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What Does the Civics NAEP Mean for Social Studies Education?

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According to the results of the 1998 civics portion of the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP), which were released this past fall, students have a weak understanding of the underlying principles of the U. S. Constitution and lack a fundamental understanding of how government works. The first national assessment of students’ knowledge of civics and government in a decade found that: about two-thirds of the test-takers in each of the three grades tested (4th, 8th, and 12th) achieved at the “basic” level or above; a little more than 20% in each grade scored at the “proficient” level; and 2% of the fourth- and eighth-graders and 4% of the twelfth-graders scored at the “advanced” level. But what do these results mean?

When the NAEP results were announced, newspapers across the country decried the “civics deficit,” the “uneducated electorate,” and the “sorry state” of civics education in the United States, as much was made of the finding that 35% of American high school seniors can’t demonstrate even a “basic” grasp of their system of government. The Christian Science Monitor asked what kind of democracy can we expect in the future when only 26 percent of seniors have more than a rudimentary understanding of the political process? Reacting to the NAEP results some made connections between students’ apparent lack of understanding of government and the low levels of participation in elections and public affairs—less than 20% of the eligible voters in the 18-25 age group voted in the last presidential election.

Charles N. Quigley, executive director of the Center for Civic Education—the organization responsible for developing the voluntary national standards in civics education, which served as the framework for the NAEP civics test—argues the results demonstrate schools don’t spend enough time on civics education to give students in-depth knowledge they need to become what NAEP considers “proficient” or “advanced” (Hoff, 1999). For example,

- 57% of the 6,000 fourth-graders that took the test did not understand that the president signs a bill into law and 85% could not name two services paid for by taxes;
74% of eighth-graders could not name two ways citizens participate in presidential campaigns; only six percent could describe how countries benefit from having constitutions;

30% of high school seniors knew that the U. S. Supreme Court uses judicial review to preserve minority rights; 45% understood that the president and the State Department have more power over foreign policy than Congress.

Quigley has been joined by Diane Ravitch and others in calling for the reevaluation of the social studies curriculum to ensure that it places more emphasis on the form and function of the government in the United States.

Creating a Civic-Minded Political Culture

While I agree with critics within and outside the social studies community that the current social studies curriculum in the U. S. needs to be seriously reassessed, I am less sanguine about the meaning of the NAEP results and the curricular directions suggested by Quigley, Ravitch, et al. Making sense of the civics NAEP is not so straightforward as identifying deficits and recommending more emphasis on the extant curriculum standards in civics.

First, the NAEP achievement levels, which describe what students need to know to be considered “advanced,” “proficient,” or “basic,” have been controversial since the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) established them in the early 1990s.1 Congress’ General Accounting Office and testing experts have criticized them as being too difficult and yielding results that differ from other large-scale assessments (e.g., Advanced Placement exams; Third International Mathematics and Science Study). Last year the National Research Council issued a report on the NAEP that questioned the research and methods used to derive its findings (Pellegrino, Jones, & Mitchell, 1999). Calling the NAEP process for measuring student achievement “fundamentally flawed” the report says it should be overhauled because the results based on NAEP achievement levels lack specificity and are “not believable.” The NAGB cannot describe exactly what scoring in each performance level means and NAEP results are open to misinterpretation. Because of flaws in the standard-setting process—which uses groups of teachers to determine the degree of difficulty of a question and decide where a correct answer would place a child in one of the exams’ three achievement levels—results based on the NAEP achievement levels overstate the academic shortcomings of U. S. students.
Secondly, before merely prescribing more of the same old curricular medicine, we should re-examine the practices and goals of civic education. With regard to the former, NAEP civics data seem to confirm something that we already know: truly effective teaching engages students in active, experiential learning. For example, twelfth-graders taking the NAEP who had been involved in community service programs scored better than those who hadn’t. Fourth- and eighth-graders who had used the internet in civics classes, likewise, outperformed their counterparts who didn’t. And eighth-graders who participated in small-group projects had higher scores than test-takers from lecture-based civics classes. These results suggest that rather than responding to the NAEP findings with a “back-to-basic” approach to civics instruction, students would benefit from increased use of more authentic pedagogical strategies that allow them to directly engage in critical examination of public issues.

These findings indicate that a prime focus of our efforts in social studies education should be developing curricula that aim to help students understand their own social situation and to learn how to transform it through inquiry, analysis, and democratic action. As Vinson (in press) points out, each of the three major frameworks for civic education presents a set of good intentions and well-placed dedication to the goals of citizenship, justice, equality, freedom, diversity, and democracy, but taken together these programs ignore the roots of oppression (e.g., exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence) as well as its utility for some.

Further, though [current curriculum standards in civics education] support some degree of “civic participation,” they do so only generally, vaguely, not noticing that the ends to which such involvement are or might be aimed are undeniably different, that agreed upon goals might imply differentially produced and interpreted yet equally valid understandings...[B]y downplaying the roots, the particulars, and the applications of oppression each program engenders a citizenship education in which students develop an indifferent if not nonexistent understanding of the disconnect between the ideal and the real. Is, for example, the United States a country characterized by “liberty and justice for all,” or is it not? (pp. 25-26)

Vinson’s critique highlights the contradictions of citizenship education in a neoliberal democracy. Neoliberalism is the dominant global political economic trend adopted by political parties of the center as well as much of the traditional left and right and is characterized by policies and practices that serve the interests of extremely wealthy
investors and large multinational corporations. Neoliberalism works best when there is formal electoral democracy, but the people are diverted from information, access, and public forums necessary for meaningful participation in decision making (McChesney, 1999). Economic consequences of neoliberalism include massive increases in social and economic inequality. For example, a recent study conducted by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and the Economic Policy Institute reported wages for the poorest fifth of American families rose less than 1% between 1988 and 1998, but jumped 15% for the richest fifth (McCaffrey, 2000). While Wall Street is soaring; the U. S. continues the longest economic expansion in its history; and unemployment is at its lowest rate in 30 years (4.1%), the Center on Hunger and Poverty at Tufts University reports that 30 million Americans are hungry and worry where they will get their next meals (30 million going hungry, 2000).

Neoliberalism is the foremost enemy of participatory democracy and a depoliticized, apathetic, and cynical citizenry is one of its by-products. As McChesney points out democracy requires that people feel a real connection to their fellow citizens. Neoliberal policies undermine efforts to realize the equality necessary to make democracy credible. In other words, neoliberalism—as well as a civic education curriculum that fails to give students an opportunity to understand and analyze neoliberalism's impact on our political, economic, and cultural lives—perpetuates the disconnection between democratic ideals and political/economic reality.

Helping students learn to function as effective citizens in a democracy requires much more than teaching the mechanisms of government. And producing students who consistently score at the "advanced" level on the NAEP contributes little or nothing to the creation of a civic-minded political culture. Rather, we must teach citizenship in ways that promote explorations of the social, political and economic conditions in which we and our students live. Educating students to be effective citizens in a democracy requires that they have an opportunity to question, understand, and test the reality of the social world and to work towards change, seek justice, create caring. It is through the processes of inquiry and action that students will develop skills as citizens and in turn contribute to the creation of a truly democratic society.

Notes

1 From the late 1960s, when NAEP was first administered, through the early 1980s, results were presented on a question-by-question basis; reports indicated the percentages of students who were able to correctly answer each question. Results were presented for the nation, for regions of the country, and for major demographic subgroups. Progress was assessed by tracking changes over time in the percentages of students who correctly an-
swered each question. In the early 1980s, NAEP was redesigned and began reporting results based on performance on the entire assessment, rather than on a question-by-question basis. In the late 1980s, congressional legislation established state-level data collection and mandated standards-based reporting. Most NAEP assessments in the 1990s reported summary scores and percentages of students performing at "advanced," "proficient," and "basic" levels of performance (Pellegrino, Jones, & Mitchell, 1999).

Fifty-six percent of students scoring in the "proficient" range said that their teachers relied on the textbook everyday and an additional 27% said they used the text one or two times a week. Less than 5% of students reported participation in activities like mock trials and classroom debates on a frequent basis.

Vinson examines: NCSS's curriculum standards, Expectations of Excellence, as well as both of the Center for Civic Education's major statements: CIVITAS and National Standards for Civics and Government.

The same study showed that in New York state average income for the poorest fifth of families dipped by 15% to $10,770 and rose by 15% for the richest fifth to $152,350 over the same period.

References
Reconsidering Arthur Bestor
And The Cold War In Social Education

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Abstract
Arthur Bestor was the most widely read educational reformer in America during the early stages of the Cold War in the 1950's. The Cold War precipitated a civil war among social educators that continues to the present day, pitting conservatives against liberals and liberals against each other, arguing over whether and to what extent there exists a threat of political and cultural subversion in the United States. Bestor, a liberal historian with a strongly progressive background, was a leading campaigner against progressive educational ideas, claiming that progressives were undermining America's liberal tradition. This article explores the development of Bestor's ideas and his differences with progressives during the 1950's. The article contends that their differences were really matters of emphasis not principles, differences that were exacerbated by the Cold War. The article concludes that ongoing post-Cold War battles among liberal social educators should be resolved in favor of their common social and educational interests.

The Cold War in Social Education

The Cold War is over but the culture wars it spawned have not abated. Battle lines drawn in the 1940's, which first pit conservatives against liberals and then liberals against each other, arguing over the nature and extent of the threat of totalitarianism to America, continue to split social educators today. The threat has receded but the fighting goes on. This is an essay in the origins of those battles in education. Arthur Bestor played a crucial part in them and his legacy continues to divide social educators along Cold War lines. Bestor's story may illustrate some lines of reconciliation among liberals and help toward writing a postmortem for the Cold War in social education.

Totalitarianism was a main concern of political and educational thinkers during the 1940's and 1950's with liberals and conservatives vying to focus public concern on different models of the totalitarian threat. Liberals, pointing to fascism as the main threat, portrayed totalitarianism as an outgrowth of conservatism (Neumann, 1944). Conservatives, pointing to Communism as the main threat, portrayed to-
talitarianism as an outgrowth of liberalism (Hayek, 1944). With fascist countries as the enemy during World War II, the liberal model prevailed for a time during the 1940’s.

At the end of the war, liberalism so dominated political and cultural life in America that the literary critic Lionel Trilling (1950/1953) expressed a common view when he claimed that “In the United States at this time liberalism is not only the dominant but even the sole intellectual tradition” (p. vii). Starting with the Progressive Era of the early 1900’s, liberal ideas had, with the partial exception of the 1920’s, become increasingly influential. By the 1940’s, the discussion of most social issues revolved around liberal proposals. Even Senator Robert Taft, leader of the conservative wing of the Republican Party, was calling himself a liberal (Vierick, 1949/1962, p. 20).

Progressivism had seemingly become Americans’ all-purpose philosophy of public life. In politics, progressive proposals for greater public control of the economy, increased social welfare programs and more participatory democracy topped the agenda (Wallace, 1943). Among historians, progressivism with its focus on social progress through social conflict was the predominant theory of American history (Schlesinger, Sr., 1949/1964). In education, progressivism with its emphasis on interdisciplinary curricula, child-centered methods and social democratic organization was the predominant theory of schooling (Cremin, 1961, p. 328).

Although liberals differed on many issues – over the limits of centralization and decentralization in society, the relative importance of conflict and consensus in history, and the relative merits of interdisciplinary and disciplinary curricula in education, among others - most of these differences were considered reconcilable, and liberals emerged from the war hoping to put their ideological preeminence into social and educational practice (Schlesinger, Sr., 1950). This was not to be. With fascism defeated and a Cold War against the Communist Soviet Union beginning, the ideological and political tide quickly turned. Communism became the main totalitarian threat, and liberals were soon forced onto the defensive (Cooke, 1950, p. 9).

From the late 1940’s through the early 1990’s, Communism was the touchstone against which most political, social and educational positions were measured. Conservatives attacked liberals for being soft on Communism, a soft-headedness that ostensibly permeated liberal ideas about everything from crime to welfare to education and undermined the moral, intellectual and political strength of America (Buckley & Bozell, 1954). Liberals responded with an anti-Communism that blamed conservatives for creating the economic hardships in which Communism thrived. At the same time a new breed of self-styled liberal realists attacked old-style progressives as weak and sought to outflank conservatives with their own hard-nosed theories.
of society and education (Schlesinger, Jr., 1949/1962, p. 36; also McAuliffe, 1978, p. 48). Issues over which liberals had previously differed among themselves now became dividing lines between them.

With conservatives red-baiting liberals and liberals attacking each other, conservatism seemed to increasing numbers of people to be the safer choice in a perilous world (Fowler, 1978; McAuliffe, 1978; Pells, 1985). By the end of the 1950's, "progressivism" had become synonymous with political weakness and educational incompetence. By the end of the 1980's, "liberal" had become a dirty word. Overall, with the partial exception of the 1960's, conservative ideologies gained increasing ascendancy during the Cold War from the 1940's to the 1990's.

Then in the early 1990's, Communism suddenly disappeared as a viable threat and with it should have gone the culture wars that the Cold War had spawned. Should have, but haven't. In education the old charges of soft-headedness and hard-heartedness still reverberate between conservatives and liberals. More important, liberal educators are still split into warring camps, with both sides seemingly willing to let conservatives win the culture wars rather than make common cause against conservatism. The issues today are pretty much the same as those over which educators have been differing for a hundred years - national standards versus localized curricula, mainstream culture versus cultural diversity, standardized tests versus authentic assessment, subject matter knowledge versus critical thinking skills, disciplinary history versus interdisciplinary social studies. The theme of this article is that differences among liberals on these issues are real, but their mutual difference with conservatives is more significant. That is the moral of the story of Arthur Bestor.

Reconsidering Arthur Bestor

Arthur Bestor was a liberal historian who promoted liberal education as the best means of promoting a more liberal society. Perhaps the most widely read educator of the 1950's, he was a vehement critic of progressive educators during that decade (Cremin, 1961, p. 344; Karier, 1985, p. 233; Kliebard, 1986, p. 260; Lybarger, 1991, p. 8). He also launched what has been called the "most influential critique of the social studies" in its history (Hertzberg, 1981, p. 189). An advocate of an essentialist curriculum based on the traditional liberal arts and science disciplines, Bestor (1953a) attacked progressives for allegedly fostering low brow curricula and lax educational standards. He condemned the progressives' interdisciplinary social studies curriculum, which he ridiculed as "social stew," and called for teaching more history instead (pp. 46-47). Bestor's speeches, articles and books precipitated a split among liberal educators which, coming during the height
of the anti-Communist crusade in America, took on the coloration of the Cold War.

Bestor, who died in 1994, is usually portrayed as a disillusioned liberal who soured on all things progressive and whose story exemplifies the irreconcilable differences among liberal educators between essentialists and progressives. Based on this portrait Bestor has often been cited with approval by conservatives and condemned by progressives (Kirk, 1990, p. 1; Ravitch, 1983, p. 76; Tanner, 1971, pp. 178-181). In turn, self-styled liberal essentialists, such as E. D. Hirsch (1996), cite Bestor as a precedent for their policy of supporting conservatives against progressives (pp. 7, 16, 126). And self-styled progressives characterize Bestor’s proposals as incorrigibly conservative (Tanner & Tanner, 1980). The thesis of this article is that this picture is wrong. Despite his criticism of progressive educators, Bestor maintained an underlying commitment to progressive political and educational goals and methods. His differences with progressives were not as great as they appeared in the heat of battle during the Cold War of the 1950’s. The conclusion of this article is that Bestor’s ideas, rather than dividing liberals, can provide common ground for liberals of essentialist and progressive persuasions to make peace and common cause in a post-Cold War world.

Although conservatives adopted Bestor during the 1950’s, he differed with them on most major issues. For example, while most of his conservative supporters were appalled at the consequences of extending high school education to the masses during the first half of the twentieth century (Smith, 1949, p. 24), Bestor was committed to free, public education from pre-school through college for everyone (Bestor, Jr., 1953a, p9). And unlike conservatives who opposed curricula or methods that questioned the status quo (Lynd, 1950, p. 203; Rudd, 1957, p. 284), he promoted the child-centered methods and social-centered curricula fostered by progressives (Bestor, Jr., 1955b, pp. 137, 140).

Although Bestor and progressives disagreed vehemently during the 1950’s, their substantive differences were matters of emphasis not principle. Their main difference was in the relative place they gave to social problems and the liberal disciplines in their respective curricula. Progressives promoted a curriculum that started with social problems and used the various disciplines as means to solve them. Bestor wanted to focus on the liberal disciplines and use social problems to illustrate them. This relatively minor difference in curricula was exacerbated by differences in political and historical analyses, differences in the views of Bestor and progressive educators during the 1950’s as to the best way for liberals to respond to the Cold War.

The basic question which divided Bestor and progressive educators was whether liberals should respond to the threat of Commu-
nism and to attacks from conservatives by stressing their own traditionalism and mainstream ideas or by stressing their radicalism and their program for reforming American traditions. Bestor favored the former, most progressives the latter. Bestor was a consensus historian who believed that Americans share a common set of liberal ideals upon which the country was built. He feared that this liberal consensus was crumbling under the attacks of Communists and conservatives. For Bestor the hourglass of social change was half empty and time was running out to save progressive social values. He concluded that only a school curriculum that emphasized the liberal disciplines could resurrect America's liberal tradition (Bestor, Jr., 1952d; 1955a; 1955c; 1959).

Most progressive educators during the late 1940's and early 1950's, including the historian Merle Curti, saw the hourglass of social change as half full. Curti, a close friend and colleague of Bestor—they shared a mutual interest in and sympathy for nineteenth century utopian socialist movements—argued that the main threat to liberalism was the lag of Americans' social ideas behind the social and economic realities of American life. He claimed that the individualistic theories that Americans had inherited from their laissez-faire, agrarian past were tragically inconsistent with the collectivist practices of twentieth-century urban, industrial society. This inconsistency paved the way for authoritarian demagogues—both Communist and McCarthyist—who preyed on the anxieties of people futilely trying to understand their collectivist present in terms from their individualistic past. Curti argued that rather than trying to regenerate the outmoded liberalism of the nineteenth-century, liberals should promote pro-social ideas more consistent with modern industrialism and urbanism (Curti, 1953, p. 31; 1955, p. 25; 1956).

Although Bestor and Curti shared the same social democratic goals, their social and historical analyses of how best to achieve those goals differed. Curti's analysis provided the imperative behind his call for an interdisciplinary curriculum that emphasized social problems. Bestor's analysis provided the imperative for his emphasis on the liberal disciplines. Bestor's differences with progressives such as Curti were about curricula, not goals or methods. Bestor (1953a) complained that many educators, in particular those promoting life adjustment education, were using progressive curricula to promote intellectual extremism and cultural nihilism. In the context of the Cold War during the early 1950's, a time when everything liberal was under attack from the Right, Bestor (1952b) considered these educators to be agents provocateurs and traitors to the social democratic cause. Bestor began his anti-progressive campaign as an effort to purify and protect progressivism.

It did not, however, end that way. Bestor seemed to believe that the defeat of progressive educators would somehow lead auto-
matically to an apotheosis of liberal educational and social values (Bestor, Jr., 1952a, pp. 114-115; 1955b, p. 418). Toward this end, Bestor adopted increasingly conservative positions during the 1950's to satisfy his ever more conservative audience, positions that were ultimately inconsistent with his liberal goals (Bestor, Jr., 1956, p. 72; 1957a, pp. 14, 16; 1957b, p. 5; 1958b, p. 72). While he helped to destroy progressivism as an educational movement, Bestor did not succeed in either resurrecting the liberal disciplines in public schools or resuscitating the liberal tradition in American politics and culture.

The story of Bestor's anti-progressive campaign can be viewed in different ways. In the view of his supporters, Bestor was a hero in the struggle against a vile progressivism (Rudd, 1957). To his critics, he was a traitor who abandoned his more radical ideals and colleagues under fire and sought fame and influence by adapting his views to the conservative post-World War II climate (Trow, 1953a). In still another view, however, Bestor was a pathetic and even tragic figure - a progressive who attacked radicalism in order to save liberalism but came to support conservatism.

Bestor's fear was that schools dominated by progressives would train teachers and students who were not carriers of the liberal tradition and that, as a result, the liberal tradition would be forgotten and lost, leading to a Dark Age in America. Bestor was in his view trying to save the American way of life (Bestor, Jr., 1955c). The stakes were high and they justified to him the doubtful alliances he made with conservatives and the down-and-dirty tactics he used against progressives. For Bestor, the rules of evidence and decorum did not apply in this conflict. Books and articles were propaganda weapons not scholarly tools. Bestor conducted his educational campaign as a no-holds-barred war not an intellectual debate. Although he seemed to know that the differences between him and his progressive opponents were never as great as the differences between him and most of his conservative supporters, Bestor appeared unable to stop himself once he had begun.

**Debating the Social Studies**

The main battleground on which Bestor and his progressive opponents fought was the social studies. Social studies has been a contested field of study from its inception in the early twentieth century (Nelson, 1980). Unlike traditional history, which generally celebrates the status quo through narratives that accentuate only the positives about the present time and place, social studies focuses on current social problems, examining their development over time and in different places. The subject has an inherently liberal and reformist ori-
entation which has always infuriated conservatives (Hertzberg, 1981, p. 1).

Most conservatives want social education to promote social stability through what Barr, Barth and Shermis (1977; 1978) have called "citizenship transmission." Conservatives hope that the transmission of traditional culture, with an emphasis on patriotism, patriarchy and hierarchy, will help counterbalance the social dynamics and disruptions inherent in a capitalistic economy (Brann, 1979; Janowitz, 1983). Social studies, to the contrary, requires students to analyze society, to question the status quo, and to deal with the social problems generated by our capitalistic society. The underlying social studies agenda is to solve those problems through social reforms, reforms that might alter the culture and the dynamics of the capitalist system. For this reason, conservatives have repeatedly called for the abolition of social studies in favor of teaching traditional history.

Paralleling this struggle between liberals and conservatives over the existence of the social studies has been a debate among liberals about the nature of the social studies. Proponents of the social studies have differed since its inception on whether the field should be seen as a coalition of academic disciplines or a discipline of its own. They have, in turn, disagreed over whether educators should focus on disciplinary or interdisciplinary subjects, and especially over whether to focus on teaching history, albeit critical history taught through studying social problems, or on teaching about social problems through interdisciplinary studies. And they have differed over how overtly reformist the subject should be (Robinson, 1980). These were the basic differences between Bestor and progressives during the 1950's. It is a running debate that is exemplified in four of the major statements on the social studies issued during the last hundred years.

The first major statement was issued by the Committee of Seven of the American Historical Association (AHA) in 1901 and then supplemented by the AHA Committee of Five in 1911. It called for replacing the traditional history curriculum of patriotic stories and patriarchal fables with scientific history. At the dawn of the Progressive Era, a time when American democracy was being seriously questioned, the Committee hoped to foster a more enlightened citizenry. Toward that end, the Committee proposed a high school curriculum that included one year each of ancient, medieval, modern European and American history, and replaced citizenship transmission with the critical study of social issues through history (Hertzberg, 1981, pp. 11, 16; Saxe, 1991, pp. 52, 54-62; Sizer, 1964, pp. 209, 264-26).

The second statement was issued in 1916 by the Committee on Social Studies of the National Education Association (NEA). Reflecting the progressivism of its members, the Committee called for a more interdisciplinary approach to social studies that would "relate to the
present life interests of the pupil” and foster the social reforms of the Progressive Era (Hertzberg, 1981, p. 27; also, Hertzberg, 1988, p. 21). The Committee’s proposed high school curriculum included Civics in the 9th grade, European history in the 10th grade, American history in the 11th grade and Problems of American Democracy (POD) in the 12th grade. While history still made up the bulk of the scope and sequence, the POD course was considered the key to the curriculum. It was seen as the culmination of students’ social education, and the Committee expected the whole curriculum to be infused with the study of present-day personal and social problems (Jenness, 1990, pp. 76-79; Singleton, 1980).

The third statement was issued during the 1930’s by the AHA Commission on the Social Studies. This report, which included a summary Charter for the Social Sciences in the Schools and fifteen volumes of findings, reflected the social reconstructionist views of its main authors. These included Charles Beard, George Counts, Merle Curti and William Bagley. Writing in response to the Great Depression, the Commission called for a multidisciplinary social education that would prepare students for a more socialistic and less individualistic society. The report did not recommend a specific scope and sequences of courses, arguing that each school district should develop its own scope and sequence based on the social problems of greatest interest to its students (Beard, 1932, pp. 24, 53, 78-80).

The fourth major statement, Charting a Course (Link, 1990), was issued in 1990 by the National Commission on the Social Studies. Written in the midst of a neo-conservative revival in politics and education, the report cited a “lack of synthesis” and lack of “coherence” as the major problems in the field, and concluded that the disciplines of history and geography should provide the “matrix or framework for the social studies.” Toward this end, the report called for a high school curriculum that included three years of history and geography and a senior year of civics and other social science electives (pp. vi, 3, 14-19). Although Charting a Course was lauded by some for returning toward the parameters of the 1901 AHA report, it was criticized by others for departing from the more reformist principles of the 1916 NEA and the 1930’s AHA reports (Engle, 1990, p. 433; Garcia, 1990, p. 445; Nelson, 1990, p. 436).

Each of these four reports was met with criticism and controversy within the field of social studies, as supporters of disciplinary, interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary studies, proponents of historical, sociological and anthropological approaches to society, and advocates of more and less liberal social views, battled for priority. At the same time, while differences among the reports and their adherents were significant, these differences were considerably less significant than their common difference with the traditional, citizenship trans-
mission form of social education being promoted by conservatives. Bestor (1953a) promoted the program of the AHA Committees of the early 1900’s (pp. 105-106). His opponents were followers of the AHA Commission of the 1930’s. Despite the bitterness of their debate, both sides were operating within a social studies framework and a progressive frame of reference.

Bestor’s Progressive Background

Chautauqua Progressivism

Arthur Bestor was born in 1908 at Chautauqua, an adult education community in western New York. His father, Arthur Bestor, Sr., was at that time director of Chautauqua’s summer educational programs, having succeeded John Dewey in that position. Bestor, Sr. also taught history at the University of Chicago where he was a colleague of Dewey, George H. Mead and other founders of the “Chicago School” of pragmatism and progressivism in the social sciences (Adler, 1988, p. 27; Cremin, 1980, p. 24).

Bestor, Sr. (1917a) was a lifelong progressive in politics and education. An advocate of direct democracy and a collectivist economy, he promoted schools which would serve the interests of students of all ages and social classes, and would function as community social centers for adults as well as children (Bestor, Sr., 1917a, pp. 8-9; 1917b; 1934a; 1934b). In 1915, Bestor, Sr. became president of Chautauqua, a position that he held until his death in 1944. Under his leadership, Chautauqua went from a moribund institution to a thriving model of experimental adult education (Morrison, 1974, pp. 87-88; Wentworth, 1992, pp. 165-234).

Bestor followed professionally in his father’s footsteps. Like his father, he studied history, receiving a bachelor’s degree in 1930 and a Ph.D. in American history in 1938 from Yale. And like his father, who earned a law degree in 1919, Bestor earned a law degree later in life, receiving an LL.D. from Lincoln University in 1959. Finally, like his father, Bestor taught history. An instructor at Yale from 1930 to 1936, he was a professor at Teachers College, Columbia University from 1936 to 1942, Stanford University from 1942 to 1946, the University of Illinois from 1947 to 1962, and the University of Washington from 1962 to 1986 (Marquis, 1988).

After his father became president of Chautauqua, Bestor and his family alternated during each year between residences in Chautauqua and New York City. Bestor was raised in a household permeated with progressivism and he attended progressive elementary and secondary schools, including the Lincoln School at Teachers College, Columbia University. Bestor lauded the education he received at Lincoln School, which he described as “one of the most progressive schools in
the country,” as combining the best of Dewey’s progressive methodology with, as he later remembered it, a traditional liberal arts curriculum. He extolled the faculty as a community of “brilliant men and women” collectively devoted to bringing “the teaching of the basic disciplines to the highest perfection possible in the light of modern pedagogy” (Bestor, Jr., 1953a, p. 45; 1955b, p. 140). Lincoln School was for Bestor proof “that it is possible to use progressive methods of education and to inculcate progressive social ideals” (Quoted in Wentworth, 1992, p. 267).

