back evolved from her strong sense of community, which encompassed both her family and her religion. More specifically, the community encompassed Saint Catherine’s parish, but especially her extended family, from whom she felt she had received so much support. Kathy felt that many families, including her own, had sacrificed a great deal to send their children to Saint Catherines. She also felt that the church members connected with the school made sacrifices to provide the best possible education for the children who attend the school. Kathy felt it was her duty to give back time and talent to the school, church and community. Accordingly, she hoped to be able to teach someday at Saint Catherine’s. In the meantime, Kathy was giving back in a variety of other ways. Visit-
ing the school to assist the teachers, organizing field trips, and participating in religious services were all ways in which Kathy was contributing something meaningful.

Just Fell Into It

Albert Mascogo, a thirty-three year old African American army veteran, who left the service after seven and a half years. The institutional contexts I will focus on in this case study are his schooling and his career in the military.

Albert’s perspectives concerning learning and the learner appear to have been strongly influenced by his most recent educational experiences. At the time of this study, Albert was in a M.A.T. program pursuing secondary social studies certification. In this program he combined a series of field experiences with his academic course work. He described his own learning process in graduate courses as the way he would like his students to approach learning. Albert readily admitted that he did not have any expectations upon entering the classroom about how his students might learn most effectively or even that there were different ways in which students learn. “I didn’t have any preconceptions to overcome, I didn’t know what I would find.” As a result, Albert’s views in this area were not as well entrenched as those of the other participants.

In Albert’s own education, particularly at college in Ohio, his military training, and his teacher education program, he pursued avenues that appeared to hold instrumental value for him. In college, he chose the communications field, hoping this would lead to employment; upon graduation, he went to California to seek a job in that field. When that venture did not meet his expectations, he entered the military, hoping to receiving more useful training, this time, in the field of electronics. However, once again, he was not able to make direct application of his learning. He did not find any connection between what he learned about electronics in the military and what would be required of him in his electronics job. In fact, once he left the military, Albert learned that his training was completely outdated and useless.

Albert’s view of his role in the classroom was that of a provider of experiences that students could use to survive in the real world may have developed as a result of his unsatisfactory learning experiences in college and in the military—experiences that did not provide him with the training needed to find employment. These previously unsatisfactory learning experiences may have also contributed to Albert’s view of his preservice program, which he did not believe was an important source of knowledge and skills for teaching. He believed, instead, that only through on-the-job experience would he learn how to teach social studies.
Albert believes his primary role as a teacher was to provide students with experiences that would prepare them for life and socialize them as workers. He did not believe teaching should be driven by the study of knowledge from the academic disciplines.

I imagine some of them are going to be working pretty soon, so they are going to have show up on time and deliver the work when they’re expected to. I’m giving them training for life. Keep that part, you can forget the rest of it.

Albert feels this model of teaching what is necessary for economic survival is the way he was taught in the military. There, “military training was pretty cut and dry;” everyone had been given identical material, and the desired result had been for everyone to arrive at the same outcome.

However, to help students toward the goal of acquiring the skills necessary for life, Albert stressed communication, cooperation and team work. These are all areas in which he thought the military prepares students better than schools do. Yet Albert suggested that this may, in part, be true because the military can use coercion and schools cannot.

Albert’s self-reported attraction to teaching parallels the answer he gave when questioned about his decision to enter the military: “I just kind of fell into it.” However, Albert did discuss several specific attractions to the teaching profession.

Teaching was attractive to Albert because, “One thing was I knew I could do it, and two, I thought I could do it well.” He said this was more of a gut feeling than anything else. It was also based on his belief that he had done a lot of reading kept up with current issues, so he knew he had information to talk about. Thus, his confidence was based on knowing the subject matter, “knowing enough stuff to talk about.”

However, Albert also recognized some aspects of teaching that were not attractive to him. He discussed some classes in which he was required to “baby-sit” or “act as a policeman,” and that was not something he wanted to be doing. He did not consider his own classroom activity to be teaching “unless some learning is going on.” A major consideration for Albert in determining how long he will remain a teacher, then, may be the attitudes and behaviors of the students he encounters in his classes, since he had such definite feelings about not wanting to be a baby-sitter. He also did not want to work with young students.

It depends on whether I would be teaching, or be a policeman or a baby-sitter. When you’re teaching the younger ones, you end up baby-sitting and screaming most of the
time, throwing people out or threatening to throw people out, and I really have no interest in that.

Consequently, Albert was already considering using his teaching experience as a springboard to higher education or to administration.

Albert's recurring sense of "[falling] into it" also figured into his preference for the social studies over other possible subject areas. When Albert had first thought about going back to school, he had not been sure whether he was going to study English or history, and he had not been sure whether he wanted a program leading to an academic or a public school teaching career. He had an interest in social studies and had taken some courses in the subject, and after talking to the social studies education professor at the local university, he decided that the social studies program was one he could complete expeditiously. "I had a family, and I didn't want to stay in school forever, and so, I sort of fell into it that way."

Therefore, it was teaching itself that Albert felt he could do well, not necessarily the teaching of a particular subject. In fact, Albert completed his student teaching prior to finishing much of his social studies course work, which was scheduled to be completed during the following semester, as Albert felt, "I have to [finish the coursework then]. I plan to be working a year from now."

At the time of our interviews, Albert was not sure how long he would remain in the social studies classroom. He had thought about administration, and because he spoke both Spanish and German, he had also considered the possibility of teaching English as a second language. Albert was considering a possible career in academia for the future, but he felt that his thoughts at that point were premature: "I'm not sure. I shouldn't sour so quickly on being a social studies teacher, should I?"

Cross-Case Discussion

The fact that the four participants had similar institutional and career experiences was the basis for including them in this study. The participants had learned, in a sense, the cultural codes that the military required of them on an institutional level (Schempp, Sparkes, & Templin, 1993). As a result, they developed some intersubjective understandings about learning, teaching and knowledge from these shared institutional experiences.

It is, however, where the interplay of idiosyncratic aspects of personal histories interact with common institutional career experiences, that the findings of interest manifest themselves. Why does Paul focus primarily on his experiences with school-aged children and military recruits as the core of his perspectives, while Albert looks primarily at
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what appears to have worked best for himself as a student? Why does Sam adopt perspectives that he himself hated as a child, while Kathy looks to the same family and societal responsibilities she has always valued?

The findings of this study suggest, however, in spite of these differences, the perspectives and attractions the participants bring to the teaching profession are of a conserving nature and will unlikely bring about the second order changes discussed by Cuban (1991). There was a feeling on both their own parts and on the parts of those with whom they worked that experiences in institutional contexts perceived to be similar gave these participants the cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) to fit into and function in schools without major dissonance to either their own perspectives or to current school culture. This expectation suggests a conserving effect on both the institution and the growth of the individual teacher.

The context in which one is presently operating also influences what one thinks is an appropriate course of action in a given situation. There were pressures to replicate the existing practices of the cooperating teachers and the schools. Oftentimes the current situations people find themselves in bring about specific episodic images or memories of similar events experienced in the past or even a conglomeration of images from perceived similar events as discussed by Calderhead and Robson (1991). These images or memories are used to help determine the appropriate action to take in the perceived similar context (Goodman, 1988).

Conclusions and Implications

Although the conclusions from any study are tentative, this study suggests that second career teachers from the military will maintain traditional pedagogical practices in social studies classrooms. Their educational perspectives and career interests suggest the type of teachers they will become and what that might mean for the students with whom they come into contact, as well as for the social studies teaching profession.

Although a number of conclusions can be drawn from this study, I have decided to focus on three issues that I believe are of great importance to the field of social studies teacher education and are directly related to Cuban’s (1991) concerns about the maintenance of traditional pedagogical practices in social studies classrooms. The first issue deals with the limitations of learning to teach through an apprenticeship model, which characterizes both the military and teacher education experiences of the study participants. The second issue is the impact of a limited knowledge base in the teaching of social studies on one’s ability to teach. The third issue is the potential for erroneous common
assumptions made concerning second career military teachers and the supposed advantages they bring to the profession.

The three issues around which the conclusions of this study center are more connected than a separate treatment here might suggest. The apprenticeship model of teacher education sets limitations on one’s ability to learn to teach, as it is based on the assumption that what is happening in schools ought to continue. Learning through the apprenticeship model is closely linked to learning on-the-job, as the participants in this study did during their prior career in the military. Socialization into the military, as experienced by the participants in this study, was based on either internalization or situational adjustment strategies (Lacey, 1977) that maintained the status quo and carried the message that things are as they ought to be.

These apprenticeship type experiences led the participants of this study to believe that teaching was merely a technical act and not necessarily an intellectual, decision-making process. They viewed teaching as something they did without problematizing or reflecting upon what was being taught. This occurred in spite of the fact that all four participants were in teacher education programs where reflection was a major component. The participants felt that if as teachers they could develop skill proficiency at the technical aspects of teaching, this would give the outward appearance that they knew what they were doing, and all would assume that they were good at it. These assumptions that many second career teachers bring to teaching, reinforce the notion that things are the way they should be.

Further, these apprenticeship based experiences underscore the belief that the participants could teach with a limited content knowledge base. Under the apprenticeship model, content knowledge takes on less importance than pedagogical knowledge. The question becomes how, not what and why. This general, naive pedagogical knowledge developed during the apprenticeship of observation and reinforced during apprenticeship clinical experiences, coupled with the personal knowledge from the career and life experiences of the participants, characterize the knowledge that many second career teachers bring to their teaching careers. None of the participants in this study were drawn to the teaching of social studies because of any intense love of the subject; but rather were more interested in the idea of being a teacher. Thus the content knowledge base is limiting and conserving both for the teachers and the students with whom they come into contact.

This study suggests that this limited knowledge base is even more of a problem for the area of social studies than for other certification areas. The way in which the field is conceived and the manner in which certification is granted makes it unlikely that teachers will have adequate subject matter preparation. Social studies teachers often have a strong background in only one of the social science disciplines. Many
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institutions still certify in single subjects such as history, and these teachers are hired to then teach social studies. This will further limit the content knowledge available to the teachers and their students, as the teachers rely on their personal knowledge. This in turn limits their ability to teach.

The assumption of the transferability of prior experience, in this case, leads to the appearance of a smooth and seemingly unproblematic transition from a first career to a career in teaching. It is the ability to master the superficial technical aspects of teaching that makes these second career people attractive to those doing the hiring for school districts. In a sense, these individuals have mastered the "form" of teaching while remaining ignorant or naive about the substantive issues of teaching and learning. This situation is counterproductive to efforts aimed at making second order changes in teaching that Cuban (1991) and others discuss. A quote by Sam's cooperating teacher states most clearly how the experience second career teachers bring to teaching works to maintain traditional practices in the classroom and sets limits on one's ability to teach. "Sam understands the institutional restraints on what he should do and should not do. He understands his role in the institution...Sam got into the routine of teaching quickly."

Note

1 The areas of research used to inform this study continuously grew and changed, in terms of relative importance, as the study progressed. I found that the more I read, the more complex, overlapping and interconnected these areas became and the more difficult it became to write them as separate sections of the literature review. In keeping with the methodological strength and flexibility of a qualitative study, this growth and change continued throughout the data collection and analysis portions of this project. A brief review of some of that literature appears here.

References


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Accounts Of Slavery: An Analysis of United States History Textbooks From 1900 to 1992

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Abstract
The presentation of slavery in United States history texts varies dramatically across five time periods from 1900 to 1992. During the first third of this century, textbook authors present slavery in a neutral way. During the Great Depression and World War II, authors justify slavery by appealing to the needs of the market. The late 1950s and the 1960s see the introduction of some limited discussion of the moral wrongs of slavery, while the texts of the late 1960s and the 1970s begin to express an awareness of the value of social diversity. Finally, in the 1980s and 1990s, the presentation of slavery reflects the nation's growing conservatism and the increased influence of the religious right.

Review of Literature

An extensive review of the relevant literature does not produce many studies involving actual content analyses of history textbooks over time. Several studies make reference to contemporary political battles over textbook content and their effects on textbook editors (Apple, 1995; FitzGerald, 1979; Sewall, 1987), describe how academic trends in historiography “trickle down” to primary and secondary school textbooks (FitzGerald, 1979; Higham, 1970; Kammen, 1987), and/or explain inclusionary/exclusionary content in terms of power relations among groups (Apple, 1993; Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991; Anyon, 1979).

However, FitzGerald (1979) does present a detailed overview of various ideological pressures and influences on textbook content over time, and Loewen (1995) specifically addresses how recent texts differ in their portrayal of slavery from earlier texts. Similarly, the American Textbook Council's guide for history texts also provides insight into ideological influences and trends in recent textbooks (American Textbook Council, 1994).
These studies offer useful findings, many of which focus primarily on recent texts and do not take historical context into account. The authors assert that these texts are succumbing to pressure from various groups but often fail to examine the ways in which ideology affected textbook content historically. Thus, there is a need for in-depth research regarding textbook history construction and ideology in order to understand current debates surrounding textual inaccuracy and/or bias.

Purpose of the Study

History textbooks are often presented to students as factual accounts which give an unbiased narrative of the origins and development of the social, political, and economic institutions of their society. Their purpose is to instruct, to prepare students for participation in society, to tell students what someone wishes them to know about their country’s past, present and future (Apple, 1993; Anyon, 1979; FitzGerald, 1979). The content of these texts is transmitted to the younger generation, along with the ideologies embedded within them. Thus, the purpose of this study was to construct a description and analysis of the presentation of slavery in United States history textbooks with respect to ideologies dominant at the time of their writing. This study is an attempt to reveal the ways in which the construction of history shifts along with changes in power structures and political ideologies.

Two primary research questions and a subset of related questions guided the data collection: (1) How do textbooks describe slavery and its context? (2) How does this description reflect ideologies dominant at the time these textbooks were written? Answering the first question required posing a series of focused subquestions, which included: (a) How do textbooks describe slaves and their lives? (b) How do they describe slaveowners and abolitionists? (c) What stance do they take regarding the morality/immorality of the slave system? (d) To what do they attribute the emergence and continuation of the slave system? (e) How do they describe key social and political actors which affected the antebellum south?

Methodology

This is an applied qualitative study in that its purpose is to provide an understanding of the presentation of slavery in United States history texts with respect to changing ideology, or to “contribute knowledge that will help people understand the nature of a problem” (Patton, 1990). This study was guided by critical theory. Critical theory is defined as “an effort to join empirical investigation, the task of interpre-
McLaren & Giarelli, 1995, p. 2). It considers knowledge to be socially constructed, highly contextual and dependent upon interpretation, and is concerned with ideology and domination. Critical theory also assesses "the way in which dominant ideologies are constituted and mediated via specific cultural formations" (Giroux, 1983, p. 37). This study uses an analysis of the portrayal of one historical issue to examine the influence of such ideologies on knowledge that is often viewed as factual and unchanging.

In this study, I critically analyzed a collection of 65 history textbooks based upon the assumptions that textbooks are written from a particular perspective, that story line and language can be used to gather information about that perspective, and that these perspectives, taken as a whole, can be used to gain knowledge about dominant ideologies and groups as well as societal change. This approach is similar to the one used by Sleeter and Grant (1991) in their study, "Race, Class, Gender, and Disability in Current Textbooks", in which they use a language, story-line and picture analysis to study how textbooks portray different groups.

