In Search of Discussion in the Standards-Based Middle School
Social Studies Classroom

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Abstract

The goal of this study was to determine what factors influence teachers in their use of

discussion in the social studies classroom. I interviewed two middle school teachers and

made classroom observations over a three month period. These teachers believed

discussion was an important process for students to gain critical thinking and citizenship

skills. These teachers believed they were conducting discussions but in fact were often

conducting what Nystrand et al. (2003) termed *recitation*, in which students respond to

questions and the teacher validates the response. The disconnect between belief and

practice may be the result of a combination factors, including a lack of teacher facilitation

skills, the timing of the research, and the tensions caused by the state curriculum

standards.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Powerful social studies teaching considers the ethical dimensions of topics

and addresses controversial issues, providing an arena for reflective development

of concern for the common good and application of social values. Students learn

to be respectful of the dignity and rights of others when interacting socially and to

emphasize basic democratic concepts and principles when making personal policy

decisions and participating in civic affairs. They are challenged to come to grips

with controversial issues and to participate assertively but respectfully in group

discussions. These group discussions in social studies class foster the

development of competencies essential to civic efficacy. Teacher questioning

often produces numerous and conflicting responses among students. When this

occurs, the teacher withholds evaluation and instead invites the students to engage

in sustained dialogue and debate. This action shifts some of the authority for

evaluating the validity of knowledge from teacher to students (National Council

for the Social Studies, 2008).

Setting the Stage

The weather was warming up, and students were dressed in faded jeans

and short-sleeved shirts. In the hallway there was an abnormal buzz as students

chatted at their lockers and then moseyed along to class. During my four-minute

sentry duty outside my classroom door, I overheard enough snippets of

conversations to figure out the hubbub and decided to address the topic of such

pronounced interest if my students brought it up.

It was the beginning of the day, and second period was my "experimental

group"— the first class to be subjected to my pedagogical concoctions, otherwise known as lesson plans. This group was like Mikey on that old Life cereal commercial: they would try anything and provide honest feedback on the potential and pitfalls of my plans. Normally, students came into class with an array of energy levels, from asleep on their feet to dancing down the hallways. Today, there was a current flowing through almost all of them. As I took attendance and they transitioned into the work of the day, an abnormal quiet settled in. I knew the direction the class would take and was poised and ready. As I looked around the class, eye contact was intense as students silently negotiated who would ask the question. I could have predicted the chosen speaker, their lone African American classmate named Jackie, who normally broached subjects others would not voice.

"Ms. Roberts are you going to wear jeans on Wednesday?" came a clear voice from the second row.

With that question, Jackie opened the door for a teachable moment. On one level the question made no sense, since the students knew I never wore jeans to school. I could have said "no" and moved on to the class agenda and no student would have questioned me further. But I made the decision to go through the door to see where it led.

"Why do you ask?"

Andrew, who always had a knack for creating controversy, spoke up. "Because if you wear jeans on Wednesday, it means you're gay."

"Really? Tell me more . . ."

And so the dialogical journey began.

I do not remember the exact conversation, but I do remember wanting desperately to understand. Why did this rumor carry so much energy? Why did it matter? Why were students so fearful of homosexuality that they would change their treasured jeans lest they send "the message"? Where did that fear come from? Where did the rumor get started? My only motivation was to hear what the students had to say. I wanted to provide a safe space and ask the questions.

I did, however, understand the origins of my need to understand. On May 13, 1988, my friend Rebecca Wight was murdered on the Appalachian Trail, a victim of a hate crime (Brenner, 1988). How did such contempt progress from the fear of wearing jeans on Wednesday because of what it may signal, to murdering someone because you saw her kissing a woman? I realized, in retrospect, that I was trying to make sense out of something that made no sense, but I also felt my students possessed a need to make sense of the taboo subject as well. They were clamoring to be given permission to voice their questions, values, and curiosities. I responded.

It was a powerful discussion. We shared stories, beliefs, and opinions, questioning each other and searching for personal clarity on the matter. I remember being surprised at how serious everyone was. Typically, when the words *gay* and *homosexual* entered a conversation, jokes and nervous accusations ensued. I believe that the student's manner of participation in the dialogue was partly in response to my raw sincerity at wanting to hear their thoughts. I tried to convey that my goal was to not change their beliefs or opinions but to immerse

myself in their position and understand how they arrived there.

At the end of the period, no one wanted to leave. They wanted to continue this honest interaction. Simon (2001) argues that students long to give voice to authentic discussion and that when they find the opportunity, they will take full advantage. I decided I would make time to discuss the topic in subsequent classes, but only if a student brought it up. Not all classes did, and those that chose to broach the subject varied in their level of exchange.

In one instance I closed down the conversation because the tone was silly and irreverent. After several unsuccessful attempts, I realized that I could not maintain the respectful classroom climate. Two other classes discussed the topic for part of the period. I wish I could say that all the interactions were similar to what happened in my first class. But that is the complexity of discussion. My history, values, and belief, my students' histories, values and beliefs, the timely taboo topic, school board policy, the motivation for the discussion, the classroom, the hallway, adolescent development, religion, and parents—all of these factors were nestled somewhere in the various exchanges in each class period. All the variables unfolded at different intensities, at different rates, which made for very different classroom dynamics as the day progressed.

Memory is selective and limited by how one cognitively processes an event (Damasio, 1994). This experience happened years ago. I cannot recall exact exchanges, but I do remember the tenor of the classroom climates and the difference it made in how students responded to each other. Overall, students listened more and defended their position less than in other discussions, in which

differences of opinions sparked intense debates. Students seemed to respond with empathy as perspectives were shared. There seemed to be a more respectful air to the whole process.

The topic of homosexuality was nowhere to be found in the content standards upon which I based my class. However, I believed the discussion was important and valuable. As citizens, we need to examine diversity and issues that result from our multicultural society. Students need to learn empathy and listening skills when it relates to positions different from their own. Still, there were plenty of opportunities to talk about multiple perspectives that related to history standards, so why allow such a tangent?

The reason why I fostered this discussion was because I saw this experience as a training ground for future discussions that would be content-driven. It was an authentic topic that was generated by their interest. The discussion skills they used and developed were invaluable. I hoped that I could use the discussion as a scaffold for other potentially emotional topics, such as race, immigration, and poverty, which were a part of the curriculum.

<div align="center">My View of Discussion and Social Studies</div>

I recount that memorable event to illustrate the potential the power of discussion in the social studies classroom. Hess and Posselt (2002) believe that "the most important component of effective democratic citizenship education is teaching young people how to deliberate about the nature of the public good and how to achieve it" (p. 278).

That incident also affected my belief in the value of discussion and the

challenge and responsibility of introducing discussion-worthy topics, especially

ones so value-laden and rarely broached. For the social studies to be meaningful,

students must have opportunities to tackle issues that are relevant to today's

society (Simon, 2001). As part of their mission statement, the National Council

for the Social Studies (NCSS) states:

> Powerful social studies teaching encourages recognition of opposing
>
> points of view, respect for well-supported positions, sensitivity to cultural
>
> similarities and differences, and a commitment to social responsibility and
>
> action. It recognizes the reality and persistence of tensions but promotes
>
> positive human relationships built on understanding, commitment to the
>
> common good, and willingness to compromise and search for common
>
> good. (NCSS, 1994, p.167)

Discussion can be the vehicle for entertaining different opinions, cultural

differences, and ways to communicate with others.

Throughout my experiences as a social studies teacher, I have observed

students learning through listening to each other. When new ideas are exchanged,

students have an opportunity to compare their stances with others. The act of

discussion allows students to socially construct new perspectives and develop new

paradigms (Gergen, 1999). The new information generated from the conversation

may confirm, alter, or enrich their positions (Richardson, 2004). Preskill (1997)

suggests that truths are a product of consensus reached through communication.

Through discussion students also learn that there may be more than one

way to interpret events. Depending on the topic, there can be conflicting values,

leading students to defend opinions as fact. As students interact, everything that constitutes the "other"—the sum total of what culture implies—enters into the dialogical exchange because both parties are constructing events and meaning (Gergen, 1999). For students to understand the complexity of society, they must have an opportunity to converse with each other, since there are so many perspectives to entertain. Wink and Putney (2002) agree that the job of schools is to provide experiences in which students can interact with each other and engage in personal reflection.

<div align="center">Motivation for Becoming a Social Studies Teacher</div>

Historically, education has been the vehicle for preparing young people to become productive members of society. Within education the field of social studies has most often been associated with developing an awareness of citizenship, while posing the question of how we prepare young people to be members of our participatory democracy (Barr, Barth, & Shermis, 1977). There are myriad perspectives on what it means to be a citizen. Citizens need to know about our history and our government. Citizens need to participate in voting, which means they need to be astute in understanding the complex issues that governments face.   In the social studies discipline, students are exposed to other cultures and places.

One of my major goals in becoming a teacher was to create an environment in which students could explore who they are and how they relate to the rest of the world. My experience in the classroom, both as a student and a teacher, convinces me that people need to be self-aware, empathic towards others,

and critical consumers of knowledge in order to be active, productive citizens. I chose the social studies arena because I viewed the discipline as an ideal milieu for addressing these real-life issues. Within the social studies, students are encouraged to analyze their beliefs and attitudes and create a framework or position on social issues affecting their lives, including the development of opposing positions. Discussion is an integral component of social studies, consisting of topics and formats that allow students to tackle fundamental life issues (Hess, 2004).

<div style="text-align:center">Realizing the Potential of Discussion</div>

Discussion in one form or another has been at the core of every one of my jobs. Whether in individual counseling, group work, training, teaching, or mediation, there has always been some type of discussion. I realized that I use the word *discussion* in a variety of situations, and it would be helpful to unpack my own perspectives and bias when I use the word. As a social studies teacher, I realized the importance of discussion as a powerful tool in supporting student learning, but it was always an unpredictable strategy to me. Yet, I continued to have discussions in my classroom. Some discussions were affected by outside influences of standardized tests and were structured with objectives and the standards testing tied to the content. Others spontaneously occurred, stemming from current events in the world or at school. Discussions unfolded everywhere, from lunchroom tables to outside my classroom door with students who were not even in my class.

Successful classroom discussions are a tricky proposition. I was not always the most skilled facilitator. Sometimes my attempts fell short of my ambitions. At times I could pinpoint the cause. Other times it was beyond my grasp. I just knew that when the synchronicity was there, and all the variables were in place, discussion was a powerful pedagogical tool. In my observations as a teacher, I noticed that students, given the opportunity, preferred talk as the method for learning and understanding, and they were voracious opportunists in this capacity.

I also knew that the more at ease students became with the processes of discussion, the more they would risk by sharing their thoughts about the content. From these experiences I concluded that discussion is a powerful tool that provides people a framework to learn about themselves and others. I understood the great potential discussion has in the social studies classroom and concluded that discussion is an essential process for students as they construct their perceptions of what it means to be a citizen. However, I also realized that discussion is a complex process and presents many opportunities for exploration. What makes the nature of discussion so elusive and so organic? And ultimately, what is the role of the facilitator?

<center>Exploring the Questions about Discussion</center>

The process of discussion begins with a structure but yields to each utterance, which molds and shapes the conversation until the interaction takes on a life of its own. In the end, each person comes away with a memory of what he or she constructed from the process. Parker and Hess (2001) discovered the

scarcity of role models in discussion when they presented the concept to their pre-service teachers. Conducting discussion is a complex and difficult skill to master. Many questions arise when scrutinizing this technique. How do other social studies teachers facilitate discussion? How did they learn about facilitating discussion? Why and how do they use discussion in the classroom? What influences their choices of when and what to discuss?

Through the process I have described, the intersection of discussion, social studies, and citizenship became my research topic. In order to understand the relationship between these factors, it was crucial for me to explore each one. More specifically, I needed to address several questions. What exactly is the discipline of the social studies? How do professionals in the social studies field define *citizenship* and explain the relationship between social studies and citizenship? I also needed to investigate how researchers define *discussion* and how it relates to social studies and citizenship. Finally, I needed to know what the research currently says about the components of discussion and what is regarded as effective discussion.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The goal of this literature review is to provide a comprehensive background in the areas of the social studies, citizenship, and discussion. My research interest lies in discussion and how it relates to the social studies. I would like to investigate what research says about discussion and how and when it is used in the social studies class room. It is important to fully explore all aspects of the literature in order to see where gaps in research might surface which will help give direction to my research interests. This chapter begins with the topic of the social studies and describes the ways in which the field is described and its tensions.

I also address the connection between the social studies and citizenship education, describing the myriad ways that citizenship and citizenship education can be viewed. I concentrate on two perspectives of social studies—the transmission perspective and the critical thinking/social justice perspective—and then relate them to citizenship education. In the critical thinking/social justice model, I build the case for the importance of discussion as it relates to social studies and citizenship. The complexities of discussion, as well as how people define and interpret it, are addressed. Finally, I problematize the issues of discussion in the classroom and develop the questions that form the basis of my study.

The Social Studies

The field of the social studies is complex, like a tapestry created by many hands. In order to make sense of this rich field, tone must examine its history as

well as the competing visions of the role the social studies play in education. In the following sections I will unpack the definitions, history and politics of the social studies.

Definition of the Social Studies

The National Council for the Social Studies defines social studies as

>   the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to
>
>   promote civic competence. Within the school program, social
>
>   studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such
>
>   disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography,
>
>   history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion,
>
>   and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities,
>
>   mathematics, and natural sciences. The primary purpose of social
>
>   studies is to help young people develop the ability to make
>
>   informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of
>
>   a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world
>
>   (http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/execsummary)

Ross (2001) acknowledges the broad nature of social studies when he quotes Stanley and Nelson (1994) as "the study of all human enterprise over time and space" (p. 266). Vinson and Ross (2001) also allude to the breadth of content that the social studies cover when they state, "Social studies is the most inclusive of all the school subjects" (p. 39). The social studies deal with many disciplines, sometimes in concert with each other and sometimes at odds (Stanley, 2001). The purpose, goals, and definition of the social studies are defined differently by

various researchers (Ross, 1997; Stanley, 2001). These different goals and definitions result in competing ideologies regarding how the social studies should be taught (Nelson, 2001), what should be taught (NCSS, 1997; Ross, 2000), and what areas of the social studies should be researched (Stanley, 2001*).*

<center>*The Emergence of the Social Studies*</center>

Many tensions and conflicts exist within the social studies regarding how the field was initially created (Nelson, 1997; Vinson & Ross, 2001), the choices made in curriculum (Ross, 1997; Zevin, 2000), and the politics affecting the social studies field (Cornbleth, 2001; Nelson, 2001; Saxe, 1997). Difficulties emerge from having one field encompass so many independent disciplines. Within each individual discipline, there are competing paradigms about focus, goals, and what is important. How can the whole achieve consensus on a vision when the parts are struggling for an identity (Stanley, 2001)? Nelson (2001) sums up the problematic nature of social sciences in the following way: "The social subjects are not clear, unambiguous, pristine, logically tight, and mutually exclusive categories of knowledge; they are sloppy overlapping, unclear and indistinct in many facets, self-perpetuating, and often intellectually limiting definitions of subjects of study" (p. 21).