Bestor also loved Chautauqua. He edited the Chautauqua newspaper during the early 1930’s and lectured there on American history (Bestor, Jr., 1932; Morrison, 1974, p. 114). In 1934, he published a history of Chautauqua, lauding its progressive ideals and methods (Bestor, Jr., 1934). Chautauqua was for Bestor an almost utopian ideal, an intellectual community of scholars and ordinary people cooperating in a life of the mind. In sum, from his birth through the middle 1930’s, at Lincoln School and Chautauqua, Bestor lived and thrived in the ambit of progressive education.

Progressive Consensus

In the mid-1930’s, Bestor came under the intellectual influence of Ralph Gabriel, his doctoral thesis advisor at Yale University. Gabriel was a founder of the consensus school of historiography (Higham, 1983, p. 210). Writing during the hey-day of the New Deal, when it seemed to some that progressive social and political theories could be taken for granted, Gabriel claimed that American history was infused with liberalism. According to him, the United States had been founded with a liberal consensus and had been moving ever since toward social democracy. In turn, Gabriel seemed to be concerned that progressive historians had overstated the class conflicts and conservative forces in American society. He seemed to worry that by focusing on conflicts, crises and conservatives, progressive historians might undermine Americans’ liberal consensus and open the door to conservative social theories (Gabriel, 1940, pp. 13, 15, 19, 22, 338, 414-416).

Gabriel’s consensus view of history seemed to many at that time a natural complement to the progressives’ emphasis on conflict. Even progressive historians such as Merle Curti, who became the dean of post-World War II progressive historians (Higham, 1983, pp. 210-211), were influenced by the new theory of consensus. In his seminal book The Growth of American Thought (1943), Curti, with support from Bestor (p. xix), seemed to be trying to reconcile the two theories, portraying history as a process of conflict within consensus and consensus arising from conflict (Counts, 1943). But the consensus view essentially replaced progressivism as the prevailing theory of history following World War II, especially among self-styled liberal realists (Hofstadter,
Bestor adopted a consensus view and, although a political idealist himself, helped pave the realists' way (Bestor, Jr., 1932; 1948b, p. 298; 1961a, p. 136; 1962a, p. 103; 1962b, p. 5; 1964, p. 331; 1971, p. 118).

**Progressive Essentialism**

While working on his doctoral dissertation with Gabriel at Yale, Bestor took a teaching position at Teachers College, Columbia University. Teachers College was at that time the Mecca of progressive social reconstructionists, educators who wanted to use schools to reform society (Karier, 1985, p. 236). With Dewey overseeing matters from across the street in the Department of Philosophy, Bestor's senior colleagues at Teachers College included the leading progressive lights William Kilpatrick, Harold Rugg and George Counts.

Bestor relished his years at Teachers College, later recalling the school as a truly liberal environment with scholars from all fields working together, "a joint enterprise" in education. Bestor was proud of his progressive connections at Teacher College and felt that he had earned credentials there as a progressive. Recollecting later with bitterness on charges during the 1950's that he was an educational and political conservative, Bestor complained that "my five years of service on the faculty of Teachers College, Columbia, seemed never to count as a refutation of this singularly flimsy calumny" (Quoted in Wentworth, 1992, pp. 307, 331). Bestor taught history to prospective teachers and his courses reflected progressive methods of teaching social studies, as he related historical issues to current social problems of relevance to his students (Bestor, 1937; 1938b; 1938c; Wentworth, 1992, p. 342).

Merle Curti was a colleague of Bestor at Teachers College. While Curti was a follower of Kilpatrick, Counts and Rugg, Bestor apparently identified instead with a dissident group of educators who advocated what they called essentialism in education (Kandel, 1961, p. 106). The group was led by William Bagley, a highly regarded curricularist and early proponent of social studies, who had trained many leading progressives. Bagley complained that progressives such as Kilpatrick, whose *Foundations of Method* was the most widely used book in schools of education between the two world wars, had gone too far in promoting interdisciplinary and child-centered curricula. He claimed that they verged on cultural nihilism. Bagley believed in focusing on the liberal disciplines, which he considered the essentials of a humanistic and democratic education (Cremin, Shannon & Townsend, 1954, p. 250; Kandel, 1961; Kliebard, 1986, p. 229; Saxe, 1991, p. 109; Tenenbaum, 1951, p. 224).

Politically, Bagley was a liberal and supported most of the progressives' social and educational goals and methods. He advocated a cooperative economy and a comprehensive social welfare system.
He participated in the American Historical Association Commission on the Social Studies in the early 1930's and supported the Commission's recommendation that progressive social ideas be the core of the social studies curriculum. Bagley, however, differed with the Commission's conclusion that these ideas should be propagated through locally determined, interdisciplinary curricula, proposing instead that there be a nationally standardized curriculum based primarily on the academic disciplines. Bagley's social studies proposals were thus quite similar to those of the AHA Committee of Seven of the early 1900's (Bagley, 1934, pp. 120-122; also, Bagley & Alexander, 1937, p. 73; Kandel, 1938, p. 70).

Making an educational argument similar to the historical theory being developed by Gabriel, Bagley (1934) claimed that educators needed to reinforce the democratic heritage that had fostered progressive social change since the founding of America. They could best do this by transmitting a common core of liberal culture to students (p. 145; also, Kandel, 1938, p. 96; Kandel, 1943, p. 83). Bagley feared that America's liberal heritage could be easily lost if it was not consciously and consistently transmitted from generation to generation (p. 33; also, Kandel, 1938, p. 165). He (1937) complained that Kilpatrick and other progressives were hurting their students and their own liberal causes by denying students the sort of academic education that would make them culturally literate and politically responsible (p. 64).

Many progressives shared Bagley's concerns. John Dewey (1938), for example, tried to reconcile progressivism with essentialism, arguing that emergent curricula must incorporate established knowledge. Condemning extremists in both camps, he complained that, at one extreme, some essentialists fell into a sterile conservatism in which the teacher was supposed to merely transmit traditional culture without any critical or reflective thought. At the other extreme, however, some progressives fell into a child-centered romanticism in which the teacher was supposed to merely follow the child's interests without any adult guidance. Neither was acceptable to Dewey. Bestor (1953a), citing Dewey's arguments against progressives, reflected Bagley's concerns and propagated essentialist views in his writings (pp. 50-51). Essentialism was, in turn, adopted during the 1950's as the educational program of most new-style liberal realists (Hofstadter, 1962, pp. 323-390).

But by that time the idea had taken on a different hue. Challenges to progressive orthodoxy made by people such as Bagley and Gabriel were seen during the 1930's and 1940's mainly as intra-family disputes among liberals who still saw themselves as allies, as comrades in arms against conservatism. But with the coming of the Cold War, differences over essentialism and progressivism among liberal educators, and over consensus and progressive views among liberal
historians, were magnified. Confounding the situation, conservatives adopted essentialism in education (Bell, 1949; Smith, 1949, p. 90) and consensus views of history (Boorstin, 1953; Nash, 1979, p. 76; Sternsher, 1975, pp. 5-10) and wooed like-minded liberals in the name of anti-Communism (Vierick, 1949, p. 24). As a result, family feuds among liberals became civil wars and the enmity among liberal educators persists to the present.

**Bestor as a Historian: Utopianism as the American Way of Life**

Bestor’s historical work reflected his father’s communalism, Bagley’s essentialism and Gabriel’s consensus historiography. A meticulous researcher, Bestor wrote most of his history during two periods of his life. From the late 1930’s through the early 1950’s Bestor published a series of sympathetic studies of nineteenth-century utopian socialism, which he described as a mainstream movement that could have and should have succeeded (Bestor, Jr., 1938a; 1950; 1957d/1970; 1958a). His most important work, *Backwoods Utopias* (1950), was highly regarded (Clark, 1950, p. 282; Hodges, 1950, p. 1006; Leopold, 1950, p. 34; Roth, 1953, p. 1932; Sirjamaki, 1950, p. 580; Spitz, 1950, p. 20; Tyler, 1950, p. 923). After he received his law degree in 1959 Bestor published a series of unsympathetic studies of conservative legal theories which he portrayed as subversions and perversions of mainstream liberal ideas (Bestor, Jr., 1961b; 1964; 1973; 1974).

**Utopian Socialism**

Bestor was attracted to utopian socialist communes as peaceful experiments in immediate social change. Utopian communes provided workable models of the good life for the rest of society to emulate, unlike revolution which was immediate but invariably based on violence, and unlike incremental reform which was often peaceful but took forever to complete. Utopian communities were, like Chautauqua, case studies of making progressive change through education.

Bestor (1950) claimed that utopian socialism was a mainstream idea during the early nineteenth century, an idea that reflected the underlying consensus and the social and economic circumstances of the time (pp. 4, 54; also 1953b/1970, p. 250; 1957d/1970, p. 269). He described utopianism as a particularly American form of social reform whose core concepts could and should still be followed by present-day policy-makers (Bestor, Jr., 1950, pp. 4, 10-16). His studies of utopianism led Bestor to focus on propaganda, education and leadership as the keys to successful social reform. These themes anticipated his foray into educational reform during the 1950’s.

Bestor was fascinated with the propaganda skills of the utopians Robert Owen and Arthur Brisbane, whose techniques Bestor tried.
to emulate during the 1950's. Bestor distinguished education and scholarship, the high roads to truth, from propaganda and politics, the low roads to power. Both were necessary for any social movement. Owen and Brisbane skillfully combined scholarship with publicity, and Bestor portrayed their propaganda campaigns as the key to the establishment of their communes (Bestor, Jr., 1938a, p. 33; 1947, pp. 146-147; 1950, pp. 96-105; see 1941, pp. 2-4 for a discussion of Brook Farm and propaganda techniques).

Bestor (1938a) also lauded the utopians' educational proposals and practices. He described the educational proposals of Fourier and Owen in essentialist terms similar to those of William Bagley, combining child-centered methods with a liberal arts and sciences curriculum. Bestor claimed that if the utopian communes had survived long enough for education to take effect, the utopians' schools would have successfully inculcated their ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity in the coming generations (pp. 225, 230; also 1948a, p. 399; 1950, pp. 134-135, 141-142, 192).

Utopian communities failed according to Bestor because their leaders were brilliant innovators but poor administrators, not because their ideas were unrealistic or unpopular. While the hierarchies and bureaucracies of traditional society can operate without inspired leadership, the utopians' participatory democracies required strong leaders to maintain order. Without them the communities degenerated into chaos, with everyone trying to do everything and nothing getting done (Bestor, Jr., 1938a, pp. 80, 103, 160, 197, 210, 212; 1940; 1950, pp. 116, 211-215).

**The University as Utopia**

Although nineteenth century agrarian communalism was long gone by the 1950's, Bestor resurrected the utopian ideal as a model for his educational campaign. Bestor (1945) claimed that utopianism had been reborn in the twentieth century in educational institutions such as Chautauqua and the modern university (pp. 18-30). The modern university was a novel combination of teaching and research coupled with the idea of self-governance by professors and students. It exemplified in Bestor's view (1953d) "the ideal of a company of scholars engaged both in the advancement of knowledge and in the instruction of students" (pp. 169-170). It was a communal ideal similar to Dewey's model of a school (Dewey & Dewey, 1915).

Bestor acclaimed the university as one of the major civilizing forces of the newly industrialized and urbanized society. Undergraduate education had been improved by replacing the classical curriculum with the modern liberal arts and sciences disciplines. Doctoral programs had raised research standards. Public policy had benefited from cooperation between professors and government agencies. Cul-
tural standards had been raised through outreach programs of adult education similar to Chautauqua. In sum, the university was for Bestor the safeguard and the avant-garde of progressive social values (Bestor, Jr., 1953d, p. 171).

At the same time, Bestor (1953d) complained, the university had failed "to impress its new standards of scholarship and competence" on elementary and secondary school teachers and on the professors of education who taught these teachers (p.179). This single failure now threatened the whole enterprise because universities were being inundated by high school graduates who were not prepared for college-level work and who did not respect the importance of the liberal tradition taught through the liberal arts and sciences. The university as utopia, as a model of social democracy for America, was being undermined by the failure of public schools to properly educate students in the liberal disciplines. This failure was, according to Bestor, primarily the fault of progressive professors of education, traitors and subversives within the university community, who rejected the liberal disciplines in favor of interdisciplinary mush. Bestor concluded that in order to save the idea of the university as an ideal community, the public elementary and secondary schools and the schools of education within the university must be reformed.

Bestor saw this as a crisis that had to be met with strong leadership if the utopian promise of the university in the twentieth century was not to go the way of the nineteenth-century communes and with it the liberal ideals that had sustained American democracy since its inception. In the dedication to his book Backwoods Utopias, Bestor (1950) had memorialized his father's work in saving and rebuilding Chautauqua with the words "To the memory of MY FATHER, who studied history ere he made it" (p. v). In the early 1950's as Bestor began his educational campaign, he seemed intent on emulating his father - having first studied history, he was now going to make it.

The Anti-Utopia: Life Adjustment Education

After some ten years as a professor of education at Teachers College and Stanford University, Bestor came to the University of Illinois at Champaign/Urbana in 1947. Although the University had a highly regarded Education Department—its education program, one of the first and foremost at a state university, had been developed during the 1910's under the leadership of William Bagley (Herbst, 1989, p. 53)—Bestor came to teach in the History Department.

The University of Illinois was at that time the mid-western center of progressivism, home to the Progressive Education Association Journal and haven for a new form of progressivism: life adjustment education (Kliebard, 1986, p. 255). Progressive education took many
different forms during the first half of the twentieth century (Cremin, 1961). During the 1930’s, social reconstructionism was the form of progressivism most followed at Teachers College where Bestor taught. The main theme of social reconstructionism was reflected in the question asked by George Counts (1932/1978) “Dare the school build a new social order?” That is, should schools facilitate social democratic reform, promoting cooperation instead of competition and pro-social values instead of individualism? Counts and other social reconstructionists said “yes,” the schools could and should become part of a broad movement for the reconstruction of society. So did Bestor (1953a, p. 37).

Life adjustment education was a more popular and populist variation on the social reconstructionist theme. It arose during the 1940’s as an emphasis on practical education in the problems of every day life. Life adjustment was designed to supplement the traditional liberal arts and sciences with courses that started with everyday problems and then proceeded to more complex intellectual issues, serving as an introduction and inducement to academic work (Elicker, 1951, pp. 8-9, 19; Prosser, 1939; Prosser, 1951; Zeran, 1953, p. 48). Life adjustment was popular among professors in the Education Department at the University of Illinois, most of them self-styled progressives who promoted life adjustment in Illinois schools through their connections with the Illinois State Department of Education (Karier, 1985, p. 251).

Harold Hand was the leading proponent of life adjustment education at the University (Ohles, 1978, 399; Tanner & Tanner, 1980, p. 731). A social reconstructionist in orientation, he hoped that life adjustment would help foster social democratic reform through the schools (Hand, 1947a, p. 195; 1947b, p. 55; 1951, p. 240; 1953, pp. 261-263; also Henderson & Goerwitz, 1950). Toward this end, Hand (1948) proposed that the high school curriculum include a core of “common learnings,” common in being the same for all students and in arising from the needs, interests and thoughts of common people. Such common learnings would constitute a popular culture in contra-distinction to a mass culture and would provide students with the civic education necessary to face the future. Hand (1947a) suggested that these courses constitute no more than one-third of the curriculum with the remaining two-thirds devoted to the liberal disciplines (p. 197).

Hand proposed that social studies be included in both the common learnings and the disciplinary portions of the curriculum. Students should take both common learnings courses on such interdisciplinary themes as community and citizenship and regular academic courses in history and the social sciences. Both types of courses should be infused with social problems of interest to students. Social studies teachers, he claimed, “should illuminate the social realities. They
should develop understanding and practice of democratic values” (Quoted in Wentworth, 1992, p. 327).

Bestor abhorred the idea of life adjustment. It was antithetical to the high-minded idealism with which he approached education. Nonetheless, he did not object to life adjustment courses as such. He merely did not want them to usurp the place of the liberal disciplines in the curriculum. Hand said they would not. Bestor feared that they would, and he found anecdotal evidence close to home to support his claim. A junior high school principal in Urbana, Illinois had reportedly stated that since most people did not need to read or write in their daily lives, most children should not have to learn these things in school. Bestor and his allies repeatedly cited this and other similar stories as examples of progressivism during the 1950’s (Bestor, Jr., 1953a, p. 83; also Karier, 1985, p. 314; Lynd, 1950, p. 46; Smith, 1949, p. 24). Bestor feared that life adjustment was an anti-intellectual cancer that would eventually kill off liberal education and liberal ideals (Bestor, Jr., 1952a, p. 114; 1953a, pp. 81-100).

Bestor’s Anti-Progressive Crusade

Anti-progressivism began at the University of Illinois and other universities seemingly as a status revolt of liberal arts and sciences professors against professors of education (Church and Sedlak, 1976, p. 401). As the first members of the Baby Boom generation went off to kindergarten during the late 1940’s and early 1950’s, the demand for elementary and secondary school teachers rose. In response, universities increased the number and percentage of their students taking education courses and correspondingly increased their education faculties. As a result a relatively smaller percentage of university students and faculty were left for the liberal arts and sciences disciplines. Professors in the academic disciplines became concerned about these trends and mounted attacks against their universities’ education departments. Since most education professors were progressives, progressivism, in turn, became a main target of their attacks (Cairns, 1953; Fuller, 1951, pp. 37-38, 41; Fuller, 1956, p. 119 et seq; Kliebard, 1986, p. 260).

Bestor (1952a, 1952b, 1952c) joined this struggle at the University of Illinois with the zeal of a convert and soon became the leading spokesperson of the anti-progressive campaign (Brickman, 1953, p. 393). The battle against progressive educators seemed to engage Bestor emotionally and actively in ways that the discipline of history had not previously done. The quality of Bestor’s educational writing during the 1950’s was zestful and graceful, very different from the ponderous prose of his historical works. His initial articles during 1952 produced such enormous response that Bestor quickly extended their
arguments in a book, *Educational Wastelands*, published in 1953. With the publication of that book Bestor seemed to come into his own. Stepping out from his father’s shadow some nine years after his father’s death, Bestor for the first time on any publication dropped the “Jr.” from his name on the book’s title-page and thereafter signed his publications “Arthur Bestor.”

**First Phase: Bucking the Establishment**

Bestor’s campaign against progressivism went through three phases as he increasingly widened his audience and broadened his attacks on progressives. What began as an attack on the proponents of life adjustment eventually became an assault on all progressive educators. What began as a local affair at the University of Illinois became a national *cause celebre.* And, what began as an attack on conservatives ended as an assault on the Left.

In the first phase, from 1951 through early 1953, Bestor portrayed himself as bucking the establishment, as a rebel who was trying to reform the system from within. Bestor (1952a) presented and opposed life adjustment as a conservative movement. At the same time, Bestor took rhetorical advantage of the Cold War red-scare by comparing life adjustment to Communism and proclaiming that “Across the educational world today stretches an iron curtain that professional educators have fashioned” (pp. 114-115). During this phase, Bestor’s arguments were addressed primarily toward fellow academicians through scholarly journals such as *The American Scholar*, the AAUP Bulletin and *Scientific Monthly*. His stated purpose was to organize scholars from the liberal disciplines to take over the training of teachers and to re-take the universities from education professors (Bestor, Jr., 1952b; 1953c).

Bestor (1952c) repeatedly attacked Harold Hand, who became for Bestor a symbol of all that was wrong with education. Bestor claimed that Hand and other life adjustment advocates “believe that most men have no need for intellectual training” (p. 418-419) and therefore promote “the elimination of all the scholarly disciplines” from the high schools (p. 437). Bestor was vehement, accusing Hand and others of falsifying evidence and deceiving the public, to the point that even some of Bestor’s supporters publicly pleaded with him to frame his arguments in more civil terms (Alilunas, 1958; Haskew, 1954, p. 28; Hodgkins, 1953; McCoy, 1954, p. 29; Melby, 1956).

**Second Phase: Joining the Establishment**

In the second phase of his anti-progressive campaign, 1953 through 1956, Bestor presented himself as a spokesperson for the educational mainstream fighting extremists on both the Right and the Left. During this period he addressed a wider audience of educators and
citizens through articles in educational journals (Bestor, Jr., 1954a; 1954b) and through popular books such as *Educational Wastelands* (1953a). In the early 1950’s his primary concern had been with the effects of progressivism on the universities and he appealed mainly to fellow academicians. During the mid-1950’s he focused on the decline of secondary education and appealed to a wider audience of Baby Boomer parents whose children would soon be in high school.

Bestor’s attacks on progressivism and particularly on William Kilpatrick, his mentor Bagley’s old nemesis, grew broader. His appeals were more political, aiming at an audience that might be able through legislative or administrative action to throw progressives out of the schools. These appeals increasingly attracted conservatives, many of whom openly opposed mass secondary and higher education. Appearing sometimes to be embarrassed by these supporters, Bestor tried to distinguish his position from theirs, claiming that “I am a firm believer in the principle of universal, public, democratic education” (Bestor, Jr., 1953a, p. 9).

*Educational Wastelands* (1953a) has been called the most influential book on education in the 1950’s (Cremin, 1961, p. 344; also Chalmers, 1955, p. 18), and its title was widely used by the mass media as a shorthand description of the state of American schools (Smith, 1955, p. 1678). It is a passionate argument in favor of a liberal, humanistic education and a vehement attack on the alleged control by progressives of secondary schools and schools of education. Published a year after Dewey’s death, the book emphasized Bestor’s (1953a) commitment to Dewey’s ideas even as Bestor attacked Dewey’s progressive followers (pp. 50-51). Condemning them for abandoning Dewey’s high intellectual standards, Bestor concluded that both high school students and their teachers were caught in a web of “regressive education” (p. 44).

The heart of *Educational Wastelands* (1953a) is an elegant defense of the “fundamental disciplines” of history, English, math, science and foreign languages as the core of both teacher education and the high school curriculum (p. 13). The defense rests on three arguments. First, Bestor argued, the liberal disciplines were “the most effective methods which men have been able to devise, through millennia of sustained effort, for liberating and then organizing the powers of the mind” (p. 18). The traditional disciplines, Bestor claimed, constituted mankind’s consensus of what was important knowledge. Through studying the disciplines, students participated in the community of scholarship, elevating themselves above the trivial pursuits of everyday life and realizing their potential as human beings.

Second, Bestor argued, the liberal disciplines are the best training for everyday life. “Throughout history the intellectual disciplines have been considered fundamental in education for practical life and
for citizenship, as well as in training for the professions" (p. 13). Bestor asserted that the academic disciplines are the best education for life adjustment and vocations as well as college preparation.

Third, Bestor argued, the liberal disciplines are the best form of civic education. Throughout history, he claimed, a liberal education had been one of the principal bulwarks of aristocracy, providing the intellectual strength that had made the old ruling classes great and powerful. The liberal disciplines provided the broad outlook and understanding of society necessary for an effective ruling class. In a democracy, where the whole people were the ruling class, public schools must educate everyone in the liberal disciplines (pp. 25-39).

In social studies, Bestor hearkened back to AHA Committees of Seven and Five of the early twentieth century and their proposed curriculum which emphasized the analytical and critical study of history. He contrasted the make-up of those committees, consisting of an almost equal number of liberal arts and science professors and school teachers, with the make-up of the 1916 NEA Committee on Social Studies, which consisted primarily of public school teachers with a few college professors. Bestor argued that whereas the curriculum proposed by the Committees of Seven and Five represented a healthy balance of academic and pedagogical interests, the curriculum produced by the NEA Committee and promoted by life adjustment educators represented a rejection of the liberal arts and liberal values (pp. 105-107).

Progressives responded to Bestor in two main ways, some with scholarly critiques of Bestor's arguments (Hand, 1954, pp. 27, 35, 44; 1957; 1958; also Burnett, 1954, p. 74; Metcalf, 1957), others with vituperation (Trow, 1953a, p. 122; 1953b, p. 151; 1954, pp. 21, 26; also Eklund, 1954, p. 350; Scott & Hill, 1954, p. 7). Some lobbied to have his articles excluded from educational journals on the grounds that he was anti-education (Brickman, 1953, p. 154). A group of education professors at the University of Illinois tried to stop the University Press from publishing *Educational Wastelands* on grounds that it did not meet acceptable standards of scholarship (Hand, 1954, p. 27; Wentworth, 1992, pp. 294-297). These efforts to stifle Bestor were futile and he gained an even wider audience for his articles and books by portraying himself as a victim of McCarthy-style repression (Bestor, Jr., 1955a, p. 199).

Bestor (1955a) relished the vituperation, responding to it in kind (pp. 192 et seq.), but he never replied to the scholarly critiques of his educational writings and even repeated what were clearly inaccurate statements (pp. 148, 348 footnote). The meticulous historian careful to document every historical assertion had become an educational warrior apparently willing to play fast and loose with the facts. Unwilling to give his critics any credence, Bestor ignored them and thereby denied them a mass audience. Even as progressives were destroying his
arguments in scholarly journals, Bestor was repeating those same arguments in the mass media.

**Third Phase: Leading the Establishment**

In the third phase of his campaign, from 1956 through 1959, Bestor became a national spokesperson for the educational establishment, addressing the general public through interviews and articles in the mass media (Bestor, Jr., 1956; 1957c; 1958b). Although he still considered himself a political liberal, most of Bestor’s allies were not liberals and his critiques were routinely used by others to support anti-liberal goals (Rickover, 1959, pp. 124, 227; Rudd, 1957, pp. 25, 107, 195, 281). In 1956, Bestor joined with Mortimer Smith, an avowed political reactionary (Smith, 1949, pp. 87-92), in establishing the Council on Basic Education to fight progressivism (Church & Sedlak, 1976, p. 405; Cremin, 1961, p. 346). Reflecting the evolution of his own thought and the expectations of his increasingly conservative audience, Bestor’s positions became more conservative. Bestor now opined, for example, that it might be better to return to the practices of the early 1900’s when only a small minority of people went to high school and an elite few to college (Bestor, Jr., 1956, p. 72; 1957a, pp. 14, 16; 1957b, p. 5; 1958b, p. 72; 1959; also Bell, 1949, pp. 5, 72; Rickover, 1959, pp. 23-24, 154).

By this time, Bestor’s repeated attacks on the social studies seemed to be having some effect. In a statement that has been characterized as a response of the social studies establishment to his critique (Jenness, 1990, p. 126), the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) issued in 1962 a report on the state of social studies education (Berelson, 1962). The report called for more control over the social studies by disciplinary scholars and warned education professors to “redo” their programs to accommodate this intrusion (p. 17). Describing the field as “in a state of ferment” (p. v), the report took a backhanded swipe at the life adjustment movement, arguing that the social studies must be built “on a foundation of scholarly and scientific knowledge in the [disciplinary] fields, and not upon utilitarian purposes narrowly conceived” (p. 17). Defining social studies as “the social science disciplines [including history] used as a means to the end of producing responsible citizens,” the report moved away from the interdisciplinary, problem-solving focus of the progressives toward a more disciplinary curriculum (p. 7).

By the late 1950’s, Bestor was celebrating the demise of progressivism but was still complaining about the lack of a national commitment to liberal education (Bestor, Jr., 1956, p. 82; 1958b, p. 72). The defeat of progressivism had not led as he had hoped to the triumph of more liberal ideals. Instead, when in the autumn of 1957 the Soviet Union launched the first space satellite, a new crisis was precipitated.
in American education. Pundits blamed the schools for the loss of the space race to the Communists and decided that a more hard-nosed and scientific curriculum, including a more scientific New Social Studies, not a more liberal and humanistic education, was the remedy (Cremin, 1961, p. 347; Rickover, 1959). In the wake of Sputnik, Bestor’s critiques of progressivism and calls for a more liberal curriculum quickly became anachronisms (Karrier, 1985, p. 249). The Cold War had moved on, leaving Bestor behind still fighting the previous battle (Bestor, Jr., 1972, p. 18; 1985, p. 228).

A Postmortem for the Cold War in Social Education?

But now the Cold War is over. Liberals need no longer fear attacks from either Communists or anti-Communists. The pressure that inflated the differences between progressives and essentialists, driving many of the former into isolation and the latter toward conservatism, is no longer there. There is no longer any reason to fight those old Cold War battles. Liberal educators nonetheless continue to split into rival camps and fight each other with the vehemence of the 1950’s. It is a momentum, a veritable habit that seems hard to break.