My approach to critical theory was informed by feminist theory, as it involves the relationship and interactions of power, language, and subjectivity. The analysis is based upon an assumption of subjectivity, using the language of texts to infer the relative power and dominance of groups and ideas. Feminist theory views such power in terms of its historical context, involving conflict, domination, and resistance (Lather, 1992). These issues are highly salient in the ever-changing battle among various groups to control textbook content. It affected my approach to this study in that I viewed the wording and story line of each text as a clue, part of a network of clues leading to information about dominant groups in society that helped to control and define knowledge as well as about the interplay between groups that eventually led to changes in textbook content.

Site and Selection

In order to undertake this study, a large and varied collection of United States history textbooks was required. The Shermis Collection of Purdue University's Humanities, Social Sciences and Education Library provided such an assortment. This collection consists of 126 different elementary, middle and secondary history textbooks published between 1870 and 1985 that were used in the Indiana Public Schools. I selected 57 textbooks from this collection based upon the following criteria: (1) The textbook was intended for use in middle and secondary schools. (2) The textbook was published after 1900. (3) The textbook included information about slavery. (4) The textbook's content was sufficiently different from that of previous editions of the same textbook so as to warrant another analysis.
This collection was beneficial in that it includes such a wide variety of authors, publishers, and publication dates, and is one of only a few such collections compiled by a social studies researcher. However, the collection is limited in that it only includes textbooks used in the State of Indiana. For example, it does not include Harold Rugg's textbooks, which were banned in many school systems during the 1930s for their humanistic perspective. In addition, the collection only incorporates textbooks published up until 1985. To compensate for the latter limitation, I selected eight additional textbooks published between 1985 and 1992. These books were obtained from the Technology Resources Center at Purdue University, which serves as a depository of textbooks used in the Indiana Public Schools. In sum, I reviewed a total of 65 textbooks published between the years of 1900 and 1992.

Design

I began the research project with an initial pilot study of two textbooks selected at random which were published during each decade from 1900 to 1990. Using a combination of content analysis and constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), I then spent over 70 hours collecting data from the textbooks. Content analysis is defined as "the process of identifying, coding, and categorizing the primary patterns in the data" and is often the most effective strategy to analyze written textual data (Patton, 1990). It is an analysis strategy that involves using a set of procedures in order to make valid inferences from text, and can be used to identify a communicator's intent, to reveal cultural patterns, and to discern the focus of societal attention when the language of the textual data is crucial to the study (Berelson, 1952; Holsti, 1969; Weber, 1988). Holsti (1969) states that one approach to content analysis "involves examining materials which explicitly perform the function of transmitting and instilling social norms" (p. 82). History textbooks clearly fall within this area.

For the first 20 texts, I examined the table of contents and the index in order to locate all references to slavery. I then systematically searched the texts, collecting data in the form of notes regarding the presentation of slavery, framed by the research questions. For example, for each text I took notes on how the authors described the slave system in general (e.g. morality/immorality, protagonists/antagonists, causes/effects), using their own words to summarize their argument. Next I began a cross-textual analysis of approximately three more textbooks from each decade, beginning with the oldest textbooks and ending with the most recent ones, noting during which time periods the authors' presentations of each of these factors of the slave system began to change. I developed some tentative patterns based upon these findings. For example, I discovered that texts of the 1930s and 1940s appeared to present slavery and slave owners in a more positive light.
than had previous texts. I then used a constant comparative analysis to determine if the new data fit into the previous patterns or if I needed to adjust those patterns or create new ones.

As I collected more data, I adjusted each pattern so it encompassed my findings from each textbook I had analyzed up to that point. Finally, I examined every textbook in the collection that fit my criteria and that I had not previously analyzed. If the majority of these remaining texts did not fit my patterns, I adjusted the pattern or the time periods in order to accommodate the new data set. If I found discrepant data for each pattern, I checked to see if the texts represented later editions of older textbooks or if they fit within an adjacent time period's pattern. I included some of this discrepant data in the body of the paper, particularly if these data appeared to be indicative of a transitional period. For example, textbooks from the 1960s and 1970s tend to portray abolitionists in a positive light, although a few discrepant cases show how abolitionists' actions were counterproductive. These texts help demonstrate how some authors' presentations of abolitionists remained the same, despite the shift in position from the previous time period.

After I had completed the data collection, I analyzed the patterns in order to determine if they fell within particular time periods. Using the publishing date of the textbooks, I was able to induce time period categories by systematically examining the data to establish when the issues raised by research questions shifted. Both the research questions and the theoretical framework facilitated the organization into time periods based on the patterns which emerged. Critical theory guided the data interpretation as I compared my findings to political ideologies that were dominant during these historical periods (Bailyn, Davis, Donald, Thomas, Wiebe, & Wood, 1981).

After the analysis was completed, I had discovered several major patterns. First, from 1900 to about 1930, textbooks appear to give a balanced presentation of slavery, depicting pros and cons of the slave system from both Northern and Southern points of view. Second, from the years of the Great Depression to the post-war decade, authors seem to justify the slave system by appealing to market forces. Third, the mid-1940s through the 1950s saw changes in the presentation of slavery as it came to be portrayed as a necessary evil. Fourth, textbooks of the late 1960s and the 1970s appear to regard slavery as un-American. Finally, in the 1980s and 1990s, certain aspects of the slave system seem to be presented as a reflection of neo-conservative values. In the Analysis, Interpretation and Discussion section I will present each of these patterns and discuss specific data in order to provide support for these claims.
Pattern #1: Neutral Presentation of Slavery

Early in this century (1900 to about 1930), textbooks generally appear to give a neutral presentation of slavery by discussing the positions of both sides of the North/South conflict. Three categories of information support this pattern. First, the authors present neither side as all right or all wrong. Second, the authors express the differences between radical and more moderate abolitionists. Third, the authors emphasize the importance of preserving the Union.

The first category that supports this pattern is that the authors present neither side as all right or all wrong. Instances of this appear in several forms. For example, in discussing the North/South conflict, Mace (1904) emphasizes that, while many people agreed that “slavery was wrong,” most Southerners believed that Whites and Blacks could only coexist as master and slave. Other texts include headings such as “The Southern Point of View” and “The Northern Point of View” (Gordy, 1911, p. 204) and “Arguments against slavery” versus “The defense of slavery” (Fite, 1916, p. 342). The appearance of impartiality is further maintained through assertions that the Civil War resulted from miscommunication and the differing needs of both sides, and that Southern reaction against Northern abolitionists was “perfectly natural” (Elson, 1902; Morse, 1912; Thomas, 1900; Usher, 1914). For example, one text states that “If we confine ourselves strictly to the point of view of 1850, we shall be likely to agree that humane, sensible, honest men might find much that seemed cogent and convincing in either argument and be able consistently to espouse that side with ardor” (Usher, 1914, p. 355).

Early texts assert that the injustices of the system could only be found in the wide differences in lifestyle between the slaveowner and nonslaveowner, and in the inhumane treatment of indentured servants. For example, Mace (1904) notes that the slaveowners, who were not obligated to work, were often the lawmakers, while the non-slaveowner “had to labor all the harder because he worked in competition with the slave” (p. 35). Another text explains that “the professional classes...were dependent on the planters for their livings...while the great mass of non-slaveholding whites...were powerless to stop their ascendancy” (Wertenbaker & Smith, 1933, p. 341). Other authors argue that slavery should have been abolished, or was abolished not because slavery was wrong, but because emancipation would also aid Whites, in that their labor would no longer be competing with free slave labor (Montgomery, 1920; Usher, 1914; Wertenbaker & Smith, 1933). As Usher (1914) states, “The very existence of the slave deprived the poor white of economic opportunity” (p. 354). Some texts focus primarily on the life of the indentured servant, claiming that there was not a substantial num-
ber of slaves during the colonies’ first hundred years (Beard & Beard, 1929; Bourne & Benton, 1913; Casner & Gabriel, 1931; Montgomery, 1920; Thomas, 1900).

The second category that supports this pattern is that the authors express the differences between radical and more moderate abolitionists. Although many texts do include “the Northern point of view,” they often depict Southerners as victims of abolitionists’ actions. Many refer to abolitionists as “extremists”, “agitators”, and “radicals” (Beard & Beard, 1928; Bourne & Benton, 1913; Casner & Gabriel, 1931; Fite, 1916; Gordy, 1911; Morse, 1912; Thomas, 1900; Wertenbaker & Smith, 1933). These early texts also illustrate the differences between radical abolitionists and moderates like Lincoln. Some explain that southerners were unable to differentiate abolitionists like William Lloyd Garrison and John Brown from Republicans like Lincoln (Gordy, 1911; Casner & Gabriel, 1931; Morse, 1912; Muzzey, 1927). For example, one text contends that “Lincoln’s inaugural address was conciliatory and very far removed from anything like abolitionism” (Thomas, 1900, p. 274). Another includes a section entitled “Contrast Between Abolitionists and Antislavery Men” (Muzzey, 1927, p. 275), while yet another text explains that “while people with extreme ideas like those of Garrison and Yancey were talking freely about destroying the Union, sober-minded men in both North and South were trying to prevent the question of slavery from... wreck[ing] the Union” (Casner & Gabriel, 1931, p. 443). Similarly, Thomas’ (1900) text emphasizes Lincoln’s conservatism by stating “Lincoln never pressed his views much ahead of public opinion. He bided his time until he thought the time had come... he had already considered the subject carefully, and was only waiting a suitable time to speak” (p. 295). Morse (1912) also represents this view of radical abolitionists by stating, “The violent, vituperative, even vindictive spirit in which the abolitionists from the very start carried on their antislavery crusade made emancipation or any other peaceable solution of the question impossible thenceforth” (p. 174).

The third category that supports this pattern is that the authors emphasize the importance of preserving the Union. They praise Clay and Webster for negotiating a compromise in order to preserve the Union (Beard & Beard, 1928; Bourne & Benton, 1913; Casner & Gabriel, 1931; Fite, 1916; Montgomery, 1920; Usher, 1914; Wertenbaker & Smith, 1933). Beard and Beard (1928) label Clay an “heroic figure”, explaining how, “in a powerful oration, he made a passionate appeal for a union of hearts through mutual sacrifices” (p. 328). Another text states that “many thoughtful men who were opposed to slavery believed that... it was better to save the Union with slavery than to deliberately destroy it for the sake of liberating the negro” (Montgomery, 1920, p. 229).

In summary, texts from the first three decades of the twentieth century appear to give a neutral treatment of slavery. As the American
Legion declared in 1925, history textbooks "must dwell on failure only for its value as a moral lesson, [and] must speak chiefly of success" (Loewen, 1995). Overall, however, the slave appears to be considered a valuable commodity, and abolitionists are regarded as vicious extremists. Finally, political figures such as Webster, Clay and Lincoln are praised and characterized as conservatives attempting to preserve the Union, thereby separating them from the radical abolitionists. What do these early texts reveal about society in the early 1900s? There appears to be much concern for the country's stability and unity (the Civil War had only ended four decades earlier). Texts favor conservatism and praise American traditions and traditional figures. FitzGerald (1979) explains that many authors during this time period revered the Founders and "carried on the only serious attempt at ancestor worship in American textbook history," while more Progressive authors strove to teach the value of social reform by stressing tolerance and cooperation in their texts (p. 53). The authors thus appear to use their presentation of the slave system not to condemn slavery (as in later texts), but in order to promote the value of Union (cooperation) and economic prosperity.

Pattern #2: Justification of the Slave System

The years of the Great Depression, World War II, and into the post-war decade were times of economic dislocation. During this era, texts justify the existence of the slave system. Four categories of information support this pattern. First, the authors use racial and gender stereotypes to present a positive view of the slave system. Second, the authors present justification for the slave system by appealing to the needs of the market. Third, the authors still portray abolitionists as radicals. Fourth, the authors continue to emphasize the importance of preserving the Union.

The first category that supports this pattern is that the authors use racial and gender stereotypes to present a positive view of the slave system. Slaves are portrayed as ignorant and careless workers who had to be whipped for laziness, would break complex tools, and ruined the formerly fertile soil of the south (Beeby, Hanna, & McClure, 1952; Brown, 1951; Canfield & Wilder, 1952; Vannest & Smith, 1937). For example, one text states that "as a rule, slaves were lazy and indolent...the overseer had to keep constant watch upon the slave to keep him at his task and get the best work out of him, and sometimes he had to whip him" (Vannest & Smith, 1937, p. 268).

Many of these texts use descriptions of a happy, carefree, faithful and loving slave to illustrate their positive presentation of the slave system. They stress that the slaves were happy and loved their masters (Aker, Hilton, & Aker, 1937; Barker, Commager, & Webb, 1941; Casner & Gabriel, 1931; Chapman, 1936; McGuire, 1946; Moore, Painter, Car-
penter, & Lewis, 1951; Townsend, 1944). For example, McGuire (1953) paints this picture of the southern plantation: "When we reach the plantation on a pleasant summer morning, we find everyone bustling about the place... The slaves are as happy as their master and mistress at thus entertaining company... As evening comes...[and the slaves begin to sing and dance], the planter and his wife smile at each other when they hear the sound, for to them it is the sign of happy, well-cared-for slaves" (p. 222). Similarly, another text states that "some of the negroes loved their white masters, and the white people were very fond of their negro slaves...The negroes...did not mind [hard field work] when their masters were kind and thoughtful" (Aker, Hilton, & Aker, 1937, p. 444).

Sexist imagery is also used in this period during the Depression and World War II. The woman is embodied in the southern plantation mistress, whose duty is presented as caring for sick slaves, overseeing their tasks, and generally providing for their personal needs (Casner & Gabriel, 1931; McGuire, 1946; Wirth, 1938). Slaves are also presented in this light. One text explains that "the negro 'mammy' took care of the white children and taught the girls how to cook and sew. The negro 'uncle' spent many happy hours telling the children stories or teaching the boys how to do some of the work about the farm" (Aker, Hilton, & Aker, 1937, p. 443). Another states that "the [Negro] men did well when working... trades that were easy to learn. The women could be trained to do housework of all sorts and they made the most faithful nurses for children" (McGuire, 1953, p. 208).

The second category that supports this pattern is that the authors present justification for the slave system by appealing to the needs of the market. They assert that demand for slaves was created because slaves were valuable and were of "most use" in the south (Beeby, Hanna, & McClure, 1952; Brown, 1941; McGuire, 1946; Moore et al., 1951; Wirth, 1936; Woodburn, Moran, & Hill, 1934). For example, Wirth (1938) explains that "Maryland, like Virginia, found the production of tobacco profitable, and soon came to depend upon negro slaves to perform the great amount of work that was required for its culture" (p. 342). Other texts argue that slavery flourished in the south because slaves could not be taught factory work and enjoyed the hot southern sun (Brown, 1951; Beeby, Hanna, & McClure, 1952; McGuire, 1953). Thus, economic prosperity is presented as a great concern as many had begun to lose their faith in the American economy during the years of the Great Depression.