Some professionals in the field argue that the discipline of the social studies is a myth (Barth, 1996). Those in the field cannot even come to a consensus about whether the term "social studies" is singular or plural (Barr, Barth, & Shermis, 1977). Nelson (2001) discusses various definitions of the concept of a discipline, some of which exclude or allow the social studies to be

defined as a discipline. Yet in the K–12 curriculum, the social studies are taught as a collection of the individual social sciences. Teachers, especially in middle and high school, define themselves using the specific discipline, as in "I am a government teacher," or "I teach history," rather than "I am a social studies teacher" (Vinson & Ross, 2001). Barth (1996) points out that some see the social studies as "merely a label for a school curriculum area" (p. 11) rather than an actual academic discipline.

Even attempting to construct the history of the social studies fosters conflict, with each discipline having competing stories of its origins and importance with the social studies (Stanley, 2001). Although the term *social studies* may not have been used in the earliest American schools, the social studies were still part of the curriculum, in the form of history and geography. Nelson (1997) notes by 1884, England used the term *social studies* regularly in schools. In regard to the United States, Ross (1997) notes that "it is generally accepted that the formal introduction of social studies to the school curriculum was marked by the publication of *The Social Studies in Secondary Education* in 1916" (p. xi). In 1921 the American Historical Association (AHA) helped to found the NCSS (Nelson, 1997), which illustrates the great influence history has had and continues to have in the social studies. Yet during this period there was a great restructuring of schools and many social studies reforms movements, two of which were citizenship education (Ross, 1997) and historical study (Wealton, 1997). The overall goal for the social studies in the early 1900s was to teach

students the knowledge needed to prepare them for citizenry and participation in society (Houser & Kuzmic, 2001).

The Social Studies as an Integrative Discipline

For the past 150 years, history has dominated the social studies (Saxe, 1997; Stanley, 2001). Some researchers argue that history is the ideal entry point from which one can access all the other disciplines (Whelan, 1997). Nelson (1997) cites Keller's position on the social studies saying Keller "merely dismisses the social studies as a myth and unworthy of academic argument, proposing that we should just give it up and accept history as the savior field" (p. 26). Even if Keller were correct believing all of the social studies could be distilled down to the one field of history, there would still be problems. The field of history itself is divided by conflicts and power struggles over how to approach the discipline (Zevin, 2000). Nelson (1997) would also argue that using history as the primary conduit for the social studies reduces the field to a transmission model of just teaching the stories of our country to the next generation. The social studies field then is reduced to memorization and regurgitation of facts and dates, with the teacher serving as a mere transmitter of knowledge (Saxe, 1997).

Social studies education, in its broadest terms, has the goal of helping students figure out what they know to be true about their social situation and equipping them with the necessary analytical and self-reflective tools to successfully navigate their world (Ross, 2000). The social studies address the community at large as well as the individual (Houser & Kuzmic, 2001).

The NCSS believes that for students to learn these necessary skills, the social studies need to be rooted in what are considered best practices. The following is a part of the NCSS (1997) vision statement:

> The emphasis is on principles of teaching and learning that have enduring applicability across grade levels, content areas, and scope-and-sequence arrangements. These principles are summarized in the statement that social studies teaching and learning are powerful when they are meaningful, integrative, value-based, challenging and active. (p. 2)

Experts in the field of social studies recognize the power of integrating content across curriculums and using effective learning strategies in helping students to recognize themes and issues that weave throughout all the fields. The social studies need to be seen as more than the memorization of facts, disseminated by a teacher though lectures and worksheets, and assessed by a standardized tests (Saxe, 1997). Even though conflicts exist among the individual disciplines as to their role in the social studies, there is a consensus about the value of creating a curriculum that is interdisciplinary, integrative, and inquiry-based (Stanley, 2001).

Key Politics Affecting the Social Studies

Political concerns influence what is taught (i.e., curriculum) and how it is taught; politics is often the rudder that steers the educational system, rather than educational research and best practices. The social studies are not exempt from that influence (Vinson & Ross, 2001).

Politics enters the equation on what to call the disciplines (Nelson, 2001). Stanley (2001) recounts his experience as a co-chair on a state curriculum committee where he and his colleagues "were given an explicit charge not to use the term social studies as a curriculum committee descriptor" (p. 2).   The very nature of social studies as a field can come into question when looking at a state curriculum and the politics surrounding the process of developing curriculum guidelines. Fore (1998) reflected Nelson's comments by focusing on the controversy relating to the creation of Virginia's social studies curriculum standards in 1995. As a result of a conservative agenda, the field of social studies was changed to history and social science. With the emphasis on high-stakes testing, curriculum is now being shaped by what can be tested on multiple-choice tests (Vinson & Ross, 1997). The NCSS has sound research guiding its vision; it advocates teaching and learning strategies that are "meaningful, integrative, value-based, challenging and active" (NCSS, 2008). Yet when pitted against standardization of curriculum and high-stakes testing, teacher transmission becomes the preferred paradigm. Integrating all the various disciplines to create cross-curriculum themes, which support a student's critical thinking, is sound practice, but conservative voices in government push the paradigm of a nationalistic curriculum based on teaching historical facts (Cary, 2001).

Furthermore, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 has generated a serious concern for professionals in the social studies field (Pace, 2008). Since the social studies is not a content area that is required to be tested under NCLB, schools are spending less time on this subject (Levitsky, 2006;

Pace, 2008). Unless individual school districts have a commitment to students learning social studies (Tanner, 2008), elementary students are exposed to less social studies than they were prior to NCLB (Hutton & Burstein, 2008; Pace, 2008; Tanner, 2008; Wills, 2007). Students from low-performing socio-economically disadvantaged school districts are potentially spending the least amount of time learning the social studies (Wills, 2007). At the secondary level, some districts are restructuring social studies or combining the classes with other content areas (e.g., English or humanities) (Levstik, 2008). Text book companies are devoting less time and resources to the social studies content area (Levitsky, 2006; Levstik, 2008). As a result of this critical picture, the National Council for the Social Studies is advocating that the social studies become one of the core subjects tested under NCLB (Tanner, 2008). In the meantime teachers are finding it difficult to teach the necessary skills and processes important to civic practice given the reduced time allotted to the subject (Mitsakos & Ackerman, 2009).

The Connection Between the Social Studies and Citizenship

Although many variables inform and define the social studies, one theme seems to emerge consistently from the innumerable positions. The primary goal of the social studies is education for citizenship (Houser & Kuzmic, 2001; Shaver, 1996; Vinson & Ross, 2001; Zevin, 2000). Ross (1997) contends "there is a widespread agreement that the proper aim of social studies is citizenship education or the preparation of young people so that they possess the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for active participation in society" (p. 6). The NCSS states "social studies is the integrated study of social sciences to promote civic

competence" (cited in Shaver, 1996, p. 41). Houser and Kuzmic (2001) make the distinction "ethical citizenship," not just citizenship, is the goal. Barton and Levstik (2004) recognize the purpose of education in general is "to prepare students for participation in democratic life" (p. 28). More specifically, they link the teaching of history to citizenship.

While social studies educators may agree preparing young people to become successful, active citizens is the mandate of the social studies that is as far as the consensus goes. Lurking beneath the surface are myriad problems, issues, and conflicts. Just looking at Ross's statement about the proper aim of citizenship raises a host of questions. What knowledge do citizens need to possess? Who chooses that knowledge? What skills are seen as important to citizenship? Who determines that? Who determines the curriculum to teach that knowledge and those skills? What or whose values can we as a society agree upon as being fundamental to citizenship? What does active participation mean? What is the responsibility of citizenship?

<div align="center">Citizenship Education</div>

Defining citizenship education is challenging because it is highly subjective; the definition of a "good citizen" reflects the values of society as a whole, and these values change with time and context (Bohan, 2001). Power struggles within society are manifested in citizenship education, whether in the transmission of knowledge or the inculcation of values. Is a "good citizen" one who is willing to risk challenging the hegemony of the dominant culture? Is a "good citizen" one who votes at major elections and lets the elected

representatives deal with the more complex issues? Is a "good citizen" one who

challenges the processes that continually benefit the dominant culture to the

detriment of the minority? Across the political spectrum, people hold very

different visions of what role people should play in order to benefit society. All

of these perspectives contribute to the complex nature of citizenship education.

Definitions of Citizen, Citizenship, and the "Good Citizen"

Webster's Dictionary defines *citizen* as "an inhabitant of a city or town or

a member of a country, native or naturalized, having rights and owing

allegiance."(p. 256) Citizenship is the state of being a citizen or having the rights

and duties of this state. Gordon, Holland, and Lahelma (2000) state "citizenship

sums up the relation between the individual and the nation state" (p. 9). The

National Council for the Social Studies also recognizes the interplay between self

and state when they state, "citizenship in this most diverse of societies is defined

not only by an affirmation of democratic first principles, but also by a willingness

to engage in civil debate and to work for republic policies that serve the common

good" (2002, p.1).

Educators voice a plethora of ideas about what it means to be a citizen

(Abowitz and Harnish, 2006; Bohan, 2001; Chiodo and Martin, 2005; Mitchell

and Parker, 2008: Noddings, 2005; Jo, 2003; Parker, 2001a 2001b, 2005; Peterson

and Seligman, 2004; Rossi, 2006). Engle (1960) stated "the mark of a good

citizen is the quality of decisions which he reaches on public and private matters

of social concern" (p. 118). Engle's definition reflects his view of decision-

making at the core of all effective social studies. On the other hand, Houser and

Kuzmic (2001) view citizens as needing to be able and "willing to address

personal challenges and the broader issues that face society" (p. 433). Boyle-

Baise (2003) uses Westheimer and Kahne's (2002) framework of personal

responsibility, participation, and justice orientation when discussing attributes of a

"good citizen":

> A personally responsible citizen exhibits "good" character traits, such as
>
> honesty, integrity, respect, and compassion. He/she acts responsibly in the
>
> community: works hard, pays taxes, volunteers, obeys laws, and votes. . . .
>
> A participatory citizen is involved in civic duties at local state and national
>
> level. He/she knows how government works and has the skills to
>
> participate collectively. . . . The justice oriented citizen looks critically at
>
> social, political, and economic structures and wonders about systematic
>
> causes for problems: drug addiction, juvenile crime, and child neglect. (p.
>
> 51-52)

Some researchers challenge the traditional view of democracy and

citizenship, calling for the terms to be re-examined (Shinew, 2001). Embedded in

those seemingly innocuous patriotic terms is an unspoken framework, which

continues to sustain dominant power structures and marginalize other perspectives

(Boler, 2004; Cary, 2001; Gordon, Holland, & Lahelma, 2000; Shinew, 2001).

The term *citizenship* is abstract, and when the term is made a reality in society,

the construct is Eurocentric and masculine (Gordon, Holland, & Lahelma, 2000).

Some argue an essential characteristic of a good citizen involves understanding

citizenship in a global context (Jo, 2003; Merryfield and Subedi, 2001; Zong,

Wilson and Quashinga, 2008). The world community seems smaller and more

interconnected, with new technologies giving us accessibility to other cultures

(Martorella, 1996).

Narrow nationalistic attitudes often inform people's definition of

citizenship (Jo, 2003). However, a student's ethnicity helps to frame his or her

perceptions of citizenship and how the government should operate (Ross, 2001).

Young people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds learn from their culture

and community about democracy and what it means to be a citizen (Epstein,

2001). This construct might be very different from the construct of a white public

school teacher, and those children have to reconcile the incongruence of the

various perspectives.

Although U.S. democracy is frequently equated with freedom of speech

(Fu & Stremmel, 1999), Boler (2004) believes there is a paradox and all voices

are not equal; she contends that an inequality in speech can manifest itself in the

classroom. The concepts of citizen, citizenship, and democracy need scrutinizing

in order to see how the hegemony of our society is firmly kept in place in the

classroom (Boler, 2004; Shinew, 2001). Parker (2001) shares a similar notion:

> The problem of citizenship raises in turn, the problem of citizenship
>
> education. Here the problem is how to affirm liberty and diversity on the
>
> one hand, protecting both freedom and inclusion, while, on the other,
>
> shaping individuals into particular kinds of citizen required by the norms
>
> and ideals of the overarching political community. Citizenship education
>
> is not a completely neutral project in any society, of course. Everywhere it

seeks to predispose citizens to particular ways of knowing, relating, and

being that is deemed appropriate to the political culture at hand. (p. 98)

The difficulties for the social studies then lie in the friction between inculcating

students with the values and norms of this society and helping them learn to

challenge the values and norms in order to improve society (Vinson & Ross,

2001).

<p align="center">*Elements of Citizenship Education*</p>

According to Null and Milson (2003), "most American educators agree

that education for citizenship in a democratic society involves developing the

knowledge, skills, and values necessary for civic efficacy" (p. 119). Concerns

exist that students do not have a command of the necessary content knowledge to

understand government affairs. The *Christian Science Monitor* asked, "What kind

of democracy can we expect in the future when only 26% of seniors have more

that a rudimentary understanding of the political process" (Ross, 2000, p. 6). One

goal of citizenship education is to provide students with fundamental knowledge

about the roles of government and how the roles apply to citizens. Furthermore

Understanding rights and responsibilities under the Constitution is also essential

knowledge to citizenship education (Saxe, 1997). Zevin (2000) recounts William

Bagley's position, stating that the body of knowledge that is essential for any

citizen includes history, government, and economics.

Skills Needed for Citizenship

In addition to a body of knowledge, certain skills are needed to be a

productive citizen. Critical thinking is integral component for a citizen in a

democratic society. Parker (1994) states, "whether embedded or freestanding, higher-order thinking has been considered a basic building block of democratic education throughout this century" (p. 15). Saxe (1997) suggests because the founding fathers wrote a constitution with the elasticity needed to adjust with the times, citizens must to be able to learn to interpret their rights and responsibilities in the context of ever-changing laws. Critical thinking also prepares students to become decision makers in matters of policy and law (Effrat & Shimmel, 2003; Engle, 1960). Learning to listen and to present one's ideas are skills that are necessary to critical thinking and decision making (Glass, 2000; Newman, Bertocci, & Landsness, 1977). Zevin (2000) views pragmatist John Dewey as responsible for emphasizing the need for students to have reasoning skills, which also include "problem solving, problem finding, reflective thinking, inquiry, critical thinking, and creative thinking" (p. 11).

Values, Morals, Dispositions

Another element of citizenship education is to identify and instill dispositions, morals, and values that are necessary for citizens to be successful in society (Glass, 2000). This goal is controversial, however. Terms such as *values*, *attitudes*, *virtues*, and *morals* are ambiguous and differ in meaning depending on who defines the term (Null & Milson, 2003). Who decides which morals, values, and dispositions are the focus of citizenship education? This is a political question, and often the white male, dominant power structure answers the question (Cary, 2001; Shinew, 2001). Vinson and Ross (2001) ask if we are to

inculcate the values and dispositions in order for a citizen to be "integrated into the status quo" (p. 42) or to "act as change agents to transform society" (p. 42).

Additionally Kahne and Westheimer (2003) observe there is an intersection in character education and citizenship education at which desired civic virtues and identified morals meet, resulting in a citizenship landscape having little to do with politics.

> These programs [character education] aim to promote service and good
> character, but not democracy. They share an orientation toward
> developing individual character traits (honesty, integrity, self-discipline,
> hard work), volunteerism, and charity and away from teaching about
> social movements, social transformation and systematic change. (p. 36)

Character education and the values that are chosen are more to promote individual traits rather than democratic traits. The virtues that comprise the underpinnings of civic education are influenced by definitions, history, religions and power structures which may not necessarily serve democratic principles.