The issues are pretty much the same, even if some of the rhetoric has changed. During the 1950’s, progressivism was the watchword. Today it is multiculturalism. Debates about disciplinary and interdisciplinary curricula that divided social educators in the 1950’s are now couched in terms of whether to teach mainstream culture or cultural pluralism.

On one side, multicultural progressives, such as James Banks (1996), worry about the lag of American culture behind the realities of American society (p. 3). Banks argues that the “outsider” view of the world provided by the mainstream liberal arts and sciences must be supplemented with an “insider” view that can only be provided by a student’s own culture (p. 54). In the tradition of the NEA Committee and the AHA Commission on Social Studies, and like the progressives of the 1950’s, Banks recognizes the importance of teaching the liberal disciplines but wants to approach these academic subjects through children’s multicultural backgrounds (1977, p. 24; 1988, p. 36). His goal is for students to learn about their shared culture, the culture of the liberal disciplines, through learning about their own multi-cultures and thereby to promote liberal social goals (1996, p. 30; also 1991).

On the other side, cultural conservationists, such as E. D. Hirsch, seek to save liberal values through traditional education. A self-styled essentialist, Hirsch (1996) is willing to teach children about their own subcultures but only after they are first taught mainstream liberal culture. Citing William Bagley and Arthur Bestor as his mentors (p. 16), Hirsch defines himself as a political liberal who is willing to join with
educational conservatives in order to defeat progressivism and restore the liberal disciplines to their rightful place in the school curriculum (pp. 7, 126). Like Bagley and Bestor, Hirsch favors progressive methods of teaching, citing Dewey with approval in this regard (pp. 58, 112, 128), but excoriates William Kilpatrick and his disciples for ostensibly destroying the liberal curriculum (pp. 52, 76, 95, 118).

Hirsch (1987), like Bestor, argues that a liberal education is the key to furthering social democratic values and is the "only sure avenue of opportunity for disadvantaged children" (p. xiii). Like Bestor, Hirsch claims that education for the democratic masses must be the sort of education for power that only aristocrats used to receive. Echoing Bestor's attacks on progressivism as regressive education, Hirsch argues that "To withhold traditional culture from the school curriculum, and therefore from students, in the name of progressive ideas is in fact an unprogressive action that helps preserve the political and economic status quo" (pp. 23-24). Like the AHA Committees of Seven and Five and similar to the recent National Commission on the Social Studies, Hirsch would focus on history, albeit studied analytically and critically.

The debate between cultural conservationists and multiculturalists has been vehement (Giroux, 1997; Schlesinger, Jr., 1992; Shor, 1986). Despite the rhetorical fury, the theoretical differences between most members of the two camps, as with Bestor and most mainstream progressives during the 1950's, are matters mainly of emphasis rather than principle. Hirsch (1987) himself says that a student's ethnicity should provide his/her primary culture and that the liberal arts and sciences should be merely his/her "second culture" (p. 22). Hirsch (1996) nonetheless repeatedly caricatures the positions of progressives, setting up rhetorical straw men that he can easily knock down (pp. 25, 81, 137, 149, 152). Just as Bestor flailed his opponents with the example of a junior high school principal who argued that not all children needed to learn to read and write, Hirsch cites an elementary school principal who thinks children do not need to know geography (p. 55). But the vehemence of Hirsch's rhetoric is not justified by the proposals of progressives such as Banks.

Moreover, the theoretical differences between educators such as Banks and Hirsch become even smaller in practice. Unlike many conservatives who want children to learn only about mainstream American culture and to accept it uncritically, both Banks and Hirsch want children to learn and to think critically about both mainstream culture and other cultures. A comparison of Banks' fifth grade history textbook, *The World Around Us: United States and Its Neighbors* (1995), and the history sections of Hirsch's guidebook for fifth graders, *What Your 5th Grader Needs to Know* (1993), shows basic similarities in their treatment of most issues. In his discussion of Native Americans, for
example, Banks (1995) has a chapter describing different Native American societies and how Native Americans adaptively responded to political and environmental changes. Banks allows Native Americans to speak for themselves and has a section in which seventeenth century Native Americans and Europeans debate their positions on European settlement. His focus on the environmentalism of Native Americans has a clear connection to current environmental problems of concern to students (pp. 100-123).

Hirsch (1993), whose book was written with the help of seventeen advisors on multiculturalism, including several Native Americans (p. vii), intersperses sections on Native Americans and European settlers. Hirsch describes Native American cultures in terms very similar to those used by Banks (pp. 192-198) and allows Native Americans to speak for themselves (p. 45). His historical sections are analytical and critical and can be used to discuss current social problems of interest to students.

There are differences between the two books in their treatment of Native Americans and other subjects, and overall there are important differences between essentialists such as Hirsch and progressives such as Banks. But these differences do not seem any greater than the differences among NCSS members. They are differences worth debating but not worth fighting over. They are not worth undermining the values which liberal educators share in common and not worth lending support to conservatives whose views of social education are uncritically Euro-centered and geared toward citizenship transmission (Bennett, 1984, 1991; Bloom, 1987).

As we enter the twenty-first century, conservatives are promoting forms of social education that seriously threaten many of the things for which liberal educators have stood for a hundred years. It might finally be time for progressive educators to acknowledge the value and values of Bestor's best ideas, for Bestor's liberal descendants to acknowledge the progressive underpinnings of his work, and for the Cold War in social education to be declared over.

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"Making History Go" at a Local Community Center: Popular Media and the Construction of Historical Knowledge Among African American Youth

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Abstract
As a range of critical pedagogues have argued, the curricula that young people are exposed to today has broadened immeasurably, due to the ever-increasing prevalence of popular media texts and cultures. The implications for social studies educators here is far ranging though little explored. In this paper, I look at how historical knowledge is mediated to young people in popular culture, how young people choose to mobilize such knowledge, and the consequences they face therein. Focusing on the film Panther (1995) (about the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense), and drawing on a series of focus groups with African American adolescents at a local community center, I look closely at what popular texts young people resonate with as well as how they pick them up and deploy them to deal with historical contingencies, here a proposed march in town by the Ku Klux Klan. I stress, throughout, the importance of looking, in concrete and situated ways, at how young people make history relevant in the here and now, how they, to echo Della Pollock, "make history go."

As a range of contemporary theorists and philosophers have made exceedingly clear, there is no such thing as "disinterested knowledge"—all knowledge, to echo Michel Foucault (1972), is power-laden.¹ This realization has been particularly important for educators engaged in processes of curriculum construction. Curricula, as many now argue, are politically interested sets of texts which can reproduce oppressive ideas about race, gender, and class across generations (Apple, 1993; 1998). In turn, common curricula and standardized tests are now seen as crucial means by which the nation-state builds and legitimates itself in often very unfair ways (Whitty, 1985). Critical here is the role of historical knowledge. As Cornbleth and Waugh (1995) (among others) argue, the sorting out and official preservation of historical knowledge in state-level curricula is a value- and conflict-laden process, one which indexes larger national dilemmas and tensions. Taking New
York and California as emblematic, for example, they detail how con-
flicts over the selection of textbooks and curricula are proxies for larger
conflicts over what it means to be an American. Typically, the debates
revolve around whether to keep an "established canon and narrative,"
to "add on" to or "broaden" this established canon to include more
diverse experiences and viewpoints, or to dismiss the notion of a com-
mon canon or narrative altogether "in favor of literary choice and mul-
tiple historical perspectives or reciprocal history" (p. 41). Roughly,
these are analogous to the Eurocentric position, the "additive"
multicultural position, and the "transformative" multicultural posi-
tion (McCarthy & Crichlow, 1993). Each offers different ideas about
what it means to be an American.

Yet, as these authors and others acknowledge, one cannot as-
sume that changes in the curriculum will effect young people in pre-
dictable ways. History in the curricula is realized, formally, in class-
room practices—by way of teachers, students, and administrators and
the work they do interpreting particular curricular texts (Keedy et al,
1998; Levstik & Barton, 1996; Wineburg, 1991). In addition, history is
realized informally, through the family and—most importantly, for
this essay—in popular culture (though these are often co-implicated
[see Sunal, 1991]). In fact, popular culture has become a highly con-
tested interpretive realm over the last decade or so, one where differ-
ent versions and visions of history struggle to be accepted as "com-
mon sense." These struggles are similar to the struggles that have faced
policy makers, as noted above.

Hence, the debates around films like *JFK* (1991), *Nixon* (1995),
*Panther* (1995) (about the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense), and
*Malcolm X* (1992), films that treat both canonical and noncanonical US
history and historical figures. These debates have been multifaceted.
Some have revolved around who gets to tell what story, in what way,
about whom. For example, Spike Lee decided to direct *Malcolm X* af-
fter he learned that a white director had been slated for the project. He
writes:

The story of Malcolm X belonged to Black film, and there
was no other way to look at it. Too many times have the
lives of the Martin Luther Kings and Nelson Mandelas
ended up as made-for-TV movies. Too many times have
the Steven Bikos ended up minor characters in feature
films that were supposed to be about them. (Lee, 1992, p.
11)

In turn, Mario Van Peebles, director of *Panther*, had to fight against his
film studio’s (failed) efforts to center the film on the life of a fictitious
radical white student who organizes the group’s actions from behind
the scenes. Such a strategy, one studio executive felt, would help broaden the movie's appeal and attract a more "mainstream" audience. As he implored, "This student could teach the Panthers to stand up for themselves, to believe in themselves. He could turn them on to all that revolutionary literature they read, and because he's white, he's forced to stay in the background and politically guide them" (qtd. in Peebles et al., 1995, p. 136). Thus, both directors resisted efforts to inscribe black experience and political struggle into already-existing narratives of US history. Both fought for the integrity of their own non-dominant perspectives.

Debates about historical knowledge and popular media have also revolved around narrative truth claims. These debates have been quite fraught, as such truth claims are—in large measure—the foundations upon which "common cultures" are built and sustained. For example, the implication that the CIA as well as the Mafia had roles in Kennedy's assassination brought the film JFK to national attention and scrutiny. In fact, American Historical Review—a premier journal in the field of history—published a symposium on the film, which brought together scholars of the Kennedy assassination to discuss its veracity as well as its broader social and cultural impact. Some, like Marcus Raskin (1992), commented that—and how—the film was "surprisingly accurate" (p. 487). Others took the opportunity to comment more broadly on the film's reception and its effects on scholarly venues. As Michael Rogin (1992) writes, "that... the journal of the American Historical Association should publish a symposium on a Hollywood movie, with contributions written within weeks of the film's release... is itself source material for the future historian of late twentieth-century America" (p. 500).

Such a moment no doubt highlights the reconfigured landscape we all face when discussing history today. As George Lipsitz (1990) argues, popular culture is a dialogic realm where the past is continually invented and reinvented for invested actors, facing an increasingly uncertain present. He writes:

The dislocations of the past two centuries, the propaganda apparatus of totalitarian powers, disillusionment with the paradigms of the Enlightenment, and popular culture itself have all served to make the search for a precious and communicable past one of the most pressing problems of our time. But simply because historical inquiry has been reframed, it does not necessarily follow that it has been diluted. It is just that historical memories and historical evidence can no longer be found solely in archives and libraries; they pervade popular culture and public discourse as well. (p. 36)
The implications for educators are far ranging. Young people are increasingly drawing on these affectively invested popular texts in constructing some sense of historical consciousness—and they are increasingly bringing these resources to bear on traditional school curricula. The growing importance of popular culture on schooling practices is underscored by a number of contemporary critics in education and cultural studies, all of whom stress how vital popular culture is to youth self-definition today (Giroux, 1992; Giroux, 1996; Giroux & McLaren, 1994; Steinberg & Kincheloe, 1997).

This article engages with the attendant questions and complexities that face social studies educators here. Specifically, I look closely at how African American youth at a local community center processed the film *Panther* (1995). I pay special attention to their collective viewing practices around this text; how their reactions and interpretations resonated and did not resonate with their more school-like constructions of history; and finally how they brought the film to bear on real historical contingencies. This work emerges from a small but growing, important, and diverse (and often divisive) field of research.

Drawing on decades of work in communications, some researchers have stressed large-scale quantitative studies of the “effects” mass media has on young people (for a review of such work, see Splaine, 1991). Others have stressed more qualitative approaches, looking in less prefigured ways at young people and their interpretive practices. In this regard, Peter Seixas (1994) has interrogated the pedagogical implications of how young people respond to different kinds of filmic representations of Native American-white relations. Focusing on *Dances with Wolves* (1990) and *The Searchers* (1956), he documents through a series of short viewing sessions and interviews, that young people had a more immediate affective investment in the newer film, deeming *Dances with Wolves* more realistic and, on their logic, more historically accurate. He thus offers a key problematic for history teachers attempting to bring emotionally charged media texts into the classroom, as young people such as these seem to collapse aesthetic and historical veracity.

Related studies have looked at popular culture as part of a broader range of resources young people draw on in constructing a sense of historical consciousness. In another recent article entitled “Historical Understanding among Adolescents in a Multicultural Setting,” Seixas (1993) writes, “Young people are exposed to formal history as well as myths and stories from a variety of sources including schools, their families, and the media...historical meaning making is an ongoing process for young people” (p. 301). Here, Seixas looks at how six different young people connect with the school history curriculum—some, he notes, pick it up wholecloth, while others draw
more closely on their family's influence as well as the influence of popular culture. As the author indicates, we cannot circumscribe young people's experiences with history in and within the classroom alone but must look at a broader range of discursive resources and interpretive practices.

Similarly, Levstik and Barton (1996), in another recent study, asked young people of different ages to order a series of images chronologically, to see what kinds of "intertexts" they draw on in the process of constructing a historical narrative. Popular culture emerged as important here—alongside "family activities" and "family stories"—with "period" shows like "Happy Days" and "Little House on the Prairie" taking on a particular salience. As the authors argue, "if we are to communicate with children about history we need to understand children's sense-making in this area"—a point educators would do well to heed (p. 532). Thus, this small but growing body of work has opened up crucial questions about popular culture, the lives of young people, and the role of historical knowledge, as a fundamentally new nexus (Gabella, 1998).

Yet, very little of this work is explicitly ethnographic, engaging with the often unpredictable and volatile lives of young people over time. For example, Seixas relied on short viewing and interview sessions for the study discussed (1994), while Levstik and Barton (1996) asked young people do specific tasks in a controlled setting. Ethnographic approaches would help open up for examination here the range of social, political, and personal context necessary for understanding the complexities of young people's lives in specific and nonsutured ways (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Such work would allow us to see more clearly how particular young people in particular social settings mobilize specific popular texts to deal with the kinds of historical contingencies that cannot be predicted from a distance. Such work would allow us to understand how young people use popular media forms to "make history go" in the present tense (Pollock, 1998).

Scholars in cultural studies have developed much of the most important work to date on popular media and reception practices. As many have noted, scholars and researchers in this tradition have looked closely at the everyday practices of ordinary people, especially their consumption of popular culture, and how they reproduce and resist dominant cultural imperatives. Audience studies or empirical studies of how particular audiences pick up or use texts in their everyday lives, have emerged as most salient here (Ferguson & Golding, 1997). These context-dependent studies have spanned life settings and specific genres, including romance novels (Radway, 1984), women's television shows (Press, 1991), as well as specific shows like Nationwide (Morley, 1980) and Dallas (Liebes & Katz, 1990) and films like Die Hard (Fiske & Dawson, 1996).
This work has been helpful for understanding more clearly how active agents read texts from in and within specific social formations. Indeed, this work has taken, as a whole, concern to situate the interpretive strategies of agents, positioned, as they are, from in and within particular identity formation matrices. Instructive here is Fiske and Dawson's study of how men in homeless shelter "read"—or "selectively produce meanings and pleasures from"—the film *Die Hard* (Fiske & Dawson, 1996, p. 297). In this small-scale ethnography, the authors describe how the men cheered during scenes when the "terrorists" committed violent acts against authority figures and ignored the film during others. As the authors state, these interpretive strategies are linked to the men's own sense of their powerlessness during the Reagan / Bush era, their own desire to critique existing power relations. This work, thus, takes pains to situate media participants in specific social, cultural, and institutional sites, interrogating how specific subject-positions enable certain kinds of readings.

Yet such audience studies have often uncritically celebrated these readings without looking more closely at how particular meanings might be and are actually constrained or the consequences people face for their particular investments in these texts (concerns taken up by Ferguson & Golding, 1997). If we are to bring a kind of reconfigured audience studies to social studies education, we will need to explore and understand young people's engagement with media texts vis-à-vis broader life courses and events, in both their enabling and constraining dimensions. Hence, focusing on the film *Panther* (1995) as well as other such media texts, I look closely at what popular resources young people resonate with as well as how they pick them up and deploy them to deal with historical contingencies, here a proposed march in town by the Ku Klux Klan. Throughout, I ask, what kinds of "equipment for living" does popular culture make available to young people? (Burke, 1941). And how do young people bring this equipment to bear on the vicissitudes of history? And with what effects?

**Setting and Participants**

The site for this study was a local community center in a small midwestern city where I developed and ran a weekly program devoted to exploring and reflecting on African American vernacular culture. I maintained the program and its curriculum for two and a half years. This program was offered as one of a handful of programs at a center which serves over 300 economically marginalized African American children in the community. In this program, we engaged and explored popular cultural forms—most especially rap music—in relation to participants' lives. The participants ranged in age from 10 to 17 and met in two separate groups (10-12 and 13-17). These focus groups typically...
consisted of three to ten participants who attended many but not all sessions. The younger group typically attracted larger numbers while the older groups typically attracted fewer. I also conducted one-on-one interview sessions with a number of older teens and engaged in informal participant-observation in the community, as well.

I came to this site as a researcher in 1995. However, my role changed considerably over time, in ways that helped me understand this site and its role in the community more clearly. Most specifically, after an extended period of volunteer work, performing a range of tasks like answering the phones and monitoring the main games room, I became a regular staff member during the Summer of 1997. In this role, I developed and maintained educational and recreational programs for children in three age groups—7-8, 9-10, and 11-12. I returned the following Fall for two more years of volunteer work. My shifting position—as researcher, volunteer, and staff—gave me greater purchase on the site itself, the community where the center is located, and the children and adolescents who people the club and participate in my program. All of these insights—as I worked these various hyphens—were central for this work (Fine, 1994).

Constructing Racial Selves Through Group Interaction

History in School

I will begin by looking at how history was mediated to young people in school, to understand more clearly the kinds of discourses available to them in this often explicitly validated setting. Understanding this kind of institutional history will be crucial for understanding broader questions about history and how these young people mobilized particular notions of history in their daily lives to deal with a profoundly unsettling local event.

The participants in this study spoke in almost wholly negative ways about how “history”—traditionally conceived—was taught in schools. Most young people noted that the life and work of Martin Luther King Jr. was stressed too exclusively and that black history was only relegated to one month of the year—the shortest month. This antipathy to the ways black history was taught in school was expressed often and in many ways. For example, one young person stressed that the Black Panthers and Malcolm X were ignored in school in favor of King, “We talking about Martin Luther King but not Malcolm X... Everybody know about Martin Luther King, Jr.” Another teen noted that all they talk about in school is “Dr. Martin Luther King famous speech, ‘I Had a Dream.’ We learned that back in second grade. Why you still teaching us that? Why don’t you teach us something else, that’s more important?” This teen also commented “they won’t teach you about nothing that Martin Luther King did except that yes, he
was a famous black African American.” He continued “In a school district, they’ll take one month and learn a little bit about African American history. All the famous people... the same thing over and over and over every single year.”

Hence, it seems as if individual icons, icons who are explicitly non-violent, were stressed first-and-foremost in school settings. As one young person said, teachers talk about “people that was famous, that’s all... they talk about Bill Cosby... um... mostly she always be talking about Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert Clemente... not the one’s that’s violent.” As mentioned above, the life of Martin Luther King Jr. has come to stand for non-violence itself and is often stressed to the exclusion of other figures, indexing black history whole cloth. The construction of MLK as supremely emblematic of “blackness” itself, in addition, often rubs up against and can contradict, at least in part, more local notions of what counts as “black.” For example, this same young person commented that rapper Snoop Doggy Dogg was “pro-black” in the video “Gangster Party” “cause he, it was like, he did all that kind of black stuff. He was drinking, riding in the cars, sagging, all that stuff.” Sagging is a way of wearing one’s pants low and is often associated with prisoners and gang members. It is, surely, not a symbol of passive resistance nor of nonviolence.

In addition to disliking how black history was taught, many young people resented how other groups were taught in counter-distinction (for a discussion of resentment, see McCarthy & Dimitriadis, 1998). For example, many young people said that they did not like the way they were forced to focus on the Jewish Holocaust. One teen was not allowed to take a test on the Holocaust, noting “my grandmom won’t let me take the, um, the Holocaust test. ... She just thought they [the Nazis] were some crazy white people. ... We making, um, a Holocaust museum, I can’t participate in that. She won’t let me do it ... cause she said if they can teach that, they can teach us something about Africa too and they really, they don’t. ... During black history we don’t do nothing.” Another teen reiterated about this museum, “they made us go through it and a whole bunch of people didn’t want to, but if we didn’t go through it, then we get in trouble.”

Thus, young people spoke both about the exclusive focus on King as well as how he was taught, including in relation to events and figures key for other groups. Many indicated, following the above, that King was merely inserted into an already existing, uninspiring curriculum, his presence strictly “pro forma,” to satisfy the demands of black history month. Nothing as participatory or as engaging as building and physically going through a museum was stressed. If anything, this use of King during black history month seemed to evoke deep feelings of hostility, especially vis-à-vis their teacher’s exclusive stress on King’s philosophy of nonviolence. Their responses echo and un-
derscore the work of many critical theorists of curriculum who stress the ways that multi-cultural education serves to reproduce a liberal-pluralist model of education, the ways such icons are uncritically added on as a footnote to history (see Beyer & Apple, 1998).

However, while many young people expressed dissatisfaction with the almost exclusive stress on MLK in schools as well as how he was taught, they also had a deep respect for the man. As ex-Black Panther Kathleen Cleaver (1998) noted recently, the popular appropriation of King to index an ideally non-violent and passive black population often belies the respect and admiration many feel for him in other more locally validated settings. Indeed, during black history month, the club where this research was conducted held a speech-making competition/celebration and young people were given the opportunity to deliver a range of speeches about black history and culture. I was in charge of much of the event and photocopied a number of speeches and poems, including those of Huey Newton, Malcolm X, Langston Hughes, and MLK. The young people, however, gravitated almost exclusively and with much enthusiasm to the speeches of King. Even the young person referenced above, the one who talked about how “everybody know about Martin Luther King, Jr.” immediately went for the King speeches. This same young person, on the day of the competition, brought in a number of photos of his family’s trip to the site of King’s assassination. These included photographs of the jacket King was wearing when he was shot as well as photos of the hotel. He displayed these pictures proudly and suggested passing them to the assembled crowd. This young person also brought in a sheet of paper with the words of the speech “I Have a Dream” printed out, decorated on a blue background. Apparently, this text hung on a wall in his home. Many young people have similar photos and plaques in their homes, with lithographs of King as well as printed text from his speeches.

While these young people knew more about King than other black figures, due to constant exposure in school, this alone cannot account for the investments evident here. There seemed two King’s—the in-school King who was used as a proxy for all black history in ways the students resisted and the out-of-school King who was connected to privileged familial and cultural networks. Indeed, a kind of enthusiasm was generated during this competition, an enthusiasm wholly lacking in their relationship with King as taught in more formal schooling institutions. Importantly, this event, unlike other events at the club, was very well attended by the families of the participants. Many parents and relatives came to this event, taking time out of demanding work schedules. The competition gave these young people a chance to perform MLK’s speeches in front of a validated audience which contained family and friends and people from the community.
It seems, thus, not a question of King himself raising antipathy but how he was taught in school, including how he was counter-posed to other subjugated populations. While, of course, these young people did not verbalize it as such, they seemed to dislike the ways King was used as a symbol for all black history, representing all that is non-violent and passive. This is especially problematic in school, which is an institution many young people already see as hostile and alien (Davidson, 1996).

Many of the links that young people made with King were by way of their extended and immediate family. Again, many family members came to this event while photos of King often adorned the home space. Links with King and even others like Malcolm X were often links with familial networks. However, this black history, the history of King, X, and others, seemed, in large measure, outside of the constellation of popular texts these young people were invested in.

As noted, the main methodological tool for my research was weekly discussion groups around rap music. During these focus groups, I attempted to make links between rap and other historical texts and events. For example, over the course of a few sessions, I showed the film Malcolm X and attempted to generate discussion about his life versus the life of MLK. Though the links with rap seemed self-evident to me, during one discussion, a young person asked “what does this have to do with rap?” Another young person answered, “well, right now, we’re talking about black history month.” When I asked if rap had anything to do with black history month, they all answered “no.” One commented, “At first we was talking about rap, about Tupac [Shakur] and Biggie [Smalls] [two rappers].” I then asked about Rosewood (1997) which we had also seen, a film about an all-black community in the South in the 1920s that is destroyed by white racists. Rosewood, they said, something to do with rap—more than Malcolm X. Malcolm X, one noted, was about a “black leader” and, as such, it seemed more school-like than rap-like (thus echoing the earlier discussion).

Young people expressed more or less interest for the historical films I introduced, including Malcolm X, Rosewood, and Panther. The level of enthusiasm seemed to unfold roughly in that fashion, with Panther garnering, by far, the most enthusiasm and Malcolm X the least. As I will demonstrate, young people made more links with this film and the other popular media forms they were invested in. This accounts in large measure, I argue, for the enthusiasm afforded the film.

I first decided to show clips of Panther to my discussion group after one young person expressed an interest in the film. However, the overwhelming consensus among the group was that I should show the whole film. I then devoted a series of sessions to the film, with
discussion afterwards. Their enthusiasm was unabated. I then, at their request, showed the *Eyes on the Prize* documentary about the Panthers, to considerably less enthusiasm as I will note.

**Panther and the Local Construction of Racial Consciousness**

*Panther* is a complex text. The film features a blending of historical footage with the film narrative, blurring the line between what was real and what was filmed. The film also, as director Peebles points out, was at pains to recreate classic historical images (e.g., the photo of leader Huey Newton on the wicker chair, holding a spear and rifle) in the filmic text. *Panther* featured a lot of action and stylized violence and tried to revolve the film’s narrative around the life of a fictitious character named Judge, a student who becomes a double-agent for the Panthers. The idea, Peebles stressed, was to avoid telling an iconic history of “great men” like Newton as such efforts always result in attempts at character assassination. Judge thus becomes the centerpiece for telling the stories of others, including Huey Newton and Bobby Seale. The key events in the lives of both and of the organization—e.g., the march on the Washington capital and Newton’s imprisonment—were all told as well. The film, finally, contains a controversial sub-plot—that of the US government, under orders from J. Edgar Hoover, releasing heroin into Oakland to defuse the power base of the Panthers in the black community.

The group reaction to the film can be thematically delineated as follows. First, the participants all made inter-textual links between this film and other films which featured the same actors; second, they made connections between the Panthers and their own informal “cliques”; third, they gelled, as a group, around the most violent scenes, especially those featuring guns; fourth, and in turn, they tended to carry out their own agendas (like talking and teasing each other) during scenes which featured talking; fifth, these young people gelled, thematically, around the film’s anti-police sub-text, making connections with their own lives and experiences. These viewing practices helped form the contours around which these young people processed this historical text and claimed it as their own.

From the very first session devoted to *Panther*, young people identified characters and actors as “playing in” other films of the new black cinema like *Friday* (1995), *Jason’s Lyric* (1994), and *Menace II Society* (1993). When such actors appeared on the screen, they became the focus of much group discussion and commotion. For example, the main antagonist in *Panther* is a local drug dealer who teams up with the police to help quell the group. This actor, A.J. Johnson, was featured as a “hype” or crack addict named Ezel in the film *Friday*. *Friday*, a comedy featuring rapper Ice Cube, is about a seemingly typical day in the life of two teens in a LA “ghetto.” It was a highly successful film...
and many young people counted it as one of their favorites. Whenever A.J. Johnson appears on the screen, young people said things like "there goes Ezell!" and routinely referred to "Ezel" when discussing the film.

Another actor in Panther, Tyrin Turner, played Caine in the extremely popular Menace II Society. In many respects, Menace was an entirely different film than was Friday. Menace is a very violent drama about two teens—Caine and O-Dog—growing up in a "ghetto" in California. The film also features rapper MC Eiht. When Turner—who plays Sy, a friend of the Judge's—appeared on the screen, young people routinely called him Caine, saying things like "that's Caine right there!" During one discussion, when the film showed that Sy had been shot, one young person said "that's how he was on Menace II Society" to which another responded, "except he look tore up in Menace." Indeed, these young people often compared the different roles of characters in both films throughout the viewing, noting both similarities and differences. Hence, though Turner died violently in both films, this young person commented on how worse off he looked when he was killed in Menace.