The third category that supports this pattern is that authors still portray abolitionists as radicals. They argue that abolitionists were the cause of many "bitter feelings", driving an even greater wedge between North and South (Canfield & Wilder, 1952; Casner & Gabriel, 1931; Vannest & Smith, 1937; Wertensbaker & Smith, 1933; Wirth, 1938;
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Woodburn, Moran, & Hill, 1934). For example, the radical acts of abolitionists are seen as counterproductive: "Garrison's statements on slaveholding forced the North and South farther apart, and the chance for a peaceful settlement of the question became less and less as time went on" (Vannest & Smith, 1937, p. 295). Similarly, another text states that "the abolitionist attacks changed the southern point of view toward the institution of slavery" (Canfield & Wilder, 1952, p. 246). Even the story of Uncle Tom's Cabin, which will later be commended in texts for awakening the north to the slave's plight, is now presented as an unusual case, an "exaggerated picture of the miseries of slaves in the south" (Canfield & Wilder, 1952; Moore et al., 1951; Townsend, 1944; Wertenbaker & Smith, 1933; Wirth, 1938). This depiction of slaves, the importance of economic prosperity, and the counterproductive nature of abolitionism can be seen as an attempt to reveal the dangers of political radicalism, especially in an era in which banks were failing, the war was all-consuming, and the future of available jobs appeared to be uncertain for many Americans.

The fourth category that supports this pattern is that the authors continue to emphasize the importance of preserving the Union. Many texts continue to commend Webster and Clay ("The Great Peacemaker") for their attempts to preserve the Union (Beeby, Hanna, & McClure, 1952; Brown, 1951; Canfield & Wilder, 1952; Casner & Gabriel, 1931; Wertenbaker & Smith, 1933; Wirth, 1938; Woodburn, Moran, & Hill, 1934). They also praise Lincoln for his thoughtfulness in abolishing slavery only as a "war measure", his final effort to save the Union from collapse (Beeby, Hanna, & McClure, 1952; Canfield & Wilder, 1952; Casner & Gabriel, 1931; McGuire, 1946; Wertenbaker & Smith, 1933; Woodburn, Moran, & Hill, 1934). Loewen (1995) speaks of this pattern as indicative of textbooks of the era, stating that "until the civil rights movement, American history textbooks [mostly agreed]... that slavery was an ideal structure whose passing was to be lamented" (p. 133). FitzGerald (1979) argues that this era also saw the end of the only period of ideological diversity in textbooks, which he states occurred from 1910 to 1930.

Pattern #3: Slavery as a Necessary Evil

The mid-1940s through the 1950s saw the beginning of changes in texts as the authors start to present slavery as a necessary evil. This time period also marks a change in textbook titles as they began to reflect new Cold War pressures. During the 1940s, many conservative groups began to attack liberal textbooks, putting enough pressure on textbook publishers that, by 1950, resulted in great success. In these new textbooks, "America was perfect: the greatest nation in the world, and the embodiment of democracy, freedom, and technological progress" (FitzGerald, 1979, p. 10). Later, during the transitory period
from the late 1950s through the 1960s, texts begin to include small portions devoted to the moral wrongs of slavery, as national attention became focused on the civil rights movement. However, they still emphasize that most southerners had no part in the institution. Two categories that support this pattern are first, that the authors begin to use patriotic textbook titles, and second, that the authors emphasize that most Southerners were not slaveowners.

The first category that supports this pattern is that authors begin to use patriotic textbook titles. Beginning in the mid-to-late 1940s and the 1950s, with the rise in Cold War tensions, a greater effort appears to be made by authors to promote capitalism and American democracy. As was the case in earlier texts, the words “freedom”, “justice”, and “liberty” are equated with the American social and political system. Instead of titles like the early Mace’s School History of the United States (1904) and A History of the United States for Schools (1911), the titles of texts from this period express this new effort to revitalize patriotism: The Rise of Our Free Nation (1946), Your Country and Mine (1951), and The Story of American Freedom (1957).

The second category that supports this pattern is that the authors emphasize that most Southerners were not slaveowners. The late 1950s and the 1960s were times of transition for America. Although some texts continue to praise the slave system and condemn abolitionists for the Union’s collapse (Harlow & Blake, 1957; McGuire, 1957; Moon & Cline, 1964; Winther & Cartwright, 1962), others are at least ambivalent on the issue of slavery and present both sides (Alden & Magenis, 1960; Burke, 1957; Moon & Cline, 1964; Schwartz & O’Connor, 1964). Many texts simply do not detail the treatment of slaves (Alden & Magenis, 1960; Burke 1957; Gavin & Hamm, 1960; McGuire, 1957; Muzzey & Link, 1963; Winther & Cartwright, 1962), and stress that many, or most, Southerners were not slaveowners (Burke, 1957; Clark, Compton, & Hendrickson, 1965; Gavin & Hamm, 1960; Harlow & Blake, 1957; Moon & Cline, 1964; Schwartz & O’Connor, 1964; Wilder, Ludlum, & Brown, 1958; Winther & Cartwright, 1962). For example, Burke (1957) states that “It should be pointed out, however, that only about one-fourth of the white people of the South were slave owners. It was the large plantation owners who were interested in keeping slavery as an institution; here was an example of how minority interests often control the policies of the majority” (p. 107). Although some texts begin to include short segments explaining why slavery was morally wrong, they still present most Southerners and the plantation system for the most part as morally upright.

In general, these texts regard slavery as a necessary evil. Several texts name famous statesmen such as Washington and Jefferson who were opposed to slavery (Clark, Compton, & Hendrickson, 1965; Muzzey & Link, 1963; Winther & Cartwright, 1962). However, the ex-
istence of the slave system is justified because more slaves were re-
quired to ensure the South’s economic growth after the Industrial Revo-
lution and the invention of the cotton gin (Alden & Magenis, 1960; 
Burke, 1957; Clark, Compton, & Hendrickson, 1965; Harlow & Blake, 
1957; McGuire, 1957; Muzzey & Link, 1963; Schwartz & O’Connor, 1964; 
Wilder, Ludlum, & Brown, 1958; Winther & Cartwright, 1962). These 
texts not only begin to give more historical significance to the develop-
ment of American industry, but they also represent the institutionalist 
trend in historiography, in which behavior was explained in terms of 
functional requirements of various systems (Higham, 1970; FitzGerald, 
1979). For example, Clark, Compton and Hendrickson (1965) state that 
southerners “found themselves part of an economic system which they 
believed demanded the Negro slave for its very existence” (p. 460). 
Another text argues that slaveowners “came to believe that slave labor 
was necessary for [growing] cotton...[they] felt that they could not af-
ford to pay wages to that many workers” (Winther & Cartwright, 1962, 
p. 420).

The Story of American Freedom (1957) includes a drawing of a large 
white-pillared mansion entitled “Life on this plantation... looks invit-
ing as the planter and his family welcome guests” (p. 176). There are 
no slaves or slave cabins pictured in this illustration. However, instead 
of focusing on the slaves’ lives (as in later texts), the texts of the late 
1950s and the 1960s stress that, although many plantation owners were 
wealthy and owned slaves to do their work, most farmers were not 
slaveowners. Slavery is seen as a necessary evil, a requirement for an 
ever-expanding economy.

Pattern #4: Slavery as Un-American

The late 1960s and 1970s saw changes in texts as society became 
more open and accepting of diversity. More people were receiving 
higher education, the Women’s Movement was in full swing, and the 
younger generation began to challenge authority as they realized the 
impact of the Vietnam War on their own lives. Trends in historiogra-
phy began to move toward an increased emphasis on social history 
(FitzGerald, 1979; Loewen, 1995). In addition, great pressure was placed 
upon textbook publishers to “multiculturalize” books (American Text-
FitzGerald (1979) explains that “in the space of a year or two, the po-
litical wind veered a hundred and eighty degrees. For the first time in 
publishing history, large-scale protests came from the left and from 
non-white people, and for the first time such protests were listened to” 
(p. 38). This movement began with a 1962 call by the NAACP to with-
draw a history textbook from the Detroit school system for its per-
ceived favorable depiction of slavery. The movement spread through-
out large cities and came to be championed by organizations repre-
senting many other minority groups. It resulted in a widespread ex-
amination of history textbooks for racial bias (American Textbook Coun-

The authors of these texts present slavery as un-American, a
contradiction to the theory of American democracy. Two categories of
information support this pattern. First, the authors emphasize that
human bondage is wrong. Second, the authors begin to change their
presentation of abolitionists.

The first category that supports this pattern is that the authors
emphasize that human bondage is morally wrong. Perhaps in response
to the Civil Rights Movement, lengthy discussions are included in texts
of the late 1960s and the 1970s emphasizing Blacks' important contri-
butions to society, the wrongs of slavery, and the humanity of the en-
slaved. Texts explain how the novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* succeeded in
shocking the north, forcing it to confront the widespread oppression
and suffering that was inherent in the slave system (Bailey, 1971; Brown,
Robinson, & Cunningham, 1977; Buggey, Danzer, Mitsakos, &
Rinsinger, 1977; Caughey, Franklin, & May, 1967; Shafer, McLemore,
Augustpurger, & Finkelstein, 1967; Wade, Wilder, & Wade, 1967; Wilson
& Spiero, 1972). The authors also emphasize that slaves were human,
even though they were treated like property (Bailey, 1971; Current,
DeConde, & Dante, 1974; Davis, Arnoff, & Davis, 1969; Madgic, Seaberg,
Stopsky, & Winks, 1971). Unlike previous texts, some of these more
recent texts include an extensive description of the slave experience,
follows slaves from the ship to the plantation and outlining their
brutal and often deadly treatment by owners, overseers, and drivers
(Brown, Robinson, & Cunningham, 1977; Buggey et al., 1977; Caughey,
Franklin, & May, 1967; Current, DeConde, & Dante, 1974; Gardner, 1977;
Graff, 1967; Madgic et al., 1971).

The second category that supports this pattern is that the authors
begin to change their presentation of abolitionists. Some texts continue
to depict abolitionists as misguided, for their actions led not toward
the goal, but rather away from it. One text states that abolitionists were
so violently opposed because they were "regarded as radicals" (Brown,
Robinson, & Cunningham, 1977, p. 305). The authors also argue that
the south "chose" to oppress slaves out of fear coupled with racist in-
tentions. Some authors state that one of the causes resulting in this
"choice" was Nat Turner's rebellion and other abolitionists' activities,
which led to stricter controls in the form of laws and other practices
(Bragdon & McCutchen, 1978; Current, DeConde, & Dante, 1974). Al-
though some texts do portray abolitionists in this light, many more do
begin to acknowledge their heroism in the face of extreme danger
(Caughey, Franklin, & May, 1967; Patterson, Patterson, Hunnicutt,
Grambs, & Smith, 1967; Shafer et al., 1967; Ver Steeg, 1965; Wade, Wilder,
The institution of slavery is presented as a contradiction to the theory of American democracy. Several texts emphasize that some of the nation’s founders were opposed to slavery (Current, DeConde, & Dante, 1974; Gardner, 1977; Shafer et al., 1969). For example, Current, DeConde, and Dante (1974) stress that “some Patriots attacked both the slave trade and slavery” (p. 72). Brown, Robinson and Cunningham (1977) print an account which asserts that the slave trade was “inconsistent with the principles of the revolution” (p. 172). Furthermore, Bragdon and McCutchen (1978) argue that the Emancipation Proclamation was written to “destroy an institution that was a complete violation of the principals America was supposed to stand for” (p. 362), and Shafer et al. (1967) state that slavery is mentioned in the Constitution only in the Thirteenth Amendment, which abolished the institution. These assertions that America is based upon moral principles can be seen as representing the nation’s fear that young people were losing their faith in the government. Finally, textbook titles also begin to reflect an effort to bolster patriotism. Instead of texts entitled This Is America’s Story (1958), A History of the United States (1960), and The Story of Our Heritage (1962), texts published during and after the Vietnam War are entitled Land of the Free: A History of the United States (1967), United States History: Search For Freedom (1974), America! America! (1977), and The Promise of Democracy: The Grand Experiment (1978).

These texts from the late 1960s and the 1970s appear to reflect the nation’s growing awareness and acceptance of diversity. They stress the slave’s humanity and begin to acknowledge the contributions of men and women to the abolitionist movement. Finally, as the younger generation began to challenge authority and the government was simultaneously attempting to legitimize the war in Vietnam in the eyes of the American public, these texts assert that slavery is a contradiction to American principles and values.

Pattern #5: Slavery as Reflection of Conservative Values

The Reagan/Bush era of 1980-1992 saw a new wave of conservatism and the growing influence of the religious right. “Trickle-down economics” sought to right the sinking economy by giving benefits to big business and assuming that these benefits would eventually “trickle down” to smaller businesses and consumers. The rise of the religious right, the politics of traditional values, and an increase in Cold War tensions were also characteristic of this new era. Textbooks experienced a “backlash” as well, in response to the previous “multiculturalization” efforts. Cornbleth & Waugh (1995) label this neo-conservatism “neonativism,” arguing that it results in “simply adding more historically excluded people... and minimizing serious examination of racial and ethnic conflict” (p. 6). FitzGerald writes that “just as soon as [publishers’] guidelines were issued and pictures of female mechanics and na-
tive-American chairpersons began to appear in books, the reaction set in" (p. 41). Apple and Christian-Smith (1991) project that "we may be entering an era of backsliding, a return to more white- and male-dominated curricula. " However, the American Textbook Council guidelines (1994) warn against "anti-historical ideologies," stating that "accuracy has been the first casualty of contemporary sensitivities, clashing ideologies, and pressures for inclusion" (p. 35). These quotations demonstrate the great difference in perspectives and the pressures placed upon publishers to avoid controversy, emphasize compromise and conform to public opinion.

The most recent texts describe the slave life in great detail. They acknowledge the courage of abolitionists and condemn slavery as one of society's great evils. However, intermingled with this ideology is a reflection of society's new conservatism. Three categories of information support this pattern. First, the authors emphasize gradual social and political change. Second, the authors stress religious experience. Third, the authors emphasize traditional values and gender roles.

The first category that supports this pattern is that the authors emphasize gradual social and political change. For example, one text characterizes William Lloyd Garrison by his "extreme attacks," which included burning the Constitution (a political taboo in the 1980s, when Bush attempted to pass a flag-burning amendment) (Boorstin & Kelley, 1986, p. 237). Other texts blame Garrison for alienating moderates, thereby hindering, rather than aiding, the abolitionist cause (Conlin, 1991; Garraty, 1991; Todd & Curti, 1990). For example, Conlin (1991) argues that Theodore Dwight Weld (who is described as a moderate) "converted more people to abolitionism than Garrison and [Elijah] Lovejoy together" (p. 335). Still others claim that moderate abolitionists were able to gain more support than the radicals (Davidson & Lytle, 1984) or the abolitionists widened the north/south ideological gap (Nash, 1992). Slave revolts, as in earlier texts, are now seen as having a detrimental impact on the status of slaves in the south (Armento, Nash, Salter, & Wixson, 1991; Brown & Bass, 1990; Conlin, 1991; Davidson & Lytle, 1984; Garraty, 1991; Graff, 1985; Nash, 1992; Reich & Biller, 1988; Todd & Curti, 1990).

In addition, Lincoln's political conservatism is stressed and his political decisions are praised. At first, texts argue, Lincoln cautiously avoided taking a position on slavery for fear of alienating border states, or because his paramount objective was to save the Union (Boorstin & Kelley, 1986; Brown & Bass, 1990; Davidson & Lytle, 1984; Garraty, 1991; Nash, 1992; Todd & Curti, 1990). Some also state that he finally issued the Proclamation only under extreme political pressure (Boorstin & Kelley, 1986; Brown & Bass, 1990; Davidson & Lytle, 1984; Nash, 1992). However, others explain that Lincoln freed the slaves as a political measure, either to win European support (Todd & Curti, 1990), to
strengthen northern support (Armento et al., 1991), or to weaken the rebel forces (Garraty, 1991).