The Individual vs. Society

One of the struggles with citizenship education is reconciling the individual with the whole and sameness with difference (Vinson & Ross, 2001). Parker (1994) states that there is a "long-standing confusion in the United States over the meaning of one of its chief mottoes, the one it has put on its coins, *e pluribus unum*" (p. 3). He suggests the central tension in citizenship education between unity and difference is not addressed. Jones, Pang, and Rodriguez (2001) argue responsible citizens understand their role in relation to others and need to make

decisions that benefit the whole public, not the individual. Conversely, our society

seems to emphasize and value individualism and the individual who is

autonomous and not dependent on community (Williamson et al., 2003).

Paradoxically, a pressure is exerted to be the same and to neutralize differences

that are outside the hegemonic paradigm. Parker (1994) notes differences seem to

be more tolerated in public and political concerns, "while differences of religion,

language, race, ethnicity and gender are moved to the side in the name of 'color

blindness' or neutrality" (p. 10).

In further exploration of the paradox of the individual versus society,

Gonzales, Ridel, Avery, and Sullivan (2001) conducted a content analysis on the

National Standards for Civics and Government and found "there were nearly

twice as many references to citizen rights as to responsibilities" (p. 122), and

there is more focus in the standards on the individual than on groups. Holmes

(2001) adds that school systems in general seem to favor the concept of

individuality over the whole, citing increasing class size and the eroding of

community focus in schools as examples. In contrast, citizenship education

attempts to incorporate more community focus in schools; one method is by

exploring multicultural issues, hoping to develop understanding and tolerance

towards diverse positions (Jones, 2004).

Abowitz and Harnish (2006) analyzed social studies curriculums and

textbooks to provide a "conceptual framework" (p. 653) for how citizenship is

described in the social studies. They found seven overlapping frameworks. Two

frameworks that seemed to dominate were what they termed "civic republican"

and "liberal." (p. 653). Civic republican citizenship focuses on how government works, how citizens contribute in the traditional ways such as participating in elections and community service, and how citizens show patriotism and nationalistic pride. Abowitz and Harnish (2006) noted this pro-government discourse was "particularly evident in the state documents on civics standards and the citizenship materials of some of the more politically conservative nonprofit organizations" (657). In civic republican citizenship, core beliefs and values are consistent and need to be instilled in citizens.

The second framework, liberal citizenship, reflects the importance of the rights of the individual and the rights of others in the quest for the ideal life. Those who are in the minority or are disenfranchised are recognized as equally important when "exercising their freedoms in society" (Abowitz & Harnish, 2006, p. 661). Liberal citizenship encompasses two subcategories, neo-liberalism and political liberalism. Neo-liberalism considers the rights of the individual in relation to supporting capitalism. Political liberalism supports critically analyzing the government and acknowledging the diversity of our society and how competing needs impact our government.

<div align="center">A Metaphor for the Social Studies</div>

Citizenship education can be further explored through two sometimes opposing expert perspectives about the field of the social studies. The following sections discuss the transmission model and the critical thinking aspects of the social studies.

In drawing the social studies picture, Saxe (1997) uses the metaphor of the pendulum, which he borrowed from Dewey. The opposites between which the pendulum swings are control and freedom. Saxe says that both freedom and control are needed in order to implement citizenship education. Barr, Barth, and Shermis (1977) focus on three themes in their conceptual framework of social studies: citizenship transmission, social science, and reflective inquiry. The citizenship transmission model seems to correlate with the control side of the pendulum and the idea of participation (Parker, 2001), whereas critical thinking aligns with the freedom side of the pendulum. Attempting to distill the complexities of citizenship education down to this pair of opposites may seem simplistic given the innumerable elements that make up citizenship education. Nevertheless, this framework serves as a useful point of entry to subsequent discussion of the variables associated with citizenship education.

The Transmission Model of Citizenship Education

The transmission model citizenship education has had the greatest impact on current practices (Zevin, 2000) and continues to be the predominant model in the social studies today (Ross, 2001). This model is the oldest one, and "it is the position most often supported by the general public" (Barr, Barth, & Shermis, 1977, p. 59). The transmission model reflects the belief and assumption associated with the concept of modernism that there is a body of knowledge and truth that is based in reason and science. The terms used in this body of knowledge are consistent, reliable, and static and are used to help establish continuity and order in the world (Klages, 2003). Order is established and

maintained through "grand narratives," or stories, which help to explain meta-concepts such as democracy.

> "Grand narratives" or "master narratives" are stories a culture tells itself about its practices and beliefs. A "grand narrative" in American culture might be the story that democracy is the most enlightened (rational) form of government, and that democracy can and will lead to universal human happiness. (Klages, 2003, p.2)

The transmission model reflects the belief that static definitions, beliefs, and a body of knowledge make up citizenship education (Barr, Barth, & Shermis, 1977). These concepts are not challenged, given that they are fundamental to what we consider "American" and "democratic" (Vinson & Ross, 2001). The tenets of "an old and influential philosophy labeled perennialism are that absolute and unchanging truths exist in human history" (Zevin, 2000, p. 10). Zevin emphasizes students who study these truths and apply them will be "competent, culturally literate individuals who know and understand their own historical milieu and are capable of transmitting this understanding to others" (p. 10). According to this framework, the purpose of citizenship transmission is to teach students a culturally agreed upon "grand narrative" of what it means to be a citizen. This unchallenged grand narrative is usually a product of the dominant culture and is accepted as truth by the teachers who transmit the story to their students (Barr, Barth, & Shermis, 1977).

Content and the Transmission Model

If the transmission model of citizenship education lies on the control side of the pendulum's swing, then content is one aspect that is controlled. The assumption is that there is universally accepted core content, which generally includes history, government, and geography. Vinson and Ross (2001) state:

> Content is based on beliefs that: 1) certain factual pieces of information are important to the practice of good citizenship; 2) the nature of this information remains relatively constant over time; and 3) this information is best determined by a consensus of authorities and experts. (p. 43)

By this definition, content is a static body of information. What social studies educators teach is a collection of facts and stories that is determined to be the body of knowledge a student needs in order to function as a knowledgeable citizen. Content knowledge could be seen as the product of the transmission model.

This transmission paradigm works well for those who believe the social studies are a collection of individual disciplines, each contributing a predetermined body of knowledge. Educators are expected to be well versed in the content of their chosen field in order to equip students with the required factual information. The teacher is the controller and transmitter of knowledge. The problem that arises is that knowledge is not neutral (Zimmerman, 2002). Teachers make choices about what information and illustrations are used to portray the concept of the good citizen. Barr, Barth, and Shermis (1977) note teachers use their beliefs, attitudes, and values to create their picture of society and citizenship. Teachers decide what attitudes and dispositions an "ideal" citizen

must exhibit to be productive in society. In the end the teacher's paradigm of the ideal society and citizenship acts as a filter for what knowledge is relevant to the student.

Pedagogy and the Transmission Model

Vinson and Ross (2001) state teachers usually use "description and persuasion" (p. 43) as processes to transmit knowledge. The content is seen as fact or truth (Zevin, 2000), and teachers need only to recount the information. The teacher is the expert and is responsible for studying the resources, analyzing the facts, drawing conclusions, and providing the students with the final product (Zevin, 2000). Some of the information allows for multiple perspectives, yet a teacher may have a preferred perspective; consequently, a teacher may have to use persuasion as a means for conveying the content. The content is generally "history-centered" (Saxe, 1997, p. 46) with rote memorization of facts and dates as the main focus. The pedagogy often takes the form of lecture, textbook reading, worksheets, and quizzes (Goodlad, 1984), with students in the role of passive observers.

Educational Standards and the Transmission Model

This product-driven transmission model aligns well with the issue of standards, state curriculums, and high-stakes testing practices. When people hear statistics such as "National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) states 35% of American high school seniors cannot demonstrate even a basic grasp of their system of government" (Ross, 2000, p. 6), they question what is being taught in the social studies. The result is a political backlash, with movement toward

standard curriculums and assessments that hold schools acutely accountable for what students learn.

The report *A Nation at Risk*, released by the National Commission of Excellence in Education in 1983, argued students were not leaving their public education experience with the necessary fundamental information and skills needed to be a productive citizen (Vinson & Ross, 2001). As a result, "the mid-1980's ushered in an era present today of teaching to common measurable objectives and administration of standardized tests with teacher accountability for test results" (Pryor, 2004, p. 79). Schools must be accountable to the public, and the public wants assurance that their children are learning the basics (Newman, Bertocci, & Landsness, 1977).

Gonzales, Riedel, Avery, and Sullivan (2001) discuss the development and contents of the National Civics Standards (NCS) and contend states are beginning to reflect the recommendations of what content should be covered in a civics course. According to NCS, the following are the standards students should master.

> 1) the relations among civic life, politics, and government; 2) the
> foundations of the American political system; 3) ways in which the
> government established by the Constitution embodies the purposes,
> values, and principals of American democracy; 4) the relations of the
> United States to other nations and world affairs; and 5) the roles of
> citizens in American democracy. (p. 111)

These standards assume there is one unified concept of American democracy and all that it encompasses (Gonzales, Riedel, Avery, & Sullivan, 2001). In the era of

No Child Left Behind the call for a national standardized curriculum and assessment process reduces citizenship education to a body of knowledge, which can be tested on the accompanying high-stakes standardized test. The idea of a national standardized curriculum fits well with the transmission model of citizenship education.

Limitations to the Transmission Model

Many social studies experts agree about the need for students to master the basic content of the social studies, and, thus, the transmission model has a place in citizenship education. Saxe (1997) argues the merits of subject-centered teaching, which is congruent with the citizen transmission model, when he states that "subject-centered teaching is not in itself bad; students need exposure to historical concepts, trends, and data in order to achieve civic competence" (p. 46). But there are limitations to the model. Frèire (1998) criticizes any method of education that sees students as mere bank accounts waiting for the cash of knowledge to be deposited. Glass (2000) writes, "Banking education substitutes memorization of facts for the skills needed to produce and critique knowledge" (p. 279). Ross (2001) acknowledges the value of facts but sees a disconnect between the knowledge and its application. That is, students do not see the connection between the elements of democracy and how to be active participants in society.

Another limitation of the transmission model is the naïve, simplistic view that there is one way to look at citizenship and democracy. In fact, another major

approach to citizenship education takes into account multiple perspectives, diversity, and critical thinking. This approach is discussed in the next section.

Critical Thinking, Social Justice, and Participation Models

While the transmission model resides on the control side of the continuum, the model of reflective inquiry resides on the freedom side. This side of the pendulum swing speaks to "freedom of thought and action" (Saxe, 1997, p. 42). Many concepts are located on the freedom side of the continuum, including critical thinking, informed social criticism, social justice education, and participatory citizenship.

The concept of postmodernism permeates the landscape of reflective inquiry, with many research articles having the word *postmodern* in the title (Giroux, 2004; Houser & Kuzmic, 2001; Reichenbach, 1998; Weltman, 1999) or having postmodernism as a theoretical underpinning (Cary, 2001). Where modernism defined the world as concrete, with clear definitions of how society operates, postmodernists view the world as an enigma and the definition of society as elusive. Postmodernism rejects modernism's belief in the orderliness of the "grand narrative." Klages (2003) states:

> Postmodernism, in rejecting grand narratives, favors "mini-narratives," stories that explain small practices, local events, rather than large-scale universal or global concepts. Postmodern "mini-narratives" are always situational, provisional, contingent, and temporary, making no claim to universality, truth, reason, or stability. (p.3)

Instead of looking for absolute truths, defending positions, or debating facts, postmodernists look for shared meanings, multiple perspectives, and storytelling (Weltman, 1999).

So how does postmodernism help to shape citizenship education? These beliefs state that citizens must not take concepts or issues at face value but must address the complexities and ambiguities that are inherent in the world. Specifically, there is an emphasis on understanding other cultures, examining previously uncontested truths to see many perspectives to a complex issue or problem, critically analyzing arguments and positions, and empathizing with cultures other than one's own. For the learner, developing a sense of self is an ongoing process. Rather than remain static in their beliefs and values, students continue to reflect on their identity, and with each new experience, they either affirm or readjust their sense of self (Reichenbach, 1998). Where the citizenship transmission model focused on a body of content, informed social criticism relies on the process of critical thinking.

Critical Thinking and Citizenship Education

Effective citizens must have the ability to critically analyze issues that affect their community (Barr, Barth, & Shermis, 1977). In this era of media domination, citizens must sift through news, advertisements, and Internet information to form positions on relevant issues. Citizenship education must prepare students for this complicated world of globalization, technology, and complex societal issues; part of that preparation includes training them to be

critical consumers of information (Martorella, 1996). Critical thinking informs students in their choices about political involvement.

Critical thinking also applies to deconstructing concepts that have been accepted as truth (Cary, 2001). Shinew (2001) believes it is imperative to identify power structures that help to construct terms like *freedom* and *democracy* in order to see how the power structures remain entrenched in these terms. Educators must become vigilant at identifying how dominant power structures continue to marginalize groups based on race, class, and gender (Shinew, 2001). Critical analysis is essential to the process of understanding how words and concepts have power embedded in them (Gordon, Holland, & Lahelma, 2000).

A key component of critical thinking, decision-making skills are vital to citizens when voting on issues (Beyer, 2007; Engle, 1960; Engle & Ochoa, 1988). Engle and Ochoa (1988) see decision-making as relevant to two areas: deciding the accuracy of information and making decisions about how to deal with social issues. In the critical thinking model, citizenship education must provide students with opportunities to practice decision-making, which includes verbalizing how they arrived at their opinions (Saxe, 1997). Barr, Barth, and Shermis (1977) argue that decision-making is inherent to democracy.

> The assumption is that democracy imposes a unique burden; we cannot escape the requirement of making decisions. Sometimes decisions relate to the making of legislation or the selecting of legislators; this is of course an inherent part of our government—what it means to live in a self-governing, democratic society. (p. 64)

The NCSS (2008) also views teaching decision-making skills as a mandate for citizenship education.

Critical Thinking: Values and Beliefs

Citizenship education must address values and beliefs, which undergird our democratic process. In a postmodern framework, it is important not to take these ideals at face value but to analyze their intent and definitions (Shinew, 2001). Ross (2000), in reviewing Marciano's book, *Civic Illiteracy*, highlights the importance of civic literacy and states that students must analyze their values and society's values surrounding democratic concepts of nationalism and war. Students also need to see how competing values are sometimes at the root of conflict between diverse populations (Wade, 2001). A critical look must be taken regarding which values are minimized or absent (Noddings, 2003). Researchers suggest that caring (Noddings, 2003,2005), relationship to the environment (Houser & Kuzmic, 2001), and Eros (Burch, 1999) be considered as fundamental democratic values.

Controversy abounds about the validity of analyzing values. NCSS's (1997) position on moral development does not suggest that students critically analyze values; rather, it suggests that students identify the civic virtues that foster democratic citizenship. Reichenbach (1998) argues a postmodern position that students are continually reflecting on who they are in relation to their environment and experiences; therefore, analyzing values is a natural part of learning. Overall, some experts argue that analyzing values is crucial if democracy is to move ahead with validating all groups (Shinew, 2001).

Critical Thinking: Curriculum and Content

In a critical thinking approach, content is seen from multiple perspectives (Shinew, 2001). More than one perspective exists about history, and for students to understand the complexities of our diverse heritage, they must be exposed to a variety of sources from which to draw conclusions. Moreover, sometimes our history is incomplete or distorted (Loewen, 1995), and it is important for students to question what is missing.