Another actor, Bokeem Woodbine, who plays a tough Black Panther named Tyrone, was featured in Jason's Lyric. Jason's Lyric—still different from either Menace or Friday—is a love story that takes place in Texas's rough Fifth Ward. In Jason's Lyric, Woodbine plays the brother of the protagonist and ends up shooting himself at the end of the film. Similarly, he blows himself up at the end of Panther to save his comrades, the consummate sacrifice which concludes the film. During this scene, when it became clear that Woodbine would kill himself, one young person said "Don't kill yourself. This gonna be the second time killing hisself. He kills hisself on Jason's Lyric. He shot hisself in the head."

Thus, these films are all part of a certain genre of movie-making, it seems, that these young people were wholly invested in. Yet it is important to qualify that these three films are all quite different—a comedy, action/drama, and love story, respectively. While all were released as part of the new black cinema, they attest to the ways that genres are inherently open and flexible, with broad based similarities and differences (Kamberelis, 1995). While the specific themes were often different, they all detailed and focused in on the experiences of young blacks in poor areas. Each also featured a rap soundtrack as well as highly stylized violence (George, 1994). Part of Panther's imbrication in this genre stems from the fact that it features actors who have made careers for themselves in these other films. Part of their pleasure here, again, seems to be drawing intertextual links between the films.

Film makers have plainly capitalized on young people and their knowledge of these artists and their different roles. For example, A.J.
Johnson played a comedic role in the film *Friday*. While his role was, on one level, very different in *Panther*, he had certain comedic dimensions to his character that these young people gravitated towards. He played a fast-talking, funny, and wily character. At the end, when he was shot in the ear, many young people laughed at Johnson’s highly stylized reaction. In contrast, Bokeem Woodbine plays more physically imposing characters, in *Panther* as well as other films. These actors, in large measure, are typecast, in ways that allowed young people to connect them to and with other films and also predict how different films might unfold. Indeed, nearly all of these actors appear in other contemporary black films.

These films also tend to foreground rap artists as actors as well, in ways that blur the boundaries of their careers. Hence, rap artist Ice-T is acknowledged by many of my participants as an actor first and foremost. As one young person put it, “he needs to give up rapping!” In addition, when I asked one young person who his favorite rapper was, he commented “Smokey,” referencing the always-stoned character that Chris Tucker played in the film *Friday* (Tucker has never been a musician of any sort). These young people are thoroughly familiar with these actors and rappers and the various roles they have played. This kind of cross-fertilization between genres and characters was capitalized on by rapper Master P who features the rappers on his No Limit label in his movies (e.g., *I’m Bout It* [1997]) and uses the same character actors in his films as well. In fact, I would attribute Master P’s great financial success to his recognition of how deeply young people are invested in “stars” and the various roles they enact in multiple contexts.

Noting characters and actors is also a way to assume a certain kind of privileged knowledge vis-à-vis the group, a way to indicate one has seen the film which accords one a certain kind of social capital or currency in relation to the group—to mark one’s taste in the context of a local hierarchy of taste (Bourdieu, 1984). It also indexes ones monetary capital as well, as one would have to have cable TV, a VCR (and be able to afford to pay for the tape), or to have seen it in the theaters. These were profoundly social processes, which allowed young people to position themselves via these texts from in and within an invested group of peers (Fingerson, 1999). While I found that most young people were remarkably well versed in these films, others were not, which could be the source of great pain. Indeed, young people have pulled me aside and commented that they have nothing to say in these focus groups because they cannot afford to see these films or listen to these tapes. Others who had more money, however, could easily and quite literally “afford” to purchase this kind of capital relative to the group, acquiring this kind of highly valued knowledge.
Thus, these black popular cultural forms provided one very important kind of capital. On one level, I could assume an almost uniform and largely exclusive privileging of these movies. I have conducted numerous surveys of young people and the films they like and there was an almost exclusive focus on these films. Young people who had a wide knowledge of these films and this music were privileged in this sense. Yet there were other kinds of capital which operated here as well, other ways one could mark oneself relative to the group. A key example is gang activity, a kind of lifestyle often valorized in these films. Hence, there were some young people who did not know much about the music and these cultural forms, but who were often also quite poor and angry and sometimes gravitated towards gang life, themes *Menace* and even *Friday* privilege. This accrued them another kind of social capital vis-à-vis the group. These popular genres, thus, are an important source of cultural capital but not exclusively so.

In addition to making links between films, these young people also appropriated *Panther* to talk about their own social positioning relative to their social networks. During the very first session devoted to the film, young people began to “claim” characters. For example, when the character of Huey Newton appeared, one young person commented “there go me!” to which another responded “That’s me right there! I already called it!” Seemingly, there was a kind of exclusivity to claiming roles here, as only one person could claim each of the available characters. Again, these young people used the positioning of characters in the film to inform their own positioning relative to the group. The film, quite clearly, afforded particular roles as indicated by comments like “I’m the black dude!” and “that’s my man!”

Interestingly, these comments were often made by young people who already had a degree of social capital relative to the group and others at the club. These were young people who most sharply competed for “roles” in these films. Indeed, these were also often highly competitive young people who made (successful) concerted efforts to position themselves as valued in other locally validated activities. One homologous activity here is sports. Nearly all the young people who claimed these roles during these sessions were active in sports and often got similarly worked up during competition, whether in Ping Pong, basketball, or pool. These same young people who competed for “claiming” Huey Newton also taunted each other during Ping Pong games (e.g., “You’re sorry! Get off my table!”) or against other clubs when competing at sports like basketball (“We’re gonna smoke that team!”). Interestingly, the young people who did not claim characters during these viewing sessions tended not to be competitive in sports and tended not to be so antagonistically vocal during activities like Ping Pong. These, again, seem like homologous activities.
The social positioning in the film also implicated their own particular social networks or “cliques.” Indeed, during this very same discussion group, the group talk turned to some of the fights that group members got into and the ways they stood up for each other. At one point, they talked about a young man named Jalin and how he had been picking on Rick’s (a member of the group) sister. Another young person from the group then commented, “all us right here [in the group], gonna jump on Jalin.” Sensing an opportunity to interrogate the kinds of conflicts these young people engaged in, I asked why they stuck up for each other. One young person responded, interestingly, “cause we help each other. We the Black Panthers.” Thus the kind of positioning and community represented in Panther were deeply implicated in their own “cliques.”

These informal “cliques” also had homologies in other popular cultural forms. Indeed, after the young person above said “We the Black Panthers,” another said “We NWO.” In addition, at the end of this focus groups, members called out, in excitement, “World Championship Black Panthers!” and “Black Panthers for Life!” These are references to professional wrestling, including the famous chant of NWO (New World Order, a group of wrestlers) “NWO For Life.” Professional wrestling is marked today by groups of wrestlers who form formal groups which are very similar to the self-proclaimed “cliques” that young people form (both are interred in conversationalizing discourses—[see Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 1999]). Hence, these young people appropriated the relationships in the film to comment on their own social networks, in ways that connect them to other popular forms. These links, however, seemed odd relative to more traditional black cultural practices and speak to the particular co-articulation of discourses which mark so much popular culture today (Bakhtin, 1981; 1986). For example, one could hardly imagine an older person making similar comments about Martin Luther King Jr. and wrestling. One might find chants like “Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee For Life!” or even “Nation of Islam For Life!” profoundly odd.

It is important to note that these group processes were instantiated in the actual viewing practices of these young people—what they conspired to focus on and where they were disruptive. Most importantly, young people tended to engage in off-task activities during narration and quiet dialogue and focus on the film during highly violent or action-filled scenes. These were routinely referred to as “the good parts” and were met with collective focus. Indeed, staying focused on a particular text is a group process and can either facilitate or disrupt the group’s resonance with a particular text. For example, there was an intense focus on the last scene in which the Panthers had a gun fight with “Ezel” and his bodyguard Tiny. Young people commented “There go Ezel!” and during the shooting, “Ezel killing ev-
erybody!” to which another young person commented “cause he got that buff dude named Tiny!” During this scene, “Ezel” got his ear shot off which elicited a great deal of laughter. Young people focused carefully on these scenes. There was no effort to disrupt the group process with individual agendas as there was during other scenes. While it is entirely possible that young people, viewing the film by themselves, would also be distracted during the scenes which did not feature heavy action, I did, nonetheless, see this group dynamic at work here—if nothing else it was reinforced. These violent scenes very much informed their responses to the film, including the kinds of messages they gleaned about the Panthers, and how they were connected to a range of popular media forms.

For example, these young people tended to look away, talk, or tease each other during scenes that featured heavy talking. These were the “boring parts” where talk turned to other subjects or there was just general disinterest. This empirical insight is crucial as many of these scenes established the sub-text that the government was complicit in the influx of drugs into black communities as a way to placate the radicalism elicited by the Panthers. Hence, much of the focus on Judge being a double agent was lost and, at the end of the film, many expressed confusion about what his role was exactly. The scenes which developed this theme were scenes with heavy talking and were, again, all-but ignored. Thus, the dialogue that these young people collectively established with each other as well as the film helped influence the kinds of meanings they took from it and were able to mobilize as a result. By and large, highly stylized violence and conflict were privileged.

These young people, thus, viewed the film as if it was imbricated in popular entertainment genres, including sports and film and music, not as a historical document or one of social critique. They resonated, first and foremost, with scenes that featured the kinds of action that are endemic to other popular genres, while the broader critique was largely lost. As argued in another recent study, young people today privilege increasingly-dominant “conversationalized” discourses, discourses which stress personal and interpersonal conflict in favor of ones that feature broader social critique (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 1999). This discourse works today in numerous popular realms, including talk shows, rap music, and wrestling. One observes this here as well, as young people focused on the violence and interpersonal conflict over the broader political critique about how the government was complicit in the influx of drugs into black communities.

Yet, it would be a mistake to assume that the film encouraged apolitical responses alone. In contrast, this stress on conflict and highly stylized violence was linked to an anti-police community empowerment agenda that was very much a part of the Panther’s program as
well. Indeed, one of the most dramatic scenes in the film featured “Huey Newton” confronting the police with a group of Panthers. During this scene, the Panthers come upon a black man being beaten by the police. The Panthers then take out their guns—legally, in plain view—and challenge the police on the abuse. Newton calls them “pigs” and says that he has the right to observe them carrying out their duties from a “reasonable distance.” At one point, a cop asks Newton if his gun is loaded. He clicks his gun, putting the shell in the chamber, commenting “now it is!”

Nearly all the young people said that this was their favorite scene. As one member put it, “I liked when he called him Pig!” As another young person put it, “I like the part when...that man, Huey Newton, start talking to the police and then they start backing down...the police knew that was their right and they couldn’t do nothing about it.” Still another commented, “I like the part when the cops said ‘is that gun...automatic loaded?’ He said ‘it wasn’t but now it is.’” The young people clearly felt a sense of power during this scene, noting that the police, for a change, were scared of African Americans. The Panthers clearly empowered the community here and gave them the courage to stand up for themselves. Indeed, during this scene, a crowd assembled to watch the Panthers; the police tell them to leave but Newton says they have the right to stay. As one young person said, “them other people was sacred of the police, but then they told them, not to, uh, they don’t have to go nowhere.”

Many young people expressed satisfaction when watching this scene, a scene which resonated with comments that many young people have made to me about the police. As numerous authors have noted, there is a long history of distrust of police in black neighborhoods (see Fine & Weis, 1998). This city is no exception and many have commented that the police exercise their power in arbitrary ways and also treat black people differently than they do whites. As one young person put it, people get “bullied around by the police and stuff.” This same young person commented that the police will often race through his neighborhood, indiscriminately going past stop signs and red lights.

Another teen gave a very clear example of how whites and blacks are treated differently by the police. His example was prompted by a real incident—a relative whose small Rotweiller dog got out of its cage and was taken by the police. This teen noted that things like barking dogs are treated very differently by the police if the owner is black or white. A white person might say something like “‘oh my dog was very protective of me and he thought the other dog [was attacking me]’” to which the police would respond ‘OK have a nice day.’” In contrast, however, if a black person said something similar, the police
would comment "'Well you can't be having your dog out here, biting on people, or we're going to take him down.' Whole other story."

This same person also noted that the police will stop black teenagers from walking together, especially in white neighborhoods. He said "They be harassing me...check this, take four black people, four black teenagers, wait till about 9 o'clock, not even curfew, just dark. And walk down the street in a nice neighborhood. Ten dollars to a penny, you'll get stopped every time." Again, many teens have expressed similar anger at being harassed by the police. As such, young people resonated—as a group—with the scenes in the film which deal with the ability of people to stand up to the police. In large measure, this was part of the larger meaning these young people took from the film, as it resonated most clearly with other aspects of their lives.

In a similar vein, when I asked young people if there were any organizations around that reminded them of the Panthers, most young people commented "gangs." The connection seems logical, one enabled by the kinds of messages taken from the film, including the anti-police sentiment, the liberal use of guns, and the more general deployment of highly stylized violence. There are also important historical connections here as well, as the Panthers were very successful recruiting members of street gangs in the 1960s and were even negotiating with the Blackstone Rangers in Chicago to merge the groups. When I commented to an older teen that some of the younger kids were making this connection, he noted, "I kinda see where they coming from... cause... they see the guns... and they see most gang members with guns, so therefore it put them in the mind of gangs. And then they got like a little clique and everything like the gangs got."

Panther resonated with young people in ways that more traditional documentary-like work did not. For example, we watched the Eyes on the Prize episode that dealt with the Panthers, though it was not received very well. The episode relied on many traditional documentary conventions, including stock footage and long interviews with key figures. There was, of course, no action or violence.

Interestingly, when I asked what they thought about the show in comparison to the film, one young person commented, paradoxically, that the film was more "realistic" than the documentary, noting that it had more "action" (see Seixas, 1994). A teen made a similar connection in another context, noting that she liked films like Menace more than the news because such films are more emotionally charged and featured a clearer use of narrative,

The news don't got good stuff in it every day—not saying good stuff like they be killing each other...it's the way they portray it. It's the way the message get across. On
the news...it don't give a lot of details. It just give like the basic outline of what happened, what went on, who died, stuff like that. And then, in the movies, they go to why they got killed, and who killed them, how many times they shot 'em. Then they go when they do it again. Stuff like that.

Narrative conjured up the "real" for these young people, a point underscored by much research in the affective dimensions of language (Besiner, 1990). Similarly, another young person commented that he liked Panther more than Eyes on the Prize because it was in color. Another noted, “one thing I liked about the movie, you know how Huey was always, he had went to law school and he was like ‘I am 12-28 feet from you, man, so I can have the right to take my, to have my weapons with me.’...He snapped.” The drama of the scene referenced above was thus privileged over and above the more conventional pedagogical narrative of the documentary.

Making It Real: Panther and the Ku Klux Klan in this City

In sum, while this film allowed young people to learn something about the Panthers, they did so in specific and highly circumscribed ways, allowing certain meanings while disallowing others. These meaning-making practices had very real consequences for these young people, as evidenced by the ways they were able to deal with a proposed march by the Ku Klux Klan in town, how they mobilized the particular historical constructions they had formed around the Panthers to deal with the event. This, again, will help us address a key, under-researched area in the field of social studies and media research.

During the Fall of 1997, the Ku Klux Klan proposed a series of rallies through the state, one of which was to take place in this city. This was a proposed rally which never materialized. However, it raised many concerns and questions nonetheless. In particular, many young people were terrified by the prospect of the Klan coming to town. Many thought they would be targeted with violence. Indeed, many have complex family histories rooted in the South, and many spoke of Southern racism, particularly as realized in the Klan’s violence. A number of younger people felt, in turn, that the Klan was going to come and burn down their homes or would attack them physically.

The Unit Director of the club where this research was conducted commented to me one day that “the Klan got these kids scared” and also noted that many parents are not doing a good job “educating” their children about the Klan and letting them know that they are not a real threat. When one young person expressed fear about burning crosses, Johnny, the Unit Director, commented that the cross is a “symbol” that the group uses, just like the Gangster Disciples gang uses a
6-point star. The Director also made efforts to educate young people about the group and tried to dissipate some of their fear by noting that they had the "right" to march, and even to call black people "niggers"—although not to physically assault them. He said he would not be out protesting but would only respond if they came to his neighborhood. Clearly, he sought to demystify the Klan's presence, most especially by invoking the discourse of rights.

This was a familiar discourse for these young people, one which they encountered in school and one they reproduced in their everyday talk. When asked about black history, young people tended, mirroring the school-like discourse evoked earlier, to stress iconic figures (e.g., MLK, Harriet Tubman, Rosa Parks, and Frederick Douglass) and "rights." When asked about important events in black history, for example, young people tended to say things like, "they had to have separate schools" or water fountains. However, as I will note, this discourse was not mobilized by these young people to deal with this emotionally charged event.

Indeed, the Klan seemed a source of real terror and many even claimed to have actually seen Klan members in town (though I am doubtful about this). One commented that "they already here, they was chasing people. They almost got shot up. It was out at the park... . remember that park we went to last, for the summer picnic? They was down there chasing people... . We was driving by, all you see is people in white sheets." This knowledge about the Klan was mediated by both popular culture and inter-personal relationships. For example, young people spoke about the mini-series Roots as well as the movies Malcolm X and Rosewood, both of which feature hooded Klansmen, and Higher Learning (1995), which features skinheads (who, many noted, are essentially the same as the Klan). Many young people also spoke of their relatives and how they told them stories about the Klan, especially down South where, as many young people noted, the group is still very active. One commented that his grandfather's friend was killed by the Klan. These stories became affectively invested—made more real—by way of the films noted above.

In addition, and in an interesting twist, some young people spoke of consuming and discussing such films and TV shows with their relatives. For example, one young person said, "My grandmom that live upstairs, she got like a Roots thing... with all the movies." During another session, some young people talked about discussing films and TV shows with their relatives. One said "My grandmom I asked her... I asked her, did she know about Klan, she was like 'yeah,' she said... sometime she seen them on TV." In fact, our discussions of the Klan prompted others, like this young person, to further investigate the group on their own.
The racism which the Klan symbolizes was also, often, given a veneer of invisibility or secrecy by my participants, much as racism seems to function today. One person commented “Some places you might see some white people and then they try to be your friend and then next thing you know, they be like, ‘I’m a Ku Klux Klan.’” Another commented “they ride cars, then try to act normal, but at night, they just come out.” Another commented that his grandfather, who had some trouble with the Klan, told him to be careful and that you don’t always know who is in the Klan and who isn’t. In large measure, the Klan came to stand in for racism as a whole—an ever-present and invisible fear, given voice and made real by way of this particular event as well as popular cultural forms and social networks.

We must now ask how young people dealt with the proposed Klan rally in town, how they made sense of this event. In large measure, many young people drew on the kinds of highly stylized images of violence and myths of invulnerability, so-realized in the film Panther. Young people commented that they would deal with the Klan, as individuals, and with violent force. During an initial discussion, one young person said “they come on Johnson Street, I’m going to war, bring like 40 guns.” Another said “I’m gonna have knives here, I’m gonna have guns here, guns here... I’m gonna look like Robocop.” Robocop is a film and TV character who is half-man half-machine/human arsenal, violent in the extreme. This same person, interestingly enough, commented “We need the Panthers! We need some Black Panthers! Really, I need some Black Panthers by my house.” Thus, young people indexed the kinds of invulnerability spoken of earlier, an invulnerability imbricated in film, in wrestling, in Robocop, and, of course, in the Black Panthers. While they drew on historical constructs to deal with the march, they were highly circumscribed constructs, connected with popular culture.

Yet, while these participants resonated with the violent gang-like aspects of the Panthers, they did not see them as black super heroes alone. Indeed, we had a very interesting discussion about how the Panthers would deal with the Klan verses how gangs would deal with them, which brought this distinction to the forefront. In fact, when I first asked the group what they thought the best response to the Klan would be, many commented that gangs were going to provide the community with protection. There was some talk about how these groups were already (according to rumor) planning a response—notably, Black P-Stone (interestingly, the latter day manifestation of the Blackstone Rangers which were initially going to merge with the Panthers). However, some commented that gangs might not be strategic enough in their response, substituting a wholly violent response for a more measured approach. One said: “Panthers, they handle it a different way. The gangs, they’ll just go get guns... Panthers they’ll just
call a white person a pig or something. 'You Pig!' Like they did in the movie.” Of course, this young person is referencing the scene discussed earlier, when the Panthers confronted the police (implicitly, for this young person, connected with the Klan). Another commented that gangs would get high and do a drive-by shooting on the Klan and might kill innocent people, or one of their “own people.” In sum, these young people sought a highly physical response to the Klan but also seemed to be self-conscious about the limits of such an approach.

Thus, young people were able to use this film to critically examine the Klan’s presence and what the best response to them might be. The response was both complex and very different from the response seemingly favored by the Unit Director and other adults—education about their “right” to march while acknowledging the fact that they cannot physically attack anyone. The discourse of “rights” is wholly implicated in traditional notions of schooling and was not mobilized here at all. These young people seemed to foreground a physical response mediated by popular culture, though they were critical about its limits. We see a kind of group consciousness emerging here for these young people, one both enabling and constraining and highly situated by and in popular cultural forms. Most importantly, we see a nascent—though complex and distinct—sense of praxis emerging, the possibility of and for reflective political action and organization, a possibility that clearly needs greater exploration and explication.

Conclusions

Hence, the group response to the Klan was very much imbricated in the kinds of popular histories they found most compelling. The kinds of historical knowledge offered in school, as noted, did not resonate with these young people as clearly as it might have and was not drawn on in this crisis. This kind of knowledge, as noted, tends to be driven by a discourse of “icons” and “rights.” Rather, the popular filmic representation of the Black Panthers was mobilized, implicated, as it was, in other popular texts, including black film and music, action heroes, and wrestling. As such, these young people made the kinds of unpredictable links enabled by a popular culture shot through with multiple co-articulated discourses (Bakhtin, 1986). These young people “made history go” to echo Della Pollock (1998), deploying popular texts to make history relevant in the here and now, transforming history from a noun to a verb. These young people used Panther to actualize history, mobilizing a specific discourse to deal with a profoundly unsettling event—a proposed KKK march.

Popular culture, thus, has made a set of resources available to the young which they have mobilized and drawn together in specific ways, in specific kinds of activities. These are the kinds of links, links
between the academic and the popular, between what some consider "high" and what some consider "low" that we, as educators, need to think about more clearly if we are going to encourage and nurture in students a passionate sense of history. History, here as everywhere, must be viewed in concrete and situated ways. A close look at Panther and the viewing practices of young people made this quite clear and offers educators a way to begin to understand not so much the limits of, but the stakes involved in, popular cultural forms and how such forms might be made more clearly a part of school curricula.

Note

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Culture Wars In The Antipodes: The Social Studies Curriculum Controversy In New Zealand

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Abstract

In New Zealand, recent attempts to produce a national social studies curricula have attracted fierce criticism and intense debate. As as in the United States and elsewhere, for broadly similar reasons, social studies remains a moral and ideological battleground for the major players involved in curriculum reform. All over the world, social studies is hailed as the subject which will create ideal future citizens. The New Zealand controversy, however, has given rise to no less than three attempts to produce an acceptable curriculum statement. Arguably the final document appears to be less controversial than its predecessors simply because it largely confines itself to outlining general aims rather than setting out specific goals. The reform process has clearly demonstrated the considerable difficulties involved in attempting to lay down what the ideal citizen of the future ought to think, know, and value while at the same time giving lip-service to the concept of reflective inquiry.

Globally, there is considerable agreement that the central aim of social studies is citizenship education (Ross, 1997; Barr, Barth & Shermis, 1978). Social educators in both New Zealand and the United States have expressed a hope that the subject will foster enlightened, democratic participation whilst encouraging an appreciation of cultural diversity (Hartoonian, 1995; Barr, 1998). In both countries, however, recent experience with social studies curriculum reform has been punctuated by confusion and controversy rather than by enlightenment.

In the United States, the NCSS document, Expectations of Excellence: Curriculum Standards for Social Studies was released for distribution in September 1994. It was a broad, relatively conservative document, intended as a guide to the development of content, skills, attitudes and perspective's in social studies programs. The result was widespread and at times, bitter debate. The multicultural emphasis of the document, in attempting to foster concepts of cultural pluralism together with an element of historical revisionism derived from the
Black and women’s movements, encountered particularly strong opposition. Liberals accused multiculturalists of sowing divisions by concentrating on what divided Americans rather than on what united them. Conservatives accused them of concentrating on the shortcomings rather than the accomplishments of traditional American values (Grelle & Metzger, 1996).

In New Zealand, a small Commonwealth country with a rather confused national identity, recent developments in the social studies curricula have provoked a similar pattern of accusation, counter-accusation and name-calling. Between 1994 and 1998, two draft statements were produced and subsequently withdrawn before a definitive document eventually emerged. Alluding to the angry and increasingly polarized debate which marred the reform process, the bemused editor of a major daily newspaper asserted, “Who, looking back on what used to be social studies, would have predicted that the subject would become so controversial”? (The Press, 1996).

The editor was perhaps unaware of both the historical and contemporary experience of social studies throughout the Western world. In the United States, Ross has argued that the social studies curriculum has long served as an ideological and moral battleground in the ‘culture wars. (Ross, 1996). Following Seixas, Ross observes that recent American attempts to create a common national historical vocabulary are intended to create citizens who will guarantee cultural survival rather than embrace the principles of reflective inquiry (Ross, 1996). In a number of other nations, the development of centralized national curricula are intended to play a key role in the development of state hegemony. During 1980s and early 1990s, for instance, the Conservative Government in the United Kingdom utilized the popular appeal of notions such as “nationhood”, “national role”, “destiny”, “heritage” and “tradition” in promoting the National Curriculum (Coulby and Bash, 1991).

The recent debate over New Zealand social studies reforms has much in common with these overseas exemplars. Political considerations have long underpinned the social studies curriculum. Lee and Hill have argued that while the curriculum has been a political instrument since its inception, it has rarely been as transparent as it has been since the early 1990s, with the attempt to create a national curriculum beginning with the 1993 New Zealand Curriculum Framework (Lee & Hill, 1996). The central aim of the document, Social Studies in the New Zealand Curriculum: Draft was the creation of citizens and workers who would accept dominant economic and social trends as natural, rather than attempt any critique of them (Openshaw, 1996a). As in the United States and elsewhere, the recent New Zealand experience re-opens long-standing but often dormant issues for social educators. For instance, should social studies promote the kind of citizen-
ship that is adaptive to the status quo, or should it encourage future citizens to challenge existing structures? (Ross, 1999, forthcoming). Central to this question are the undoubtedly formidable barriers facing those teachers who seek to promote a genuinely reflective inquiry. Here, the fierce debate over the role of teachers and curricula in New Zealand social studies serves to underline the relevance for all social educators of Rich Gibson’s recent comment on United States historian Gary Nash: benevolence neither creates a worthy ally, nor is it a good direction-finder (Gibson, 1998).

An analysis of the extended debate in New Zealand over the Draft and the Revised Draft social studies documents also reinforces the need for us to appreciate the parallels between social studies curriculum innovation and the wider political environment. New Zealand’s Fourth Labour Government (1984-1990), was elected by a loose coalition of voters who shared a common conviction that New Zealand society together with its welfare state was fatally flawed and required drastic surgery. Whilst overseeing thorough-going neoliberal reforms of the economy, Labour also implemented key Leftist policies regarding ethnic issues, gender equity and anti-nuclear legislation (James, 1992). Likewise, during the early 1990s virtually all those who sought to re-shape social studies shared a conviction that the nation’s future citizens were in considerable need of radical transformation, even though they fundamentally disagreed over the nature of this re-shaping. Nationally, politics was dominated by unstable alliances of convenience which eventually fragmented, resulting in a multiplicity of mutually antagonistic political parties. The social studies curriculum reform process presented an interesting microcosm of the wider political situation. Initially, there was a similarly fragile grouping of disparate elements seeking reform. Once again, however, the ultimate result was a somewhat messy divorce as the contradictions between them were exposed under the unremitting glare of the popular press.