Although some texts argue that Lincoln was against slavery and others assert that he was pro-slavery, most indicate that he was able to transcend his personal opinion in order to make a decision that would benefit the Union and be in accordance with public opinion (Armento et al., 1991; Boorstin & Kelley, 1986; Davidson & Lytle, 1984; Garraty, 1991; Nash, 1992; Todd & Curti, 1990). For example, Boorstin and Kelley (1986) state that “Abraham Lincoln was every inch a politician. He was not a crusader...Lincoln realized that his job was not to express his feelings but to shape the real world” (p. 289). Loewen (1995) also notes that most textbooks of this era “take pains to separate Lincoln from undue idealism about slavery,” revering him primarily because he “saved the union”. He states that authors present a “morally indifferent” Lincoln who did not act on the basis of beliefs that slavery was wrong (p. 174).

The second category that supports this pattern is that the authors stress religious experience. Religion, and especially Christianity, is increasingly being viewed as a fundamental component of American society. Texts emphasize the religious experience (often described as an innovative religion combining both African and Christian elements) as one of the slave’s few hopes and comforts (Boorstin & Kelley, 1986; Brown & Bass, 1990; Budziszewski & Pauline, 1989; Conlin, 1991; Davidson & Lytle, 1984; Nash, 1992; Risjord & Haywoode, 1982). Several texts also assert that some famous and heroic abolitionists were motivated by their religious beliefs (Armento et al., 1991; Brown & Bass, 1990; Garraty, 1991; Reich & Biller, 1988; Risjord & Haywoode, 1982; Todd & Curti, 1990). For example, one text states that “Quakers and Pietists were the first to insist publicly that bondage was inconsistent with religion—that one could not be both a slave owner and a good Christian” (Risjord & Haywoode, 1982, p. 57), while another explains that “Early in the abolitionist movement, women saw their work as a religious crusade against the ‘sinful’ and ‘unChristian’ slaveholders” (Armento et al., 1991, p. 251).

The third category that supports this pattern is that the authors emphasize traditional values and gender roles. For example, Boorstin and Kelley (1986) state, “Not surprisingly in such a close-knit society, there were white southerners who loved their slaves and who were loved by them in return. Usually the wives of plantation owners took care of slaves who were sick, saw that they had the proper clothes and food, and attended their weddings, funerals, and church services” (p. 226). Other texts also discuss the plantation mistress’ duties, focusing on her role as nurse, tutor, and overseer of slaves and domestic work (Armento et al., 1991; Boorstin & Kelley, 1986; Conlin, 1991; Davidson & Lytle, 1984; Todd & Curti, 1990).
However, the modern era has brought some changes in the presentation of women in texts (Wade, 1993) despite the focus on conservatism and traditional values. Texts include extensive descriptions of Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, and Harriet Beecher Stowe, and their contributions to the abolitionist movement (Armento et al., 1991; Boorstin & Kelley, 1986; Brown & Bass, 1990; Conlin, 1991; Garraty, 1991; Graff, 1985; Nash, 1992; Reich & Biller, 1988; Todd & Curti, 1990). Furthermore, the latest text, although it evades the issue of whether or not slavery violates the founding principles of the United States, does mention that the founders were all wealthy, white males, many of whom were college-educated. However, the text leaves the reader to determine what, if any, difference these facts could make in the writing or execution of the principles of the Constitution (Nash, 1992).

Conclusion

The discussion of slavery in United States history texts is framed by ideologies dominant at the time of their writing (Bailyn et al., 1981). During the early part of this century, texts present slavery in neutral terms and emphasize the preservation of Union. During the Depression and war years, texts justify the slave system by appealing to the needs of the market. Beginning with the late 1950s, texts begin to recognize the courage of abolitionists and the moral wrongs of slavery, although they still indicate that slavery was a necessity for the pre-Civil War south. From the late 1960s through the 1970s, these changes are broadened as texts also begin to emphasize that slavery is not only immoral but a contradiction to the theory of American democracy. Finally, in the modern era, texts present slavery in the light of the new wave of conservatism and the increasing influence of the religious right.

What implications do these findings have for the social studies classroom? First, teachers may wish to point out ways in which textbooks have been influenced by current ideology (e.g. the banning of Harold Rugg’s controversial textbooks, the influence of industry, and the pressure from ethnic and racial groups to “multiculturalize textbooks”) and present material within its historical context. Ravitch and Finn (1987) also suggest that history be taught in context “so that people and events are seen in relation to consequential social and economic trends and political development” instead of teaching isolated facts (p. 205). For example, teachers could present narrative of slaveship owners, slaves, plantation owners, free Blacks, abolitionists, etc. in order to bypass such biases. Second, because these textbooks are a compilation of histories, teachers may wish to consider using multiple sources in the classroom to enhance textbook content. For example, a textbook account of slavery could be supplemented by a slave narrative or other writings, art, a documentary film, or a reading from Uncle
Tom's Cabin or historical fiction. In addition, students themselves could be provided opportunities to analyze and discuss the differences in treatment of specific topics and/or historical events in textbooks from different time periods (e.g. by comparing a 1940s account of slave life with a slave narrative and/or a more recent textbook account). Regardless of current ideology, students can be taught questioning and analytic thinking skills. They could be taught to seek author influence and bias and to search for multiple perspectives. For example, teachers could use texts and/or newspaper articles to study fact vs. opinion, solicit students' opinions about possible alternate perspectives authors could have chosen, set up mock debates, have them write "newspaper articles" or assign opinion papers or research articles involving the use of more than one perspective about a single issue or event. Thus, students may be able to rely on their own resources to learn about their society, past, present, and future.

What implications do these findings have for others? Those individuals who critique texts for inaccuracy and/or bias may wish to examine materials in terms of the ideological influences represented within them in addition to explicit factual error. Authors may want to include multiple voices and quote from a variety of original sources when compiling textbooks. In addition, teacher educators can make future teachers aware of these ideological influences, showing them the difference in topic coverage in textbooks from different time periods, and introducing them to alternative information sources (e.g. personal narratives, newspaper articles, films, historical records, etc.) and teaching methods.

Future research in this area needs to examine the portrayal of other historical and present issues/events in textbooks and the role of textbook content in a student's knowledge of history and society. It should also address ways in which textbook content could be adapted and improved, taking the constraints of current ideology into account. In conclusion, it is important to help teachers become aware of ideological influences in textbook content. Then teachers will be able to communicate about and help compensate for these biases, giving students the tools necessary to analyze textbook content in order to formulate their own ideas and opinions about their heritage and the society in which they live.

Appendix

Bibliography of Data Sources
Accounts of Slavery in U. S. History Texts


References


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Once a week, a professor of social studies education in northern California moves his base of operation from the university to a nearby middle school. He works in social studies classrooms, observing, helping, and supervising his student teachers. After school, he and his students gather in a classroom to hold their social studies methods class. The students’ resident teachers are intimately involved in teaching this course, offering their expertise in curriculum development, classroom management, and the politics of teaching in a large secondary school. The teachers’ mentoring of student teachers and participation in the methods class requires that they spend considerable time discussing their teaching practices with one another. The social studies professor helps facilitate these discussions in weekly meetings with the teachers. “Initially, the teachers’ goal in these meetings was simply to enhance the candidates’ student teaching experiences,” says the professor, “but now the teachers are also reshaping their own curricula through ongoing interrogation of their notions of social studies education.”

Meanwhile, in the midwest, a university researcher spends every morning with an 8th grade social studies teacher committed to exploring new ways to approach curriculum with his students. For four months, they meet daily during the teacher’s prep period to plan interdisciplinary approaches and inquiry-based projects designed to spark student interest, foster community in the classroom, and bolster students’ knowledge of U.S. history and geography. Together they team-teach two of the teacher’s social studies classes. Initially, the students balk at this revitalized curriculum, preferring the patterns of textbook-based instruction to which they have become accustomed. They talk and goof off or just stare into space. Responding to students’ resistance, the teacher and researcher continually rethink and readjust their plans, coming up with ways to ease the students into this new approach to social studies. By the end of the researcher’s stay at the school, students’ eyes have opened to the rewards of
generative curriculum. Inspired by his fruitful relationship with the researcher, the teacher comes to see his role in a new light and begins seeking out other teachers at the school with whom to carry on this collaborative process.

Back in California, a high school social studies teacher is a familiar face at the nearby university's school of education. A graduate of the secondary education program, she has remained in close contact ever since with the university's director of social studies education. Over the years, she has worked with several student teachers sent by the director to her school; now, as the chair of her social studies department, she oversees the placement of several student teachers each semester, making sure that each of them receives guidance, support, and encouragement to put into practice the ideas taught in the university's methods courses. At the university, she helps teach one of those methods courses and, twice each year, helps interview new candidates for the teacher education program. She is also working on her master's thesis, an action research project that she is conducting in her classroom, under the direction of her social studies mentor.

The More Things Change...

In the past quarter-century, such collaborative endeavors involving teachers and university professors have been all too rare. Social studies research continues to be carried out, for the most part, as it has been conducted in academia for decades—by university professors who communicate little, if at all, with the teachers whose curricula and practices they are investigating. During the past twenty-five years, many social studies researchers and curriculum developers have made forays into the classroom, but generally only to collect their data, after which they have returned to their offices to analyze their results and discuss their findings with colleagues. And far too often, these research projects have only perpetuated the schism that divides schools from schools of education, utilizing methodologies which preclude communication between researchers and subjects: surveys or process-product procedures whose validity would be suspect if the researcher discussed hypotheses or ideas with the teacher while collecting the data in the classroom. Teacher input has been virtually absent from such inquiry: teachers often have been the objects of research and development or have been eliminated from the research and development process entirely. Instead, researchers' communication with teachers has generally entailed merely requesting their cooperation in the studies and, perhaps, making diagnoses and dispensing prescriptions.

During the last twenty-five years, these prescriptions have taken the form of various plans for reforming the social studies curriculum—everything from lists of recommendations to sweeping new curriculum standards, from
teacher-proof lessons to complete overhauls of existing programs. The intelligentsia has decided what is best for social studies teachers and students, and then has delivered these solutions to teachers, expecting them to carry out its mandates. Teachers have been given sweeping new standards to follow (e.g. The Bradley Commission, Historical Literacy; The National Commission on Social Studies, Charting a Course; National Center for History in the Schools, National Standards for United States History), and they have been handed such innovative programs as Man: A Course of Study (MACOS), the new social studies, character education, values education, and, most recently, the Teacher Curriculum Institute’s History Alive!

Ironically, in spite of this plethora of carefully devised, research-based standards and curricula, few if any of these reforms have penetrated the social studies curriculum or significantly altered classroom practice. In the 1990s, in nearly every secondary grade level, students cover the same information in the same order that their predecessors had to learn in the ’70s and ’80s. Although some of today’s teachers do introduce alternative social and historical visions to their students, the predominant world view presented in American classrooms remains the traditional Eurocentric perspective.

Instructional methods and curricular applications have also changed little in recent decades. Too often, daily activities are dominated by dull textbook readings, teacher-controlled recitation and lecture, individual seatwork, and tests determining students’ recall of low-level factual material. The teacher, primarily using the textbook, disseminates information to students who are expected to listen passively and absorb the information that they must know in order to succeed in the course. It should surprise no one that social studies continues to be named by students as their least favorite subject—uninteresting, unimportant, and irrelevant.

Why has all the diligent work of committed, well-intentioned, and talented social studies researchers and curriculum developers done so little to alter students’ negative impressions of social studies? And why has it had such a minimal impact on actual classroom practice? Why have teachers been hesitant to embrace the standards and innovations which our research has produced? In truth, the teachers find little relevance in the university—particularly in the prescriptions its professors offer. And why should they trust our recommendations? For the most part, teachers have seldom been invited to participate in our lively and sometimes tediously circular debates about defining the social studies, and about the focus and direction of social studies inquiry. Instead, teachers have been given new standards and told to follow them; they have been handed new teacher-proof curricula and directed to implement them.
All of these curriculum reform initiatives have relied on the notion that change in the social studies must emanate from the intelligentsia and flow from the top down. Traditionally, standards-driven reforms have been developed by small, select task forces, whose political agendas behind the reforms have seldom, if ever, been openly discussed. Embodying a monolithic view of what the social studies curriculum ought to include, most of these lists of standards would (if followed) render the social studies curriculum even less responsive to diverse student, regional, and community-based needs than the guidelines they would be replacing. And while many curricular projects have pushed traditional boundaries of the social studies instruction, offering fresh new perspectives, challenging content, and/or much-needed departures from teacher-centered instruction, their origin, development, and dissemination were still carried out in a manner that was as authoritarian as the more conservative standards reform movements. Few teachers are apt to embrace such mandates if they have had no voice in developing them. They are much more likely to react to them with resentment than with excitement; as far as teachers are concerned, the intelligentsia which devised these plans has little respect for the expertise that teachers have to offer, and little understanding of the reality of life in the classroom. And in many cases the teachers have been right.

As a result of this approach to curriculum reform, many potentially worthwhile programs were doomed from the moment they were conceived in the “laboratory” of the university, destined to gather dust on classroom shelves all over the country. Instead of embracing these new ideas, the teachers have chosen to rely on their familiar curriculum and instructional techniques; the more we strive to tell them what to do, the less likely they are to attempt anything new. During the past twenty-five years, top-down curriculum reform efforts have done little to ameliorate the shortcomings that Hunt and Metcalf pointed to almost thirty years ago: that the social studies often reinforces the dominant beliefs, myths, and explanations for existing social and class stratification and often does not deal with the vital survival issues and problems that many students experience in their daily lives. In social studies education, the more things have changed in the university, the more they’ve stayed the same in the classroom.

School /University Partnerships: The Challenge of the Next Twenty-Five Years

Considering the way that business is conducted at most universities, this top-down approach to curriculum reform is certainly understandable. Working within a university structure that supports traditional modes of research, grant writing, and frequent publication, professors are expected to
develop, quickly and efficiently, projects for which they will be appropriately rewarded with salary increases, promotion, and recognition. Compared to conventional methods of inquiry and curriculum development, collaborative enterprises are inefficient means of attaining these goals, for such projects severely limit a professor’s “productivity.” Collaborative endeavors require considerable patience and tolerance for ambiguity; they demand tremendous amounts of time, energy, and commitment.

A number of such collaborative efforts in social studies research and curriculum development have taken place over the past quarter-century—with teachers and professors working together side-by-side to create substantive change, on a small scale, in social studies theory and practice. Many of our university-based colleagues have been engaging in collaborative action research projects, team-teaching undergraduate and graduate courses with teachers in the field, and developing curriculum with teachers in the context of professional development schools. But, because they tend to go unrecognized as legitimate research projects, these isolated efforts at school/university collaboration and grass roots innovation have received scant attention in the social studies literature.