To foster students' critical thinking abilities, teachers must provide an environment that welcomes the complexities of the issues. A citizenship educator should provide students a forum to examine the values and belief structures that are inherent to democracy (Gordon, Holland, & Lahelma, 2000). Concepts of democracy, equality, freedom, and justice need to be deconstructed in order for students to understand how those beliefs are formed by dominant power structures and how they are influenced by one's group affiliations (Houser & Kuzmic, 2001). Students must be afforded opportunities to understand how some groups' positions are based in privilege and others' are marginalized, as well as to understand the ramifications for society (Glass, 2000).

Social Justice and Multicultural Education

As stated previously, the transmission model of the social studies assumes a set body of history and a common position that is inherent to all citizens. The predominant influence that shapes this position tends to be white, male, European, Christian, and economically advantaged. In contrast, a whole movement of the social studies believes that in order to be prepared for the democratic process, one

has to see the limitations and realties of our democracy and work to right the inequalities that are a byproduct of the dominant paradigm (Boyle-Baise, 2003). By creating a space and format for students to investigate and challenge the complexities and inconsistencies of our society, we set an example for how to be an engaged citizen who is proactive in making society more just.

The goal of social justice education is to move beyond the status quo of the transmission model and aid students in shifting their filters and thought processes in order to critically analyze their society. Postmodern philosophies demand that we unpack concepts like justice and democracy to see the underpinnings that create the basis for the dominant culture (Cary, 2001) or white privilege.

Ladson-Billings' (1999) conceptual framework of white privilege quotes Martin Luther King's definition of *dysconscious,* which is "an uncritical habit of mind (including perceptions, attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs) that justifies inequity and exploitation by accepting the existing order of things as given" (p. 99). "Dysconscious racism is a form of racism that tacitly accepts dominant white norms and privileges" (p. 99). Some researchers believe social justice education and multicultural education fall short unless teachers understand the imperative to become social activists and work at societal change, as well as being culturally sensitive in their classrooms (Boyle-Baise & Kilbane, 1999; Boyle-Baise & Sleeter, 2000; Duesterberg, 1998; Montecinos & Rios, 1999). Consequently, a key element of developing the qualities of citizenship is providing students with opportunities for participation in social justice work.

Furthermore, social justice educators would argue that oppression is inherent to the educational process (Greene, 1988). The language we use (Cazden, 1988; Cary, 2001; Popkewitz, 1998), how we delineate space (Gordon, Holland, & Lahelma, 2000; Popkewitz, 1998), the methods we use to teach (Boler, 2004; Jones, 2004), the metaphors we use to frame the educational process (Frèire, 1970), what we value in our students (Cazden, 1988; Larrivee, 2002), and how we measure outcomes (Greene, 1988) are all formed and maintained by the hegemonic culture. These factors mean that social studies teachers need to be more than just culturally sensitive to marginalized groups in order to fulfill the need to help students see beyond the dominant culture. The underlying premise is that teachers must actively engage in change.

Jones (2004) notes a connection between multicultural education and social justice social studies and believes that social studies should be taught from a multicultural education framework. Sleeter and Grant (1994) identify six themes in how teachers approach the issues of multicultural education. Two of the themes are as follows:

1. Combat discrimination in the educational system, making sure that the educational system works for all groups.
2. Look at multicultural education from a social justice perspective, create democratic classrooms, and focus on how society perpetuates inequality.

These themes highlight the ways in which social justice education and multiculturalism can be seen as fairly similar in their goals of identifying social

inequalities and taking some sort of action, even if it is to change one's own paradigm.

Participation

Dewey (1938) stressed the need for education to provide students not only with knowledge about democracy, but also the experience of democracy. Participation on the freedom side of the pendulum swing includes the more traditional participation within the status quo of society but also considers participating in a way that will influence and perhaps transform society. These possibilities for participation exist outside the bounds of school as well as within the confines of the school system.

Similarly, Marilyn Boyle-Baise (2003) makes the distinction between learning about democracy and "doing" democracy. The success of a democratic nation is based on the participation of its citizens. In the citizenship transition model (Barr, Barth, & Shermis, 1977), participation in democracy involves actions that are traditionally seen as mandatory for democratic citizens. Traditional civic involvement includes "obeying laws, voting, running for office, participating in one of the recognized political parties, canvassing, collecting political contributions, and joining civic clubs, unions, or special interest groups" (p. 90). Voting is the central event for this participation.

In describing the concept "enlightened political engagement," Parker (2005, 2001a) combines civic knowledge with action. Students must be able to act on the knowledge, skills, and beliefs that they acquire through their education, whether through the traditional avenues of politics and voting or through activism.

Parker recognizes that citizenship education is not bounded by the classroom walls; students learn citizenship through affiliations outside schools and through community work.

Kahne and Westheimer (2003) researched 10 citizenship education programs, and they assert that civic involvement through community service prepares students to become actively involved in community affairs. Real, relevant experiences "link positive experiences to their desire for continued participation" (p. 58). Through service learning projects and working on local issues, students recognize the importance of having a voice in local affairs and realize that they have the potential to facilitate change in their community (Kahne & Westheimer, 2003; Wade, 2001). Service learning can also enhance student's academic success (Scales, Blyth, Berkas, and Kielsmeier, 2000). Students also benefit from teachers who model civic participation for their students through involvement in volunteer projects and local affairs (Jones, 2004).

Participation in School Culture

The school culture is another venue for citizenship participation (Smith, 2003). Parker (2001b) asserts school governance and climate offer lessons in democracy to students and are arenas that are overlooked by social science researchers. He uses the term "extracurricular approaches" (p. 9) in describing citizenship education that occurs in the schools but outside the classroom. "The common characteristic of the extracurricular approaches is that they focus on the norms by which adults and young people in the school relate to one another and by which decisions on school and classroom policies are made" (p. 10). In a

qualitative research study, Nielsen (2003) describes an elementary school

program that has citizenship education as its whole focus. Students, parents,

teachers, and administration all work in concert to create an overall school climate

that ensure the school's democratic mission. Student government bodies are also a

portal into the democratic process, giving students experiences in representing

classmates' interests in the decision-making process (Hart, 1997).

Unfortunately, the organization and structure in some school systems

could countermand teachers' goal of fostering a democratic classroom. Schimmel

(2003) describes that scenario as the "hidden curriculum" of a school. Rules,

norms, and structures are often authoritarian in nature and undermine citizenship

education goals (Apple, 1996). Effrat and Schimmel (2003) offer a solution to

combat the hidden curriculum by using the process of collaborative rule-making.

By providing students and teachers a chance to participate in creating the structure

and the rules of a school, students get experience in democracy (Parker, 2001b).

Participation in the Classroom

Participation within the classroom is crucial for citizenship education.

Students need to master the skills necessary to engage in political activities.

NCSS (1994) recognizes that social studies classes need to provide the following:

> programs (that) develop social and civic participation skills that prepare
>
> students to work effectively in diverse groups to address problems by
>
> discussing alternative strategies, making decisions, and taking action; to
>
> pursue social and civic agendas through persuasion, negotiation, and
>
> compromise; and to participate actively in civic affairs. (pp. 160-161)

Additionally, Chilcoat and Ligon (2003) refer to social studies classrooms as "democratic instructional laboratories" (p. 203), in which students can practice democratic processes like problem-solving and clarifying issues.

Participation in the citizenship education classroom also incorporates experiential activities and simulations (Kahne & Westheimer, 2003), which provide students with lifelike scenarios that require deliberation or problem-solving. Simulations can also serve as the precursor for actual participation in community projects (Hart, 1997). Role-playing is another method of beneficial student participation. For example, students become more engaged when they are afforded the opportunity of experiencing a mock trial instead of didactic instruction on the judicial system,.

Sewell, Fuller, Murphy, and Funnell (2002) suggest creative problem-solving as another instructional strategy that encourages participation. This strategy develops democratic skill building within its framework. Students start by collectively identifying a real problem affecting the class, and, through a series of six steps, they collaboratively find solutions and develop an action plan. Cooperative learning is another participatory strategy, which also presents students with tasks that necessitate the use of negotiation, listening, and problem-solving skills.

Discussion

The social studies model that fosters critical thinking supports social justice education, and values participation engages students in numerous ways. Discussion is a valuable tool for engagement that supports this model.

According to Parker (2003) the pedagogy of discussion is fundamental to any social studies class. Preskill (1997) states "open, thoughtful, and highly participatory conversation is a critical feature of democratic society" (p. 317). Discussion is an essential element for other instructional methods, including cooperative learning, problem-solving, decision-making, and experiential learning. Dewey (1938) notes "the principal that development of experience comes about through interaction means that education is essentially a social process" (p. 58). Participation via discussion aids students' experience and learning. Parker and Hess (2001) describe discussion as "a way of knowing" (p. 286).

There seems to be consensus that discussion is an invaluable tool for citizenship education; however, the way researchers define and describe discussion is inconsistent and varies greatly depending on the researcher and focus. Discussion is valuable, both as a process in and of itself and as a vehicle for creating a product (Parker & Hess, 2001). Participating in the process gives students a voice (Wade, 2001) and an opportunity to listen to other perspectives (Preskill, 1997). The act of deliberation, another term used for discussion, helps build processes for eventual self-reflection (Barr, Barth, & Shermis, 1977). Discussion supports human growth (Preskill, 1997), contributes to community-building (Parker & Hess, 2001), and promotes higher levels of thinking (Larson, 1997). Preskill (1997) argues conversation makes us human and that "discussion satisfies a great human need. In families, at workplaces, and as citizens, few activities bond people as powerfully as conversation" (p. 317).

Definition and Descriptions of Discussion

Innumerable definitions and descriptions of discussion exist. In the literature several terms, including *dialogical space*, *deliberation*, *discourse*, *speech act*, *communication*, *conversation*, *rhetoric*, *recitation*, *debate*, and *bull sessions* are all used interchangeably with *discussion*. "Reciprocity and movement, exchange and inquiry, cooperation and collaboration, formality and informality, are all incorporated into this conception of discussion" (Preskill, 1997, p. 319). Discussion has many nuances depending on intention (Preskill, 1997; Larson, 1997), time (Miller, 1997; Nystrand et al., 1997; Nystrand et al., 2003), space, and power relationships (Frèire, 1970; Hart, 1997), which makes defining *discussion* problematic. Researchers, in attempting to bring order and meaning to the unruliness of the term, have created a host of categories and frameworks (Larson, 1997; Parker & Hess, 2001; Preskill, 1997).

Nystrand et al. (2003) use the terms *monologic* and *dialogic discourse* to "conceptualize the continuum of classroom discourse ranging from tightly controlled recitation (in which students demonstrate their recall of assigned information) to open discussion featuring unprescripted exchange of student ideas in the absence of test questions" (p. 139). This study further defined discussion patterns that included dialogic spells, in which students are posing a question to a class (Nystrand et al., 2003).

Further, Parker and Hess (2001) make a distinction between *seminar* and *deliberation*. The goal of seminars is finding meaning or understanding through sharing. Deliberation, on the other hand, "is aimed at reaching decisions" (p. 282).

In his research on social studies teachers' conceptions of discussion, Larson (1997) uses six clearly delineated categories of discussion, which follow the continuum from teacher-controlled discussion to student-controlled discussion.

Deliberation is used to describe discussion in relation to citizenship education (Rupert, 1997). Matthews (1996) states "deliberation is public thinking done in a group" (p. 282). Parker and Hess (2001) use deliberation as one of three frameworks in their research. Deliberation entails an exchange between two or more individuals in which there is thoughtful consideration on the issue, resulting in some action (Parker, 2003). Parker (2003) describes deliberation as an aspect of discussion that takes into account how the relationship is organized and then enhanced by deliberation.

> A deliberation is creative. It is an occasion—an experience—that happens between persons. It is not defined solely by its substantive aim, which is to choose wisely and fairly a course of action, nor solely by the deliberative methods employed, but also by the way it constitutes a relationship—a purposeful relationship that requires some measure of getting to know one another, presenting ourselves to one another, expressing opinions and reasons for them, and listening, whether we are particularly fond of one another or not. Consequently, deliberation is not only a means to an end (reaching a decision), but an end in itself, for it creates a particular kind of democratic public culture among the deliberators. (p. 80)

A fairly consistent element of discussion is the concept of taking turns between listening and speaking. *Recitation* fits that definition and, in fact, is included among the types of discussion in a study of teachers' attitudes towards discussion (Larson, 1997). A teacher asks a student a question, the student answers, and the teacher evaluates the response as correct or not. This form of discussion would be acceptable in the transmission model of citizenship education as a method of assessing whether the student has mastered the content. Parker and Hess (2001) conducted a study on preservice teachers learning to facilitate discussion and found that preservice teachers are most familiar with recitation as the form of discussion used in the classes they took as students. Recitation is the form of discussion used the most in education (Nystrand et al., 2003).

The product of discussion depends on the intent. Students in a debate are defending their position. They listen to the other person not to hear new points of view to enlighten their position but to counter an argument. In contrast the goal of recitation is not to create new information or new insights but to reinforce content that was covered. Discussion can also aim to share information for greater understanding of an issue or to increase one's self-awareness. Nystrand et al. (2003) frame this dichotomy in terms of monologic discourse, which is seeking to be right, as opposed to dialogic discourse, which is seeking truth.

Peter Senge (1990) made similar distinctions in his definitions of dialogue and discussion. Senge views discussion as a process in which individuals have a clear preferred position that they maintain and hope to persuade others to adopt. In dialogue:

a group explores complex difficult issues from many points of view. Individuals suspend their assumptions but they communicate their assumptions freely. The result is a free exploration that brings to the surface the full depth of people's experience and thought, and yet can move beyond their individual views. (p. 241)

Parker and Hess (2001) also illustrate the distinction between the two types of discussion when they recount the dialogue between Thrasymachus and Socrates. Thrasymachus, it was noted, discussed for the purpose of winning points and soliciting applause. For Socrates the purpose of the dialogue was to discover deeper truths and the "essential nature of justice" (p. 279). Parker (2001a) and Senge (1990) both attempt to describe the type of discussion that elicits the quality of connectedness in a community. In order to achieve this connection, a group collectively agrees to suspend judgment and communicates in a way that allows room for everyone's thoughts, in which members listen thoughtfully to all positions with the goal of achieving greater understanding and new perspectives.

The definition and description of discussion is elusive and metamorphoses from moment to moment. Recitation, deliberation, and bull sessions can all be a part of one discussion episode between students and teachers.

Discussion and Learning Theories

Miller (1997) believed through discussion students learn about themselves, others, and their world. "As opposed to presenting the world and knowledge as fixed in words, discussion theoretically presents the world as in need of interpretation, and treats knowledge as something that is made and

remade in dialogue with others" (Miller, 1997, p. 197). Students create and confirm knowledge through the process of discourse (Richardson, 2004). Preskill (1997) suggests truths are a product of consensus from communication. Individuals dialogue on the issue and address various positions before coming to an agreement about the nature of the issue. Berger and Luckmann (1966) propose that all of reality is socially constructed and maintained through conversation.

Furthermore, Wink and Putney (2002) state the job of schools is to provide experiences. For students to understand the nature of the experience, they must have an opportunity to converse with each other. Wink and Putney (2002) claim that Vygotsky would call this dialogue exchange "processing on the intermental plane" (p. 61). After one completes the discourse process on the intermental plane, then one can integrate it into one's internal schema, which is the "intramental plane" (p. 61).