Reforming Social Studies: The Context

The immediate context of recent social studies curriculum reform in New Zealand is significant. Central to the process has been the influence of neoliberalism in restructuring the educational bureaucracy from the ‘safe’ state bureaucracy characteristic of a welfare state, to a cartel of contract-letters who might be held to more accurately epitomize the ideals of competition and accountability promoted by corporate capitalism. Until late 1989 all curriculum documents, including social studies, were prepared in the Curriculum Division of the Department of Education (Openshaw, 1996a) The release of the policy document, Learning for Life II in August 1989, however, unleashed market forces which were supposedly to work in the interests

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of participatory curriculum making, but which in actuality gave the Minister of Education more power than ever to intervene on the grounds of safeguarding 'the national interest' (Goff, 1990). In the same year, the Curriculum Development Division was replaced by a Curriculum Contracts Division within the new Ministry. The main task of the new and smaller establishment was not to prepare syllabuses but to oversee what was now envisaged as a contestable process. Curriculum development contracts were to be let to competing groups and consortiums outside the immediate bureaucratic structure. (O'Neill, 1996). The successful contractor was also to undertake to prepare the curriculum documents in accordance with the broad national guidelines laid down in the Framework. The contractor was to provide for community consultation and had to meet a series of mutually acceptable milestones leading to the eventual delivery of a draft statement. Once the Ministry had received the statement, the document would be released and a period allowed for public submissions Depending on the tenor of these submissions, the document might proceed to Ministerial approval with only minor modifications, or a further draft might be prepared either by the original contractor or by a third party chosen by the Ministry.

The writing of the first draft Social Studies Statement must also be seen within the wider context of government-driven curriculum initiatives aimed at the production of a set of national curriculum guidelines serving to further centralize and systematize the process of curriculum reform. This process had to some extent begun as early as the 1970s with the Lawrence Report (1974) and the McCombs Report (1976), and was furthered by the 1986 Curriculum Review (Lee & Hill, 1996, p.19). During the 1990s, successive Government documents provided for seven essential learning areas of which social science is one. As a key social science subject, the social studies curriculum contract was the third to be let, following English and technology. In 1993, a National Government succeeded Labour on the Treasury benches. Free-market economic reforms intensified amidst growing resistance. Although the New Zealand economy had come out of recession and unemployment was falling there was, nevertheless, a popular perception of growing social inequality. Racial conflict was constantly in the news and Treaty of Waitangi issues were being hotly debated, including the return of Maori lands, ownership of fisheries and other resources, even airwaves.¹

The new government was thus committed to a manifestly political curriculum which both legitimated direct government intervention in social policy and sought public support for the many economic and social changes that had come since 1984. Launching the Draft Statement a decade later, on 7 December 1994, the Minister of Education, the Hon. L. M. Lockwood Smith, made it clear that social studies was
to provide economic literacy of a particular type which would strengthen the economy and promote national harmony. In addition, however, concessions were also to be made to social liberalism and particularly to better race relations especially where these appeared to further or at least not to conflict with, other priorities:

*It's fair to say that this draft curriculum places greater emphasis on concepts from economics than previous syllabi. I think that's sensible. It is a fact of life that students need to be economically literate to participate in the world of the twenty-first century.*

*The curriculum also emphasises some of the skills required in the workplace – decision-making, critical and creative thinking, communication and co-operation. It also places emphasis on individual responsibility and in taking responsibility for one's own actions* (Lockwood Smith, 1994).

Recent developments within social studies together with the institutional location of the Draft writers also had a significant influence on the ideological framework of the document which emerged. Within the social studies movement, the previous two decades had seen the growing influence of bi-culturalism and feminism, especially through the various FACES documents produced by the Department of Education. The conviction that that young women could break down gender prejudices to forge new career paths together with an emphasis on a "Herstory" version of New Zealand history had thus already become an established tradition within social studies. The fact that these gains could be made without necessarily threatening the existing socioeconomic structure undoubtedly made liberal feminism a more viable choice for the writing team than either radical or socialist feminism.

More controversially, as it turned out, the Draft writing team opted for a model of bi-culturalism then being advanced by radical land activists with the support of some social anthropologists (Spoonley, 1993). This view focused exclusively on relations between two distinct cultural entities, Maori (the indigenous people of New Zealand) and Pakeha (the Maori name for settlers of British descent). By contrast, social class and regional differences within these groupings were downplayed. As a result the Draft presented a highly politicized depiction of "Pakeha-ness" which required a sort of moral initiation into post-colonial realities, leading to an acknowledgment of personal responsibility for righting historical and contemporary injustices to Maori. Any ‘confession’ was to come ultimately from the soul, as the result of a process perhaps not dissimilar to contemporary
religious revivalism. It is noteworthy that this particular model of bi-culturalism did not directly challenge the notion of creating a hard-working and loyal workforce through social studies education which was a priority for legitimating the Government's free-market policies. Indeed, in its strong discouragement of any class analysis and in its focus on individual guilt as a motivation for action, it had the potential to be utilized as a powerful pillar in support of this goal.

The fact that these two particular models of culture and of history were selected rather than any other competing versions (Openshaw et al., 1993) can also be viewed in the context of the writing team's institutional location. The contract to write a curriculum statement was let jointly to the Auckland and Christchurch Colleges of Education. As institutions, colleges are strategically sited between classroom and university. Arguably, colleges attempt to link the two through offering courses in which research knowledge is pre-selected, then prepackaged for delivery to teachers (Openshaw, 1996b). Viewed in this way, colleges are constructivist vortexes. To extend this analogy, the widest opening of the vortex might be said to suck in research findings. Within the vortex these findings are processed and refined until the appropriate variants are finally presented at the focal end for professional consumption.

Another factor to be borne in mind when considering the draft statements concerns the environment beyond the formal policy-making apparatus. Here during the early 1990s, powerful new newcomers had appeared which reflected the growing willingness of business interests to directly influence curriculum. The Education Forum, a new and influential education lobby group formed under the auspices of the New Zealand Business Roundtable, was actively promoting privatization and competition in education. Along with this agenda and to some extent in conflict with it, the Forum was also campaigning vigorously for the fostering of traditional Western individual and family values, cultural identity, and academic excellence through schooling (Dawson, 1991). As far as social studies was concerned, the Forum sought to protect the traditional secondary school disciplines from the twin evils of constructivism and cultural relativism whilst at the same time advocating that students gain an informed appreciation of the benefits of modern capitalism. In addition to the Forum, the privately sponsored, Enterprise New Zealand Trust was promoting Enterprise Studies for schools centered on a kit designed to promote closer school-industry links. Beginning in 1993 with a handful of schools, the Trust was able to claim that by 1995 at least 90 per cent of New Zealand utilized one or more of the Trust's services. By now some 155 New Zealand schools offered Enterprise Studies, and the Trust looked forward to being increasingly involved in the training of teachers (Enterprise New Zealand Trust, 1995). The Trust envisaged
social studies as the ideal vehicle through which students could be made to appreciate the supposed advantages which had flowed from the post-1984 economic reforms.

The final factor was the combination of urgency required by the Minister of Education and the strict timeline necessitated by the contractual process. Together, these necessitated the extremely rapid development of a new social studies curriculum which was to span the entire schooling period, from entry until the final high school year. A Policy Advisory Group drawn from primary and secondary schools, university schools of education and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority was set up by the Minister, meeting for the first time in late 1993. Some eight months were allocated to writing, during which three coordinating writers selected a further group of eleven writers and the expanded team produced several working documents (O'Rourke, 1994).

This sub-contracting had the effect of further obscuring the process as well as blurring the lines of ultimate responsibility for the Draft. Consultation was essentially limited to those who largely shared the views of the writing team. Potential critics who did not share the ideology of the writers were effectively excluded. In response to his requests for information Michael Irwin, a policy analyst for the New Zealand Business Roundtable, was told that the analyses and implications of the relevant literature were already well known to the team, the submissions duly considered, and the key points taken into account. No discussion papers were ever made available, leading Irwin to the conclusion that the Draft was considered by both the writers and the Ministry, to be self-evident and unproblematic (Irwin, 1996).

The Draft was officially released in December 1994. Unlike earlier social studies syllabuses, it was to run the gauntlet of public submissions. This exercise in public participation was, however, subject to a number of constraints. The time-frame for submissions was extremely brief given the Minister's desire for a rapid closure. Submissions were called for in mid-May 1995, with a deadline of 31 August. The call for submissions was largely restricted to advertisements in professional publications such as the Education Gazette. It is not, perhaps, surprising that schools and teachers featured prominently in the 150 submissions eventually received by the Ministry. Of these, the majority were from individual schools (72) or from groups of interested staff within schools. Most of the 27 submissions from organizations were from professional teachers organizations although other organizations, both government and private, were also represented. There were 43 individual responses from teachers, together with a small number from the general public (Bassett, 1995). There was also an attempt to restrict the nature and extent of submissions. The 15 May edition of the Education Gazette contained specific recommenda-
tions on submission structure. Clearly intended for photocopying, by schools and teachers, the suggested two-page format comprised eleven headings under which comments were invited general aims of social studies, program organization, assessment, program planning, achievement objectives, learning contexts and settings, learning activities, Maori content and examples, gender, strengths and weaknesses, and overall opinion of the Draft Statement. Under each heading a series of questions carefully guided teachers and schools into considering minor and cosmetic suggestions aimed principally at improvements to the delivery of the framework and philosophy of social studies as outlined in the Draft, rather than the encouragement of any wider critique.

The Submissions

The submissions to the Draft included comprehensive, professionally produced monographs and handwritten paragraphs concentrating on a single issue. They ranged from outright rejection of the document, to wholehearted support for it. Some submissions, such as that of the Education Forum, made it clear that dropping the Draft entirely and replacing social studies with the traditional disciplines of history, geography, sociology and economics was the preferred option, at least as far as secondary schools were concerned. The Enterprise New Zealand Trust submission, together with a number of submissions from private schools and individuals, provided critiques which could have been met only by a substantial re-drafting of the document, incorporating a complete change of focus. Some submissions, such as that of the New Zealand Federation of Social Studies Associations (NZFSSA) together with a number of submissions from the NZFSSA's constituent regional bodies, saw strengths but also identified serious weaknesses. Conversely, a large proportion of submissions, including many from primary schools, simply stuck to the format provided and commented critically only on specific features of the draft. Whether this implied general satisfaction with the overall tenor of the Draft or a traditionally stoic desire to get on with the task in hand is difficult to say. Yet another group of submissions, especially those from the Draft writers and from some colleges of education, appeared to be well satisfied with the Draft as it was. The diversity of contemporary views on the nature and purpose of social studies is underlined by the fact that some 74 of the submissions, nearly half of the total, went beyond the simple mechanics of curriculum design and construction. The most passionate debate was reserved for the indoctrination issue centering on what knowledge and values the syllabus should prescribe for good future citizens. One critic contended that the Draft was not new in placing socialization at the cen-
ter of learning, with academic knowledge relegated to a secondary consideration. He alleged that he had written to the then Prime Min-
ister Geoffrey Palmer in May 1990, to complain that the old social stud-
ies syllabus was left-wing political propaganda. It should be recog-
nized, however, that this particular controversy debate dates back to
the introduction of social studies to New Zealand schools in the mid-
1940s, and also dogged the teaching of history prior to World War
Two (Openshaw, 1979).

Allegations of indoctrination focused on three main concerns:
the neglect of New Zealand’s European heritage, the use of the term “
Pakeha”, and the extent to which the language and content of the docu-
ment reflected an unacceptable degree of political correctness. Fre-
quently these concerns were linked to the issue of academic standards,
All were taken up in some detail by the Education Forum’s submis-
sion, the largest and arguably the most compellingly argued. The
Forum’s submission was prepared with the assistance of Dr. Geoffrey
Partington, a sociologist and historian from Flinders University, South
Australia. In many respects the arguments advanced by Partington
display a general similarity to some contemporary British critics of
the National Curriculum, particularly those of Professor Kenneth
Minogue. In summary the submission claimed that:

(a) Social studies allowed for little quality or depth of
knowledge. The skills presented in the draft possessed
no intellectual coherence for students (Education Fo-
rum, 1995, pp. 30-32), and the subject was, “...a seduc-
tive smorgasbord” which substituted passion about
contemporary issues for the rigours of traditional sub-
ject disciplines (Education Forum, 1995 p. 45),

(b) Political passion and constructivist leanings on the part
of the Draft writers facilitated the indoctrination of stu-
dents into politically correct attitudes (Education Fo-
rum, 1995, pp. 19-25; 45), especially in the case of bi-
culturalism and gender issues. The price was the ma-
ipulation of history through highly selective case stud-
ies, the deliberate omission of conflicting evidence, and
the downgrading of Western culture and values (Edu-

(c) The Draft encouraged moral absolutism in the case of
indigenous people’s customs and traditions but fos-
tered moral relativism when dealing with Western val-
ues with the intention of creating an intellectual
vacuum into which the writers could instill their own
values, based on one particular interpretation of New Zealand's history and contemporary society (Education Forum, 1995, pp. 15-18).

The Forum's preferred option was for schools to abandon social studies altogether and teach social science disciplines such as history, geography, economics and sociology as separate disciplinary entities. If this proved politically inadvisable, then social studies had to be saved from sliding into 'social therapy,' and given intellectual rigor and coherence based on relevant knowledge and skills, taught by teachers specifically trained in history and geography. Those students who so chose should be permitted to substitute traditional disciplinary based courses (Education Forum, 1995, pp. 49-50).

While the Forum desired a more sympathetic treatment of capitalism and individualism, including some mention of why the Soviet Union and other communist states had collapsed, this particular theme was accorded a relatively minor place in its submission. This was certainly not the case with the submission of Enterprise New Zealand Trust. Not surprisingly perhaps, given the overall focus of the Trust's educational activities, its submission was centered on the Draft's alleged failure to teach key economic concepts. The Trust argued that as future citizens, students should be taught to recognize that, "competition encourages efficiency in the allocation of resources, and in the long run leads to the removal of privileges as compared with a non-competitive economic system," that the environment would be better cared for "under competitive market conditions where property rights and incentives exist than under a command economy," that "investment (was) the engine for growth" (Enterprise New Zealand Trust, 1995).

This view did not receive particularly strong support, although a number of submissions by secondary economics teachers were critical of the treatment of economics in the Draft. These, however, tended to concentrate on an alleged lack of precision in economic terminology rather than on the merits or otherwise of a market-orientated approach to economics. The New Zealand Commerce and Economics Teachers Association listed some strengths and weaknesses, but conceded that the Draft Statement and the 1990 Economics Syllabus could comfortably co-exist in the lower secondary school. In fact, one of the most noteworthy and indeed surprising features of both the Draft and Revised Draft submissions was the lack of response from those individuals and groups who held radically different views on economic philosophy and organization.

The Trust struck a far more popular theme when it turned to the question of indoctrination. Under the heading, "Education versus indoctrination", the Trust defined indoctrination as the use of vocabulary, terminology and contexts that could counteract the main educa-
tional objective of developing amongst the young, "...those attributes and skills and knowledge to take their part as responsible and creative members of society". The way the Draft Statement dealt with bi-cultural issues and particularly the use of the term Pakeha, was therefore crucial to citizenship:

The question is, what does Pakeha mean? Certainly it should be used consistently, and we cannot see much educational value in using it to refer to all non-Maori as if they were a unified group (pp. 7, 10-11, 52) (Enterprise New Zealand Trust, 1995, pp. 7; 10-11; 52).

Regardless of whether they were opposed or supportive of its use, nearly all of those submissions who commented on the use of the term "Pakeha" appear to have been aware of its political implications. One individual submission complained bitterly; "I liken this word to the American used 'Nigger'"; adding that the term had in the writer's view become derogative, emotive and ambiguous. Others, while less obviously upset, nevertheless wondered who the term actually referred to. One school economics adviser observed that "when the definition of Pakeha is clear, we can think about what is meant by Pakeha culture." Some concern was also evident among social studies specialists. The staff of the Social Studies Department, Palmerston North College of Education, argued that the use of the term Pakeha was not inclusive enough of the nature of New Zealand society as it now existed. The Social Sciences Department of the Correspondence School, Wellington, conceded that there was considerable division amongst staff over the use of the term with some arguing that the definition was an imposed one which ignored multicultural realities and others claiming that it simply acknowledged the legitimate place of Maori as tangata whenua; the first people of the land.

The Trust also criticized the use of the term "Aotearoa-New Zealand" on the grounds that, officially speaking, there was no such country. This view attracted support particularly from teachers within the country's more traditionally academic secondary schools. A teacher at the Francis Douglas Memorial College found its use, "irritating and excessively politically correct A senior staff member at Auckland Grammar was one of several critics who observed that Aotearoa-New Zealand was not an officially recognized name and that it was not valid for the social studies curriculum to be used as a means of politicization in this way. The relationship between bi-culturalism and multiculturalism was also an issue with some submissions arguing that the latter concept had been subordinated to the former.

Teachers themselves varied considerably in both their own reactions to the Draft, and in their perceptions of their colleague's reac-
tions. Some claimed that the document had been well received by the teachers they worked with. Others alleged that the planners had bowed to political pressure and that there existed virtually no teacher sympathy for the draft. On the whole, secondary teachers were, given their greater allegiance to disciplinary specialization, much more inclined to be critical of the Draft than their primary colleagues. A number of submissions from teachers and from social studies specialists expressed concerns not altogether dissimilar to that emanating from the Forum or the Trust, although these criticisms were on the whole couched in milder tones. A four page submission from NZFSSA made a systematic attempt to reflect the diverse views of its membership whilst acknowledging that many intended making their own individual submissions. The Federation considered the document, “to be a promising statement going in the right direction but one that needs a considerable amount of tidying up in particular areas.” The achievement objectives were too general and needed to be made more specific to give teachers guidance for planning and assessment (NZFSSA, 1995, pp. 3.1.1; 3.1.2). There was a lack of focus on Europe in particular, as well as Australia, America and Africa. Cultures needed to be considered in their own terms rather than exclusively in the context of New Zealand’s relationship to them (NZFSSA, 1995, pp. 3.1.3; 3.1.4). Decision making and critical thinking skills were muddled. There was a lack of emphasis on inquiry and research skills. Some members felt the learning activities to be extremely “lightweight” and too numerous, resulting in a very “bitsy” social studies program (NZFSSA, pp. 3.1.4; 3.1.5; 3.1.6).

In their own submissions, the Draft writers sought to defend themselves. One submission asserted that, “There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that this document can provide classroom practitioners and others with the base they need to be more forward”. Another believed that “many of the suggested ‘improvements’ (were) already possible within the existing structure”. A further submission argued that the use of Aotearoa/New Zealand and reiteration of the phrase, “women, men and children” in the Draft reflected a positive stance on gender issues. Generally speaking, social studies staffs working within colleges of education not amalgamated with universities were more supportive of the Statement, particularly in regards to its bi-cultural and New Zealand focus, than were other groups.

The Debate Amplified

From a relatively early stage in the process, the Government proved extremely sensitive to the spectra of a free-for-all public debate over the question of indoctrination in social studies. This was foreshadowed by Education Minister Lockwood Smith’s address to
the Annual Conference of the New Zealand Social Studies Federations, in July 1995. Still mindful of the recent controversy over the science curriculum, the Minister re-affirmed the Government’s commitment to the promotion, through social studies, of economic literacy and workplace skills. He strongly rejected any suggestion that social studies should be replaced by traditional subject disciplines such as history, geography and economics, dismissing claims that it was impossible to set clear, measurable objectives or rigorous standards (Lockwood Smith, 1995, p.10).

The Minister did, however, stress the necessity for social studies objectives that were sufficiently clear so as not to be open to different interpretations by different teachers. Citing a recent and extensively reported controversy over cultural safety in polytechnic nursing courses, he complained that, “Critics of the Government’s curriculum reforms are only too willing to latch onto one wacky idea, buried deep in a curriculum statement to lampoon and undermine confidence in the whole reform process.”

Now there are people, especially on talk-back radio, who would argue that indigenous people have no special rights. Others, might argue that indigenous people have exclusive rights, but they just haven’t asserted them fully. So the danger with suggesting that students will develop a theory about ‘why indigenous people ... are asserting their rights’, is that it may be interpreted as promoting a particular view of an issue which, for better or worse, is still being debated (Lockwood Smith, 1995, p.12).

Clearly, the Minister was seeking to distance the Government from the position on bi-culturalism adopted by the Draft writers. Meanwhile, the critics were gathering force. In August 1995 the Education Forum released its own submission to the press, and offered it for sale to the public. The role of the media in defining the terms of subsequent debate was to be crucial. Despite the range of submissions, the Forum submission received by far the most media attention, to the virtual exclusion of any other point of view. Media coverage was also highly selective, focusing largely on the more “sensational” aspects of the Forum’s case. In September 1995 the Evening Post ran a feature provocatively entitled, “Once were cannibals.” Prominence was given to the Forum’s claim that the Draft Statement attempted to re-dress past injustices by offering a sanitized version of Maori culture which omitted references to such practices as cannibalism, whilst shamefully neglecting the country’s British heritage (Evening Post, September 1995, p.5). Other comments were to prove even more damaging. An article in the Nelson Times by Agnes-Mary Brooke, a Nelson-
based freelance writer, spoke of a crippled curriculum, taught by academically inferior teachers and turning out students who knew very little about anything substantive:

An intellectually inferior blueprint, the Social Studies Curriculum Draft is shockingly third-rate. It reads like the mentally-light-weight construct of a country which has become an educational disaster area. Ideologically driven, the proposed curriculum is a highly selective document, suppressing or side-stepping the truth about important aspects of our history, and contributing to the cant and humbug to which we've been long subjected on social and cultural issues (Nelson Times, 17 October, 1995).

Even before the submission process was complete, the Draft’s supporters were rallying to its defense. One supporter argued that the statement was “a balanced, educationally defensible document, giving coherence to learning and ownership to teachers.” It was “inclusive of our British heritage, despite reports from the Education Forum to the contrary.” Others were critical of the media’s role. The editor of the New Zealand Journal of Social Studies, Hugh Barr, observed that, “Journalists seized on the most sensational aspects - and there were plenty to choose from.” Barr thought the Forum’s critique to be more of an attack on social studies as a discipline than on the Draft as such.” Barr believed the Draft to be salvable, although many teachers desired a tighter content structure, more carefully thought out social studies skills, and more emphasis on European heritage (Barr, 1995, pp. 42-43).

Politically speaking, however, the Draft had been already been dealt a death-blow. Lockward Smith was by now replaced, and the new Minister of Education, the Hon. Wyatt Creech, asked the Ministry to commission a redraft and to invite further public comment. One commentator later claimed that NZFSSA had been unhappy with the process followed by the Ministry following the first round of submissions. It had not been invited to speak to its submission even though three other groups had been. The rewriting process was subsequently conducted in a climate of secrecy, with minimal and highly selective consultation. Moreover, decisions were taken on the Revised Draft after the Ministry’s own advisory group had been disbanded (Keown, 1996, p.3), Some indication of Ministry embarrassment at being caught in this sort of crossfire was evident in subsequent attempts by the Ministry to downplay any suggestion of conspiracy or secrecy in the development of the Revised Draft.

The Revised Draft appeared in mid-1996. In the Foreword, Acting Secretary for Education, Lyall Perris, claimed that the document
was now “presented in a more concise, user-friendly, and accessible format.” Achievement objectives were made more specific and the section on skills reformulated to include more on research and inquiry skills. The controversial heritage strand with its bi-cultural focus was retained, but the terms “Pakeha” and “Aotearoa-New Zealand” were dropped from the document except where passages from the New Zealand Curriculum Framework were being cited. Some attempts were made to develop “understandings of European cultures and of the influence of European heritages on the nature of society in New Zealand.” The deadline for public submissions was set for 31 October 1996, and it was optimistically claimed that the aim was to finalize the curriculum statement for publication in early 1997.

If the Ministry and the Government had hoped the Revised Draft would enjoy a clear passage they were to be sadly mistaken. Even before the date for the submissions had closed, the battle lines were being drawn which would lead to its demise. In July 1996, Kelvin Smythe a prominent social studies teacher and educational commentator laid an official complaint with the Race Relations Conciliator alleging that the new draft was racist and would impede race relations rather than improve them (New Zealand Educational Review, 24-30 July, 1996). In August the New Zealand Educational Review claimed that teachers were divided over the revisions. The Review reported the HOD Social Studies at Aotea College who was unhappy because, “key elements in New Zealand’s history, such as the concept of colonization and its impact on indigenous peoples, were missing,” and the Head of Social Sciences at Burnside High School, who liked the new document because it was “balanced and objective,” and was easier to implement (New Zealand Educational Review, 8-14 August 1996). During the same month, Reg Lockstone, a long standing critic of social studies, contended that the subject had always been concocted by people with little accurate knowledge of the accepted academic disciplines, but with considerable interest in tinkering with people’s personalities (New Zealand Educational Review, 30 August – 5 September 1996). This article drew a caustic response from Barr who retorted that social studies teachers educated for democratic citizenship rather than blind subservience, and that most critiques of social studies had formulated ideas of what the subject was without even bothering to find out if they were true (New Zealand Educational Review, 20-26 September 1996). In October 1996 the Christchurch Press cited the view of a former senior lecturer in social studies at the Christchurch College of Education that the Revised Draft was a sanitized and politically correct document (Christchurch Press, 16 October 1996).

Subsequent submissions to the Second Draft merely confirmed the polarization of opinion that had taken place in the period between the decision to rewrite the Draft and the date on which submissions to

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the Revised Draft closed. The Draft’s most severe critics were very far from being satisfied. The Education Forum’s submission on the Revised Draft, released to the Press on 2 December 1996, claimed that it represented little improvement on the original. There was no adequate rationale for social studies, it lacked a coherent plan for skills development or assessment. Maori culture and traditions were to be unquestioningly admired whilst European ones were under-represented or critiqued. The failure to provide a systematic historical treatment of Maori or British societies or of gender relations encouraged an ideologically inspired molding of student’s ideas. The project was denounced as being too flawed to salvage. It was “a political wolf in educational sheep’s clothing” (Education Forum, 1996, pp. xii-xv). The accompanying press release statement accused the Ministry of having no real interest in following up any analyses that questioned its own preconceptions.

The Forum’s second submission sparked off a further round of response and counter-response. On 5 December an editorial in The Press argued that the Forum had rightly recommended the latest Draft be rejected or at the very least made non-compulsory, adding that this might be “...all the defense available against the politically correct who seem to have captured the process of curriculum review” (The Press, 5 December 1996). On 8 December the Dominion summarized the Forum’s views under the heading, “Social Studies Plan a Failure” (“Social studies plan,” 1996). Social studies supporters were quick to respond. Only a day after the Dominion’s summary, The Press reported NZFSSA President Paul Keown as saying that teachers, “opposed the direction in which the Forum was trying to move social education,” and that the previous bi-cultural emphasis had been so watered down it was now insufficient for schools to meet their Charter obligations (“New curriculum defended,” 1996). On 14 December the Southland-Times alleged that Southland teachers were “hotly opposing” Forum claims that social studies was not a real subject and should be scrapped (McKay, 1996). A number of supporters alleged that the Ministry had caved in to pressure from the Education Forum and the New Right.

Lessons From The Debate

By early 1997, with the debate still raging in the press, the Ministry was left with three difficult options. a). It could have taken the radical step of abandoning social studies altogether. This would have meant tacitly accepting one of the Forum’s main contentions. In addition to incurring the hostility of the teachers’ organizations, it would have run contrary to the Curriculum Framework already embraced by both Ministry and Government. b). It could have passed the whole issue over to the politicians. This would have had the dubious advan-
tage of absolving the Ministry of responsibility. This option, however, would have created a political minefield for a Government whose own membership had a tradition of skepticism regarding the value of social studies but whose parliamentary majority nevertheless depended on the goodwill of several Maori parliamentarians. c). It could have let the contract for a third, revised social studies curriculum document. It was this option that the Ministry eventually took up.

The obvious danger with this third option was that any new document would likely be regarded as a sell out by supporters and critics alike. The Ministry took steps to avoid this by commissioning a report. A team from the Social, Physical and Health Education Department of the School of Education, University of Waikato was invited to furnish the Ministry with "a clear rationale for social studies". Commenting on this development, the *New Zealand Education Review* observed that such a paper "would return to square one, analyzing the purpose of social studies, what should be taught and how it should be taught" (*New Zealand Educational Review*, 23 January 1997).