In light of the social studies intelligentsia’s failure to influence social studies education through top-down reform efforts, it would be wise for us to spend the next quarter-century focusing instead on these alternatives to traditional methods of research and curriculum development. Our suggestion is that we begin by reconceptualizing the traditional school/university relationship, to make concerted efforts to break down the age-old barrier between teachers and researchers. This requires that social studies professors (indeed, all those engaged in teacher education, regardless of subject discipline), along with the universities that support us, develop new visions regarding the nature of our work.

In the first place, university reward systems, which define much of what we do and how we do it, need to broaden the conventional parameters for legitimate research and curriculum development, and to acknowledge that collaboration takes time away from performing the usual functions of the university professor. For example, working in professional development schools—which is rapidly becoming an important avenue for collaboration—must be recognized not just as community service, but as a powerful means of conducting ongoing action research.

Confident that our universities recognize and support our work with teachers, we need to leave the sanctuary of the university and spend considerable time looking at what is going on in the classrooms. This entails more than just sitting invisibly in the back of the room and taking notes or holding inservice workshops with teachers after school. We need to
engage in action research, becoming a part of their lives at school and getting involved in the daily classroom interactions and activities of students and teachers. The more we become involved in school life, the more teachers will be interested in talking with us. As they become convinced that we do understand the daily problems they face in the classroom, they should come to trust our opinions and respect our suggestions—which is just what happened in the opening vignettes. Indeed, many teachers are hungry to discuss what they do and to consider ways to change their practices, and would leap at the opportunity to converse with an outsider whom they felt they could trust.

Still, no matter how much time we spend in the classroom, we won’t win teachers’ trust if in our conversations we simply tell them what to do. Rather than imposing our agendas and expertise on teachers, we need to take our cues from them—to find out from them what they would like to accomplish through our collaborations. Change should be a continuous process of action and reflection among theoreticians and practitioners working together to transform schools in ways that benefit the agendas of both parties, but the ultimate responsibility for change must remain in the teachers’ province, where it belongs. We can only offer support, suggestions, new ideas, and guidance to help them attain the goals that they set for themselves. As indicated by the examples described above, each teacher/researcher collaboration will be unique, depending on the number, personalities, and goals of the people involved.

For university researchers, participating in these relationships can be an exhilarating, multifaceted endeavor. In the above vignettes, university faculty play many roles in their relationships with teachers: advisor, assistant, colleague, confidant, cheerleader, resource, soundingboard, advocate, mentor. Ultimately, all such roles can help to accomplish what should be the primary goal of social studies research: to help teachers envision and articulate new ways of teaching, and to help those visions become a reality. Curriculum reform cannot be top-down; it begins at the grass roots. Change is incremental, not all-encompassing—a process, not an event.

In a collaborative school/university partnership, the roles of teacher and researcher are far less distinct than in conventional research relationships. Traditional research is the province of the university, with professors providing the “experts and expertise” to help teachers “solve” the problems in the classroom. In contrast to this hierarchical relationship, in a school/university partnership research is not the private domain of the professors, nor is the classroom the exclusive realm of students and teachers. Spending so much time in the classroom, the professor comes to understand the lived experience of teachers and
becomes an integral part of the teacher’s world. Meanwhile, teachers engaging in ongoing conversation about classroom practice inevitably become involved in systematic inquiry—a realm usually reserved for the researcher. Curriculum planning, staff development, and inquiry evolve into collective enterprises in which all the constituents engage. As the teacher/researcher relationship flourishes and their respective worlds begin to interconnect, the schism between university intelligentsia and school proletariat should gradually dissolve.

Of course it will take more than just the few inspired teachers and professors described above to transform social studies curriculum and the traditional research agenda. Examined in isolation, the scenarios illuminate valuable experiences for teachers and their students, but they hardly sound like the beginnings of a grass roots movement. Yet these and all such partnerships have the potential to grow and eventually reach far more people than those originally involved. Over the years, those California teachers working with a university professor and student teachers may influence hundreds of student teachers, and perhaps their success will inspire more of their colleagues to become involved in the program. The midwestern teacher seeking reform-minded colleagues may actually find others at his school with whom to share his new ideas about social studies curriculum.

How many teachers would it take to create a critical mass of educators at his school, a confederation of committed teachers which could continue to grow and make a significant mark on the way students and teachers perceive social studies education? What if there were thousands of similar scenarios playing out all over the country, with every social studies researcher working to facilitate grass roots reform in local schools? And what if a national social studies organization supported such an effort—not with the goal of forging national standards, mandating model curriculum, or promulgating a monolithic vision of social studies reform—but with the commitment to support a sort of mosaic of reforms which reflects the diversity of teachers, students, and evolving visions of social studies education in this country?

Taken together, this mosaic offers some exciting new windows into the world of social studies theory, research, and practice—a world that should be at once exciting, mysterious, and full of promise. Too often in the last twenty-five years, that world has been comprised of disinterested, dispirited, and disconnected participants. But beginning with just a few committed participants working together over the next quarter-century, a grass roots social studies reform movement could revitalize and reconnect students, teachers, and professors, growing inexorably, as educator and author George
Wood writes, "classroom by classroom, school by school."

Note

1 The term intelligentsia was first used by James Shaver to define the relationship between the self-described leaders of social studies theory, research, and curriculum development and classroom teachers.

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The era of TRSE, covering approximately the last quarter of the 20th century, marks a time period equal to that of one generation of researchers in the field of social studies education. Many of this generation of contributors to TRSE became active in the field in the late 60's and early 70's and many will begin to retire, if they haven't already, around the turn of the century. As I look back on this quarter century of research, I have a disquieting feeling that my generation of social studies researchers has left a very sparse legacy and have done little to systematically advance the practice of social studies education. Let me pose a question in this regard: Based on the activity of research in social studies education, what do we know today that was not known twenty five years ago that has resulted in a measurable improvement in social studies practice?

Education is, at the heart of the matter, a moral enterprise. That is, the purpose of education that trumps all other purposes is to make a positive contribution to the well-being of the child. This goal manifests itself in short as well as long term educational outcomes. In the short term, education must be concerned with providing educational experiences that interest and engage the child; experiences that the child can master and hence develop a sense of academic and personal competence. In addition, these educational experiences should develop in the child appropriate knowledge, skills, dispositions and values that provide the requisite foundation for subsequent learning and development. In the long term, the goal of education is to develop such capacities as necessary to life long learning, good citizenship, and the economic knowledge, dispositions, and skills that enable one to successfully participate in society and the marketplace.

Educational research has an essential role to play regarding the moral enterprise of education. Educational research's role with regard to the furtherance of the moral imperative of educational practice is to identify best practice, that is, those practices that contribute to the well-being of the child. Another important role for an educational research community is to engage in theory development and systematic thinking that clarify the goals of an educational sub-field. Both roles are important for the development of effective practice, and within a field of study either one by itself is insufficient to the advancement of a field.

Entailed in the concept of the moral imperative that we all share to enhance the well-being of children is the notion that we have a responsibility to attempt to identify
exemplary practice. To fulfill this obligation, it seems to me, implies that researchers conduct research in school settings and attempt to identify factors associated with valued student outcomes. In a word, research must be conducted in school settings and must focus on the consequences of educational practice for children's development.

In an examination of the last five years of TRSE, beginning with volume 21 and ending with this issue of volume 25, I found that none of the 62 "research" articles in these volumes utilized either true-experimental or quasi-experimental research designs and attempted to assess the impact of social studies curriculum and instruction on children in school settings. That is, not a single research article attempted to assess if a given social studies curriculum or instructional practice in schools had a positive (or negative) impact on children. How do we as a professional community of scholars account for this startling neglect of the interests of children?

I acknowledge that experimental research is not the only type of disciplined inquiry relevant to the study of social studies education. However, of all the forms of educational research, findings from experimental research offer the most promise for producing credible and transferable knowledge claims about the relationship(s) between students' educational experiences and students' development. Knowledge claims derived from this form of research provide essential data for the discussion over the proper goals and methods of social studies education.

How does one account for the fact that a generation of scholars who obviously care deeply about children and their education, have spent their professional lives studiously avoiding research that focuses on the lives of children in classrooms and the impact that those experiences are having on their development? Why has our research been conducted at arms length from the lives of children? I feel that there are a number of factors, resulting primarily from the era in which we have attended graduate school, acquired our doctorates, and assumed the mantel of our professorships that have shaped our orientation to scholarship.

As I see it, the primary reason for this state of affairs is that an epistemological shift has occurred that has had a powerful influence within academe where we all have been trained and today live out our professional lives. This most recent generation of social studies scholars, if not the children of the cultural and intellectual revolution of the 60's and 70's, were the midwives of this revolutionary shift in epistemology and values away from experimental research toward qualitative methods of inquiry and the socio-political analysis of educational phenomena. Experimental research is now viewed with suspicion by many in the profession. Qualitative research and anti-positivist ideology has assumed religious status within many graduate schools of education. Increasingly doctoral students come into my office without a research
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topic but staunchly committed to the qualitative methodology. Within academe, and especially at many elite schools of education, to be schooled in the postmodern canon is to guarantee success in graduate school, increase the likelihood of subsequent employment, and finally facilitate publication and hence promotion and tenure.

A second reason why this generation of researchers have spent their research lives at such a distance from the real world of children and teachers is the increasing difficulty and expense of doing research in school settings. The task of getting the approval from local school boards, parents, students, and teachers and the frequently burdensome restrictions imposed by hyper-cautious campus human subject review panels pose sometimes formidable obstacles to fledgling as well as experienced researchers. Armchair and library researchers face few such frustrations. As I recently found out with a two year evaluation of a character education program, the obstacles, expense, and frustrations involved in school-based research are formidable (Leming, Hendricks-Smith, & Antis, 1997).

The problem with this shift in research emphasis is that the answer to the question of “What works?” and the quest to identify best practice has become a more a political question rather than a question of best evidence. In the field of medicine, a field of study and practice where a moral imperative also drives practice, has the Hippocratic injunction of “First, do no harm” and a rigorous adherence to the “clinical trial” research methodology. As I see it, the field of social studies education research cannot, in the absence of a body of knowledge based on experimental research, speak authoritatively to the question of whether practice is either beneficial or harmful to our students.

It would appear that many leading social studies scholars today are seriously questioning the idea that it is possible to build a research-based body of knowledge to inform educational practice in the social studies. Certainly the research cited in TRSE in the past five years could be interpreted as confirming that perspective. If, however, we look outside the work of social studies researchers it is apparent that such knowledge building is possible utilizing the methods of experimental research. For example, the research program on cooperative learning has much to say about the learning of social studies content and reduction of ethnocentrism (Slavin, 1990), and the research program on the Kohlbergian dilemma discussion method (Schaefli, Rest, & Thoma, 1985) offers clear implications for practice if the facilitation of cognitive moral development is an educational goal. The problem is not that the development of such a body of knowledge is impossible, but rather that the social studies research community no longer values this undertaking.

Many social studies scholars have developed a mechanism for operationalizing their genuine and heartfelt concern for the well-being of children without engaging in experimental research. The strategy is
to leap from theory and socio-political analysis to practice without rigorous consideration of the evidence of the impact of the proffered programs on children. A case in point is multicultural education and the inroads it has made into the mainstream of social studies research. Because multicultural education is, in my judgment, the most significant shift that has occurred in the field of social studies curriculum in the past quarter century, it is worth looking at in more detail.

Nearly all of the "best and the brightest" scholars in the field today are avid supporters of multicultural education in the curriculum, yet the experimental research base for multicultural education is practically nonexistent (Banks, 1991, 1993; Dunn, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1994). That is, the research, such as does exist, consists largely of anecdotal accounts and justifications for multicultural education with only the thinnest of bases of experimental research to identify the impact, either positive or negative, that a multicultural approach to social studies education has on the academic achievement of minority students or the development of positive racial, ethnic, or cultural attitudes of the children in these classrooms. In the field of medicine the equivalent would be to bring new medicines to the marketplace in the absence of clinical trial research.

As Jere Brophy pointed out in his TRSE retrospective, questions about what we should teach children can not be resolved through empirical methods alone because they involve value questions (Brophy, 1997). I would add to Brophy's observation that neither can we identify best practice solely through values-driven scholarly deliberation and theoretical analysis. It is the moral responsibility of educators to subject value-based claims regarding best practice to scrutiny regarding the impact that these educational prescriptions have on the development of children. It appears to me that we as a profession have become so enamored of the power of our ideals that we are no longer interested in, or even acknowledge that it is worthwhile, to subject our ideals to tests in the real world of schools.

In my first education course at the University of Illinois in 1962, in the middle of a heated classroom discussion of a closed area of contemporary culture, Larry Metcalf, after one of my many confused questions from the back of the room responded "No, no, no, Leming, you just don't get it." Increasingly I have the feeling that Larry was right and that I still don't get it. I don't get it that asking what impact the teaching of social studies has on students is not the most important question for any generation of educational scholars.

It is my judgment that the fin de siècle generation of researchers in social studies education has failed to carry out an important moral responsibility. The passion that has surrounded the profession's consideration of political and epistemological ideals has been so intense and focused that sight has been lost of a very important issue: the interests of children. Today debate continues to
rage over the proper focus of social studies education. Such noteworthy members of this generation of social studies scholars as Bill Stanley and Walter Parker continue to be convinced that we still don’t have it right (Parker, 1997; Stanley, 1997). It is argued that current formulations of our theories and goals need continued analysis and reformulation. No responsible educator can be against clarity with regard to our purposes and methods, but it appears to me that we are no further along in our quest for clarity today than we were when TRSE was first published in 1972.

An ex-colleague of mine was fond of telling the story of how his major professor prodded him to complete his dissertation which was taking an interminable length of time to finish. One day his major professor called him into his office and said, “Dave, there is a time for mulling, and a time for action. It’s now time to stop mulling things over and start writing.” We can not fulfill our moral obligation to the next generation of children and identify best practice unless we begin to test our new ideals about social studies education in the real world of schools. Clarity regarding the proper goals of social studies education may just as likely arise from the results of attempting to quantify student experience and development or assess program import as it may from scholarly theorizing.

The origin of TRSE represented a symbolic separation of theory and research from the realm of practice. That symbolism has become reality. The dialogue between social studies researchers and social studies practitioners appears to be as disconnected as ever. It appears to me that the scholarly community publishing in TRSE increasingly is talking to itself. Based on my own professional reading I rarely see articles from TRSE cited outside of the pages of TRSE. A research base is being developed that has a focus on the effect of curricula on students, but it is being published outside of the pages of TRSE and by researchers that do not identify with this scholarly community. For example, the latest issue of the Journal of Social Studies Research—21(1), Spring 1997—contains one more experimental study than found in the pages of TRSE in the past five years.

I feel that for knowledge to advance in a way that has the potential for improving the practice of social studies education the current imbalance reflected in the pages of TRSE between theory building and scholarly analysis and tests of the impact of school practices on students needs to be redressed. The interests of children require it. Only if we, as a research community, take seriously the task of attempting to identify best practice will the interests of the children of the first 25 years of the next century be better served than they have by of the community of social studies scholars of the past twenty-five. But, then maybe I just don’t get it.