When children begin to make meaning of their worlds, they use the tool of language as a mediator to understand experience (Kozulin, 2002; Renshaw, 2003). As children interact with others, all aspects of the "other," the sum total of what culture implies, enters into the dialogue space as both parties negotiate meaning (Gergen, 1999). Vygotsky (1978) says that the child then transfers the meaning or knowledge from the interaction with the other to the interaction with the self, where the meaning is internalized. Vygotsky states, "Every function of the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first between people (interpsychological), and then inside the child (intrapsychological). . . . An interpersonal process is transformed into an

intrapersonal one" (p. 57). It is clear from Vygotsky's position that knowledge is first constructed in a social context.

Constructivism

Doolittle and Hicks (2003) suggest that the concept of students constructing knowledge through social interactions is counter to the transmission model.

> Traditionally, the search for knowledge within the social studies consisted of the search for "truth," that is the acquisition of knowledge that mirrors or corresponds to a singular "reality." Constructivism, however, employs a more flexible, culturally relativistic, and contemplative perspective where knowledge is constructed based on personal and social experience. (p.76)

In describing models for how children learn, Bruner (1996) contends that children use reason through "discourse, collaboration and negotiation" (p. 57) to construct knowledge, allowing for multiple perspectives or conflicting points of view. Similar to Doolittle and Hicks (2003), Bruner makes room for the concept of multiple realities:

> Truths are the product of evidence, argument and construction rather than of authority, textual or pedagogic. This model of education is mutualist and dialectical, more concerned with interpretation and understanding than with the achievement of factual knowledge or skilled performance. (p.57)

In citizenship education, discussion can be a vital process for children since learning is the result of using language as a tool for thinking (Miller, 1997).

Chilcoat and Ligon (2003) state "the social studies classrooms are democratic instructional laboratories in order for students to develop, cultivate, practice, and implement the characteristics of a good citizen" (p. 78). As such, the democratic classroom is the training ground where students can learn tolerance through interaction. Students have different experiences and backgrounds; they need to have an arena where they can interact with the variety of perspectives each classroom community has to offer (Howard, 2001). In the democratic classroom, students can address the inconsistencies surrounding cherished beliefs of freedom and equality.

<center>Classroom Climate and Discussion</center>

Various researchers note the necessity of creating a positive classroom climate, in which meaningful discussion can occur (Bloom, 1998; Chilcoat & Ligon, 2003; Glass, 2001; Hess & Posselt, 2002; Shinew, 2001; Wade, 2001). Hess and Posselt (2002) cite a study conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), which reports that "an open classroom climate for discussion is a significant predictor of civic knowledge, support for democratic values, participation in political discussion, and political engagement" (p. 288). In her study of racial identities and perspective on social education, Epstein (2001) describes open classroom climates "in which teachers often dealt with political and social issues, allowed free discussion and maintained a neutral position" (p. 45).

Many variables enhance classroom climate; one of these is the act of discussion. Harwood (1992) cites the following variables pertaining to the

research on classroom climate: teaching style, interaction between students and teachers, willingness of teachers to allow the focus of discussion on controversial issues, student involvement, and student perceptions of teachers. Harwood concedes "the concept of classroom climate is complex" (p. 80) and that "in depth qualitative studies of classrooms are particularly needed; such research could provide additional insights into what the most salient climate variables are, and would help us to understand better how teachers structure the climate of their individual classrooms" (p. 81).

Shinew (2001) also implores teachers to provide spaces where students can talk about the privileged positions that are embedded in democratic concepts. If a goal of the democratic classroom is for students to deconstruct their perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs, then the classroom must afford a safe climate in which that process can occur (Hahn, 2001). A safe classroom climate that is inclusive entails spoken and unspoken rules and norms that allow students to share of themselves without judgment, ridicule, or attack from others, including the teacher. Chilcoat and Ligon (2003) explain:

> In a democratic classroom, citizenship is promoted through public discussion that actively explores and shares ideas, not in a subordinate teacher-students environment, but rather in a free and accepting atmosphere where students feel secure enough to express ideas and emotions freely, but with civility. (p. 84)

Definitions vary as to what is considered "safe" and "open" for a classroom and how to achieve a safe environment; however, several researchers identify the skills of listening and speaking as important elements to a safe classroom.

Listening: A Part of a Democratic Classroom

Listening is an important skill for both teacher and students. Bloom (1998) asserts orchestrating dialogues that get at the deeper complexities of issues must include participants who are taught "the art of listening" (p. 45). When perspectives are radically or subtly different from a student's familiar schema, there is resistance to hearing the other perspective. "It will often mean listening to what makes us angry and to what makes uncomfortable" (Bloom, 1998, p. 45). A student's first reaction to hearing another student's perspective is often to debate rather than absorb what the other is saying. Even if the goal is to debate, students need to learn to listen to the other's arguments (Effrat & Schimmel, 2003).

When teachers exhibit appropriate listening skills, they enhance classroom climate through role-modeling and relationship-building. Loutzenheiser (2002) conducted a study to examine how the act of listening affected young women at an alternative school. She discovered teachers who listen to students' testimonies about their lives create a positive relationship with the students, which in turn enhances the classroom setting. Students feel more willing to share in class discussions and are more motivated to be in school.

In addition, Frymier & Houser, (2000) suggest empathy is a form of listening that fosters relationships and classroom climate. Carl Rogers (1980) believes the conditions of empathy, congruence, and positive regard are important

ingredients in creating and maintaining interpersonal relationships. Empathy can be defined as "the capacity to see a situation from the point of view of another person and feel how they feel about it" (Teven & McCroskey, 1996). Empathy is also a desirable trait in developing students' capacities to understand multiple perspectives (Bloom, 1998). Brookfield and Preskill (1999) also note providing students with a venue to discuss personal and meaningful issues develops trust and empathy.

Frèire (1998) offers an additional perspective on the importance of the teacher's role as listener. He argues if teachers are always in the role of speaker, then the unspoken message is that the students' voices are not valued. In the role of listener, the teacher validates the process of dialogue, which can create a sense of equality of perspectives among everyone in the room, including the teacher. Frèire asserts a part of listening is valuing silence.

> The democratic-minded teacher who learns to speak by listening is interrupted by the intermittent silence of his or her own capacity to listen, waiting for that voice that may desire to speak from the depths of its own silent listening. (p. 104)

However, Boler (2004) argues there are times when listening reinforces dominant power structures in classrooms and that "affirmative action pedagogy" suggests not listening, or actively limiting those dialogues that shut down discussion. For example, a white, male, middle-class student may respond to issues on marginalized voices by dismissing "the other student's comments as 'whining'" (p.11).

What needs to be remembered, however, is that censoring any voice sets a precedent for the classroom climate. The assumption is that teachers can discern when their own belief system manifests itself in the decision about when to silence voices and when to empower them. However, Howard (2001) believes teachers are not afforded the opportunity to unpack their own position of privilege or uncontested constructs. Teachers may be unaware of why they quiet some voices and give audience to others. It is important to provide a space for teachers to analyze their own history and schema. This may give them insight into how they choose to conduct discussions. Preskill (1997) warns, "Discussion is always at risk as long as hierarchies and power differentials overshadow what transpires" (p. 341).

Listening, then, is in actuality a complex, multilayered concept that can have competing goals and outcomes. Burbules (2004) summarizes some reasons for listening:

> There are many kinds of listening, and reasons to listen: listening to learn; listening as an expression of empathy or concern; listening as an act of obligation to others, growing out of respect; listening as an active process of perspective-taking; listening as a passive receipt of information; and so on. Here again, the educational benefits of listening, and of encouraging listening in the classroom, depends on what kind of listening is going on. (p. xxv)

As important a role as listening seems to have in discussion and the democratic process, little research supports how to assist students and teachers in acquiring these skills.

<div align="center">*Teacher Skills and Classroom Climate*</div>

The teacher's skill as a facilitator is one of the most influential factors in creating a positive democratic classroom climate (Harwood, 1992). The choices teachers make in determining the content or the focus of a discussion can potentially engage students in examining the inequities of society and investigating solutions to injustices (Wade, 2001). Classroom climate is positively enhanced when students are motivated by what they perceive as interesting and relevant issues. Curriculum choice is not always up to the teacher and how teachers broach the curricula can be determined by events outside the classroom. For example, some researchers note that the popular rhetoric about September 11 is framed from a nationalistic standpoint, which limits how educators approach the subject (Boler, 2004; Mitchell & Parker, 2008; Popen, 2002).

The teacher has to be the guardian of the safe classroom climate and ensure that the norms and rules are upheld (Hess & Posselt, 2002). Teachers' decisions on how to discuss the content can mean the difference between discussion as recitation and discussion as deliberation. Unfortunately, teachers "rarely pay attention to how they structure" discussions (Nystrand et al., 2003, p. 191).

Problems with Teachers Using Discussion

The research clearly points to the benefits and necessity of discussion as a tool for the democratic classroom; yet, documentation shows that very little if any discussion is conducted in the social studies classroom (Cazden, 1988; Hess, 2004). Nystrand et al. (2003) conducted an extensive study on discourse over time in English and social studies classrooms and found little evidence of discussion. Nearly 91 percent of the social studies classes observed included no discussion in their classes. In those classes that did use a discussion format, the average length of the discussion was "42 seconds in the eighth grade and 31.2 seconds in the ninth grade" (p. 178). Several researchers attempt to address why so little discussion occurs in the classrooms.

Hess (2004) reports four problems that impede discussion in the classroom: "the tendency of teachers to talk too much, to ask inauthentic questions, as well as the lack of focus and depth in student contributions, and the unequal participation of students" (p. 152). Several researchers parallel Hess's assertion regarding teachers and their poor question choice and identifies teacher questions as a limiting factor in discussions (Brookfield & Preskill, 1999; Cashin &McKnight, 2003; Cazden, 1988; Copeland, 2005; Dillion, 1998; Preskill, 1997). In addition, the short amount of time teachers allow for discussion dissuades students from participating in any depth. Further, one study showed the chosen topic can also impede an effective discussion (Henning, Nielsen, Henning, & Schulz, 2008). Students cannot effectively participate in a discussion on a topic about which they have little or no prior knowledge. Cazden further observes the

physical setting of a classroom, in which all seats are pointed towards the front, can inhibit classroom discussion.

Another factor hindering discussion in the classroom is the teachers' inability to control the classroom in order for a discussion to occur. Larson (1997) studied teachers' conceptions of discussion: teachers acknowledged in a discussion it is uncomfortable to participate on equal footing with students. In concert with the issue of control is the concern for classroom management (VanSledright & Grant, 1994). When discussions look as though they are getting out of control, teachers will stop the process (Hess, 2004). Cazden (1988) mentions, however, if teachers can endure the sometimes chaotic energy of discussion, it can be "the intellectual highpoint of the lesson" (p. 62).

Another recurring theme in the literature is the teacher's lack of skills in conducting discussions (Houston, 2004; Milson, 2000; Parker and Hess, 2001). Parker and Hess (2001) conducted a study to train preservice teachers in the art of facilitating discussion. The first problem Parker and Hess encountered was the lack of experts in process of discussion. They state that "we do not know anyone who claims to be an expert discussion leader, and those who are demonstrably very good at it speak mainly of their deficiencies" (p. 273). They found preservice teachers had many years of modeling (apprenticeship) of recitation as discussion. The researchers had a difficult time shifting their preservice teachers' recitation construct as discussion.

Another researcher writes descriptively about his shortcomings and fear involving his facilitating classroom discussions (Inayatullah, 1997). He

recognizes how his inadequacies and self- judgments resulted in his need for

control of the process and of all the learning space and events.

> It [teaching] drove me to prepare thoroughly so I would not seem the fool.
> It spurred me to treat every second of empty classroom space as a
> potential slide into awkwardness and loss of control. It tricked me into
> converting every moment of ambiguity into assertions of authority,
> displays of dominance, and threats of ridicule. Anxiety dominated my
> classrooms as surely as a low-pressure weather system dominates the
> moods of those it envelops. (Inayatullah, 1997 p. 175)

But once Inayatullah sees the potential of discussion as a tool for discovery, he

has new experiences and learns what is needed to facilitate students in finding

their voice. Discussion is a process involving numerous skills, and when teachers

lack those skills, then it's easiest for them to avoid the process.

Some researchers question the role of discussion and point out that the

discourse process can actually reinforce the dominant paradigm rather than offer

opportunities for students to analyze multiple perspectives (Boler, 2004;

deCastell, 2004; Jones, 2004). Dialogue can be counterproductive in trying to

develop understanding and empathy in marginalized groups. Jones (2004) asserts

providing a forum for dialogue in the educational setting gives the illusion that

those in the dominant group are being supportive of marginalized groups.

However, when the educational arena itself is so entrenched in the hegemony,

silenced voices are only superficially heard. "My arguments suggest that,

paradoxically, progressive teachers' calls for dialogue may be in danger of

reproducing the very power relations they seek to critique" (p. 64). DeCastell (2004) notes, historically, schools were created to foster "social relations of hierarchy and subordination" (p. 53) and discussion only helps to ensure the inequalities rather than address them.

Houston (2004) agrees addressing the issues of social injustice in the classroom could incur more problems for the typically silenced voices. "Given the momentous institutional pressures against it [democratic dialogue], the political and educational skill required, as well as the emotional difficulty associated with it, there may be few educators with the capacity to effectively cultivate democratic dialogue" (p. 106). However, Houston makes a compelling point that democracy is not sustainable without discourse and that we need to find ways to address concerns and shift paradigms, which will enable marginalized populations to benefit and not be wounded by discussion.

Limited Research on Discussion in the Social Studies

Bohan (2001) criticizes social studies research as limited and narrow. She states "the field of social studies research continues to focus narrowly on its own scholarship placing little emphasis on a broader base of social science research for its foundation of knowledge" (p. 521). Thus, other disciplines may offer different concepts of discussion. For example, the issue of why some students are silent during discussion emerges from researchers who are not in the field of social studies (Boler, 2004; Shinew, 2001). Similarly within the field of communications the spiral of silence theory (Moy, Domke, & Stamm, 2001) addresses why people do not speak out on public issues. Additionally, in the

counseling field, numerous theories and methods are devoted to creating group climates in which open communication can occur (Johnson, 1997; Johnson & Johnson, 1994; Miller & Rollnick, 2002).

Currently there is minimal research that examines how social studies teachers describe and explain their use of discussion, and specifically follows teachers to see how they use what they term 'discussion' within their classroom. Conducting research in the classroom to investigate how teachers facilitate discussion is a necessary step to help illuminate the reasons for the apparent disconnect between the belief that discussion is valuable and the fact that discussion is rarely implemented in classrooms.

Conclusion

The social studies prepare students to become productive citizens. Although the question "what is citizenship" can be answered in numerous ways, there seems to be a consensus that citizens must be critical thinkers who are capable of participating in the fundamental processes necessary for a democracy to function effectively. For educators to equip students with critical thinking skills, students must have opportunities to engage in and consider issues, perspectives, and beliefs that are different from their own (Reichenbach, 1998). One way students formulate their positions on issues is by dialoguing with others (Richardson, 2004). Through discussion students are able to entertain the perspective of "the other."

The contradiction that seems to emerge from the literature suggests discussion is a valuable tool for developing citizenship, yet teachers do not use the

strategy or do not use it strategy well (Brookfield and Preskill, 1999). Teachers struggle with conducting an effective discussion. While some explanations regarding why teachers are resistant or hesitant to use discussion are available, many questions remain unanswered. These questions include: When and why do some social studies teachers choose to engage in discussion in the standards based classroom? and What factors influence the success of classroom-based discussion?