One major outcome of the fierce debate which accompanied the first two draft social studies statements was a precipitate retreat from the threat of further controversy. The third and apparently definitive curriculum statement was finally launched in October 1997 at a deliberately low-key ceremony within the Minister of Education's own electorate. The final document was much shorter than the first two draft statements. Topic prescription was generally avoided, and goals were so broadly stated that they engendered little disagreement (Ross, 1996). By leaving the details largely up to teachers and schools, the new curriculum document attempted to export residual tensions downwards, sparing Ministry and government from further embarrassment. In 1998, however, the Ministry published a teachers' guide to the new curriculum which incorporated at least some of the suggestions made by the writers of the original Draft Statement (*N. Z. Ministry of Education*, 1998). This document has apparently slipped by the critics comparatively unnoticed for the time being.

The controversy over New Zealand social studies clearly demonstrates the severe difficulties inherent in producing centralized curricula which attempt to combine any forms of citizenship transmission, liberal, radical or conservative, with genuinely reflective inquiry (Ross, 1997). The first draft statement writers extolled the virtues of open-ended inquiry and discussion, whilst attempting to create a new type of school-leaver, sympathetic to bi-cultural and feminist viewpoints in so far as these could be made compatible with the economic objectives of the neoliberal state that had emerged from the mid-1980s. The Education Forum was highly critical of indoctrination in the Draft, but its own alternative suggestions were somewhat reminiscent of the now largely forgotten 1929 history syllabus. This was a controversial
document for its time, which attracted fierce criticism from both conservatives and socialists because of its allegedly indoctrinative content. Encapsulating a further fundamental problem one critic, after attacking the Draft for being indoctrinative, went on to concede that social studies was not a discipline at all but a school course with specific outcomes for young school leavers. Compounding these difficulties was the greatly expanded number of submissions from influential single agenda organizations such as Enterprise New Zealand Trust, and Asia 2000. These clearly demonstrated sectional perceptions that social studies should indeed be the vehicle through which appropriate messages to young people be conveyed. Given all these constraints and dichotomies, there seems little prospect that reflective inquiry will ever receive anything more than pious lip-service in New Zealand social studies.

Notes
1 The Treaty of Waitangi was signed by the representative of the British Crown, Captain Hobson, R. N., and about 50 Maori chiefs at the Bay of Islands on 6 February 1840. The Treaty eventually included about 500 signatures from all around the country. It provided for British annexation of New Zealand including the surrender of Maori sovereignty. In return the Treaty extended to Maori the rights and privileges of British subjects. It also granted them full possession of their lands, estates, forests, fisheries and other properties. What all this means in the context of late twentieth century New Zealand society is fiercely and at times bitterly debated.

2 This figure does not include eight short letters, some of which contain the promise of a later submission, but which make very brief reference to matters of concern. I have elected not to include these as full submissions. The figure of 150 also includes a batch of 20 submissions from a third-year social studies class at the School of Education, University of Waikato, treated here as a single submission.

3 In the interests of privacy and readability, I have referenced only the submissions prepared by the Education Forum, Enterprise New Zealand Trust, and the New Zealand Federation of Social Studies Associations. All submissions, published and unpublished, are currently held by the New Zealand Ministry of Education.

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Creating A Future For History Within South Africa's Curriculum 2005

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Abstract
The new democratic dispensation in South Africa since 1994 has necessitated the development of a new approach to history as a school subject in the framework of the recently inaugurated Curriculum 2005. The new education authorities regard history as one of the keys to a new social and political dispensation, especially in view of its abuse during the apartheid era. This article briefly covers history curriculum development during the pre-1994 apartheid era, and also the various efforts since 1994 to ensure the development and future of a history curriculum suitable for the new democracy in South Africa. Two problem areas are discussed, viz. the role of the Government in these efforts and the constraints of integrating history into the Curriculum 2005 learning program.

Introduction
Since the end of apartheid in 1994, South Africa has been undergoing dynamic political, social, economic and other changes. The teaching of history as a school subject and as an academic discipline (one of the key elements in the future evolution of the new democratic dispensation) has undergone some radical changes (Van Eeden, 1994, 1997; Gunning, 1997; Pretorius, 1996).

The new education authorities correctly regard the different provincial Departments of Education of the pre-1994 apartheid period as having been autocratic white, Eurocentric entities. The National Department of Education (DE) has consequently undertaken several structural reforms to rectify the situation. Despite such reform efforts, the history curricula for South African schools had still, by 1998 (i.e. in the post-apartheid dispensation), all been developed by specialists from former apartheid departments or by persons contracted by them. There has, nonetheless, been a clear drive during the past five years for the reinterpretation and revitalization of history curricula, which has given rise to numerous discussions about curriculum reform and
construction and also to various new curriculum development structures. Certain aspects of this initiative have been questioned and rejected as controversial, emotional and even as regression to the apartheid past. Debates about the “how and what” and the future of the history part of the newly created Curriculum 2005 learning area “Human and Social Science” have, in some instances, reached such intensity that there is a danger that recent developments in history curriculum construction (as well as its implications for teaching methods and historiography) elsewhere in the world, might be overlooked.

A description of the problems besetting the fields of historiography, curriculum development and history teaching in schools in a society evolving towards a democratic dispensation, may be of some value to other societies finding themselves in similar situations. The discussion in the following sections of this article therefore has a two-fold purpose:

- To briefly outline South African historiography and its influence on the history curriculum in schools in the periods 1652-1993 (i.e. the colonial period and subsequent apartheid phase) and post-1994 (the post-apartheid phase), and

- To discuss a few selected issues in creating a future for history within South Africa’s Curriculum 2005 (1994-2000).

**South African Historiography And Its Effect On History Curriculum Processes—The Period Up To 1993**

Throughout the three and a half centuries of European involvement in South Africa (1652-1998), history has always formed part of the formal school curriculum. The area, now known as the southern and eastern parts of South Africa, was occupied by Dutch colonists (1652) followed by French (1685), British (1795 and 1820) and German (1830) settlers. Their settlements gradually spread into the northern areas, encroaching on black tribal territory, resulting in the economic, cultural and political dominance of the Blacks (cf., Wilson & Thompson, 1982).

By the mid-nineteenth century, three history curricula were used in schools, one for the two British colonies (the Cape and Natal, which mainly featured British history), one for the Republic of the Orange Free State and one for the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (both mainly featuring the white Voortrekker struggle for independence from British rule). Schools in the two British colonies (Cape Colony and Natal) as well as in the two Boer republics (to the west and north of the British colonies) were under-resourced, unsophisticated and lacked quali-
fied teachers. Consequently, instruction in the school subject history was restricted to informal oral communication.

From the arrival of the first Europeans in 1652 up to 1953, missionaries provided "formal" education for Blacks. As far as could be ascertained, the missionaries gave no formal instruction in history as a school subject (Behr, 1984; Chernis, 1991; Van der Walt, 1991). Education, such as it was for these groups, was also unsophisticated and largely restricted to oral instruction.

After the unification of the two former British colonies and the two Boer republics in 1910, school structures became more formal and centralized. The three history curricula for Whites were merged into one, reflecting a broad European and especially Afrikaner Nationalist perspective: on the one hand the struggle for freedom from the British, and on the other, the struggle for identity in the midst of the black majority. Education for Blacks was, however, still excluded from the formal education structures of government and was regarded as something to be taken care of by missionaries.

1948 was a watershed-year: the government voted into power by the white minority in that year espoused apartheid ideals, such as separateness on the basis of race, ethnicity and color, and their concomitant historiographical perspectives (Van Jaarsveld, 1984, 1992). Technical and career oriented education for Blacks, mainly for the Labor market, was another of the 1948 National Party government's educational foci (Van der Walt). From 1953 onwards, the apartheid government also took control of education for Blacks, though still as a separate subsystem. In many respects, the political ideologies of the ruling party and of those opposing it, were mirrored in the historiography and history methodology of the day. The perspectives of those white historians, belonging among others, to the British Settler School, the Afrikaner Nationalists and the English as well as the Afrikaner liberals, were reflected in the history curricula.

Government policy, and the manner in which it was implemented, gave rise to widespread dissatisfaction and unrest among Blacks, as well as among a number of liberal-radical Whites (Marks & Trapido, 1987). The history curriculum prescribed for schools for Blacks came under heavy fire. One point of criticism was that the history curriculum in schools for Blacks was restricted to events up to 1948, whereas in schools for Whites, historical events up to the 1970s were included. Needless to say, the history syllabus for Whites, in its coverage of the period after 1948, dealt mainly with facets of Afrikaner nationalism and the policies of the ruling National Party (Chernis, 1991; Pells, 1970; Van den Berg & Buckland, 1982).

In the 1970s, a decidedly radical revisionist perspective on the history of the country and its peoples gained momentum (cf., Smith, 1988; Van Jaarsveld, 1984). In many ways, liberal and radical perspec-
tives propounded the political ideals of Blacks; radicals also objected to the living conditions of black people as well as to the discriminatory practices to which they were subjected by the apartheid regime (Marks & Trapido, 1987).

Gradual political reform in South Africa since the early 1980s brought about changes in the history curriculum, rendering it somewhat more inclusive and democratically oriented towards the South African past. The 1990s were characterized by a rather stormy process of trying to effect further, more radical, changes in the history curriculum. A plethora of curriculum committees, history conferences, workshops and discussions involving all role players (historians, education departments, parents and non-governmental organizations) took place (Maylam, 1995; Saunders, 1991; Tempelhoff, 1996, 1998). While these events transpired, various historians and history teachers ventured into creating and compiling culturally and ideologically diverse materials for use in future textbooks, without any guarantee that these materials would be utilized (Harris, 1996; Siebörger & Reid, 1995). Many of the proposals of the various history committees, created by the different Departments of Education (i.e. one national and nine provincial) and/or the various forums since 1985, were not adopted but were academically instructive and stimulated debate.

Some Issues In History Curriculum Development In A Changing South Africa (1994-1999)

Historians are aware that situations such as the one described here virtually bristle with issues, controversy and even occasional flash points. The creation and adaptation of a history curriculum in an ever changing situation that would be approved by the various constituents, is not simple and straightforward. From a multitude of issues, only two have been selected for discussion in this article, viz. the role of the new democratic government in the drafting of a history curriculum for schools, and how history as a school subject (up to Grade 9) and learning program (Grades 10-12 and levels 1-5 of the Higher Education and Training phase) can be retained and integrated into the umbrella structure called Curriculum 2005.

The New Democracy And A History Curriculum, 1994-1996

The history curriculum for schools was more extensively debated than ever before during the period 1994-1998. In 1994, the Subcommittee for history of the (national) Department of Education produced an in-depth report proposing various changes to the curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1994). The findings and recommendations of this Subcommittee were not well received by the History Task Team of the ruling African National Congress (ANC). The History Task Team criticized the Department of Education for appointing a Subcommittee
consisting of white middle-aged men who did not possess broad historical expertise (Reid & Siebörger, 1995). "Reputable" English-speaking black scholars were not represented on the departmental committee (CEPD, 1994).

In contrast, the ANC’s History Task Team, consisting of nine members, appeared to represent all the cultural, gender and academic sections of the South African population. No academic specialists from the historically white Afrikaans and dual-medium (Afrikaans and English) universities were included, however.

The ANC Government then formed another structure, the National Education and Training Forum (NETF), to replace all other curriculum development structures existing at the time. Committees were set up under the auspices of the NETF to review curricula and to process all the submissions by the public and a wide spectrum of organizations/institutions after August 1994 (cf., Carl, 1995; Reid & Siebörger, 1995). It was also requested to react to public submissions, after an invitation to all stakeholders by the Minister of Education in September 1994 (Ministry of Education, 1995; cf., Reid and R. Siebörger, 1995). The NETF Committee for History commenced a process of “cleansing” the history syllabi from all discriminating and incriminating content (NETF, 1995), such as:

• the narrow Afrikaner Nationalist or Eurocentric view of the past;
• the historical interpretation found in textbooks which determined the curriculum practice in South African schools, and
• the unavailability of new methodologies to ensure that educators teach critical thinking. (Lowrey, 1996)

On the basis of submissions, the NETF History Subcommittee made recommendations concerning (i) changes to the curricula of the different school subjects, especially with regard to those themes which dealt with pre-colonial and pre-industrial South Africa, the life-styles of the inhabitants of South Africa, slavery, the movement of indigenous peoples in the nineteenth century, the establishment of the Union of South Africa, the road to democracy (1970-1994), traditional medicine, the independent African states and ii) the development of criteria against which textbooks could be evaluated and texts scrutinized (Reid & Siebörger, 1995).

This NETF Subcommittee also drafted guidelines for changing the history curriculum for schools. Its recommendations were referred to the different national education structures for approval, further processing and eventual implementation. However, many of these reprocessed recommendations were later widely criticized as either ill-conceived or not a true reflection of the original recommendations
adopted by the NETF’s History Subcommittee (Kapp, 1997; Reid & Siebörger, 1995).

The original recommendations of the History Subcommittee focused on the adaptation of textbooks to conform to the Interim Core Syllabi, and also on the provision of support material for educators. Efforts to provide such materials aroused much dissatisfaction amongst experts (Lowrey, 1996; Reid & Siebörger, 1995) who had been excluded from the processes. Not all the members of the History Subcommittee were regarded as sufficiently academically trained to prepare source materials for the new topics suggested for the Interim Core Syllabus.

Amidst all this controversy, two history societies in South Africa, viz. the South African Historical Society (SAHS) and the South African Society for History Teaching (SASHT), commenced transforming themselves by organizing a joint conference from 10 to 12 January 1996. This conference was of some significance, since both these historically Eurocentric societies committed themselves to change and renewal. This effort resulted in the election of executive committees for both societies, representing, more than ever, the ethnic and gender composition of the South African population.

Despite pressures for the creation of an altogether new national historical association for South Africa, because of the historical links that these two associations had with the Afrikaner Nationalist historiographic tradition, nothing to this effect was really done at the joint conference. Both historical societies opted for renewal from within and for incremental transformation.


The new national Department of Education (DE) has expressed its determination to apply all acknowledged procedures for curriculum construction. This includes recognizing universally accepted criteria for the formulation of educational objectives, content-wise and vocationally, for each subject, within certain time-frames (National Department of Education, 1995). In developing a new history curriculum a selected National Committee assisted the DE, especially in developing the support material to be used by history teachers in 1996-1997.

The process of drafting a new curriculum for schools commenced in August 1996. In the first phase, expert/specialist committees were appointed for each of the eight learning areas of Curriculum 2005. History formed part of the Social and Human Science learning area. However, it soon became evident that history could also form part of several of the other learning areas. The learning area committees made recommendations in the form of a draft report for each area, which the DE refined in February 1997. At the time of writing this article,
learning programs for the Foundational and the General Education and Training (GET) phases (the first 9 years of schooling) have been developed.

The bodies/committees involved in the standard-setting and the learning program-planning processes are now more representative of all sections of the population than was the case three to four years ago. It is, however, doubtful that all the required skills have been included (see the concerns raised later in this subsection).

It is also possible that history as a separate subject will disappear. It has already been integrated into the learning area Social and Human Science. The DE, via its National Standard Bodies (NSB’s) and Standard Generating Bodies (SGB’s), seems determined to shift the focus from a subject-based approach to an integrated approach to education and training, as well as from a content-based approach to an outcomes-based one (Gunning, 1997; Iona, 1996; National Department of Education, 1997). By August 1999 the status of History in Curriculum 2005 was as follows:

In the General Education and Training phase (grades 1 to 9), history is combined with other disciplines such as Geography and Economy to form a learning area “Social and Human Science”. Historical events and issues are included for the purpose of providing learners with an historical perspective in the treatment of thematic issues. Several subfields, such as “Environmental Relations”, “People/ Human Centred Development” and “Rural and Agrarian Studies”, have been identified for the development of learning programs in the Further Education and Training Phase (grades 10 to 12). Other subfields will be added in due course. The subfield “Tradition, History and Legacy” seems to be targeted for further expansion and differentiation. While this can be welcomed because of the implied recognition of “history” in its universally accepted form, concern must also be expressed about the susceptibility of this and other subfields to ideological manipulation. By October 1999 a Standard Generating Body was in the process of being formed for this subfield and scheduled to have a first meeting in February 2000.

In the Higher Education and Training Phase (e.g. universities), as a result of the transformation that higher education institutions have undergone in the past five years in order to reflect the racial and gender composition of the country, history seems to be assured of a place both as a basic and as an applied science.

During all these developments, historians and history educators took every opportunity to air their concerns about the future status (with regard to content and position) of history teaching in Curriculum 2005 with the Minister of Education. The SAHS Executive, for instance, expressed its concern that “coherent but objectionable narratives will become accepted in practice because they will fill the void
left by the removal of the old history” (SAHS Newsletter, June 1998). It also warned against the danger of history content in future programs becoming linked to the ideological position of the new governing party in South Africa, i.e. socialism (O’Dows, 1991). Only time can tell whether lessons from the past have been sufficiently learned. South African history is witness to the fact that history teaching in schools can be patently one-sided, and can be abused for ideological purposes.

History, both as an academic field and as a cultural enterprise, is, of course, always closely connected with the world-view, the convictions, political affiliations, ideological sentiments and fundamental assumptions of the practitioner, whether he or she is an historian, a curriculum development expert or a teacher. “We believe that history is about conflicting interpretations; it is not merely a framework of static facts. All history is partial; knowledge is not fixed. There is no particular objective truth and values are not universal” (SAHS Newsletter, 1998).

It is extremely important for practitioners in the fields of historiography, curriculum development and history teaching to be aware of this, as well as of the universally recognized objectives of historiography, curriculum development theory and practice, and history teaching. Since personal and group sentiments cannot be fully eliminated or completely bracketed out during the historiographical, curriculum development or teaching-learning process, a careful rein has to be put on them, and any undue influence (such as prejudice, bias) should be avoided. The presence and role of a personal philosophy and basic life-view in the actions of the practitioner have to be recognized, and be allowed to play a carefully-regulated complementary role in the practicing of history as a subject/learning program/discipline within the framework of accepted educational teaching-learning principles (Van Jaarsveld, 1992; Viljoen, 1994).

The SASHT and the SAHS also raised concern about the fact that South African history in the “Human and Social Science” learning area is covered by only a single assessment criterion in the lower grades. This implies that educators can cover it only cursorily. The use of rather general program organizers, such as “living together”, makes it possible for practically any aspect of history to be included (or excluded). The curriculum also does not provide an adequate framework for learning content selection; it is left to school based planning to ensure that appropriate content is selected in order to achieve the prescribed outcomes. There is also no mechanism in Curriculum 2005 to prevent educators from teaching the same content year after year. Another shortcoming is the lack of reference to African and world history. The learning area “Human and Social Science” for grade 7 also contains too little history (Siebörger, 1999). It is furthermore an open question as to whether the Human Rights culture will inspire a
unifying vision (Mohamed, 1999)\(^7\) in the teaching of history (cf. Cuthbertson & Grundlingh, 1992; Legassick, 1998).

**Conclusion**

The recent curriculum reform processes in history as a school subject and as a learning area in Curriculum 2005 can only be beneficial to all South Africans if the cultural (ethnic, religious, language, etc.) diversity of the South African population is acknowledged in the choice of processes and content. History as subject or as a learning area, has for far too long in the history of South Africa, been abused for ideological purposes (in support of the apartheid ideology). The danger of a similar scenario in the “new” South Africa cannot be discounted. A certain lack of transparency in recent curriculum development processes is an early warning sign. Universally recognized teaching-learning principles are sometimes not sufficiently taken into consideration in providing vocational opportunities. Two other shortcomings are the overemphasis of a cross- and interdisciplinary approach to learning content, and the neglect of, for example, world history in the curricula for the Further Education and Training and Higher Education and Training phases (cf., Brooks, 1991; Frank, 1991). The non-inclusion of a dynamic generic skills approach to a balanced body of content is another potential problem (Van Eeden, 1998).

On the other hand, the outcomes based approach which is being propagated by the education authorities in South Africa, affords historians and history educators with new opportunities for promoting their field of expertise. Outcomes based education is replete with dynamic methodological facets and considerations, and mastery of them presents educators of history with a tough challenge. South African history educators, parents and learners have much to be enthusiastic about in the new curriculum.\(^8\)

**Notes**

1 An abridged and updated version of a paper presented at the ISCHE XVIII Conference, Krakow Pedagogical University, Poland, August 1996.

2 The emphasis in this article is on the history curriculum for two school phases: the General Education and Teaching (GET—Grades 1 to 9) and Further Education and Training (FET—Grades 10 to 12) phases.

3 “White” and “Black” are written with a capital letter when referring to a certain section of the South African population. When “white” or “black” is used as an adjective, lower case is used.

4 A distinction is made between “subject curriculum” and “school curriculum”. In this article, the term “curriculum” refers to the curriculum for history as a school subject, learning area or program. In some circles this is sometimes referred to as “the history syllabus”.

5 Information given here is based on a personal input and negotiations with Mr. Sazi Kunene of SAQA to act as facilitator for the newly proposed SGB in the sub field ‘Traditions, history and legacies’.
The SASHT (and the SAHS) is a Society which includes all constituents/role players. Since October 1998 Mr. Bruce Mohamed acted as chairperson.

It should be noted that the SASHT newsletter is the only national voice of this Society at the time of writing this article. A lack of funds and uncertainty among history practitioners led to the discontinuance of the Journal Yesterday and Today in 1997.

Compare recent concerns in this regard, that were mentioned by Kapp 1997 (editor of Yesterday and Today) in Historia and by Sieborger (1997), (chairman of the South African Society for History Teaching) in the SASHT Newsletter.

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Primary-Grade Students’ Knowledge and Thinking About Native American and Pioneer Homes

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Abstract
The traditional K-3 social studies curriculum has focused on cultural universals, including shelter. To gather information about children’s prior knowledge and thinking (including misconceptions) about historical aspects of this topic, individual interviews were conducted with 216 K-3 students, stratified according to grade, socio-economic status, achievement level, and gender. Analyses indicated that the students could describe certain formal aspects of Native American and pioneer homes, but they did not understand much about the historical, geographical, or cultural reasons for differences in housing styles. Advances in accuracy and completeness of knowledge were observed as students progressed through the K-3 range. Relationships with SES level, achievement level, and gender were much weaker and usually not statistically significant. Findings are discussed with respect to the nature and extent of K-3 students’ knowledge about Native American and pioneer homes and ways in which this knowledge might be taken into account in planning instruction on the topic.

Primary social studies focuses on the universal human needs of food, clothing, and shelter and on other cultural universals such as families, communities, occupations, and transportation. Ravitch (1987)
and Larkins, Hawkins, and Gilmore (1987) have suggested that primary students already know most of this content, so there is no need to teach it. The authors of this article have disputed these arguments, suggesting that the knowledge about cultural universals that children develop through everyday experience tends to be tacit rather than well-articulated, poorly connected, and poorly understood (Brophy & Alleman, 1996).

One purpose of this research was to gather data that speak to this issue. Another was to develop information about students' knowledge that would inform efforts to teach social studies for understanding, appreciation, and life application, using methods that connect with students' prior experience and engage them in actively constructing new knowledge and correcting existing misconceptions. Such information would directly inform the planning of instruction about cultural universals for Grades K-3, as well as characterize the prior knowledge that students are likely to carry with them to Grade 4. There have been occasional surveys of knowledge about particular social studies topics (Guzzetta, 1969; Ravitch & Finn, 1987; U.S. Office of Education, 1995a, b). However, these have concentrated mostly on isolated facts such as names, places, or definitions, with findings limited to percentages of students able to answer each item correctly. To be more useful to educators, the research needs to focus on qualitative aspects of children's thinking, including commonly held misconceptions.

As a first step toward developing such information, we interviewed one second grade class in late spring on various aspects of shelter. We found that the students' knowledge was limited and spotty, tacit rather than well-articulated, composed of loose collections of observations rather than well-integrated knowledge networks that included awareness of connections and understanding of cause-effect relationships, and often distorted by inaccurate assumptions or outright misconceptions (Brophy & Alleman, 1997). These findings motivated us to launch a series of studies on developments across Grades K-3 in students' knowledge and thinking about cultural universals. This article reports findings from the historical section of the shelter interview.

Sample

Interviews were conducted with 216 students, 54 in each of Grades K-3. The sample was further stratified by SES of the community, students' prior achievement levels, and students' gender. SES variation was introduced by conducting one third (72) of the interviews in each of three communities: an upper-middle class suburb, a middle/working class suburb, and a working class section of a small
city (population about 160,000). Students of all racial and ethnic back-
grounds were eligible for inclusion, except for those who had spent
most of their preschool years in other countries (these few were ex-
cluded because an assumption underlying the work was that what
the students knew about shelter, other than what they learned at school,
had been learned in the process of growing from infancy in the con-
temporary United States). The samples were predominantly white,
however, reflecting their school populations. Interviewees were char-
acterized by their teachers, within gender groups, as being within the
upper third, the middle third, or the lower third in general academic
achievement.

Data Collection and Analysis

The content base for the interview was synthesized from three
sources: (1) social studies teacher education textbooks that identified
key ideas about shelter that are rooted in the social science disciplines;
(2) elementary social studies textbook series and children’s tradebooks
on the topic; and (3) our own ideas about teaching cultural universals
for understanding, appreciation, and life application (Brophy &
Alleman, 1996).

The “funnel” interview technique was used, in which initial
broad questions encourage students to make extended statements
about a topic. Probing then begins with questions asking for elabora-
tion of these initial statements. Finally, more specific questions are
asked about aspects of the topic that the students did not address spon-
taneously. This approach maximizes the degree to which students’
responses reflect their own unique stances toward and construction
of knowledge about the topic, but also ensures that all students ad-
dress certain key aspects. Interviews were tape recorded, transcribed
by one person, then corrected by a second person. Data were devel-
oped by coding the corrected transcripts.

We did not force students’ responses into predetermined catego-
ries. Instead, we allowed the categories to arise from the data, using
what have been called analytic induction methods for developing
grounded theory (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Glaser & Strauss, 1979;
Patton, 1990). We read responses to each question, identified common
themes, then coded for the presence or absence of these themes. Mul-
tiple codes were assigned if a response included more than one theme.
In addition, each coding scheme contained an “other” category for
flagging rare or unique responses. The coding schemes were devel-
oped and refined by a primary coder who eventually coded all of the
transcripts. Reliability was established with the assistance of a second
coder who coded one third of the transcripts. Exact agreement aver-
agealed 79%.
Scores derived from the codes were subjected to statistical analyses. These included frequency distributions and means reflecting the degree to which various ideas were expressed across the sample as a whole and within its stratified grade level, SES, achievement level, or gender subgroups, as well as Chi-Square analyses indicating when subgroup differences were large enough to reach statistical significance. These analyses typically showed statistically significant and often quite dramatic increases in knowledge across the K-3 range, but much smaller SES, achievement level, and gender differences. Most of the SES and achievement level differences that did appear were in the expected direction (that is, students who were higher in SES or achievement level tended to give more sophisticated responses than students who were lower in SES or achievement level). Overall, however, the same general developmental patterns were observed in each group. Consequently, although information on SES level, achievement level, and gender differences is included in the tables for interested readers, our discussion of findings will focus on overall trends and grade level progressions. More complete data presentation and discussion may be found in the technical report for the study as a whole (Brophy & Alleman, 2000).

Pueblos and Longhouses

Our first historical question was designed to determine whether the students understood that in the past, people had to build to suit their climate using whatever materials were available in the local area. The students were shown a drawing of a longhouse and a photo of a pueblo and asked to talk about why these two types of Indian homes were so different. Probing was designed to see if the students mentioned that pueblo dwellers lived in a hot, dry climate that did not support much vegetation but longhouse dwellers lived in a four-seasons climate that supported thick woodlands.

Question 1. Here are two kinds of homes that different groups of Indians lived in a long time ago. Why do you think that some Indians lived in this kind of home but others lived in this kind of home?...The Indians who built these homes (pointing to the pueblo)—could they have built these homes instead (pointing to the longhouse)?

The following are representative examples of the responses.

Kindergarten. Because they builded it. (What else?) And they had some wood to build it with. (Which one?) This one. (I see. You’re pointing toward the pueblo. What else?) This one has straw made out of. (The Indians who built
this home, could they also have built this kind of home?)
Yes. (Why do you think they didn’t?) I don’t know.