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The Historical Subject Matter that Ultimately Matters Most

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The very first sentence of the first article about social studies education I ever read as a graduate student posed the question, “Are method and content enemies?” (Hertzberg 1988, p. 13). Hazel Hertzberg, the professor who assigned the article and also its author, considered the question significant because, she said, “it goes to the heart of the relationships among [several key] parties involved in the secondary school [social studies] curriculum.” Thus, for her, the question was more about influence and interplay among groups of social studies theorists and practitioners than about instruction per se. It was best investigated historically, therefore, focusing on the evolving relationships among those groups that had most affected the organization of social studies education through the years. Two groups, in her judgment, had been especially instrumental, classroom teachers and college and university historians, the relationship between whom she analyzed in considerable detail, tracing its development over the hundred or so years since the founding of the American Historical Association in 1884.

Leading historians, she pointed out (pp. 13-14), had played a critical role in social studies’ establishment as a school subject during the Progressive era. Moreover, they had been guided in this effort by an “alliance of method and content” they considered fundamental. All of this changed after World War II, however, as historians came to see themselves as “content experts” for whom matters of method were largely irrelevant to their professional concerns (pp. 36-37). School teachers and their students had suffered as a result, Hertzberg concluded (passim), and she consequently argued two closely related points as her central theme (pp. 13-14): first, that a “rapprochement” of method and content is badly needed in social studies education; and second, that “[a]n understanding of how the present came to be is...a necessary basis” for re-establishing such a relationship.

While her first point is certainly well-advised, her second seems somewhat misleading, at least in implying that historians will once again lead a movement to promote such reform. Whatever incentives and institutional arrangements that may have induced historians at one time to attend to issues of method have long since been replaced by others less conducive to this end. Accordingly, even those historians who today seem truly concerned with the state of history education in schools tend to focus almost exclusively on content issues, and mostly the wrong sorts of content issues at that
The much publicized curriculum standards reports by the National Center for History in the Schools (1994a; 1994b; 1996) are perhaps the best recent examples of this overly narrow focus. As the Center’s co-chairs explain (1994a, p. 3), the reports are intended to define exactly “what, of the great storehouse of human history, is the [content] most significant for all students to acquire” (p. 3). So conceived, their effect on classroom practice—if any effect at all—is likely to be negative, contributing to further standardization of textbooks and assessment procedures, which in turn will only further limit teachers’ instructional decision-making options.

Historians, then, seem highly doubtful champions of any new campaign for content-method realignment. More plausible candidates are social studies educators, ironically, a group of scholars not yet existent during social studies’ formative years. Today, however, they are the chief facilitators of pre- and in-service teacher education and certification in most states, and as such, particularly well-positioned to redress the content-method bifurcation. Many approaches to this end are possible in teacher education and professional development programs, but all should focus considerable attention on the content side of the question. More specifically, all should provide ample opportunities for in-depth analysis of the fundamental nature of the several disciplines that comprise social studies education, for this is the subject matter that ultimately matters most in organizing social studies instruction.

Firm intellectual grounding of this sort is especially needed in the field of history, first, because history is the most widely taught social studies discipline, and second, because it appears to be the most misunderstood, based at least on the way it is most often taught (Cuban 1991; Goodlad 1984). The all-too-common pattern of teacher-centered, textbook-driven instructional practice in which students are required merely to memorize and periodically regurgitate selected sets of factual information is wholly inconsistent with the nature of historical inquiry and understanding. Three points in this regard, each with direct methodological implications, are particularly important.

First, current and prospective social studies teachers need to understand that history is not a matter of facts, but a matter of assigning meaning to facts. Accurate factual information, while necessary at every stage of historical study, is nevertheless insufficient at any one. This point was made in much more memorable fashion by E. H. Carr (1961, p. 9) who, paraphrasing a character from a Pirandello play, likened historical facts to empty sacks, unable to stand by themselves until someone first filled them with meaning. Knowing all the facts about the use of nuclear weapons during the final days of World War II, for example,—facts such as the dates the weapons were used, the number of people killed and injured as a result, the throw-weight and detonation devices of the weapons, etc.—is not history, for historical study involves the complex cognitive processes of
deciding what these sorts of facts mean. History, in other words, is an effort to make sense of such facts, both in the short run and the long. There is, of course, no one, right answer or interpretation to the many interrelated questions that arise, for all, in the end, must be made on the basis of one's judgment about a wide variety of issues, including among others, the selection and categorization of evidence, some estimation of the character and motivation of key decision-makers, a sense of the possibilities of human action within a given context, and a feel for the likely consequences of actions not taken. History, then, is as much a creative, synthesizing activity as an inductive or deductive, research driven study. Facts, quite simply, no matter how compelling, cannot speak for themselves. Someone must speak for them, and like Michelangelo's depiction of God and Adam on the Sistine Chapel ceiling, there is always a gap between historical facts and the conclusions they support. This gap may be bridged only by the creative judgment of the person doing the history.

Second, social studies teachers need to understand that the significance of historical knowledge is neither permanent nor universal, but varies from time to time and from group to group. Some aspects of the past which may hold special significance today, may just as well be matters of mere antiquarian curiosity at some point in the future. Similarly, something about the past that may be especially significant to one group, may just as well be all but irrelevant to another. For forty-five years, the end game of World War II, for example, held special significance for the conduct of United States foreign policy. Since the disillusion of the Soviet Union, however, many of the decisions made during 1944 and 1945 are not nearly as meaningful as they once were, for they no longer seem to illuminate the present as clearly as they once did. Furthermore, those same end game decisions, while so critical for so long to the United States, never held quite the same significance for the conduct of foreign policy of many other countries around the world. Indeed, no country, save perhaps the Soviet Union, invested so much time, energy, and resources on the basis of the way those fateful World War II decisions were interpreted.

Finally, social studies teachers need to understand that the historical knowledge of greatest social value is generalizable knowledge. While knowledge of the particular—a particular issue, person, event, etc.—has certain inherent worth, identifying the general in the particular is the basis for history's unique potential to contribute to a transcendent understanding of what it means to be human. Locating and analyzing general "truths" in a particular situation is history's most profound rationale as an educational endeavor, therefore. Indeed, whatever "lessons" history has to teach derive from the possibility of doing so. Consequently, the key question teachers need to ask themselves when preparing history instruction is what is it about this particular set of circumstances that informs life in general. Drawing again on decisions made during the final days of World
War II as an example, teachers may inquire with students about what, if anything, distinguishes nuclear weapons from all others. This question, general in its own right, may very well lead to the still more fundamental consideration of war's moral justification as a national policy. Highlighting the general in the particular in this way is the means by which history speaks to the present, and also the future. Moreover, it is the means by which history may illuminate the most basic, most universal aspects of our existence. Focusing exclusively on particular aspects of the past can quickly degenerate into a leaden, largely irrelevant academic exercise, but taking advantage of history's endless opportunities to address general questions about the nature of our existence can transform such study into a truly engaging and enlightening inquiry. Indeed, no other discipline affords so many opportunities to consider so many aspects of what it means to be human, in all its subtle, intricate, developmental complexity.

The pedagogical implications of these fundamental points should be obvious. In general, they require that students studying history be put in positions to exercise their judgment about a wide variety of issues involved in making sense of our manifold, collective experience. Historical content, therefore, must be presented, not as so much information to be memorized (and very likely soon forgotten), but as a series of questions, challenges and problems that immerse students in the active, personal, and creative processes of constructing meaning for themselves, and doing so about an encompassing range of issues that ultimately explain who they are. Only then will method and content in historical study be effectively realigned.

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Technology and the Social Studies—or: Which Way to the Sleeping Giant?

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Arguably, technology is a sleeping giant in the social studies curriculum. The onset of the giant's deep sleep is nowhere recorded, but it predates at least the birth of this journal. Unconfirmed reports of the giant's awakening appear from time to time, but these are discounted. Surprisingly, there have been few serious attempts to rouse him.

If the giant does awaken, a surprise awaits him. He will discover technology has taken on new meanings and applications in schools, some with far-reaching implications for our society. Most visibly, he will note, we have entered the information age where computers are ubiquitous and dominate our lives. In the process, in ways large and small we have become a visual society. The visual has achieved supremacy over the written or spoken word.

At the same time, the giant will be struck by how little the social studies curriculum has been affected by the technology changes sweeping the nation. If he ponders this state of affairs, he is likely to conclude: There is much for the giant to do with respect to the social studies curriculum.

Changes in Technology Related to Instruction

At the inception of TRSE 25 years ago, the category "technology" in instructional contexts subsumed a variety of different media. These included television, films, textbooks, records, and overhead and slide projectors. Further, in that earlier era, a "multimedia" presentation implied some combination of technologies (e.g., slides synchronized with an audio cassette).

Today, as a measure of its increased prominence, the term, technology, more often than not, refers to computers and related peripherals. Correspondingly, the term "multimedia" in instruction is reserved typically for some combination of computers and audio and video applications (e.g., CD-ROM's, DVDs, videodiscs). In short, our past technology has reinvented itself to accommodate the growing dominance of computers as media.

More than semantics are involved. Today, the world beyond the walls of the school is heavily invested in an assortment of computer-based technologies. This assortment is rapidly displacing an earlier generation of multimedia hardware and software. Digital tape players, fiber optic cables, DVDs, and digital monitors are growing in popularity and dropping in price.

The Internet, both as a medium of communication and as a repository and catalog of information, continues to grow at a mind-boggling rate. Web sites, newsgroups, distance learning centers, and listservs
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are proliferating. So extensive and rapid has been the growth of the Internet, a second already is being planned. Further, the user base of the Internet is sufficiently broad and the appeal so deep, likely it will continue to grow and increase. Also, the new generation of Internet will step-up the capacity to transmit voice, sound, and video data with digital clarity and real-time processing. On another front, software, long the object of derision in classrooms, has improved immeasurably in quality and cost (Multimedia Source Guide, 1995-1996).

On the sidelines, lest we not take notice, there are some noteworthy aspects of emerging technologies that can be grabbed on the cheap. Creative but resource-strapped teachers are effectively employing applications such as low-end two-way desktop videoconferencing.

These developments are occurring at a dizzying pace that guarantees the rapid obsolescence of both our technology and our discourse related to it. As Mehlinger (1996) points out, in an information age where new technologies continue to proliferate rapidly, it is short-sighted to reflect too long on the present.

Social Studies and Technology

Against the preceding backdrop, our best evidence is that social studies largely has been on the sidelines as the Information Age rapidly unfolds. White (1997) echoed the laments of many social studies educators when he wrote, “In some ways technology in social studies has changed little since... the early 1980s” (p. 147). Other anecdotal data and unobtrusive measures confirm this tone. A quick scan of our professional beacons, TRSE, Social Education, Social Studies and the Young Learner, allegedly sensitive indicators of serious concerns in our profession, reveal that over the past 25 years few articles have appeared dealing with technology-related topics. As an illustration, only three articles were published in TRSE during that period. Perusal of the CUFA and AERA-SIG programs over the same period reveals a similar pattern. These figures suggest a critical need for more research, reflection, and developmental efforts.

Clearly, by all reports, technology issues appear to have a low priority for social studies educators. If technology is to become a dynamic and forceful agent for change in the social studies curriculum, we must quickly reverse this trend. This will require an infusion of concern, as well as new instructional materials.

Side-by-side with efforts to raise the level of awareness of emerging technology applications, technology-minded social studies educators need to shift the focus of their concerns away from traditional hardware and software issues. A more urgent priority is the need for a dialogue centered around the profound social consequences of technology trends both, for our nation and the world. One important product of these discussions should be the identification of strands and strategies that reflect technology issues to be addressed on an ongoing basis. The sets of national standards could be of immeasurable assistance
in these pursuits, as well as professional technology organizations.

What products might emerge from a sustained dialogue? Since I must be brief, I will only sketch a handful of illustrative themes and examples of what might be included in a K-12 social studies curriculum that includes analysis of technology issues. The illustrative themes are: Computer as Alter Ego, Computer As Citizenship Educator, Computer As Workplace, Computer As School, and Computer As Data Gatherer.

**Computer As Alter-Ego.** Computers are becoming more and more "personal". Under development are technologies that are able to learn about and then mirror our behavior, physically or cognitively. The yeasty brew of topics such as genetic engineering, cloning, and artificial intelligence hold all the elements for ethical quandaries and debates. Discussion Theme Example: Should the federal government support the development of clones and intelligent agents that mimic our capabilities and needs?

**Computer As Citizenship Educator.** Increasingly, effective citizenship involves mastery of computer technologies, ranging from the use of voting cards to e-mail or facing to contact your congressperson. Discussion Theme Example: What computer-related skills are required for accessing and interpreting data for political decision-making?

**Computer As Workplace.** Elsewhere, I argue that in many respects, we have become a "a degathering society" (Martorella, 1996). That is, we are in the process of reversing our historical pattern of "gathering" or collecting individuals at central venues for activities such as jobs, entertainment, worship, and shopping. Discussion Theme Example: If the trend continues, how will schools and educators' roles change in a degathering society?

**Computer As School.** The signs point to the same degathering process taking place with respect to schooling as to the workplace. The growth of home and charter schools, as well as the rapid development of distance learning, has expanded the number and type of venues for schooling. Discussion Theme Example: As construction, transportation and maintenance costs skyrocket, should school boards consider alternatives to traditional school buildings such as virtual schools?

**Computer As Data Gatherer.** Through the Internet and all its faces and the databases and individuals to which it affords access, the computer is a tremendous resource for collecting data. At the same time, it has the potential for the same errors and issues (e.g., pornography) that print databases have. Discussion Theme Example: Who should be denied access to databases and under what conditions?

**Conclusion**

With respect to the impact of technology on the social studies curriculum over the last quarter century, the news is not encouraging. The larder of exemplary software lessons and units that have accumulated, however noteworthy, consists largely of fragmented items in search of a conceptual home, the
venerable and acclaimed Oregon Trail is but one example.

Databases, free and not, may be the answer to how technology can best be harnessed to the social studies curriculum, but a thicket of issues surrounding their use remain. Not the least of these are those attendant to access, verification, and requisite search skills.

Because issues are the warp and woof of social studies, the computer also commands our attention to address the quandaries its rapid development has spawned. The world as we know it has been transformed immeasurably by a pinch of silicon. The passage and course of that revolutionary transformation merits our students' informed analysis.

Hopefully, more research, development, and dialogue will suggest an agenda and a list of priorities concerning the relationship between technology and the social studies. Meanwhile, social studies educators can spread the plea: Wake the giant!

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Unlike historians (indeed, unlike any researchers in the humanities), educational researchers have the responsibility to think about how the fruits of their work will translate into practice. A recent TRSE symposium addressed that responsibility in respect to research on teaching and learning history (Barton et al., 1996). What are the mechanisms, the participants asked, through which research on history education can be brought into sustained and fruitful dialogue with policy and teaching? Enter Levstik and Barton with Doing History: an exemplary review of research on teaching and learning history. The volume is aimed not at helping academics to define new research projects, but at assisting teachers to improve their teaching of history. In other words, we have here two researchers who have put their academic money where their mouths are. Their achievement, Doing History, is the most important volume for teachers, on teaching and learning history, to be published in North America since Holt's (1990) Thinking Historically. And while it is the first to utilize the outpouring of research which has occurred since that date, Levstik and Barton also draw extensively from the work of the teachers whose classrooms they have visited. Rich with voices from the schools, the volume thus reads as a conversation among teachers, students and researchers.