A deeper exploration is needed of the issues surrounding discussion to determine how teachers talk about discussion and why they use or do not use discussion in the standards based classroom. Only when a clear picture of the problem is available can researchers seek avenues to make discussion a more accessible pedagogy.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Discussion is a viable, necessary component in the social studies classroom. Research has been conducted on teacher's values and attitudes concerning discussion (Larson, 1997), preservice teachers' use of discussion (Parker & Hess, 2003), how teachers pose questions in the discussion process (Brookfield& Preskill, 1999), and time spent on discussion in the classroom (Nystrand et al., 2003). Despite the literature that supports the value of discussion in the classroom, Hess (2004) states that social studies teachers are not comfortable with this process. Social studies classrooms in which teachers are reported to use discussion provides a perfect opportunity for further investigation into this area. In order to begin to understand such issues, this study is guided by the following three key questions:

1. How do teachers conceptualize discussion as a teaching strategy with the social studies?

2. How do teachers describe and explain their use of discussion in terms of their practice within their classroom?

3. How do teachers balance their use of discussion while meeting the expectations of the standards-based curriculum?

The Study

The goal of this study is to provide the research community with information about the use of discussion in the standards-based social studies classroom. Little qualitative data is currently available about the organic nature of

classroom dynamics and processes (Hess, 2004) in classrooms where teachers use discussion. This study provides an in-depth portrait of two teachers' social studies classrooms and describes the processes that foster their choice of engaging students in discussion. The focus of this research is the factors that influence a teacher's choice to conduct discussion in his or her classroom

This research involves studying two eighth-grade social studies teachers in a school system in southwestern Virginia. The goal was to locate teachers who conduct a social studies classroom and frequently use discussion in their classes. These teachers represent a purposeful sample in order to show how a teacher facilitates discussion in the classroom (Maxwell, 1996).

Case Study

Human interaction is complex. The factors that affect how the interaction process unfolds are often so interconnected that it is difficult to study any aspect of human interaction (Snow & Anderson, 1991). The choice of methodology is also complex in how it relates to researcher and research. Ultimately, the research question determines how one chooses to study a phenomenon. The case study is a method that allows the researcher to view a phenomenon in the context in which it occurs with all its inherent uniqueness (Feagin, Orum & Sjoberg, 1991; Hatch, 2002;). Feagin, Orum and Sjoberg (1991) state that "a case study can permit the researcher to examine not only the complex of life in which people are implicated but also the impact on beliefs and decisions of the complex web of social interaction" (p. 9). Since the goal was to provide an illustration of how discussion processes unfold in a classroom, the case study method seemed ideal. Although

the idea of a case study is a familiar common methodological choice, many social scientists make assumptions when using the term (Ragin, 1992).   Thus it is wise to look at some definitions of *case study*. Yin (1994) states a case study is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 13). Snow and Anderson (1991) argue that case studies allow a holistic picture of "interrelated activities and routines engaged in by one or more networks of actors within a social context that is bounded in time and space" (p. 152). Hatch (2002) describes a case study as "a special kind of qualitative work that investigates a contextualized contemporary (as opposed to historical phenomenon within specified boundaries)" (p 30).

The use of the case study presents potential limitations since it is not clear if what is studied can be used to propose new insights when applied to larger populations. Becker (1998) identifies that the problem with samples deals with not knowing if the sample is a representation of the larger picture. Walton (1992) adds another limitation to case studies stating "cases are situationally grounded limited views of life" (p. 121).

The goal of this study was not to focus on a teacher that typifies a democratic classroom but to focus on what drives them to use discussion in the classroom (Hess, 2004; Parker, 2001c).

The Setting

This case study was conducted in a middle school in southwestern Virginia. The population of the district is 83,659, comprising 90% white students,

3.7% African American, and 4.0% Asian. This district has the highest growth rate west of Richmond, Virginia. The school resides in the town that is home to a land grant university, which boasts a 28,000 student population and is the largest university in the state. The university is the largest employer in the county. In addition, a second, smaller university is located within 20 miles southeast of this town. The educational background of the residents of the town include 42.2% having some college education, 19.4% having either an associate's or bachelor's degree, and 12.5% having a graduate or professional degree. This setting was chosen because of my familiarity with the school system and proximity to the university. The school system has four high schools, four middle schools, 12 elementary schools, and two alternative schools. The average class size is 17.1:1 at the secondary level. Seventy-four percent of the graduating class of the county will attend college. Fifty percent of the teachers and certified/non-certified administrators of the county have post-graduate degrees. The cost per pupil is $7,730 per year ("District School Calendar," 2004–2005). Although this setting has little diversity in race or religion, it has cultural diversity. The effect of a major land grant university residing in the Appalachian region of Virginia results in a dichotomy of cultures based on socioeconomic status.

Overall Climate and Elements of the School System

In order to understand the context of a classroom, it is important to look at the system in which it is situated. In the following sections I will focus on the various elements that impact the student body. I will also describe some of the programs and structures that influence each teacher's classroom.

Understanding the impact of poverty on education.

For over five years the school district paid to have teachers trained in a program developed by Ruby Payne, which addresses issues concerning poverty. Payne (2001) concluded there are hidden rules imbedded in all classes of society. The goal of the program is to provide information to teachers on how economics and poverty affects their classrooms and to make teachers aware of how these hidden rules of social class can conflict with teaching. Teachers learn a process by which to identify the rules of their cultural background and how their position as teachers inadvertently reinforce the injustices that poverty creates in the classroom. Teachers can then develop teaching practices that will bridge the gaps that some students experience as a result of the culture of poverty.

Inclusion.

The county school system supports full inclusion of students with special needs in the classrooms. Every student enrolled in the school system attends class unless a better placement is determined in order to meet his or her educational needs. Students who have learning disabilities or physical disabilities have accommodations, which will support their learning in the classroom. A teacher could have a variety of students with special needs in his or her classroom; these special needs include learning disabilities related to reading and writing comprehension, attention deficient hyperactivity, emotional or behavioral disorders, and physical disabilities.

Students with special needs have federally mandated Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs), which detail accommodations and may mandate

adaptations to the learning environment that may include a special education

teacher or an aide. Aides are paraprofessionals who assist teachers in providing

additional help to students with special needs. These aides may have little or no

training to prepare them to assist students who have many needs.

Standards of Learning.

The Standards of Learning (SOL) are performance tests that were

developed by the state of Virginia in 1995. The goal of these tests is to ensure

that all students are mastering the basic core content knowledge and skills of each

discipline and that there is a uniformity of content coverage throughout all of

Virginia's schools. The tests were first administered in spring of 1998. Currently,

testing occurs in the following grades:

- grade 3 (Introduction to History and Social Science)

- grade5 (Virginia Studies)

- grade 6 (United States History to 1877)

- grade 7 (United States History 1877 to Present)

- grade 8 (Civics and Economics).

Students are also tested in high school and expected to pass six end-of-course

tests in order to receive a diploma. Schools are expected to have a 70% passing

rate of students taking these tests. Schools that do not meet this rate are in

jeopardy of losing their accreditation. The 2004 SOL passing rate for the school in

which this research was conducted was: U.S. History I (sixth grade): 55.28%;

U.S. History II (seventh grade): 72.86%; Civics (eighth grade): 78.91%.

Curriculum and Initiatives in the Social Studies

The school district provides a social studies coordinator whose goal is to support social studies teachers and coordinate curriculum training for the teachers in all grades, K–12. The position has been in flux over the last several years, but prior to that one person stayed in the position for over 10 years and had a lasting impact on the social studies curriculum in the district. This social studies coordinator stressed a philosophy to move away from a textbook-driven curriculum to a curriculum focused on multiple perspectives and primary sources. The coordinator examined alternative texts for the textbook adoption process and marshaled approval for the Joy Hakim (2007) series of *A History of Us*. Hakim (2007) includes multiple voices in her portrayal of American history, which provides students with a broader perspective than the typical white, male, European one. This coordinator also advocated for other curriculum sources and provided teacher training to integrate geography into the social studies using the curriculum developed by Nystrom, an educational materials publishing company. Furthermore, the staff at the Richmond Historical Society offered several workshops, in which they demonstrated how primary sources can be used in classrooms to facilitate discussion and critical thinking.

The coordinator also sponsored several workshops and had faculty trained in History Alive!, the curriculum developed by Teachers' Curriculum Institute (TCI). The institute was developed by a group of teachers who were concerned about students' lack of interest in history. As a result a group wrote a history curriculum that utilizes more engaging teaching strategies and primary sources.

The History Alive! curriculum also stresses cooperative learning and scaffolding knowledge through the use of the spiral curriculum, in which "students learn progressively more difficult concepts through a process of step-by-step discovery. With this approach, all students can learn once a teacher has shown them how to think and discover knowledge for themselves" (TCI, 2005).   Part of this process is to encourage discussion, which allows students to formulate their own perspectives and construct their own knowledge from various sources. A basic premise of History Alive! is that "increased student interaction leads to more learning and retention" (p. 5).   History Alive! also stresses the importance of teaching necessary social skills, which will enable students to more effectively interact with their peers as they develop as future citizens.

The Middle School Concept

This school district is committed to the middle school concept. The district organized its school system to include four middle schools that consist of sixth through eighth grades. The major philosophical underpinning in the middle school concept recognizes the need to acknowledge the unique developmental processes this age group encounters in relation to teaching and learning. Students at this age are undergoing changes in all areas of life. Their emotional, physical, social, and intellectual makeup is under scrutiny and suspect (Elkind, 1984). Erikson identifies two adolescent issues in conceptualizing his stages of development. Developing a sense of identity is of primary importance, and this group experiences a need to understand their role in life. Erikson also notes that in Stage 4 of development, early adolescents need to feel a sense of accomplishment

when attempting various tasks. This age group is constructing an image of whether they have an ability to be successful, and it is advantageous to set tasks that are achievable at this stage.

Thus, the goal of middle school is to provide an environment, which supports this adolescent period of growth. Nancy Atwell (1987) sums up the complexities of adolescence as the following:

> Confusion, bravado, restlessness, a preoccupation with peers, and the questioning of authority are not manifestations of poor attitude; they are hallmarks of this particular time of life. By nature adolescents are volatile and social, and our teaching can take advantage of this, helping kids find meaningful ways to channel their energies and social needs instead of trying to legislate against them. (p. 25)

Middle school then should recognize the uniqueness of this age group and provide age-appropriate curriculum, teaching strategies, and learning environments in order to work with the tumultuous middle school audience.

Specific components are unique to middle schools and their learning environment. The National Middle School Association (2004) focuses on five components essential to an "exemplary" middle school program:

1. Advisory programs enable a teacher to develop a meaningful relationship with a small number of students.
2. Students are divided up into interdisciplinary teams of two to four teachers, and they rotate classes with the same group of students.
3. Instructional strategies are varied and based in authentic life situations that

relate to the student.

4. Exploratory programs allow adolescents to experience a wide range of courses, which speaks to the natural curiosity inherent to this age group.

5. Transition programs aim at making the shift from elementary to middle school as minimally chaotic as possible for the middle school student.

The district fully supports the middle school concept and works to provide their sixth- through eighth -grade students with the environment they need while they are developing a sense of self in relation to the larger community. A calendar provided by the county states their commitment to the middle school concept:

> The middle schools adhere to the philosophy that young adolescents grow and mature in a caring and supportive environment through exploration and guided experimentation. Middle school programs include a continued emphasis on the core curriculum—English, math, science, and social studies—with opportunities for elective and exploratory classes. Academically able students have the opportunity to begin taking high school credit courses in math and foreign language. All students benefit from advisor/advisee activities, team teaching and interdisciplinary instruction. (Roseland County School Calendar, 2004–2005)

The middle school in which this study occurs has a daily schedule that reflects the middle school concept. The day is divided into seven 45-minute periods. The advisory program takes place for approximately 20 minutes at the beginning of the day. Social studies teachers teach five periods and have a team planning and individual planning period at some point during the day. In sixth grade students

are assigned a variety of electives in order for them to explore classes.

I chose the middle school as the setting for my research because of the developmental issues middle school students face. This period of time is tumultuous for many students. Adolescents in middle school are beginning to develop an identity apart from family (Elkind, 1984). Peers and relationships matter more at this age. Much of adolescents' world is social, and they see school as a place to work out social needs (Goodlad, 1984). Developmentally, this age group favors interaction, which is the primary reason why the tool of discussion is appropriate. More than in other grades, if discussion is attempted in the classroom, middle school students are likely to rise to the challenge.

Teacher Participants

For eight years I had been employed as a social studies teacher in the district where the research was conducted. In this role I facilitated numerous workshops, participated in ongoing staff development, supervised social studies preservice teachers, and served on social studies curriculum development committees. Because of my history at this school, I was able to select two teachers who were noted for using discussion in their classrooms. I began the research process by contacting the county social studies coordinator for the county school system. I shared my research interest and asked her to provide a working list of exemplary teachers, who foster citizenship in the social studies classroom through the use of discussion.   I used her list of exemplary teachers, who foster citizenship in the social studies classroom through the use of discussion in coordination with my prior knowledge of teachers, to help the

selection process. I looked for teachers who were judged to be successful by the social studies coordinator and by their peers. I concluded it was important to have teachers working in the same school so that both would have the same administration and work within the same school culture. I also decided it would not be necessary to choose teachers from the same grade because the goal was to find teachers who used discussion in the classroom. Although some social studies content lends itself to more discussion, I relied more on the teachers' self-report concerning their perceptions of how they used discussion in the classroom.

I chose two teachers with whom I had a prior relationship, both from Essex Middle School (a pseudonym). Margaret (pseudonyms are used for both teachers in this case study) was an eighth-grade social studies teacher on a four-person team. The other case-study teacher, Angela, taught sixth-grade English and social studies on a two-person team.

Margaret and I had worked together on several projects when I was a seventh-grade social studies teacher. I remembered how she facilitated group discussions and believed that she would be an appropriate candidate. I also knew that Margaret was trained in the Paideia method of discussion, which is a structured process of encouraging students to critically think about issues. In 2004 Margaret was asked to move from the position of gifted and talented coordinator to civics teacher after the sudden death of an eighth-grade civics teacher. Prior to becoming the gifted and talented coordinator, Margaret had been a middle school English teacher.

I also had a prior relationship with Angela since I had worked in the

same school with her for four years. Angela had attended staff development workshops that I had conducted. We also attended several workshops together on History Alive!, and she frequently used that curriculum in her teaching. I became reacquainted with Angela when I was a university supervisor for the social studies teacher preparation program. Angela was a mentor to one of my students, and I had a chance to observe Angela facilitating a discussion. I concluded that she would be a viable participant in my study.

I met with both teachers individually and informed them of my research goals. I shared my interest in discussion, hoping it would make the research process more open. The goal of meeting was to note how the teachers articulated their processes and how they reflected on their teaching. I wanted to choose teachers who were comfortable with talking about their teaching.

Introduction to Margaret.

I informally met with Margaret before school started in August 2004. She was eager to talk about her work as a civics teacher. She discussed her extensive use of discussion in her classroom and invited me to observe her first two days of teaching. She also shared how almost every one of her students in the previous year's classes had passed the SOLs. Margaret believed that her discussion format was a factor in this success. She was extremely positive and supportive about becoming a part of my study.

Margaret had five classes of eighth-grade civics with a total of 104 students. She taught periods 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7. During third period, an aide was present, which indicated this class had a larger number of students with special

needs who had some type of accommodation. The aide was the art teacher who

had this assignment for her duty period. The civics class encompassed a variety of

topics, including forms of government, history of the U. S. government,

Declaration of Independence and Bill of Rights, how the federal government

works, Virginia government, banking systems, supply and demand, and other

economic topics (see Appendix A).