First grade. Those are kind of mud houses but those are longhouses where a lot of Indians live in them. We studied about Indians but we didn’t study about them in a long time because it was a long time ago. (Why do you think that some Indians lived in this kind of home and others lived in this kind of home?) Because they’re a different kind of Indians. (Could the Indians who built this kind of home also have built this kind of a home?) Yeah. The ones who live in those houses—they’re used to those kind of homes and the ones that live in other ones are used to live in those kind of homes. (One could not have built this kind?) Um hum, cause those Indians can’t build those houses because it’ll take a long time, and the other ones can’t build those houses because it’ll take a long time too.

Second grade. Because they have more space for them to go and this one over here (pueblo) has lots of windows and doors and this one (longhouse) has a flag and it has a tree and it has a fireplace. (Do you think that the people who built House No. 1 could also have built House No. 2?) Well, it depends on where they’re at. (Tell me about that.) Cause where would they get the idea if they don’t know where it’s at? (So you think if they just had the idea, then they could build it?) Yes.

Third grade. Probably they have a lot more stuff to build with and with the other ones, you don’t have that much. These probably live in the desert and these live in the woods or something. (Tell me more about this.) You can see a lot more than this. (A lot more what?) Windows, rooms, shelter—this one is just one big old thing. (Do you notice anything else?) Yeah, these have like sand barrels so if somebody attacks, you just have to go back there and shoot arrows. But with these, they’d just get shot because there’s no sand barrels or nothing to go under to shoot. (Could the Indians who built this house also have built this house instead?) Yeah.

Most students merely described rather than explained the differences in housing styles. They usually did not know the names “pueblo” or “longhouse,” but they could point to the illustrations and
could talk about pueblos as sturdy constructions made from sand, stone, cement, or bricks, and longhouses as flimsier constructions made from tree branches and leaves. Among 57 students who stated that pueblos were sturdier, more durable homes, 19 also suggested that longhouses were temporary or makeshift shelters used by people who were waiting for construction of a sturdier home to be completed or were too poor to afford anything better.

The most common responses, generated by 63 students, were based on the idea that one form of housing was larger. Most of these responses indicated that the inside living space in a longhouse was larger than a pueblo apartment and enabled extended families to live together. However, some students noted that the pueblo buildings (as opposed to the apartments within them) were larger and more durable than longhouses, so they provided better protection against enemies and severe weather.

Only 26 students talked about the local availability of construction materials in responding to the first part of the question, and only 7 others brought this up when asked whether pueblo builders could have built longhouses instead. Only a few of these students elaborated by talking about the climate and physical features of the two geographical regions.

The “other” (rare and unique) responses included: One of the buildings was the house that the family lived in and the other was a workshop that the men worked in; longhouses were easier to conceal from Pilgrims; the longhouse might have been a barn for animals; pueblo dwellers built pueblos because they wanted to preserve trees; pueblos were homes but longhouses were storehouses for food; pueblos were city houses but longhouses were country houses.

Frequency distributions for scores derived from responses to questions about Native American homes are given in Table 1. Significant grade level progressions were found for most response categories. Sometimes the differences were relatively linear across the K-3 range, but frequently the key difference was between first and second grade, with the two younger groups showing similar scores and the two older groups showing similar scores.

The younger students were more likely to be unable to respond to the first part of Question 1 or to attribute the differences in housing types to mere differences in personal (or occasionally, tribal) preferences (e.g., “They just like that kind of house better.”). Older students were more likely to say that pueblos were more durable than longhouses or that the different housing types reflected contrasting climates or differences in availability of construction materials or knowledge.

There were seven significant relationships with grade level but only three with SES and achievement level, along with one gender...
Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Scores Derived from Questions About Native American Homes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Sample</th>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Socioeconomic Status</th>
<th>Achievement Level</th>
<th>Gender</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>K 1 2 3</td>
<td>Low Avg High</td>
<td>Low Avg High</td>
<td>Low Avg High</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students Interviewed</td>
<td>216 54 54 54 54</td>
<td>72 72 72 72</td>
<td>72 72 72</td>
<td>108 108</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RESPONSE CATEGORIES

A. Why did different groups of Indians build such different homes?

1. Doesn't know
   - 65 26 19 12 8
   - 28 21 16
   - 26 23 16
   - 26 39
2. Personal preference
   - 11 5 5 0 1
   - 2 3 6
   - 4 0 7
   - 3 8
3. Pueblo more durable
   - 57 8 10 14 25
   - 19 21 17
   - 12 22 23
   - 33 24
4. Size (one type is larger than the other)
   - 63 12 14 19 18
   - 19 25 19
   - 14 29 20
   - 34 29
5. Lack of construction materials
   - 26 4 10 11
   - 3 10 13
   - 7 9 10
   - 13 13
6. Lack of construction knowledge
   - 8 0 1 2 5
   - 4 2 2
   - 3 3 2
   - 4 4
7. One type was quicker or easier to build
   - 9 1 3 3 2
   - 2 2 5
   - 2 5 2
   - 5 4
8. Longhouses were temporary, makeshift, or for poor people
   - 19 3 7 5 4
   - 3 3 13
   - 9 3 7
   - 11 8
9. Climate
   - 14 0 2 6 6
   - 4 3 7
   - 3 4 7
   - 5 9
10. Other relevant responses
    - 19 2 7 5 5
    - 6 7 6
    - 9 7 3
    - 8 11

B. Could Pueblo Builders Have Built Longhouses Instead?

0. Yes/maybe
   - 145 41 35 32 37
   - 49 48 48
   - 51 46 48
   - 74 71
1. No—unexplained
   - 22 7 7 5 3
   - 7 11 4
   - 8 8 6
   - 12 10
2. No—lacked knowledge
   - 16 2 5 6 3
   - 4 4 8
   - 6 6 4
   - 9 7
3. No—lacked materials
   - 33 4 7 11 11
   - 12 9 12
   - 7 12 14
   - 13 20
Table 1 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESPONSE CATEGORIES</th>
<th>Total Sample</th>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Socioeconomic Status</th>
<th>Achievement Level</th>
<th>Gender</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>K</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **C. Knows name “tipi”**
(0=doesn’t know; 1=tent; 2=tipi)* | 1.6 | 1.2 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 1.9 | 1.5 | 1.7 | 1.7 | 1.3 | 1.7 | 1.8 | 1.7 | 1.5 |
| **D. Why Did Indians Live in Tipis?** |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| 0. Doesn’t know | 47 | 13 | 18 | 11 | 5 | 15 | 20 | 12 | 20 | 14 | 13 | 24 | 23 |
| 1. Unspecified preferences | 18 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 11 |
| 2. Simple/small family home | 43 | 6 | 10 | 10 | 17 | 16 | 12 | 15 | 8 | 17 | 18 | 20 | 23 |
| 3. Lack of construction materials or knowledge | 44 | 8 | 9 | 13 | 14 | 11 | 12 | 21 | 15 | 15 | 14 | 23 | 21 |
| 4. Poverty/low status | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| 5. Quick, easy to build | 21 | 2 | 2 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 11 | 5 | 10 | 11 |
| 6. Protection from enemies | 14 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 8 | 6 |
| 7. Fire for warmth or cooking | 18 | 5 | 9 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 8 | 5 | 11 | 7 |
| 8. Paint, decorate them | 13 | 2 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 9. Other relevant response | 23 | 6 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 7 | 8 | 4 | 10 | 9 | 8 | 15 |
| 10. Portability—unexplained | 9 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 4 |
| 11. Portability—explained | 9 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 2 |
| 12. Mentions portability | 18 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 7 | 3 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 4 | 7 | 12 | 6 |

*Numbers in this row are means. Numbers in all other rows are frequency distributions indicating how many students in each group were coded for mentioning the ideas represented by the response category. Sets of scores are bold-faced if Chi-Square analyses indicated a statistically significant (p<.05) relationship between the response category and the students’ grade level, SES level, achievement level, or gender.
difference. Lower SES students were less able to respond to Question 1, whereas higher SES students were more likely to refer to the local availability of construction materials and to suggest that longhouses were temporary, makeshift, or for poor people. High and average achievers were more likely than low achievers to note that pueblos were a more durable type of home. Also, compared to the lower and higher achievers, the average achievers were less likely to attribute choice of housing type to mere personal (or tribal) preference, but more likely to attribute it to the fact that one type was larger than the other. In general, students’ responses were more closely linked to grade-related differences in exposure to information about Native American life than they were to differences in students’ achievement at school. Finally, more boys than girls were able to respond to the first part of the question. The other categories do not show any consistent trend favoring boys in general quality of response (among those students who were able to respond), so this gender difference may reflect nothing more than a greater willingness of boys to take a guess in the absence of clear knowledge.

Discussion

Only 70 percent of the students were able to respond to this question. Most responses were accurate as far as they went, but stopped short of explaining why some Indians lived in pueblos but others lived in longhouses. Many were confined to descriptions of the materials from which the two forms of housing were constructed. Others drew accurate comparisons (pueblos were more durable whereas longhouses accommodated extended families), but failed to explain why the different styles were constructed by different tribes. A few thought that pueblos were developed later in time, after Native Americans had learned more about construction techniques.

The most basic reason, rooted in the geography of the desert southwest vs. the eastern woodlands, was noted by only 15 percent of the students, including only 20 percent of the second- and third-graders. One of the best responses was the following:

There was lots of rock where these Indians lived and there was lots of wood where those Indians lived. (Do you think that the Indians who built this home could also have built this home?) No. (Because?) Because they don’t have very many trees because they would live in the desert and they (the other Indians) would live out in the woods.

Unfortunately, such responses were rare. The larger pattern of findings suggested the need for better instruction concerning geographical influences on people’s housing needs and on the forms of
housing that they construct. This point will be discussed following presentation of findings concerning tipis.

**Tipis**

The next question was intended to determine whether the students understood that the plains tribes used tipis because they were nomadic and therefore needed homes that were easily taken down, transported, and reassembled.

Question 2. (Show photo of tipi). Some other Indians lived in this kind of home. Do you know what it was called? ... (elicit, or if necessary, give the name “tipi”) ... Why do you think that these Indians lived in tipis instead of other kinds of homes?

The following examples are representative of the responses.

Kindergarten. No. (It’s called a tipi. Why do you think that some Indians lived in tipis like this instead of other kinds of homes?) Because they didn’t know how to build the houses, but they knew how to make a tipi.

First grade. A tipi. (Why did some Indians live in tipis?) Because they think it’s nice to live in them and they like the tipi and that’s the only house they know how to build and they go around and hunt and sing songs, and when they make a fire, the smoke goes up to the top and out of the house, like a chimney.

Second grade: A tipi. (Why do you think that some Indians lived in tipis instead of other kinds of homes?) Because they couldn’t get the stuff that they needed to build it. (Build what?) They didn’t have as much wood as they probably did to build that other house. They don’t have a lot of sand there so they couldn’t make bricks very well because they don’t have sand and you sort of have to have sand or something that will turn hard. (Are there other reasons why they lived in tipis?) Cause maybe they didn’t like that kind of house.

Third grade. A tipi. (Why do you think that these Indians lived in tipis instead of other kinds of homes?) Because maybe they felt a little bit more safer because they couldn’t build a house in the middle of nowhere but they could build a tipi in the middle of nowhere, and that’s where the buffaloes lived and they wanted to go out and hunt so
they could be near them and they wouldn’t have to go so far on horses. (Any other reasons they built a tipi?) Maybe cause it’s easier to build and it doesn’t take up too much room and maybe they thought a whole family could fit in that because there’s a lot of room in tipis.

When asked the name of the Indian home shown in the photo, 37 students could not respond, 14 called it a tent or hut, and 165 (76 percent) called it a tipi. Thus, three-fourths of the students knew the name of this prototypical symbol of Native American life and culture. Concerning why some Indians lived in tipis, 47 students (22 percent) were unable to respond. The rest were able to generate one or more relevant responses, but only 18 mentioned portability and only 9 clearly understood that the plains tribes were nomadic and needed portable housing for that reason.

Lacking knowledge of tipis as portable housing for nomadic societies, most students made reasonable guesses about the motives of tipi builders: 44 suggested that these people lacked construction materials or knowledge that would allow them to build any other kind of home; 43 that they only needed a small home; and 21 that they preferred tipis because they were quick and easy to build. Other common responses, along with most of the unique or unusual responses, involved fanciful suggestions: These Indians preferred tipis because they could build a fire in the middle of them for warmth or cooking and the smoke would go out the top (18); because tipis were small and hard to see from a distance, so the people could hide in them from their enemies (14); or because they liked to paint designs on them (13). These fanciful responses are not surprising given common depictions of Indians in movies, television programs, and children’s literature.

Noteworthy rare and unique responses included: You can cook better in tipis so you get to eat better food; tipis were small and Indians didn’t have much stuff; they wanted to sleep outside so they could hear their enemies coming; building tipis was cleaner—you didn’t get dirty making bricks; tipis were easy to get into and out of and you had blankets to keep you warm; tipis allowed Indians to live out in the field where they could catch buffalo; a chief might want to live in a tipi because he might want his own separate home; animals were plentiful and the Indians could use their skins to make tipis; they could hide in them from cowboys; they did it for their religion.

Younger students were less able to respond, as well as more likely to suggest that some Indians preferred to live in tipis because they could build fires in them. Older students were more likely to know the name “tipi,” to cite portability as the reason for constructing tipis, and to suggest that tipi dwellers only needed a small home or con-
structed tipis because they were quick or easy to build. The responses of the older students were more sophisticated, but in most cases the differences were not so much in knowledge as in the maturity levels of the thinking displayed in constructing guesses in the absence of knowledge.

The only significant relationship with SES indicated that high-SES students were more likely than other students to suggest that some Indians built tipis because they lacked the materials or knowledge needed to build some other form of housing. Low achievers were less likely to know the name “tipi” or to suggest that tipi dwellers did not need larger quarters (an incorrect guess, but one that represents good reasoning). Low achievers also were more likely to be coded in the “portability—unexplained” category (among the 18 students who mentioned portability, 6 of the 9 who could not explain further were low achievers, whereas 8 of the 9 who were able to explain further were average or high achievers). Boys were more likely than girls to know the name “tipi” and to explain that tipi dwellers needed portable homes. Perhaps the boys had had more experience with camping in tents or with scouting activities that included supposed “Indian lore.”

Discussion

Some of the more fanciful elaborations on common themes, as well as many of the rare and unique responses, reflected the stereotyped views of Indians that many students bring to school. Brophy (1999) showed that elementary students’ thinking about Indians progresses from negative and stereotyped views held in kindergarten to more realistic and empathetic views expressed by fifth graders. Before they learn about different tribal groups at school, most students’ ideas are rooted in a stereotype of the plains tribes: living in tipis, hunting buffalo on horseback with bows and arrows, and fighting with soldiers, cowboys, or other Indians. Some students who failed to mention the portability of tipis nevertheless associated this form of housing with buffalo hunting. Some portrayed tipis as temporary shelters used only during hunting, akin to the igloos used by Inuit hunters. Others conveyed the fanciful idea that tipis were easily hidden because they were small, so hunters could conceal themselves in tipis and wait for unsuspecting buffalo to happen by (this idea may have come from cartoons seen on television).

Of the 18 students who did mention portability, only nine communicated understanding that tipi dwellers followed the buffalo and needed portable housing. Two of these responses were:

Cause they could take it down and take it where the buffalo are and like if the buffalo move somewhere else, they
could move where the buffalo are again. It's easier to move.

Well, these were traveling Indians and tipis were better to be able to undo and go around carrying them, and they would be better on transportation than other houses that were made with rock and sand and stuff and things like that that you'd live in for practically all your life.

Our findings from this larger study confirm and expand on our pilot study findings (Brophy & Alleman, 1997) indicating that although most primary-grade students can accurately identify and compare the physical features of different forms of Native American housing, they show little understanding of the geographical or cultural factors that help explain why these different forms existed. Few students interviewed for this study showed appreciation of pueblos, longhouses, or tipis as adaptations to environmental conditions (availability of construction materials) or cultural features (nomadic society). There was little mention of the portability of tipis or the defensive value of pueblos.

Our experiences in developing and field testing a curriculum unit on shelter have turned up more evidence that primary-grade students often know that different forms of shelter exist, but do not know why they exist. For example, second graders typically already knew or easily learned that stilt houses are situated above marshes or periodic flood waters and thus remain dry, but they did not understand (or even appear to wonder) why people would live in marshes or flood plains in the first place.

To promote these kinds of understandings, primary-grade instructional materials and teachers will need to go beyond merely showing different forms of housing by pointing out functions and cause-effect relationships that explain why the houses are constructed as they are and preferred over feasible alternatives. In the case of portable shelters or stilt houses, explanations will need to include descriptions of the economies of the societies (periodic migration to accommodate animal grazing or hunting, cultivation of crops that grow in marshes or flood plains). In other cases, explanations will need to emphasize adaptations to local climate and geography. For example, the steeply sloped roofs of homes in the mountain valleys of Switzerland are not merely picturesque but functional (they prevent dangerous accumulation of snow on the roof and cause the snow to pile up against the house where it acts as insulation). Similarly, tropical huts or jungle homes constructed primarily of vines and leaves not only capitalize on locally available construction materials but also incor-
porate features that make them well adapted to the climate of the region.

_Pioneers' Log Cabins_

Our third question focused on students' knowledge about log cabins on the frontier.

Question 3. (Show drawing of cabin) Two hundred years ago, the pioneers lived in log cabins. What were those log cabins like back then? ... How were they different from today's homes?

This question encouraged the students to tell whatever they knew about log cabins and to compare pioneers' log cabins with today's homes. Three planned probes were added to determine whether students realized that the pioneers (1) did not have running water and thus had to fetch their water from a well or nearby stream, (2) depended on fireplaces (or perhaps woodburning stoves) for heat and did not have modern heating systems, and (3) did not have electric lights and thus had to depend on light from the fire or from candles or oil lamps.

The following examples are representative of the responses.

_Kindergarten._ I don't know. (How were they different from today's homes?) They're made of wood and they aren't painted. How did people who lived in log cabins get their water? They got it from ponds. They had buckets to carry the water in. (How did they heat up their cabins?) They had a special heater (couldn't elaborate). (What about light? After it was dark, did they have light in their cabins?) No.

_First grade._ They were like made out of wood cause I think there was like no bricks to make it. And those people, they like used to live like cowboys and Indians used to come there and try to get them and they tried to get the Indians, and they had like wars. I think they used wood to build it. They had a lot of wood even in the house in the stove they have. (How did people who lived in log cabins get their water?) I think they just like go ... they dugged in the ground really deep where all the water is and they get the water. One had mud in it. They would like make the water clean and when the water gets clean they could like drink it and they could stay alive. (Did they have water inside their cabins?) Probably they took these things and
they stabbed them in the ground and then the thing sucks up water and cleans it when it goes through a pipe, and then when they opened up the faucet, they would get water. (How did they heat up their cabins?) Probably like they'd get fire, or they got this like a stove and then they'd get coal and they'd put it in the stove and shut the door, and then they'd light something and put fire and then they closed it very quick and then they could get warm on the fire. Probably when the fire was burning, they leaved the fire on for a little while, and after all the kids go to sleep then the parents just go up there, and when the parents were ready to go to sleep they just go there and put out the fire and go to sleep. (Tell me more about the light.) Well, the light was I guess just made out of fire. The light was out of fire, so they just had to let the fire off and then they just had to go to sleep.

Second grade. They had one room and usually everything was in that room, and usually the kitchens were in a different place, and they probably built the cabins because they didn't have stuff to make it—stuff to make bricks. (How are these cabins different from our homes today?) They're right out of all wood. They don't put electricity through them, they have one room, and their kitchen is separate from their house, and they have to build their houses. (Any other differences?) They don't have power or plugs or anything that they can use for electricity. They had to do everything usually by hand. (How did people who lived in log cabins get their water?) They went to streams or rivers or somewhere that has water nearby. (How did they heat up their cabins?) They used fires for the heat and they used wood and they used it in a place that they put stones around so it wouldn't spread around. (Where do you think they would build those fires?) Probably in the stove, but in the house they probably used the fires and they put it in the corner or something. (What about light? After it was dark, did they have light in their cabins?) No, not unless they used candles or burned something.

Third grade. Made of wood and not much protection against fires. Indians can make a fire and they'll throw it into the house and it'd burn more and the whole house would be burnt down. (Anything else you notice about the log cabins?) Yeah, you have to build the roof and I
think that would be kind of tiring—working on the roof. (How were these log cabins different from today’s homes?) You don’t have cement and bricks on them, no lights—just candles. Back then they had candles ... and we have electricity. (Any other differences between log cabins and our homes today?) Our roofs today are made of stone, so like if somebody throws fire onto the top of the house, it won’t come shattering down. (How did people who lived in log cabins get their water?) You had to walk to a stream or a little pond to get it. If it was like a mile away, they would still go get it. (How did they heat up their cabins?) They took a pot with a lot of wood under it and burned it— they had water in it so you could put wood in it and put it at the foot of your bed and it would just warm your bed up and your feet. (What about light? After it was dark, did they have light in their cabins?) No, they had candles. (Anything else?) Nope. Oh, lanterns.

The students produced quite a variety of responses to the initial question, most of them accurate. The most common response was that the cabins were small or cramped (68). Other popular responses noted that the beds or furniture were primitive (54), the doors or windows were missing or primitive (54), the cabins lacked electricity or modern plumbing (46), the pioneers had to build the cabins themselves (39), the roofs were made of wood (34), the walls were plain and lacking in paint or wallpaper (29), or the cabins were poorly insulated because they lacked siding and often featured leaky roofs (29). Smaller numbers of students indicated that there was no oven or that the people had to cook in the fireplace (17), there was no floor or only a dirt floor (16), there was only one storey (15), or cabins were easily flammable (9).

Concerning how the pioneers got their water, 147 students cited above-ground sources (rivers, lakes, etc.) and 48 mentioned wells or other underground sources. Concerning how the pioneers got their heat, 155 said from the fireplace, and an additional 18 said from a woodburning stove. However, 22 were unable to respond, 9 thought that log cabins had modern gas or electric heating, and 12 spoke about the pioneers wrapping themselves in blankets, closing the door and windows, or lighting candles, but not about using a fireplace or stove for heat. Finally, concerning how the pioneers lit their cabins, 44 mentioned oil lamps or lanterns and 51 mentioned candles, but 35 thought that the pioneers only had light from the fire, 53 that they had no way of creating light at all, and 14 that they had electric lights.

Rare and unique responses included: log cabins were bigger than Indian homes; they were not “smooth and nice” like our homes; log
cabins were “alone” but modern homes are clustered together; we use metal nails rather than wooden pegs; they were collapsible if not “tied real good;” the kitchen was a separate building; they lacked refrigeration so the people had to store food underground; they could only be as long as the longest trees in the area.

Responses concerning log cabins were more knowledgeable, more realistic, and less fanciful than responses concerning pueblos, longhouses, or tipis. This may have occurred because our log cabin illustration included more details and cues to potential response elements than did our illustrations of Indian homes. However, it is more likely that the students knew more about pioneer homes than Indian homes because shared Euro-American ancestry made it easier for them to identify with pioneers than with Indians (on this point, see Alton-Lee, Nuthall, & Patrick, 1993). Also, the children’s literature, movies, and television programs and the school activities that children experience with respect to pioneer life (e.g., churning butter) tend to be more realistic than those they experience with respect to Indian life (e.g., making paper headdresses or tipis).

Descriptive statistics for scores derived from questions about log cabins are given in Table 2. Significant relationships with grade level indicate that more younger students were unable to respond to the first question, whereas more older students were coded for 11 of the 13 substantive response categories. Older students were especially more likely to talk about the cabins being small or cramped, to note the lack of electricity or modern plumbing, or to say that the roof was made of wood or logs. Older students also were more likely to cite wells or other underground sources of water, to say that the cabin might have contained a woodburning stove, and to suggest that pioneers used candles, oil lamps, or lanterns to light their cabins.

Higher SES students were more likely than lower SES students to state that pioneers got their water from wells or other underground sources or that they used woodburning stoves to heat their cabins. Higher achievers tended to give longer responses and were more likely to say that pioneers had to build their cabins themselves, that the cabins were small or cramped, that the beds or furniture were primitive, or that they got their water from wells or other underground sources. Average achievers were more likely than either higher or lower achievers to state that the log cabins did not have electricity or modern plumbing. Girls were more likely to note that the cabins contained no paint or wallpaper and that they had only dirt floors, as well as to suggest (incorrectly) that log cabins lacked a significant heat source. Boys were more likely to give “other” responses.
### Descriptive Statistics for Scores Derived from Questions About Native American Homes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Sample</th>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Socioeconomic Status</th>
<th>Achievement Level</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>K 1 2 3</td>
<td>Low Avg High</td>
<td>Low Avg High</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUMBER OF STUDENTS INTERVIEWED</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>54 54 54 53</td>
<td>72 72 72</td>
<td>72 72 72</td>
<td>108 108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. No response (beyond noting that the cabins were made of wood/logs)</td>
<td>34 20 9 4 1</td>
<td>11 16 7</td>
<td>14 11 9</td>
<td>17 17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. The people built the cabins themselves</td>
<td>39 5 9 12 13</td>
<td>10 13 16</td>
<td>7 16 16</td>
<td>19 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Cabins were small, cramped</td>
<td>68 7 11 20 30</td>
<td>26 16 26</td>
<td>21 17 30</td>
<td>30 38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Beds, furniture were primitive</td>
<td>54 7 16 19 12</td>
<td>20 19 15</td>
<td>13 17 24</td>
<td>26 28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. No paint, color, wallpaper</td>
<td>29 8 11 6 4</td>
<td>11 10 8</td>
<td>8 8 13</td>
<td>9 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. No siding, poor insulation, leaky roof</td>
<td>29 2 6 8 13</td>
<td>9 8 12</td>
<td>10 6 13</td>
<td>14 15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Doors, windows missing or primitive</td>
<td>54 8 13 18 17</td>
<td>15 17 24</td>
<td>14 19 23</td>
<td>29 27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. No oven/cooked in fireplace</td>
<td>17 2 2 7 6</td>
<td>9 3 5</td>
<td>6 5 6</td>
<td>8 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. No electricity, modern plumbing</td>
<td>46 2 11 13 20</td>
<td>13 19 14</td>
<td>11 22 13</td>
<td>25 21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Wooden/log roof</td>
<td>34 1 4 12 17</td>
<td>9 11 14</td>
<td>8 13 13</td>
<td>18 16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. Dirt floor</td>
<td>16 4 3 4 5</td>
<td>4 6 6</td>
<td>3 6 7</td>
<td>4 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. One storey/no basement or upstairs</td>
<td>15 2 3 2 8</td>
<td>8 2 5</td>
<td>3 5 7</td>
<td>7 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Easily flammable</td>
<td>9 0 1 4 4</td>
<td>4 3 2</td>
<td>3 4 2</td>
<td>4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. Other relevant response</td>
<td>40 3 12 10 15</td>
<td>10 16 14</td>
<td>7 14 19</td>
<td>27 13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O. Level of response (1=just describes the illustration; 2=talks about cabins' physical features; 3=also talks about life in them)*</td>
<td>2.1 1.6 2.1 2.3 2.4</td>
<td>2.1 2.1 2.1</td>
<td>2.0 2.1 2.2</td>
<td>2.2 2.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. Total number of response categories coded*</td>
<td>1.6 0.8 1.6 1.9 2.2</td>
<td>1.6 1.5 1.7</td>
<td>1.3 1.6 2.0</td>
<td>1.6 1.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Sample</th>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Socioeconomic Status</th>
<th>Achievement Level</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>K 1 2 3</td>
<td>Low Avg High</td>
<td>Low Avg High</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Q. How Did Pioneers Get Their Water?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0. No response or fanciful guess</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17 2 0 2</td>
<td>8 8 5</td>
<td>9 6 6</td>
<td>10 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Above-ground source</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>31 42 39 35</td>
<td>54 49 44</td>
<td>51 52 44</td>
<td>79 68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Well or underground source</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>6 10 15 17</td>
<td>10 15 23</td>
<td>12 14 22</td>
<td>19 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R. How Did Pioneers Heat Their Cabins?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0. No response</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8 7 6 1</td>
<td>8 8 6</td>
<td>9 5 8</td>
<td>14 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Gas/electric heat</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7 0 2 0</td>
<td>2 3 4</td>
<td>4 4 1</td>
<td>3 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Blankets; closed door, windows; candles</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6 2 2 2</td>
<td>4 3 5</td>
<td>6 4 2</td>
<td>3 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Fireplace</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>32 41 41 41</td>
<td>55 53 47</td>
<td>47 53 55</td>
<td>78 77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Woodburning stove</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1 4 3 10</td>
<td>3 5 10</td>
<td>6 6 6</td>
<td>10 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>S. How Did They Light Their Cabins?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0. No response/other</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13 4 2 0</td>
<td>6 9 4</td>
<td>7 7 5</td>
<td>9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Electric lights</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10 2 1 1</td>
<td>5 2 7</td>
<td>6 4 4</td>
<td>7 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. No lights</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>18 16 12 7</td>
<td>20 18 15</td>
<td>21 18 14</td>
<td>26 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Only light from fire</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>5 10 11 9</td>
<td>13 14 18</td>
<td>11 8 16</td>
<td>19 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Candles</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>3 11 19 18</td>
<td>19 11 21</td>
<td>13 20 18</td>
<td>24 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Oil lamps, lanterns</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>5 11 9 19</td>
<td>9 18 17</td>
<td>14 15 15</td>
<td>23 21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Numbers in these rows are means. Numbers in all other rows are frequency distributions indicating how many students in each group were coded for mentioning the ideas represented by the response category. Sets of scores are bold-faced if Chi-Square analyses indicated a statistically significant (p<.05) relationship between the response category and the students' grade level, SES level, achievement level, or gender.
Discussion

The students showed much more knowledge, as well as much less fanciful thinking, about the homes and lives of the pioneers than the Native Americans. This is probably due to some combination of exposure to Disney movies and other movies and television programs set in pioneer days, the “Little House on the Prairie” books and the television series based on them, and units on pioneer life and related children’s literature experienced at school. Most of the students understood that pioneer families built their log cabins themselves (with help from neighbors), that the cabins tended to be small and cramped, that the beds and furniture tended to be homemade and primitive, and that they lacked modern heat, light, and running water. Most of them viewed pioneer life as difficult because the people had to construct and maintain their own homes, fetch water, chop wood, make candles, grow their own food, and fend off Indian attacks.