A Theoretical Orientation

The first three chapters lay out approaches to historical knowledge and cognitive theory which undergird the entire work. History, Levstik and Barton explain in the first chapter, tells us who we are and what we can become; it's about significant themes and questions; it is interpretive; it has a narrative structure; it is more than politics; and it is controversial. Perhaps most importantly, it reflects human diversity, including the powerless as well as the powerful. A coherent vision of history is reiterated throughout the volume. Levstik and Barton advocate:
shifting the focus of history instruction from an oversimplified emphasis on ‘progress’—every day in every way we are getting better and better—to more in-depth study of how groups and individuals now and in other times exercise power publicly and privately, how society deals with competing claims between order and protest and how political and social meanings are transmitted to individuals and groups. (p.105)

Their definition of history is also informed by narrative theory and the recent linguistic and rhetorical turns in the philosophy of history. Yet, despite the potentially disabling impact of this literature, Levstik and Barton keep the discussion safely away from the “edge of the cliff” which has given historians vertigo in the last decade (Chartier, 1997).

Just as there is a coherent vision of historical knowledge drawn from recent literature, there is a strong presence of cognitive learning theory applied to historical knowledge. The title suggests active students, learning to “frame questions, gather data from primary and secondary sources, organize and interpret that data, and share their work with different audiences” (p.xi). The next two chapters introduce the notions of disciplined inquiry, scaffolding, prior knowledge, and in-depth understanding, all of which resurface throughout the book. They put forward the notion that students can learn by confronting issues in a classroom constituted as a community of historical inquiry: “Students...must learn what the authentic application of historical knowledge looks like: they must see how history can explain the present, and they must see this in the most authentic of ways—through the comparison of conflicting ideas about the nature and significance of the past.” (p. 14)

Some Approaches to Teaching History

Following three introductory chapters are five chapters organized around a series of projects. Though vignettes of teaching are used in the introductory chapters, here is where they really come into their own, as the authors take us from classroom to classroom to look in on expert teachers doing exciting work with students. Levstik and Barton acknowledge the expertise of the teachers (a too-rare stance among educational researchers). At this point the volume becomes a theoretically informed catalogue of best practice. The cumulative effect of reading through the case studies is to put the reader in the company of a corps of extraordinarily thoughtful, knowledgeable, creative, and responsive history teachers. Indeed, on a number of occasions, the “best practice” seemed so perfect that I wondered how extensively Levstik and Barton had rewritten their classroom observations.
A chapter on personal history opens the question, “what is history?” for fourth-graders with an authentic historical task. Though superficially similar in approach to the discredited “expanding horizons” of social studies, this project is theoretically rich, introducing students to “key elements of disciplined inquiry” (p.27). Questions about the best ways to gather, organize and present information about their lives, judgements about reliability of sources, and the relative significance of different events all come into play in a relatively simple exercise, culminating in a narrative autobiographical essay. A suggestion for extending the exercise has students reading historical biographies and comparing them to their own lives. The next chapter extends this exercise into “family history,” again raising fundamental theoretical questions at a level that fourth grade students can grapple with. Levstik and Barton include practical hints like showing students the power of subordinating conjunctions (e.g., because, although, when, before, and after) in constructing historical narratives (p. 40). Each chapter also includes a list of relevant historical literature for children. The chapter on personal history includes a list of forty historical biographies along with seventeen other titles dealing with the theme of “personal history, memory and identity.”

In a chapter on world history projects, Levstik and Barton provide extended vignettes of classroom investigations into Christopher Columbus and change in South Africa, applying principles that they have already discussed, but emphasizing connections between the local and the global, as well as those between past and present. Again, their examples underscore historiographic controversy, the tasks of interpretation, and the cognitive dimensions of these activities: “Children’s and historians’ mental models of the past are constantly restructured, not just by learning more historical information, but by regularly reflecting on what that information means, on what other points of view are possible, and on what light new historical knowledge throws on current events” (p. 54).

Despite their attention to the narrative structure of history, Levstik and Barton do not see chronological treatments of the past as the foundation of history instruction, as do some recent commentators. Their accounts of non-chronologically organized units (including a chapter on a local, urban study, entitled “history in the context of social studies”) are so richly nuanced and so solidly based on the theoretical principles gleaned from historical, psychological and educational research, that they remain entirely convincing.

Theory in Practice

Chapters 9-12 take on some major theoretical questions. Each of the chapters in this part of the book deals with ways that students make sense of the past, as the authors say, how they make “human sense of
history” (p. 130). The analysis is informed by the notions of diverse perspectives, empathy, agency, and moral judgment, and the relation between all of these and the narrative structure of history. But it is not clean or neat, and chapters which set out to discuss one invariably take on aspects of the others.

In a chapter on “Fiction, Non-fiction, and Historical Thinking,” Levstik and Barton discuss, among other difficult questions, the scale of the historical narrative. They note children’s preference for personal scale of historical interpretation over large, structural forces, “individual human intentions and motivations” over “political and economic analyses” (p. 93). Young students, they assert, arrive in class with “human behavior schema” which they can readily apply on this personal scale. This raises important questions about when (and how) children become able to take on the larger, more abstract analyses, as history without consideration of larger structural forces remains incomplete (see Halldén, 1994). In the same paragraphs, Levstik and Barton deal with the “delicate balance between honoring children’s search for historical truth and developing their recognition that other people in other times saw the world differently...” (p. 94), and the problems of conflicting narrative accounts of the same events. For a teacher considering these issues for the first time, the going could get tough at this point. For the philosopher of history, the issues may appear to be needlessly superimposed and inadequately explicated. Perhaps thankfully, the authors retreat quickly to some nuts-and-bolts guidelines for selecting historical fiction and non-fiction and then to consideration of students’ writing of their own historical narrative (what Boix Mansilla (in press) has called “performances of understanding.”)

As in the preceding section of the book, the teaching vignettes and the explication of the principles involved in those lessons provide the anchor for the book as a teaching tool. The theoretical organization remains somewhat messy. At the end of Chapter 8, (p. 89) we hear that the “next chapter” will deal with issues of agency. In fact, Chapter 10 (“Putting Conflict in Context”) has the extended discussion of agency (and almost all of the index entries on the topic), while it is Chapter 12 that is entitled “Agency and Perspective in American History.” The latter turns out to have important lessons on empathy and evidence (pp. 130-132), along with sections on diversity and prior knowledge. But these organizational glitches are relatively minor flaws, when one keeps in mind the book’s intended uses. The fact that Levstik and Barton emphasize historical agency—largely a product of historiographic concerns of the past couple of decades—as a key concept for history instruction is the important point.

A separate chapter treats the use of art and music, both as sources for the examination of history, and as media through which students can demonstrate their historical understanding. Again, Levstik and
Barton bring important insights from cognitive theory to their observations on how students develop the capacity for historical meaning-making: “the very process of selecting representations for their inner conceptions shapes students’ historical understanding” (p. 155).

Some Reservations
A final chapter entitled “constructive assessment in history” bears no surprises, and yet is perhaps the least developed aspect of the book. The reader learns—if she has not already guessed it—that assessment should be intimately tied to instruction, and therefore that the book has been describing, throughout, activities—including discussions, writings, performances and presentations—which serve as the basis for assessment. In the kinds of classrooms described in this book, the authors note, “there is no...split between instruction and assessment. An observer walking into one of these classes would not be able to tell whether it was a ‘teaching’ day or a ‘testing’ day, since they’re one and the same thing” (p. 161). The authors stress process, choice and variety, in order to give students the most successful experiences. They are less explicit when it comes to providing criteria for assessment, or indeed even in providing processes for teachers to develop criteria. Embedded in one paragraph are some ideas of what might count in historical writing: it should be original, clear, coherent, “rich in the kind of details that support the writer’s interpretation but also engage the reader in the historical account” (p. 166). The complexity of the task which Levstik and Barton ask teachers to perform here is hidden by the easy-going and matter-of-fact tone. Though the authors point them in the right direction, I am afraid that new teachers will need substantially more guidance than is provided.

The other topic which is missing will be of less concern to new teachers, but more important to curriculum developers who may also turn to this volume. There is little discussion of the overall shape of a history course, much less an entire history curriculum. Beyond the general principle that history should encompass diversity, there is no discussion of a sequence of instruction. Rather, the authors emphasize the adaptability of the “principles of effective instruction and the elements of historical thinking” to “any topic a teacher wants or needs to teach” (p. 141). Hopefully, history education research will soon have as much to tell us about curriculum as it does about instruction.

And an Enthusiastic Conclusion
Innovative page-layouts for the large-format book provide key points from the text reproduced in the margins. Many of these underscore major principles that appear throughout the text: “Collaboration helps students activate their prior knowledge,” (p. 135) or “Taking a historical moment out of context can lead to incomplete interpreta-
tions" (p. 149). In another kind of work, such repetition might be overbearing. Here, as a pedagogical strategy aimed at teachers who will hopefully put these ideas into practice, it seems eminently justified. References, also placed in the margins, allow for a volume of citations which would be inappropriate and distracting if they were incorporated into the body of the text. They provide keys into an extensive bibliography, drawing from research in history, psychology, and education.

Levstik and Barton have written an insightful volume. They have provided a service to teachers through their presentation of recent research, and a service to researchers, whose work really only makes sense insofar as it has an impact on what goes on in classrooms. I, for one, look forward to Doing History in my classes.

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MIXED MESSAGES AND UNANSWERED QUESTIONS


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What's the problem with social studies education? Social studies teaching is a "non-thinking, memory-bound process." What's the solution? Issues-centered education; "the way all education should be approached to produce informed citizens who are involved in working out better solutions to our problems." These words appear in Shirley Engle's foreword to the *Handbook on Teaching Social Issues* (Evans & Saxe, 1996, p. vii) and they resound throughout this massive (almost 500 pages) effort. On the way through its soup-to-nuts course on teaching social issues, the *Handbook* authors offer some useful insights for teachers inclined to take an issues-centered approach. The authors aim higher than this, however, and therein lies part of the problem. For we wonder if a handbook is the appropriate vehicle for making and supporting an argument to fundamentally change teaching practice. The list of contributors is impressive and we have no quarrel with most of their individual efforts. Yet the sum of their efforts sends mixed messages about content, teaching, learning, and assessment and leaves unanswered a raft of practical questions about enacting an issues-centered approach. The result seriously undercuts the strength and persuasiveness of the issues-centered argument. We worry, then, that an issues-centered "solution," at least as represented throughout this book, will have little take in those classrooms most in need.

Making Issues-Centered Education Work

The *Handbook* offers a tour-de-force of issues-centered education. The 44 chapters are organized into 11 sections: "Definition and Rationale," "Reflective Teaching Strategies," "Cultural Diversity," "Historical Topics and Themes," "Geography, Global Studies and the Environment," "Social Sciences," "An Issues-Centered Curriculum," "Assessment," "Teacher Education and Supervision," "Future-Oriented, Issues-Centered Education," and "Materials and Resources." Before we discuss the mixed messages and unanswered questions, we want to highlight the positive pieces of this book, for there are several.

Teachers inclined toward issues-centered instruction will find useful suggestions throughout the *Handbook*. Some of those suggestions center on creating appropriate issues for classroom study. In Chapter 11, for example, Joseph Onosko and Lee Swenson demonstrate the many ways issues can be classified: historical, disciplinary, interdisciplinary, factual, definitional,
ethical, legal, and aesthetic. They also offer four helpful criteria for selecting issues to be studied. In their view, an issue must be controversial, important, interesting, and researchable. Good suggestions for teaching methods also emerge. For example, Patrick Ferguson advocates issues-centered history be taught as a "problem solving endeavor...that engage(s) students in thinking and behaving in the manner of historians..." (p. 137). He believes that students should be actively involved in using documentary analysis, biographies and case studies, argumentation-based activities, and team investigation methods to grapple with issues.

There is also some good advice on assessment. In his introduction to and chapter in the assessment section, Walter Parker offers two useful reminders. One is that assessment needs to be intimately tied to curriculum and instruction; the other is that ratcheting up assessment expectations will disadvantage some students, at least initially. In short, it is one thing to create more challenging assessments, and quite another to help students understand what they need to know and be able to do in order to meet our expectations. In that light, David Harris's assertion that, for example, students need to "practice discussion before being assessed" (p. 290) makes a lot of sense.

Other valuable suggestions come in the form of project and unit ideas and in the classroom resources described. Onosko and Swenson nicely demonstrate how issues can be pulled from a unit on the American Revolutionary War. Samuel Totten and Jon Pedersen (Chapter 26) describe several examples of thoughtful units developed at the middle school level. Robert Yager and Martha Lutz (Chapter 27) offer additional unit suggestions from a science, technology, and society perspective. Also helpful are the several chapters which describe classroom materials in a range of issues-related areas.

Two additional points are worth noting. One is the strong evidence that classroom climate matters. Carole Hahn's chapter on research around issues-centered teaching suggests that, while many studies yield inconclusive results, those which explore the climate of open, issues-centered classrooms offer consistent evidence of the benefit to the least-advantaged learners. Summarizing the work of Lee Ehman and others, she finds "positive correlations between an open climate and adolescents' reported levels of political interest and efficacy" (p. 31). For teachers seeking ways to include all their students in powerful learning opportunities, this comes as welcome news.

Also important are the thoughtful suggestions around interdisciplinary study. As some observers note, much of what passes for interdisciplinary instruction is woeful at best (Alleman & Brophy, 1993; Roth, 1994) The Handbook, however, reveals some good thinking on working across the social studies disciplines. In Chapter 28, Ron Evans and Jerry Brodkey argue for a curriculum, "...in which social studies is defined as a unitary field of study that is fully issues-centered, interdisciplinary and
extradisciplinary rather than a field that is merely derivative of academic disciplines" (p. 257). Their plan of semester-long courses with titles like "Race and Ethnicity in American Life," "Utopian Visions and Competing Ideologies," and "Philosophy in Personal and Public Life" demonstrate a commitment to interdisciplinary goals. Similarly, William Wraga argues that the complex nature of most issues absolutely requires that conventional boundaries between disciplines be disbanded. He proposes an interesting "common learnings course" to study issues in an interdisciplinary, problem-focused class required of all students each year (p. 271). Wraga also cites a suggestion by Engle and Ochoa (1988) to devote approximately two weeks a year to a school-wide study of a significant social issue. We agree with these types of interdisciplinary approaches since we believe that citizenship education goes beyond the boundaries of social studies to be the responsibility of the entire school community (Grant & VanSledright, 1996).

The Mixed Messages of Issues-Centered Education

Teachers disposed toward issues-centered instruction will find some useful suggestions in the Handbook. Unfortunately, these suggestions are but blips on a bigger screen. Those teachers who use issues-centered approaches as well as their unconvinced peers will find a plethora of mixed messages about content, teaching methods, assessment, and even the nature of issues-centered instruction itself. Such conflicting notions are not only confusing, but they seriously undercut the effectiveness of the issues-centered argument, at least as presented in the Handbook.