At the end of eighth grade, students were expected to complete a human

rights project, which Margaret had designed. The goal of the unit was to help

students understand the atrocities that had occurred in the world. Margaret

showed several movies about the Holocaust created by a group called Facing

History and Ourselves from Boston, MA. She used children's books to illustrate

issues of differences and tolerance. The culminating project was a research paper

on a human rights violation that had occurred in the world. At the end of May,

eighth-grade students attended a two-day field trip to Washington, D. C., where,

among other sites, the students visited the Holocaust Museum.

Beginning in April, Margaret also covered current events once a week.

Some of the issues that her class discussed included the environmental, separation

of church and state, the anniversary of the Oklahoma City bombing, the economy,

and drinking and driving.

Margaret was also involved in many after-school activities. She was the

faculty advisor for the yearbook, which met after school one day a week.

Margaret was also the coordinator for National History Day. National History

Day is defined by the organization's website as:

A national contest for students in grades 6–12. The students

conduct extensive research related to an annual theme and present

their findings in one of four categories: exhibits, documentaries,

performances or papers. Students develop critical thinking and

problem-solving skills while creating their entries. There are two

divisions: junior (grades 6–8) and senior (grades 9–12). Students

can choose to participate in the contest individually or as part of a

group of up to five students. Public, private and home schools are

welcome to participate. The competition starts at a local or district

level and progresses to state and national competitions. (2005,

para. 3)

Margaret was the first to suggest that her school participate in National History

Day. Since the first year, social studies teachers have at times incorporated the

National History Day project into their curriculum. Margaret even had former

students who had gone to high school and come back to middle school to work on

their NHD projects. In 2002 Margaret received an award for State National

History Day Teacher.

Margaret had always worked on cutting edge projects. When she was the

gifted and talented coordinator, she worked with an English educator at Virginia

Tech for seven years on what was called "MOO chats." Margaret described what

MOO chats are and how they got started:

It started out as letter writing. Students were reading the same

books and then writing letters. (It was) between [the local

university] and eighth graders at [my school]. The middle school

students and the college students would write back and forth in

journals. Then e-mail came along and we changed from writing

letters to just sending e-mails. An English professor at the local

university had a discussion with one of her classes and they created

the MOO. MOO stands for Multi-Object Oriented environment,

which simply means real-time chat rooms. We would have five or

six small virtual rooms with a combination of [local university]

students and [our] students. They would discuss the books they

were reading. What was good was that you could print out the

transcript of the discussion. Then the transcript could be analyzed

based on how much they talked and what kind of questions were

asked. I would even have them count their words in their

sentences, and the more they did it their questions and answers got

more complex just because they counted. I'm not sure but it

worked.

Margaret saw the MOO chats as discussions, even though students were not face

to face. At the time of the study, she was not focusing on MOO chats in her

classroom.

Additionally, Margaret and the art teacher spearheaded a project that was

born out of the Human Rights unit. Eighth-grade students learned about mosaics

and how to construct them in art class. Students practiced the technique by

building a mosaic on the side of a convenience store next to the school. When the

new school building opened, Margaret and the art teacher supervised the students

to create a "Tolerance Wall," which was a mosaic mural wall depicting poems

and quotes on tolerance and justice (See Appendix B).

        Description of Margaret's classroom.

        Margaret's room was decorated with a collection of artwork by students as

well as purchased posters from a group that promotes tolerance. A significant

amount of cow memorabilia was also present, which Margaret later shared was a

testimony to her "MOO chats." Behind me stood a bookshelf full of adolescent

fiction, which reflected Margaret's English content background. Political cartoons

were taped to the green chalkboard, alongside a weekly calendar informing the

students that they were going to have Society on Wednesday and an economics

test on Friday. There was a hand-written list of rules of conduct on a poster board

taped to the wall just inside the classroom. Seven Mac computers lined the wall

where a television unit was mounted. Some computers were mismatched with

other hardware and said "Out of Order." Under the television sat a newer

computer with a phone on the wall behind it.

        Margaret's demeanor created a laid-back atmosphere in which students

would get up to use the bathroom pass without asking permission. Margaret had

no seating chart. Her speech was quiet and thoughtful-sounding with pregnant

pauses as she seemingly worked to find the exact words she wanted to use.

Throughout the day the students were generally somewhat quiet except for

Margaret's occasional questions that they all wanted to answer at the same time.

Introduction to Angela.

Angela, a 20-year veteran teacher, had been on a sixth-grade, two-person team at Essex Middle School since 1991. Prior to that, she was a reading and vocabulary teacher. She described that experience: "Our school was tracked and I taught Level One kids. This was a class that used Roman history and Latin to infuse vocabulary growth into the curriculum." She was responsible for English and social studies, and her teaching partner of 10 years taught math and science.

Angela had a total of 46 students who were essentially divided into two groups. The day was set up so that Angela taught each group for two consecutive periods a day to cover both social studies and English. One group had Angela for second and third periods, and the other group had her for fifth and sixth period. When Angela taught the two periods, there was no delineation between social studies and English. Angela stated that her first love was social studies.

The group that I observed most often had a special education teacher who team taught with Angela. If [the special education teacher] were in the classroom, there were students who had special education teacher accommodations in their IEPs. She was able to assist in teaching; if Angela stepped out of the room, [the special education teacher] would continue the class. The sixth-grade social studies curriculum encompassed world explorers, early empires, the discovery of America, and the colonial period up to the Civil War (see Appendix C). When I first visited her class in April, Angela was covering the colonial period. She read *The Captive* to her students for about 10 minutes every day.

Angela often availed herself to her students after school. She had homework days during which students could stay after school for extra help. During this time she aided her students in making up work and ensured that they were current on assignments. Every week she asked for names of students who planned to attend these days.

Angela was also a part of a history grant that was developed in partnership between the district schools and the local university. Angela spent part of her summers and monthly meetings in the fall going in depth in various aspects of U.S. history. Part of her requirements was to participate in the workshops and then develop lesson plans based on critical thinking and primary sources. Angela stated:

> I work on the [history] grant for two weeks each summer. The commitment also extends to monthly meetings throughout the school year, not just fall. Our summer work is heavy on lectures that I love. We do produce a product each summer that reflects good practice and curriculum demands. Mine have been lesson plans in unit form as well as daily plans for reviewing SOL knowledge.

Description of Angela's classroom.

Angela's sixth grade classroom was functional and engaging. There were no less than seven maps showcased on any given day. Most were of the world. Posters had multicultural themes celebrating African-American contributions to history and culture. Vibrant pictures showcased jazz. Posters of famous women

and award-winning books also decorated the room. The posters also provided students with models for good practices, including how to approach writing tasks and ask good questions. Other posters defined tasks and behaviors that corresponded to group roles.

Angela created many processes to help students remain organized. One whiteboard displayed the days of the week and assignments due each day. Students were expected to come into class and write down their assignments. I observed that most students were receptive to the process, and there were almost no students who did not comply. Desks were arranged in groups of four, and Angela assigned students to seating charts and groups. She also had specific requirements for how students' notebooks should be constructed. Students often glued in information, graphic organizers, and rubrics based on directions on the board. Angela would always call attention to the directions and, in a detailed manner, review the individual tasks.

As a result of her classroom organization and tone, Angela's room was one of camaraderie and comfort. Students were courteous to each other and to their teacher. When Angela solicited names of who was going to stay after school for homework day, many hands shot up. She would call out a name or two and then turn back to the board to write their names down. One student, without any prompting, began to call out the names of students whose hands were raised to make the process easier for Angela. Further, when assignments required glue sticks or other supplies, students, without prompting, would go to the supply cabinet and pass out the supplies.

Timeline of Research Process

After meeting with the potential candidates for my study, I observed both

of their classrooms during a period when they used the discussion format. My

goal was to examine their use of discussion. I was especially looking for the

concept of discussion that Nystrand (2003) used in his study, in which discussion

is not viewed as a recitation; rather teachers facilitate students talking to each

other. In August 2004 I observed Margaret's eighth-grade civics classes five

times at the beginning of the school year. I observed three classes one day and

two classes the second day. Margaret wanted me to see how the project she called

"Society" got started. During the project I saw a variety of examples of

discussion. She assured me that what I saw was typical of how she started the

school year. I concluded that she exhibited the qualities I was looking for in my

research.

Angela was a mentor teacher for one of my student teachers in the fall of

2004. In October, while observing my student teacher, I was also able to observe

Angela and her discussion process. She skillfully led students in a dialogue with

each other. I observed her a total of four times and approached her about being a

part of my study. She was willing to participate.

My initial plan was to observe both teachers for the full second semester

of teaching. However, because a variety of logistical issues, I was unable to begin

research until April 5, 2005. First, I interviewed both teachers prior to observing

their classes. I solicited information about their teacher preparation, early years of

teaching, and current position. I also asked them about their beliefs concerning

the social studies.

I began my research towards the end of the school year when the emphasis shifted from teaching content to preparing students for the end of the year Standards of Learning test. The teachers used a lot of direct instruction in an attempt to review information they had taught. Both teachers stated this was not how they usually conducted class, but they wanted to make sure students received all the information that would be on the test. From their comments I gathered that I did not observe as many examples of discussion as I might have if I were observing during a period when teachers were teaching the regular curriculum.

Data Collection

The time period for data collection was from April 2005 until June 2005. In order to provide a multilayered, detailed account of discussion, several forms of data collection must be employed (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Gillham, 2000; Maxwell, 1996). A variety of data collections also allows more possibilities for analysis (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). Although there are many ways to approach case studies, data collection is often similar (Hatch, 2002; Merriam, 1998) in regards to observing, interviewing, and unobtrusive data collecting. Maxwell (1996) notes that data collection should be tied to the research questions. For the purposes of this study, the following data collection strategies were employed:

- Interviews with teacher participants (structured and unstuctured
  See Appendix D)
- Classroom observations
- Researcher field note journals

Interviews

"An interview is a conversation, a dialogue between two partners about a topic of mutual interest" (Kvale, 1996). For this research I conducted a variety of interviews with my participants. I used two types of interviews, which I term *structured* and *unstructured*. For structured interviews I had prescribed questions in order to find out the participant's teaching history, background information, and attitudes and beliefs. Unstructured interviews were conducted as a follow-up from an observation when I wanted some explanations or clarifications on teaching processes or what I observed in the classroom that day.

In April 2005 I conducted an initial interview with each teacher, which lasted about 90 minutes and was in her classroom. The goal of this initial structured interview was to obtain background information from the participants and to set the stage for a productive relationship. The background information included the teachers' educational experiences, philosophies about teaching, and how they approach their teaching role. I also asked about how the school year had progressed and what their goal was for the second semester.

Maxwell (1996) suggests a relationship between research questions and interview questions. "Your research questions formulate what you want to understand; your interview questions are what you ask people in order to gain that understanding" (p. 74). Therefore, the nature of the interview was based on my research questions, but the format of the questions were determined by the interaction itself. Instead of having a rigid system of questioning, the responses of the teachers helped shape the direction and the type of questioning posed. This

approach is supported by the nature of case studies. The focus of subsequent interviews was based on topics generated from the review of the literature, but, more importantly, the focus was also based on themes emerged from the research process. Appendix D has some general questions that were used in interviews over the course of the semester.

The interviews with the teachers served two purposes. First, structured interviews gave me a chance to bring up issues from the literature on the nature of teachers and discussion, such as how do teachers prepare students for discussion, how do they decide their choices in topics (Larson, 1999), and how do they frame questions (Dillon, 1988; Hess, 2004; Parker, 2001c). The second purpose for the interviews was to gain perspective concerning the choices they made during the actual discussion. The unstructured interviews occurred on a weekly basis in conjunction with the days that I observed classes. Ideally, I had hoped the interviews would take place as soon after the teaching episode as was convenient for the teachers to meet, which would allow teachers to reflect while the lesson was still fresh in their minds. Unfortunately, Margaret's schedule made scheduling these follow-up interviews difficult. I ended up having brief sessions between classes and after school when her schedule permitted. Angela's schedule, however, allowed for me to ask questions about her process after each observation. These interviews lasted anywhere from five to 30 minutes. I partly used those meeting to clarify questions I had regarding my observations in the classroom. It was also important for me to continue to ask each teacher what their definitions were for complex concepts like citizenship and discussion rather than

ascribe my own assumptions (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). All interviews were audio-taped and transcribed, which provided me the most accurate record, as well as providing opportunities for using quotes when writing results of the study (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

The tenor of the interview relationship is a key component of any study. Since I knew the participants, it was unrealistic to maintain a sterile formal relationship with them. Bloom (1998a) asserts interview relationships based on focused attention and non-judgmental validation help to create a trusting relationship that is empowering for both the researcher and participant. Another way to consider the interaction between researcher and interviewee is to view it as a low-key conversation between two people (Wolcott, 2001). Although I knew the dynamics with both Angela and Margaret were that of researcher–participant, the nature of the conversation would ebb and flow between research-oriented and that of a colleague. When the conversations were particularly engaging and thought-provoking, both teachers would ask me questions on the topics we were discussing. Anderson and Jack (1991) encourage this shifting of the focus of interviews from just information gathering to a more interactive process, since interviewing is a "dynamic unfolding" activity stemming from the participation of both interviewer and interviewee.

Classroom Observations

From April 5 until the last day of school on June 8 I made a total of 64 classroom observations lasting 45 minutes each. I observed Margaret's class 29 times. I audio-taped 26 of the 29 observations. The tape recorder malfunctioned

for three of the observations. I observed Angela 35 times and have audio-taped

transcriptions for all the sessions I observed.

Initially, I observed both teachers for a full day to orient myself to each

teacher's schedule. During these full days I merely observed and took field notes.

I observed classes several times a week when my schedule permitted. I was

flexible in the subsequent classroom observations. I would meet with each teacher

to see what their lesson was for the day or what she anticipated for the week. If

either teacher knew she was conducting a discussion on a certain day, then I

attended that class. I also observed classes even when teachers did not think they

were going to use discussion in the class. This allowed me to note any

spontaneous discussions that took place. Observing both structured and

unstructured discussions provided me with a richer picture of what shaped the

discussion process in the classroom.

The goal of my observations was to watch how each teacher conducted the

discussion process. Some of my specific observation questions included:

- When did teachers decide to use discussion?

- Why did they think discussion was useful in the delivery of different

  content?

- Why did teachers allow non-content-related discussions to unfold in

  the classroom?

- How did teachers make choices about providing time for unscheduled

  discussions?

- Who participated in the discussions, and does the participation change

depending on whether the discussion is structured or not?

Summary of Data Collection Procedures

Table 1 shows a summary of the procedures used for data collection.

Table 1 Data Collection Procedures

Dates	*Procedure*	*Number*	*Total Time*
September 2004– February 2005	Observations not taped ("getting in")	Margaret 6 Angela 5	19 hours
April 2005– June 2005	Audio taped observations	Margaret 29 Angela 35	64 hours
April 2005– June 2005	Structured interviews	Margaret 5 Angela 3	11 hours
April 2005– September 2005	Unstructured interviews	Margaret 8 Angela 13	16 hours
June 2005– October 2005	E-mail-member checks	Margaret 10 Angela 7	-
		Total: 121	Total: 110 hours

Researcher Field Note Journal

I understood that note-taking is a skill that would be developed over time

(Hatch, 2002). I had hoped in the beginning of my research that I would be able

to sit in on classes in order to practice taking observation notes and prepare for the

actual observations that were to begin in February. Since my research did not

begin until April, I was unable to take the time to practice taking field notes:

consequently, I felt my initial attempts were not as in-depth.