Except for the few who thought that the pioneers possessed electric lighting or modern heating systems, the students did not express many misconceptions and the ones that they did express were relatively minor. Some thought that the cabins were prone to collapse because they did not realize that the logs were notched and interlocked at the corners. Some thought that the fire was built in a wooden fireplace or in a pit in the middle of the cabin, rather than in a stone fireplace located along one side of the building. A few thought that you could not build fire inside of a log cabin because it would burn down the structure, that the length of the cabin was limited by the length of the longest available logs, or that all log cabins were built at considerable distance from their nearest neighbors.

Some students did not realize that pioneers had sources of light available to them after the sun went down, so they assumed that the pioneers slept from dusk (or at least, dark) until dawn. Most realized that the pioneers at least had light from the fire after dark, but fewer than half (95) mentioned candles, and only 44 mentioned oil lamps or lanterns.

Most students thought that the pioneers tooted water to their cabins, and some had the impression that the cabins were located a mile or more away from their water sources. Only 48 students mentioned underground sources. As in our pilot study, some who mentioned wells thought of wells merely as holding containers and did not realize that wells tap underground water sources.

Most students’ thinking revealed a pervasive presentism: a tendency to devalue the past by emphasizing what it lacked compared to what is available today. It is true that pioneer lives were generally more difficult than modern lives and that log cabins were a less developed form of housing than modern homes. However, log cabins can be appreciated as sturdy and functional homes, a cost-effective way
for the pioneers to meet their shelter needs given the resources available to them. Like other prototypical homes from past eras (including various types of Native American homes), log cabins can be understood as sensible human adaptation to the time and place, if curriculum and instruction bring out such points as the following.

Fireplaces featured stone hearths and chimneys that allowed the people to cook and to heat their cabins without filling them with smoke or burning them down (at least, not often!). The cabins were built near an above-ground water source or else a well was dug right next to the cabin, so water did not have to be toted very far. The pioneers made their own candles and were able to use these, as well as oil lamps or lanterns, to light their homes after dark. Most furniture and many implements were homemade using relatively simple tools and thus were primitive by our standards, but if taken in the context of their time and place, they can be appreciated as elegantly designed, functional, and often artistic. Wells were not mere holding tanks but means of gaining access to underground water sources. Modern refrigeration was not available but the pioneers developed creative ways to keep foods cool or preserve them for storage before they could spoil. In these and many other respects, pioneer life can be taught in ways that develop empathy with the people and appreciation for their accomplishments, not distancing or pity because they lived difficult lives and lacked modern conveniences.

**General Discussion**

Except for our own pilot study, the larger study reported in part here has been the first systematic investigation of children’s knowledge about shelter. It provides more evidence that their knowledge is quite limited, mostly tacit rather than well-articulated, frequently distorted by misconceptions, and scattered rather than well organized into coherent networks structured around big ideas (especially cause-and-effect connections that support meaningful understandings). Its findings support our claim that children typically do not acquire all, or even a significant portion, of what is worth knowing about cultural universals through everyday experience, so that they stand to profit from instruction on these topics.

For most questions, most students either were unable to respond or gave responses that were naive or at least incorrect, and only a few generated responses that were reasonably complete and accurate. We did observe increases in knowledge associated with increases in grade level, but most of the gains occurred in categories representing lower levels of sophistication about the topic, so that the increases represented shifts from little or no knowledge to partial knowledge rather than shifts from partial knowledge to complete knowledge. Even the
second and third graders had very limited knowledge about many of the topics addressed in our questions.

Most responses emphasized description over explanation and form over function. That is, the students recognized differences in the sizes, construction materials, durability, and general quality of the shelter provided by different forms of past and present housing, but they did not understand much about the historical, geographical, or cultural reasons for these contrasting housing styles, so they did not know much about why particular forms were emphasized by particular groups. There was very little recognition that housing types reflected differences in climate and local availability of construction materials, and little mention of the portability of tipis or the defensive value of pueblos. Most students were not aware that certain tribes were nomadic societies that moved with the buffalo, so they did not appreciate that portability was a crucial quality of tipis. Most were able to make sensible statements about differences between pueblos and longhouses, but few mentioned differences in climate and geography as factors contributing to the differences between these two forms of Native American housing.

The students' responses concerning log cabins and pioneer life were more accurate and less fanciful than their responses concerning Native American homes and cultures. Even so, misconceptions were common. Furthermore, most of the students' responses about homes of the past revealed a pervasive presentism. That is, the students emphasized the deficiencies of these homes in comparison with contemporary housing rather than appreciating them as inventive adaptations to their time and place.

The group difference analyses for each cluster of questions tended to yield the same general pattern that included the following four key features: (1) noteworthy and usually statistically significant progressions across grade level for a majority of the response categories, especially those that reflected knowledge rather than mere personal preferences; (2) progressions across SES—and achievement—level groups that were similar in pattern to the grade level progressions but usually much smaller and not statistically significant; (3) occasional statistically significant but nonlinear patterns that usually were not easily interpretable; and (4) few if any significant gender differences.

A few of the SES differences may reflect home background experiences related to social class rather than differences in amounts of general information held as prior knowledge (in these data, the ideas that longhouses were for poor people). For the most part, however, the patterns for the three SES groups were much more similar than different. This suggests that the students' knowledge about the topics addressed in our questions was shaped more by their common learning at school and exposure to contemporary U.S. media and culture.
than by contrasting socioeconomic aspects of their home backgrounds. There was no evidence of strikingly contrasting patterns of knowledge within contrasting SES subgroups.

Higher achievers showed more complete or accurate knowledge than lower achievers, although significant Chi-squares reflecting this pattern were not observed as frequently as we had expected. Perhaps this reflects the fact that most students had some level of personal experience with most of the topics addressed in our questions, so that they were not wholly dependent on knowledge acquired at school. Group differences in academic skills may have influenced the students' responses to items that involved showing photos or drawings: The higher achievers appeared to be more adept than the lower achievers at studying these illustrations to identify cues suggesting potential responses.

Gender differences were infrequent in number and small in magnitude. Overall, the response patterns for boys and girls were much more similar than different.

**Limitations of the Study**

The sample was large enough to allow testing for statistically significant relationships with grade level, SES level, achievement level, and gender, but it was limited in at least three respects. First, it was limited to the middle three-fourths or so of the SES range. No subsamples representing the upper-upper SES or the lower-lower SES groups were included.

Second, even though the sample was stratified by SES rather than race or ethnicity, the populations of the communities involved were such that few African-American, Asian-American, Latino, or Native-American students were included. However, we believe that children's ideas about shelter are more likely to be influenced by their common experiences growing up within contemporary U.S. society than by the differences in their family backgrounds, so we do not believe that this sample limitation is as serious as it might have been if we were asking questions about race or ethnicity.

The third limitation was geographic: The students all lived in Michigan in low-density urban and suburban communities. It is possible that different responses to certain questions might have been elicited from students living in high-density urban environments, in sparsely populated rural areas, or in considerably warmer or colder climates.

**Implications for Primary-Grade Social Studies**

The claim that primary-grade students do not need to be taught about cultural universals because they already know this information from everyday life experiences may be true for the very limited and
trite information contained in many primary-grade social studies textbooks (e.g., that shelter is a universal need and that people around the world live in many different kinds of shelters). However, our findings indicate that children do not routinely acquire most of what is worth knowing about cultural universals through everyday experiences (primarily because these experiences are informal and do not include sustained discourse structured around key ideas). Furthermore, the mostly-tacit knowledge that they do accumulate is limited, disconnected, and frequently distorted by naive ideas or outright misconceptions.

We believe that instruction about cultural universals belongs in the primary-grades social studies curriculum, although in addition to (not instead of) efforts to develop students’ prosocial values and dispositions and a variety of skills ranging from map reading to critical thinking and decision making. Cultural universals subsume many of the most basic aspects of human experience and thus include many natural starting points for developing initial social understandings. Furthermore, they facilitate development of instruction that not only connects with young learners’ prior experiences but is compatible with their predisciplinary knowledge organization structures. Like others who have focused on the primary grades, we believe that the curriculum in these grades should feature pandisciplinary treatments of topics designed to develop “knowledge of limited validity” (Levstik, 1986) or “proto-disciplinary knowledge” (Gardner & Boix-Mansilla, 1994) about the topics, rather than attempts to teach children disciplinary knowledge organized as such (which we view as premature attempts to socialize these students into the academic disciplines).

Whether or not it is conducted within the expanding communities curricular sequence, it is important that teaching about cultural universals be more powerful than typical textbook-based teaching. We define powerful treatments as treatments that enable students to develop understanding of how the cultural universal addressed in the unit works in our society, how and why it got to be that way over time, how it varies across locations and cultures, and what all of this might mean for personal, social, and civic decision making.

References


Authors

JERE BROPHY is University Distinguished Professor of Teacher Education and JANET ALLEMAN is Professor in the Department of Teacher Education at Michigan State University, East Lansing, 48824.
Rethinking Research and Pedagogy in the Social Studies: The Creation of Caring Connections through Technology and Advocacy

Michael J. Berson
University of South Florida

The process of rethinking pedagogy in the social studies is complex and multifaceted. Although we strive for a common stated outcome—the education of students—there is lack of consensus on the prescribed structure for achieving this outcome and for operationally defining the goals. In fact, it appears that each time that we engage in this discourse, restructure the process, and implement strategies to reform the practice of social studies teaching, new problems are created. We become engaged in a cycle of perpetual reform in which our solutions, that are initially designed to bring promise and hope, eventually become part of the problem. The recurring opportunity for change has presented itself once again. Will we be satisfied with the usual tinkering, minor adjustments and blame shifting of the past, or are we ready to reexamine the basis for our solutions so that pedagogic practice can evolve?

Reform begins with a vision, and this discourse is the initiation of the process of evolving a vision for social studies that may guide our efforts to create meaningful change. To what issues must we attend in order to create a more ideal educational experience? What is it that we wish to bring out in children, and how should we proceed in achieving this goal (Block, 1997)? “Experience teaches us not to assume that the obvious is clearly understood” (Freire, 1985, p. 43). What we may assume as a given, may be nothing more than a vestige of the very system in which we are immersed. It is for this reason that we need to involve the voices of all those who are stakeholders in the outcome of education, including children, parents, business leaders, mental health professionals, political leaders, and community members. The insights of others who are outside of social studies education may bring clarity to our barriers while offering novel solutions to problems that have plagued the field. As social studies educators we need to reflect on our investment in changing and contemplate whether we have the resources and motivation to mobilize supports that may facilitate this reform.
Although this is a difficult initiative we should not be discouraged from the task. We should seize the opportunity to formulate a strong core group with a shared vision that can overcome the inertia of traditional practices. The vision that I propose is just one possibility for guiding our efforts. It is based on the premise that we can draw on our present strengths as the force for change. While we identify our strengths we also must be examining the barriers that have hampered our efforts in the past. I have identified three challenges that guide my vision for reform. These challenges include the evolution and maintenance of collaborative networks (Berson, Berson, & Ralston, 1998; Lawson et al., 1999; Zuniga-Hill & George, 1995), advocacy for children (Block, 1997; Epp & Watkinson, 1996; Freire, 1993; Kozol, 1991; Noddings, 1992), and the integration of technology into social studies teaching and learning (Becker, 1999; CEO Forum on Education & Technology, 1999; Cooper & Bull, 1997).

**Pedagogy as a Collaborative Process and Product**

The first issue that challenges us is the acknowledgment that we exist in a medium that includes other systems and observers, and therefore, we are invested in the mutual coexistence of one another. Due to this interaction, we need frank discussions of the inequalities that have been built into our educational systems and join together with families, communities, organizations, and the larger society to create sustaining change both within and without each level of the system. This is the function of collaboration.

Many of us have only a tentative grasp of the concept of interdependence. There is an African saying, “If I don’t care for you, I don’t care for myself,” which expresses the sense that our identity is bound up in our interrelatedness to others. Shaffer and Amundsen (1993) define community as a dynamic whole that evolves when a group of people engage in common practices; are dependent on each other; participate in joint decision-making; identify themselves as part of something larger than the sum of their individual relationships; and commit themselves to pursuit of the well being of themselves, other stakeholders, and the group as a whole. Choice is the critical issue, not nostalgia. Collective associations are woven deliberately, and cannot be assumed to be a foregone conclusion. They are intentional efforts to put aside counter-productive turf wars and work toward constructive and mutually beneficial problem solving. This is the process to evolve comprehensive systems of care in which all the stakeholders have an explicit understanding of their mutual roles, responsibilities, goals, and strengths.

These multidisciplinary groups are necessary since the required professional and personal resources to meet the needs of children are not available within one entity. Presently agencies and schools often
offer fractionalized services that respond to specific problems. Frustration arises from attempts to increase the efficiency of services and establish a common system for communication.

Success in educating children depends on building or strengthening existing social networks and support systems. We as social studies educators need to recognize our role in collaborative community-based partnerships that work toward the creation of safety and well being for all children and their families. At the university level, we can initiate this inclusive interaction between professionals.

Preservice teachers must join with other professionals in training to examine children and their needs, not just in the domain of the particular professional orientation but in the context of their families. This orientation to family, rather than isolated students, must be from multiple perspectives—the teacher, the nurse, the mental health worker, and other frontline workers engaged in agencies whose work focuses on some aspect of service delivery to children in their families. (Zuniga-Hill & George, 1995, p. 104)

Schools and community agencies must recognize that they are attempting to service the same families whose needs can only be met by breaking down artificial boundaries that isolate components of care. Our country, with all of its wealth, opportunity, and potential has historically provided the contextual backdrop for exploration of the spirit of innovation, yet always at the expense of those who lack the resources and access to power. Children are often very perceptive regarding these inequities and are socialized by the system to recognize their role in the system and the extent of their opportunity and potential, or lack thereof. Jonathan Kozol (1991) states that,

All our children ought to be allowed a stake in the enormous richness of America. Whether they were born to poor white Appalachians or to wealthy Texans, to poor black people in the Bronx or to rich people in Manhasset or Winnetka, they are all quite wonderful and innocent when they are small. We soil them needlessly. (p. 233)

The ability of schools or agencies to overcome the economic challenges and educational disadvantages of students ultimately rests with schools shedding their identity as isolated institutions. As we seek new perspectives and insights, it is critical that we anticipate the school of the 21st century in which interdisciplinary and interprofessional collaboration are an established mechanism for meeting the needs of
children and families. Heightened awareness of depleted social, emotional, and financial resources; a commitment to overcome the barriers of rigid solutions promoted by schools, communities and families in managing crises; and a determination to participate in the interaction of systems of care will better inform the development and implementation of policy, planning, and service delivery. Ultimately, this exchange may create the potential for children and families to access their untapped resources and discover the richness of their strengths.

The overriding foundation of collaboration is an interdependent relationship. In the context of educational systems collaboration is a multifaceted process in which individuals, groups, families, professionals, and organizations work in concert toward the common goal of educating and supporting children. Mobilizing and coordinating these services is among the challenges we face and evolving a coordinated effort that is based on empirically supported and researched data is our task.

**Child Advocacy**

Collaborative partnerships also provide the means for us to fill our role and responsibilities as child advocates, the second challenge for this vision of pedagogy. The safety and well being of children is of paramount importance. This sentiment is often touted by social studies educators as a creed of their profession; however, the reality of practice is that few professionals are prepared for their role as protectors and advocates. Acknowledgment of abuse or potential risk has encountered societal barriers, and continues to interfere with personal and professional standards of care in schools and communities.

Although individually we would state that we value children and believe they deserve to be protected, historically, we as a society have failed to act on this belief (deMause, 1974). Society's attitudes about abuse have influenced public perception regarding the protection of children and the pervasiveness of abusive acts perpetrated against young people. We may verbalize horror at the idea of child physical or sexual abuse, but when confronted with the reality of child maltreatment, it is more comforting to deny evidence of the abuse than to take action. Our own comfort level with issues of sex and violence may lead to avoidant responses to cope with these troubling issues and situations. Additionally, many professionals are afraid of the backlash that could result from intervening and raising awareness. We may not want to jeopardize our relationship with the adults in children's lives, and we may choose to protect our institutions rather than ensure the safety of children. However, when we put our own needs before the needs of a child, we fail to provide protection for young people who are unable to protect themselves.
The plight of victimized children in the classroom has been an issue of grave concern since professionals acknowledged child maltreatment and fought to establish a protective system of care. However, even though an understanding of the field of child abuse continues to evolve, there has been a tendency by institutions of education to overlook these issues and to avoid the role of child advocate. What does the social studies teacher really know and understand about incidents of abuse experienced by children in his/her classroom? Even those teachers who have received training in reporting laws and their legal responsibility to act on their suspicions of maltreatment typically report that they lack an understanding of abuse dynamics, family functioning, and child protection systems. In fact, their knowledge base may be clouded by myths about abuse that leave them helpless in the face of children who desperately need competent and caring support networks. The letter that follows is representative of the experience of one child who sought help from her teacher.

Dear teacher, dear teacher:

I am writing to you because I have died. Did you know that? I don't think that you can know, because you keep calling my name during morning role call. From somewhere deep inside I respond to you. I call out my response. Some days I whisper it, some days I announce it. Can you tell the difference? It is an important clue. When I whisper my name I am scared. I am afraid to call attention to my being. Any sudden movement may cause more pain. And I can't take any more pain. I move toward you to go to my place at the blackboard. I brush by you to get your attention. You stop what you are doing once in a while and look up at me and smile. No, I scream inside of me. You don't get it, don't smile. Stand up and pull me aside. Ask me what is wrong. (Seryak, 1997, p. 33)

What are the costs of failure to intervene on behalf of children? Which educators will notice a young life being stifled by abuse, neglect, or poverty? The children who are in need of help appear to us as honor students, dropouts, class-clowns, introverts, socialites, athletes, and more. They are representative of all ethnic heritages, religious groups, and socioeconomic backgrounds. They may be labeled by adults as deviant, perfectionistic, rude, withdrawn. Yet, despite their diversity, they share in common a childhood infused with violence where their models act out intolerance and offenses in front of their eyes. The immersion into an intrafamilial toxicity is but the initial destructive element that infuses the critical development period of youth.
Violent images are pervasive in our society and tend to reinforce the beliefs and actions of many children who are reflections of the world in which they are raised. These children typically lack the power that we think that they possess—they lack the power to stop the violence or to overcome its effects. Their scars may be internal and/or external, and the one universal reality is that nearly all children who experience traumatic life experiences attend schools where teachers are the frontline of defense.

Violence in the community is not isolated and often spills over into the classroom setting. This type of interaction interferes with the teaching environment and inhibits student learning. Violent school settings expose students who may already be at-risk for school failure to other failure related factors such as physical and emotional harm.

The child whose basic needs for security and safety are unmet may be unable to function optimally in the classroom. Our challenge is to mobilize and coordinate existing services within the community and school system. Moreover, positive school experiences and good peer relations are ways to overcome the deficits. Despite the barriers in children’s lives, the presence of just one caring adult who can relate to them and support them can foster resiliency and allow children to actualize their promise and potential (Viscott, 1996).

Yet, children who should be helped by the system are all too often isolated and hopeless. We must dispel the myth that schools are always acting in the best interest of children, that they gingerly nurture children’s development and that they model best practices in treating children. Most efforts to train social studies educators, if they address advocacy efforts at all, have focused on personnel as observers of the abusive practices of others. They have neglected to engage educators in a critical dialogue regarding their overt and covert participation in the victimization of children. Too many programs have avoided efforts to identify and address weak teacher education candidates who may create risk for the emotional or physical well being of students. We need to be aware that our inaction or avoidance of these issues can alter potentially enhancing processes, such as education, into development-obstructing, abusive processes.

Recognizing the tremendous needs of children for supportive services, we as practicing professionals have a special obligation to our students and trainees to prepare them for the realities of child maltreatment. Through this process we may begin the difficult task of transforming traumatized children from states of sadness, depression, and desperation to hope, joy, and a renewed sense of purpose and meaning of life.
Technology

The third challenge as we evolve a vision of pedagogy is the infusion of technological advances into our practice. Technology provides the tool that fosters collaborative processes and aids us in our role as child advocates. As social studies educators and advocates for children we must be open to how our students may be impacted by technology and remain vigilant in responding to the needs of children for the sake of both safety and learning.

The computer has the potential to facilitate widespread access to ideas and information. Information that might otherwise be unaffordable can be reviewed, and students can explore the world on virtual field trips that would otherwise be impossible. Social studies educators can be empowered through the computer to break down the barriers of isolation and collaborate with broad networks of peers and experts locally, nationally, and globally.

Technology also minimizes the barriers for fostering communication and collaboration with parents. Yet with all of these potential opportunities awaiting those who have the resources for computers, the danger of widening a gap between students from different socio-economic backgrounds looms over the process. It is imperative that technology be used to remove existing barriers and avoid creating new ones. The threat of being submerged in a new "culture of silence" (Shaull, 1993, p. 15) may be realized if we believe that technology is a panacea for all our shortcomings. Educators may erroneously focus the experience of students and model in their classroom teaching the use of technology as a tool to access information and knowledge as developed by others, but they may simultaneously fail to evolve skills in critically and creatively constructing ideas and thoughts that may transform the function of society.

Social studies teachers need in-depth, sustained assistance and modes of instruction as they work to integrate computer use into the curriculum and confront the tensions between traditional methods of instruction and new pedagogic methods that make extensive use of technology. It should no longer be the exclusive realm of technology experts to train educators about the mechanics of computers. Social studies professors need to model the use of technology as a tool to teach and address broader pedagogical concerns.

All teachers can use E-mail to facilitate home-school collaboration, keep parents informed of homework, and engage in asynchronous conferences. The asynchronous nature of electronic communication also allows social studies educators to become more reflective practitioners who thoughtfully consider new ideas and pathways. As educators increase their comfort with computers, they may incorporate them into their classroom practices so that they become a natural part of their teaching style. By sharing what they know with others
they also have an opportunity to advance their own knowledge and the collaborative community's knowledge. Collaboration that occurs in real time is an exciting environment that takes advantage of the Internet's interactive multimedia features. The developing connections evolve learning relationships. Successful collaborative environments should have a defined focus, clear benefits, and a culture receptive to collaboration.

The way we conceptualize teaching and learning across the disciplines has undergone significant shifts due to changes in the use of technology as a tool that seamlessly integrates collaborative processes and facilitates access to resources and ideas. The nation's scholars are investing their careers and financial resources to reexamine the nature of education. As the results of research are infused into the university teaching process, these advances are affecting the way that content is taught.

Internet access in schools has increased greatly over the last 20 years with approximately 89 percent of schools maintaining on-line initiatives (U.S. Department of Education, 1999). Seventy-six percent of students in grades one through twelve use a computer at school, and 45 percent access a computer at home (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1997). Given the essential role of computers in our society students' experiences are reflecting their preparation for an increasingly technological workplace.

The innovation that we seek needs to have widespread, practical application so that investments in "hardware, infrastructure, software, and content" will not be wasted (President's Committee of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) Report, 1997). The preparation that we evolve needs to shift the emphasis away from basic drill and computer skills and re-focus on technology as a tool that enhances discipline-based learning (Becker, 1999).

A new classroom is evolving that is an expansive learning environment extending beyond the walls of the traditional class setting. This adaptation of technology-based innovation has changed the conceptualization of teaching in universities and has transformed pedagogy as a consequence of technology-enriched processes. These transformations are instrumental in preparing future teachers to employ content-specific uses of technology as a means to evolve more effective social studies teaching and learning. The challenge is to seamlessly integrate technology into education and to transfer innovations in instruction to teacher education pedagogy. As a result, teaching may become more creative with technology serving as a tool to enliven the process.
A New Vision of Pedagogy

What are the benefits of this new vision of pedagogy? This model is designed to prepare a new kind of social studies educator who works in partnership with colleagues, communities, and families; promotes collaboration; advocates for the safety and well-being of children and families; and utilizes technology as a tool to facilitate improved educational experiences. What will it take and what will we need to do differently to meet the needs evident in schools?

Whatever vision we have, we need to consider and learn from each other’s perspectives, even when those perspectives are conflicting. We must also commit ourselves to seeking new insights that will better inform the development and implementation of policy, planning, and service delivery. We must be committed to the effective transmission of new knowledge to the appropriate audiences. There is a continuing need to move research and information from those who generate it to the user and the service provider in a form that has direct and immediate application. Not only is this a need—it is a challenge, and a challenge that is deceptively complex. The traditional approach to knowledge dissemination was to cast knowledge out into the world of practice, under the theory that a good idea would ultimately be used. The focus of this approach is almost exclusively on the dissemination side of the process rather than on the knowledge use side. The contrasting approach that I emphasize is a multi-level approach in which the needs and participation of the user are taken into account from the beginning, and the context for the use is also considered.

As we seek to inform and evolve the practice of social studies education, we must strive for collaborative models for designing, conducting and disseminating research to policymakers and practitioners in a meaningful way. But to accomplish this task, we must ask ourselves pointed questions and engage in dialogue and debate to guide our actions and initiatives. Questions include: What is good pedagogy? What is good education research? What knowledge counts? What is our commitment to and responsibility for experimental work that can inform practice? As social studies teacher educators we have had little incentive to bring our message to other forums besides professional journals. Moreover, we typically have failed to train our education students to attend to research as a means to evolve their instruction. However, if we do not self-regulate the quality of our endeavors and set goals to continuously reflect upon and transform our pedagogic and research practices in teacher education, then we may be held accountable to more formal standards (Ishler, Busching, Scannell, 1999; Viadero, 1999). Indifference or inaction on our part may further fuel the microscopic scrutiny of our teacher education programs.
Conclusion

Education as the exercise of domination stimulates the credulity of students, with the ideological intent (often not perceived by educators) of indoctrinating them to adapt to the world of oppression. (Freire, 1993, p. 59)

As social studies educators, we are members of the privileged few, with more education and social status than most. This allots us a certain power, and the choice of how to exercise this power should concern us. Inequities are structured into our society, and as people of privilege we need to raise our own consciousness of the potential for influence. Frederick Douglass has taught us that power concedes nothing without demand. We rarely become aware of or give up our privilege without pressure. Paulo Freire (1993) has noted the process of educators in endorsing the conformity of the oppressed and in avoiding transformative processes. So as we begin to ponder the status quo, we must energize ourselves to induce a shift from the safety of our present-day functioning. In order to resolve existing problems we are among those who must change, for we hold the power of education in our hands.

References


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