One set of mixed messages develops around the content to be taught in issues-centered classrooms. Reading the Handbook, it appears that any content organized in any form will suffice. Several authors suggest that new, issues-oriented projects and units can simply be inserted into the traditional social studies curriculum. In Chapter 21, for example, Stephen Fleury and Adam Sheldon offer several suggestions for unit topics that might be inserted into the regular curriculum. Other authors maintain, however, that the content of social studies courses must be radically changed to meet the demands of issues-centered instruction. Thus, in Chapter 17, Ron Evans asserts that course content should reflect revisionist history and "...emphasize alternative voices, seeking out the voices of the oppressed, of those who have offered critical perspectives on social institutions, historical events, and decisions of the past and present" (p. 153). Evans (and Evans and Brodkey in Chapter 28) makes a strong case for re-conceptualizing the content of social studies. Readers may be confused by the Evans and Brodkey proposal, however, since it follows chapters in which other authors maintain that the current curriculum can easily be adapted to serve issues-centered purposes. In fact Evans' co-editor, David Saxe, argues that revisionist (or "new, new") history is less desirable than a traditional historical perspective and that using issues in an American history course
“does not necessarily change standard traditional offerings; the content certainly can remain essentially the same if the teacher so chooses” (p. 143).

Not surprisingly, then, mixed messages surface around the form issues-centered content should take. Throughout the Handbook, authors argue that issues can be pursued by developing separate issues-based courses, infusing issues into existing course lessons and units, constructing new issues-based units, or developing integrated, cross-subject matter courses. Arguments for and against these different instantiations boil up throughout the text and readers may conclude, ironically, as the authors of Chapter 1 do, that “there is no inherent curriculum logic or sequence” (p. 2) to issues-centered content.

Mixed messages also develop around teaching methods. There is great disparity in the instructional positions advocated; in fact, every method we have ever seen is advocated at some point—from lecture and recitation to peer teaching and cooperative learning to discussion and debate. Some authors castigate teachers for pushing students to “regurgitate the so-called facts presented in textbooks and teacher lectures” (p. 1), while others suggest just the opposite. Evans, Saxe, and Fred Newmann declare that, while issues-centered “techniques” are useful, so too are “traditional methods of teaching such as lectures, objective testing, memory reliance, or repetition” (p. 4). Complicating the issue even further, Cleo Cherryholmes observes that, according to critical discourse theory, standard teaching approaches such as debate and voting are “prohibited” (p. 78). It makes sense that issues-inclined teachers might draw from a wide range of teaching approaches. Yet, given the diversity of the arguments about appropriate teaching practices and the fact that virtually every teacher can see his or her practice represented, we wonder if many would be inspired to rethink their instruction at all.

We also saw some mixed messages in the way assessment is presented. The most obvious is whether or not assessment is important. Assessment is arguably one of the hottest topics among teachers, yet it occupies one of the shortest sections in the book. Other mixed messages recall the enduring debate between process and product. For example, in describing the Controversial Social Issues teaching model, Jerry Ligon and George Chilcoat note that it “should emphasize process and students’ personal learning...not the acquisition of specific content” (p. 225). Evans and Passe add, “The major emphasis of schools, and of the issues-centered curriculum in particular, is on process” (p. 86). By contrast, Saxe (citing E. D. Hirsch, certainly no fan of “process” assessment) states that knowledge of American history is a “necessary precondition for competent citizenship” (p. 144). Still other authors advocate assessing both what students produce and how they produce it. For example, Onosko and Swenson note that unit projects should ensure that students gain “both in-depth and cohesive understanding of an issue....[and] an opportunity to demonstrate their understanding
and prowess to peers" (p. 95). As with content and method, then, the messages sent about assessment cover a wide and conflicted territory.

Yet another set of mixed messages concerns the relationship between issues and "right" answers. We read that issues are enduring, controversial, and beyond simple, right answers. This makes sense. What does not make sense, however, is the overwhelming impression one gets that there are "right" answers both in the way issues are defined and in the way they are presumably resolved. This impression comes from two sources. One is the pervasive sense that, at the end of their discussions, students should seek consensus, reach and justify a decision, reconcile different views, or express the solution to the problem. True, some authors add caveats that undercut the starkness of these assertions. For example, summarizing the Massialas and Cox instructional model, JoAnn Sweeney and Stuart Foster aver that a "'solution'...can never be any more than the best possible statement under the circumstances" (p. 68). Nevertheless, talk about consensus, reconciliations, and solutions seems at odds with the complex and often divisive nature of most public issues (Kingdon, 1984), the convoluted and often irrational manner in which public policy is made (Cohen & Garet, 1975), and the fact that minority voices may go unheard and the oppressed are often excluded from the policymaking arena (West, 1993). Moreover, it raises the specter of students going through the motions of developing a consensus simply to satisfy the teacher and get a good grade.

But there's a bigger problem. For bubbling up throughout the Handbook is another form of "right" answer. The issues that regularly surface—race, class, gender, labor, environment, power—are clearly controversial and debatable. Yet, the voice or perspective offered on each of these issues is almost always that of the political and social left. For example, advocating attention to issues of "power in America," Evans suggests pursuing questions such as who rules America, is there a power elite, how should we alter or reform the power structure in the United States (p. 158). Massialas argues that, "factors connected with race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, and linguistic background...as well as the classroom psychological milieu, make an important difference in what is learned, how it is learned, and for what purposes" (p.44). There are occasional instances where diverse views are hinted at. For example, Jack Nelson notes that "medical knowledge has increased life expectancy and improved public health but created other problems related to aging, the political economy of health care, and ethical questions about dying and equality of treatment" (p. 15).

But these references are almost never developed so that the reader sees the multiple perspectives that adhere to these issues. Frankly, it pains us to make this observation because we count ourselves among those who advocate these issues and positions. However, the lack of attention to the full range of views conflicts with the rhetoric that there are no right answers and supplies ample ammunition to those who would slam issues-centered education as left-wing propaganda.
This sketch of the mixed messages offered in the *Handbook* is meant to be illustrative rather than exhaustive. A fuller treatment of this problem would include references to the conflicting information around whether or not issues-centered instruction is appropriate for elementary and/or secondary students, how one teaches learners to be sensitive to the "common good" as well as needs of a multicultural society, and the proper role of background knowledge and disciplinary studies in an issues-centered classroom.

In the end, however, there may be no more important set of conflicting signals than those sent about the nature of issues-centered education. One set of mixed messages surrounds the basics of an issues-centered approach—what it is, what the issues are, and who decides. The first section of the *Handbook*, "Definition and Rationale," ostensibly addresses these questions. The message, however, gets muddied the more one reads. For example, many authors offer a variant on Totten and Pedersen's stance that issues-centered education is designed to "develop reflective citizens who are ultimately capable of rationally analyzing, synthesizing, and acting upon issues central to citizenship" (p. 237). References to rational decision-making are numerous. Yet, other authors tell us that issues-centered education is primarily a teaching method, the content of coursework, a means for solving problems in students' daily lives, or a means of acquiring disciplinary-centered knowledge and skills. A similar mix of messages emerges when one wonders what the issues are. Here, authors tend to fall into one of three camps. Issues are either broadly conceived as "social," "public," or "human;" focused on students and/or the local community; or located in the subject matter of extant courses. Finally, different messages are conveyed about who decides which issues should be investigated. Some authors clearly give that power to teachers. Others suggest that students should be the primary source of issues. And still others maintain that, while teachers must decide, they should do so with a keen sense of the issues students find compelling.

The notion that the *Handbook* is replete with mixed messages is important, but it's not unique (Grant, 1997). For in one sense the *Handbook* functions as most educational reforms do, that is, as an argument for changing current practice. Like educational reforms, the text is the work of many hands. Perhaps inevitably, then, multiple and mixed messages will emerge (Kirst & Walker, 1971).

Recognizing and accepting that inevitability does not take us very far, however. For as school and university folks interested in promoting ambitious teaching and learning, we have to look at the potential impact of arguments like that which the *Handbook'*s authors offer concerning issues-centered education. The outlook isn’t pretty. Teachers already doing issues-oriented work may find some good ideas and they may not think the mixed messages are disconcerting. More problematic, however, is our sense that teachers unconvinced about the value of an issues-centered approach are
likely to remain so. Instead of being challenged to rethink what they are doing and why (individually and/or with their colleagues), we imagine those teachers reading this volume will only feel confused, frustrated, and annoyed. Many of the Handbook authors criticize teachers’ current practices. Persuading those teachers to change is no simple task (Fullan, 1993). That task is only complicated, however, if it is unclear in which direction they are being asked to change.

The Unanswered Questions of Issues-Centered Education

Regardless of whether teacher-readers are practicing issues-centered education or not, they are likely to come away, as we did, with a lot of questions that are alternately ignored or underdeveloped. We group those questions around Joseph Schwab’s (1978) distinct, but inter-related commonplaces of education—learning, milieu, subject matter, and teaching.

Before addressing these issues, we need to say a word about the research base behind issues-centered education. To be blunt, it is discouraging. One problem is that the research base is thin and dated. In Chapter 4, Hahn does an admirable job in pulling together and summarizing the available research. She acknowledges, however, that shifting definitions and limited research evidence supporting issues-centered practice hamper the construction of solid arguments. Hahn does not mention the dated nature of the bulk of the research cited. But even a quick survey suggests that most of the empirical work cited comes from the 1960’s and 70’s. The developing work of Patricia Avery, Walter Parker, Fred Newmann, and Hahn herself should help bridge that gap. We can not be sanguine, however, about the fact that the research base in issues-centered classrooms—in social studies education generally—is thin in comparison with that in other school subjects (Gehrke, Knapp, & Sirotnik, 1992).

The other problem is that the existing research evidence is stubbornly inconclusive. Studies of classrooms (e.g., Bickmore, 1993; Rossi, 1995) offer valuable insights into teachers’ efforts to do issues-centered work. But common across these studies is a sense that this kind of teaching is much more complex than many teaching models (e.g., the Jurisprudential approach, Social Inquiry model) portray. Studies of student outcomes offer similarly circumspect findings (see Hahn’s description of the Indiana Experiments in Inquiry and Harvard Social Studies projects).

What will an issues-centered approach do for kids? The Handbook authors offer numerous salutary claims. Some, like Anna Ochoa-Becker, announce that issues-centered education “offers the greatest promise for improving citizen participation and the quality of life in a democratic society” (p. 1). Others offer more muted support. Hahn, for example, concludes that issues-centered education remains the “unfulfilled challenge” (p. 37) of social educators. Given the thin research base and the largely inconclusive evidence, we are more inclined to agree with Hahn.
Theory and Research in Social Education

We conclude, then, that research in general and the Handbook in particular do not address some important questions about learners and learning. In short, we know little about what students know and value about issues and how their views emerge, grow, and change. Questions abound: What background knowledge about issues do students bring to school and how does that knowledge vary across individuals and groups? What issues are students most responsive to and why? What do students' nascent ideas about issues sound like? How do students' knowledge and attitudes about issues change (if they do) over time? These all seem like reasonable concerns, yet we learn little about them in the Handbook. We believe that a handbook, purportedly intended to encourage and aid teachers in using an issues-centered approach, should help teachers figure out the answers to questions such as these. There is some compelling, new empirical work being done in how students think and learn about history (see, for example, Barton & Levstik, 1996; Seixas, 1993; VanSledright & Brophy, 1992; Wilson, 1990). Similar work needs to be done around social issues.

We also need to know more about classroom milieu. The research to date is tantalizing: Students, especially the least able and those from minority cultures, seem to learn more and hold more positive attitudes when they learn in “open” classrooms. But what does that mean? We get some hints about this, but teachers are likely to want more. What does an “open” classroom climate look like and how do teachers go about creating one? Which elements of classroom life might make some students uncomfortable and thus unwilling to participate? How do gender, race, and class differences affect climate? Attending to the classroom milieu appears to be important. However, until issues-centered advocates address some of the questions above, teachers are likely to feel frustrated.

In some respects, subject matter is well-covered in the Handbook. Though it appears in different forms (e.g., curriculum guides, textbooks and other resources, and course content), the question of what students will study is discussed throughout the Handbook. But two problems surface. One comes back to the importance of classroom climate. Content or subject matter is clearly important. Yet as Hahn notes, “the mere presence of controversial issues in the curriculum is not sufficient to bring about positive student attitudes; when issues are presented in a closed climate, there can be negative consequences” (p. 31). If true, this observation raises questions about, among other things, the focus of this book. For even a quick survey shows that much more attention is given to curriculum than to milieu.

The second problem with regard to subject matter relates back to the mixed messages around content. Here possible questions include: Does it matter how teachers bring issues-related content to bear (e.g., by inserting new units, reconceptualizing the curriculum, pulling out the issues in traditional content)? How do teachers negotiate the balance between students' background knowledge (the “facts”) and their openness to inquiry? Is is-
sues-centered education appropriate for elementary, middle, or secondary
school students? For a book so ostensibly geared toward subject matter, it
is surprising that so many of these seemingly basic questions remain.

Clearly, the unanswered questions about learning, milieu, and sub-
ject matter have implications for teaching. But even if those questions were
addressed, questions about teaching in an issues-centered approach would
continue. Those questions might include: What role should teachers play
in issues-centered classrooms—impartial arbiter, neutral observer, defen-
sible partisan? How do teachers manage the time and coverage pressures
inherent in an issues-centered approach? How do teachers “hear” their
students’ fledgling attempts to express their ideas? What do teachers do if
they have a standardized test hanging over their head? How do teachers
negotiate school and community support for the creation and implemen-
tation of new, issues-centered courses? And how do teachers deal with what
James Shaver calls the “constraining institutional culture” (p. 381) of
schools? Several Handbook authors acknowledge that constraints exist, but
they make few suggestions to help teachers figure out what to do about
them. Saxe’s chapter on teaching issues in American history stands out in
this regard because he takes the reader through the array of decisions a
teacher faces when infusing issues into a traditional curriculum unit. There
are simply far too few of these illustrations. After finishing the book, we
longed for chapters that explored how teachers pull together the various
elements of issues-centered teaching, learning, subject matter, and milieu
into a powerful classroom experience.

These several unanswered questions sharpen the implications de-
scribed in the mixed messages section above. Issues-inclined teachers will
likely be disappointed that the really tough issues are not taken on. The
uninclined teachers are likely to read this book as just so much pap—an
assortment of suggestions that, given ideal circumstances might be good,
yet take little account of the real-world issues and constraints they face. At
best, then, the Handbook serves to elevate the whole notion of an issues-
centered approach, while at worst, it tends to reinforce the image of social
studies as a mish-mash of content, methods, and assessments working to-
ward the (still) ill-defined end of “good citizenship.”

A Concluding Thought

Proponents of issues-centered education want teaching to change. We
agree. In fact, we count ourselves as advocates of using issues to frame
instruction. In our team-taught masters-level social studies methods course,
we combine readings and discussion of pedagogical issues with "real" his-
torical readings and issues—e.g., Should Andrew Jackson be viewed as
democrat or demagogue? How can Reconstruction be alternately viewed
as both success and failure? Are women better off in America today? Among
other things, these issues model the kind of "big ideas" we want our stu-
The Handbook provides a framework for developing open-ended inquiry and encourages teachers to think about the fundamental issues of teaching and learning. Teachers may feel challenged and supported to do new things in their classrooms, but the authors worry that the issues-centered mantle of the Handbook does not always address the practical matters of teaching and learning.

References


Theory and Research in Social Education

INFORMATION FOR AUTHORS

Statement of Purpose
Theory and Research in Social Education is designed to stimulate and communicate systematic research and thinking in social education. Its purpose is to foster the creation and exchange of ideas and research findings that will expand knowledge and understanding of the purposes, conditions, and effects of schooling and education about society and social relations. Manuscripts reporting conceptual or empirical studies of social education are welcomed.

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School of Education and Human Development
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