Notes and observations were written on- and off-site (Hubbard & Power,

1993). I kept two journals. One journal had my observations from class. There, I

recorded as much information as possible. "Raw field notes" (Hatch, 2002, p. 83)

were recorded in as much detail as possible with the goal of recreating an accurate

account. A second journal was dedicated to written notes from interviews with

teachers. I shared the information I obtained from interviews and observations

with the teachers so that they could correct misinformation or elaborate on

incomplete information. This process was conducted through one-on-one

interviews and e-mails. Emerson, Fritz, and Shaw (1995) emphasize the

importance of writing field notes while the impressions are fresh if the goal is to

obtain the richest data. Also, the more detailed the description, the less need there

is for analysis (Becker, 1998). So, as often as possible, I tried to immediately

write my impressions after my observations.

Artifacts

Both teachers provided photos of their room organization, which included

desk arrangement, bulletin board displays, and student work, as well as other

materials displayed on the walls of the room. These photographs were used by

me as a tool to facilitate conversation about the discussion process (Merriam,

1998). No photographs included students. Handouts related to discussion or

creating the climate for discussion were collected. This provided additional data

on how students were informed about the process of discussion, including rules and format. Lesson plans were also obtained and photocopied in order to analyze the teachers' processes in constructing discussion activities. When it was not feasible to collect the artifacts, I instead recorded a description of the artifact that was used.

<div align="center">Data Analysis: Making Sense out of Experience</div>

The process of analysis should not be seen as a distinct stage of research; rather, it is a reflexive activity that should inform data collection, writing, further data collection, and so forth. Analysis is not, then, the last phase of the research process. . . . The research process, of which analysis is one aspect, is a cyclical one (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p. 6).

I am both creative and analytical by nature and employed a variety of strategies when working with the various forms of data. The goal was to see how themes and trends emerged from the data. The multiple methods of data collection provided me various strategies to use in data analysis.

Writing

Writing for me has always been a tool for self-understanding and processing information. From the time I took on the role of researcher, I was recording, speculating, and musing about all the experiences that reached my five senses. Field notes from observations were completed; rich, detailed descriptions were recorded; and impressions noted. After most interviews I recorded ideas for future avenues for conversations with my participants. Any insights or

impressions I gleaned from the interaction were also noted. Some label these writings as *memos* (Bryman, 2001; Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995) Memos can be insights, themes ascertained from coding data, or general impressions (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2004). I played creatively with my thoughts at this point, using metaphors, drawings, or poems (Richardson, 2004), which allowed me to shift my way of thinking (Becker, 1998). This process was necessary to enable me to remember to leave the comfort of my own preconceptions in order to look at my experiences as a researcher from a fresh vantage point. An example of a metaphor I considered had to do with discussion as a Grecian urn which is something I have always sketched. I asked myself what is the urn holding? How important is the contents? I began to see categories of how discussion was used in each teacher's class rooms.

Coding the Data

Coding is a method in which the researcher can begin to organize the myriad data being collected for interpretation (Delamont, 1992). At this point I read through my notes, interviews, and transcriptions, and I began to look at themes that were emerging. Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995) distinguish two types of coding:

> [In] open coding the ethnographer reads field notes line by line to identify and formulate any and all ideas, themes, or issues they suggest, no matter how varied and disparate. In focused coding the fieldworker subjects field notes to fine-grained, line-by-line analysis on the basis of topics that have been identified as of particular interest. (p. 143)

Coding, therefore, is open to broad considerations about the themes or categories

in which to assign the data. This process allowed me to begin to formulate

interpretations of the data (Coffey & Adkinson, 1996).

Talking about the Data

Another vital process that supported my data analysis was talking. While it

is dangerous to ask anyone immersed in the dissertation process "How is it

going?", I did not wait for that invitation. I often asked friends, colleagues, and

family members to let me converse with them on my impressions and thoughts

concerning my research. When developing a context for the questions, "What is

citizenship?" and "What characteristics do people believe are vital for

citizenship?, I talked to at least a dozen people. As I was developing themes and

new ways to interpret my data, I would ask to meet with my most analytical

colleagues who would challenge my conclusions or reasoning.

Thinking Outside the Box

Since I have so much background and personal experience in the area of

group facilitation and discussion, it was crucial for me to continue to look at the

data from perspectives that I had not considered prior to the research. Becker

(1998) suggests many ways to reframe the research experience in order to gain

fresh perspectives. He calls these ways of reframing "tricks." Becker states:

> Tricks [are] ways of thinking that help researchers faced with concrete
>
> research problems make some progress. . . . A trick is a specific operation
>
> that shows a way around some common difficulty, suggests a procedure
>
> that solves relatively easily what would have otherwise seem an

intractable and persistent problem . . . these tricks, then, are ways of

thinking about what we know or want to know that help us make sense of

data and formulate new questions based on what we found. (pp. 4–5)

An analogy to Becker's tricks would be how Edwards (1989) approaches

drawing. Her goal is for students not to draw their concepts of things like a house

or a dog but to draw purely from what they observe. Like Becker, Edwards

suggests tricks to short-circuit the brain from using hard and fast constructs. One

trick Becker suggests is looking at what is not there, which is similar to Edwards

challenging students to draw the negative space, or what is not there (Edwards,

1989).

Concepts like Becker's tricks helped me see themes that I had not

considered in regards to discussion. Metaphors (Coffey & Adkinson, 1996) are

another way of looking at data from an alternative perspective. When comparing

one concept to another, there is a potential to discover new territory. I also

manipulated the data using visual representations, including graphs or diagrams,

which also facilitate thinking outside the box (Coffey & Adkinson, 1996).

More Writing

When researchers are ready to begin the writing phase of their research

project, they should be mindful of how connected their writing will be to the

process of interpretation with which they are constantly engaged. In effect,

writing and interpretation can be considered one and the same process. There can

be multiple tales from the field, and it is up to the writer to decide which

interpretation of events will be showcased, but the writer should not lose sight of

the notion that other representational possibilities exist (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2004,).

The final process of writing the research results is a culmination of drafts as the researcher is trying to be a clear mirror, reflecting the phenomenon studied. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2004) clearly state that the writing process is about interpretation, which is ever-present in the research process. The goal of this research is to study teachers who use discussion in the classroom and ask the question "why?" The final writing product aims to shed light on the question.

Issues of Validity

After the research has been conducted and evaluated, how useful will it be? The usefulness of validity in qualitative research has been debated among researchers (Johnson, 1997). Wolcott (1994) wrote that there are limitations in considering validity and qualitative research:

> Validity does not serve well as a criterion or goal for qualitative research. . . . I can state unequivocally that I find no counsel or direction in questions prompted by a concern for validity. There is no set of circumstances here, no single and "correct" interpretation, nothing scientific to measure that tell us anything important. . . . For every actor in these events there are multiple meanings. . . . I hasten to add, however, that I always try to present issues in concrete terms and complex illustrations guided by Geertz's maxim that there is no ascent to truth without a corresponding descent to cases. I think it instructive and provocative to examine cases that are open, confounding, and of immediate consequence, rather than to

retreat always to cases where known outcomes make us appear so much

wiser in our ability. (pp. 364-365)

Wolcott considered the complexities when attempting to regard qualitative

studies using a scientific approach. He suggested there are innumerable ways

to interpret events.

For Merriam (1998) it was "imperative that researchers and others have

confidence in the conduct of the investigation and in the results of any particular

study (p. 112). In attempting to address validity this study utilized several

measures, including triangulation (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002; Delamont,

1992; Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991), rich description (Anfara, Brown, &

Mangione, 2002), and member checks (Bryman, 2001; Delamont, 1992; Merriam,

1998).

Triangulation is a concept developed by Denzin where the use of multiple

sources of methodologies or data can help test reliability and validity (Feagin,

Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991; Golafshani, 2003; Merriam, 1998; Snow & Anderson,

1991). Having several different data collection methods allows validation of the

study if consistent themes emerge from the multiple collection processes. That is,

triangulation allows the researcher to "confirm" (Bryman, 2001) the themes by

looking to see if they are in fact present in the various methods of studying the

phenomenon.

Member checks involve participants viewing the process as the research

unfolds in order to see if they agree with the interpretations of the researcher

(Merriam, 1998). In this study I arranged ongoing conversations with my

participants, using my notes and insights and asking for their suggestions or opinions. As I was transcribing and coding the data, I would email Margaret and Angela asking for clarification on any questions I had.

The Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher is critical as a "data gathering instrument" (Sanchez-Janowski, 2002, p. 146). I have a strong passion for the importance of interpersonal communication skills in the classroom. I know the biases and theories from which I normally operate. Ragin (1992) suggests that if a theoretical framework is too firmly in place, the research will be guided not by the unfolding data but by the theory. Vaughan (1992) writes:

> Even when we believe ourselves to be unfettered theoretically, we always begin a research project with an arsenal of preconceived theoretical notions accumulated from our own research, our reading of the work of others, personal experience, literature, and conversations that shape our perceptions and ideas in spite of ourselves. . . . But I am concerned here with unacknowledged biasing effects, which raise the possibility of some distortion being introduced into the work so great as to make it useless or invalid. (pp. 195–196)

The issue is not so much to be unbiased, which is impossible, but to be aware of the bias. I am very sensitive to my biases and prejudices, so I used colleagues and the chair of my committee as sounding boards to help unpack any preconceptions that might surface as the study unfolded. I have passion for my subject, and Rosaldo (1993) would argue that passion has a place in research.

As a researcher I bring strengths and limitations to the study. My prior knowledge was both a help and a hindrance to the phenomenon I studied. I was a middle school social studies teacher in the school district I studied. I was familiar with the curriculum and the focus that it had taken. I was a History Alive! trainer for the system and was well-versed in the History Alive! materials. I was familiar with the pace and sequence of the seventh-grade and eighth-grade curriculums. My question framework may have been more effective since I had a sense of how the school system worked. I tried to be sensitive to the idea that I also came with perspectives and judgments from my experience with the system and that could color the direction my research took or the observations I made. I had ongoing dialogue with both the teacher participants and professors at Virginia Tech to support my self-analysis on how my role and background impacted my study.

My prior relationship with the participants needed to be considered when looking at the study. In some ways it could enhance my study in that the prior relationship may have made the participants more willing to be forthcoming in their interviews. Since I perceived the relationships as positive, then there was a chance that the trust-building stage would be minimal. There was also a possibility that the prior relationship might make the teachers more reticent in sharing some of their thoughts. They might not want to be as open and honest because it might change the nature of our relationship.

Merriam (1998) emphasizes the need for the researcher to be a good communicator. With my background in counseling, I was sensitive about how I interacted with the teachers, making sure I remained focused on their stories. I

saw this as a potential asset since I am aware of how conversations unfold and when I am leading and following the speaker's line of thought. I also had had practice in the art of observation in my role as student teacher supervisor for three years. I felt skilled at observing different levels of action in the classroom and felt comfortable moving in and out of various perspectives as I observed what was unfolding.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH RESULTS

Research Question One

How do teachers conceptualize discussion and its purpose as a teaching strategy

within the social studies?

Margaret and Angela's case studies demonstrate how, from their perspectives, the concepts of discussion, citizenship, and the social studies intersect. Both teachers' concepts and beliefs about these topics were manifested in their classrooms through the different projects and activities they assigned. From my observations and our discussions regarding their practice, Margaret and Angela's choices concerning what unfolded in their classrooms clearly were shaped by their beliefs, prior teaching, and the curriculum standards.

Since the concepts of the social studies, citizenship, and discussion are so interconnected, it was difficult to isolate just one concept without alluding to the others. To address research question one, I provide a portrait of both Margaret and Angela's paradigms concerning the social studies, citizenship, and discussion, which will serve as a framework in examining each teacher's process in the classroom. An understanding of each teacher's perspective on the social studies and how it relates to citizenship will help illuminate how and why they use discussion in the social studies classroom.

Margaret and the Social Studies

To ask someone to describe a topic he or she teaches is to ask for a superficial look at a multidimensional issue, but I chose to ask Margaret about

how all the complexities of the nature of the social studies can provoke a

dialogue. Margaret talked about the social studies in the following way

> I think social studies is to give knowledge, information, experiences,
>
> understandings, of the way the world works, how it has worked in the past,
>
> what has gone on, what has led to what we think about in the future, and
>
> how countries work together, how people work together, how
>
> governments work together and how they don't work together, and the
>
> strife that is caused by misunderstanding, miscommunication, differences,
>
> and all of that rolled up into one. That is what I think social studies is
>
> about.

Notice that Margaret first used words like knowledge, information, and

understandings to define the social studies; these words all denote a need for

content. Margaret looked first at the social studies from a global perspective of

wanting students to obtain knowledge regarding "the way the world works" and

how "countries work together," which reflects Jo's (2003) position of world

citizenship as a vital component in citizenship.

Next, Margaret saw the social studies as a vehicle to help students to

understand why there is "strife caused by misunderstanding, miscommunication,

and differences." She was in the last week of an eight-week unit about human

rights, and she had just completed a review to prepare students for an end-of-year

test required by the state. I wondered how her present focus in the classroom

affected her definition of the social studies. Had she been teaching the

Constitution, would she have emphasized different aspects of the social studies?

As the conversation continued, Margaret again stressed that the social studies were "about understanding and experiencing and learning knowledge, so that hopefully when you are an adult or even a child you know how the world works in a better way and how it can work in a better way or should work in a better way." Margaret saw the social studies as a possibility for a better world; for her, the field was about how her students, as future adults, have the obligation to make the world better. Westheimer and Kahne (2002) articulate a framework of personal responsibility, participation, and justice orientation that aligns with Margaret's articulation of citizenship.

When I asked Margaret what she wanted her students to take away from her civics class, she began to conceptualize what she thought were qualities of citizenship.

> Well, I hope they come away with some understanding of how, one, our government works or governments in general work and that, two, if you just stand by then really nothing will happen. That you have to be involved, you don't have to be involved by becoming the president of the United States, but you can be involved by doing community service, by voting, by helping others, by becoming a "good citizen," which doesn't necessarily mean standing up and saying the pledge of allegiance, but just kind of doing for your community in order to make it a better place.

Here, Margaret stressed the need for citizens to take action and participate by doing more than just voting. She began to articulate what Houser and Kuzmic

(2001) portray as "ethical citizenship" and the vital importance of looking at the broader social issues as well as participating in the community.

Margaret's sentiments reflected many researchers' views that the social studies are about preparing future citizens (Houser & Kuzmic, 2001; Shaver, 1997; Vinson & Ross, 2001; Zevin, 2000). She envisioned students who are not only versed in the fundamental knowledge of how our country functions but who also have the ability to critically analyze the limitations of our social structures. Margaret wanted students to be compelled to "make [the community] a better place."

<div align="center">Margaret's Concepts of Citizenship</div>

In my observations and conversations with Margaret, it was clear that she considered the social studies, specifically civics, as crucial to helping students evolve as citizens. Her motivation was not just providing vital content to students in order for them to understand the government and their relation to the government, but Margaret had a vision of teaching participatory skills and dispositions students needed in order to become effective, action-oriented citizens. Margaret often explained her rationale for teaching various topics or using discussion in relation to what students needed to become successful citizens.

Citizenship and the "Good Citizen"

Margaret talked of wanting her students to become active, "good citizens." She equated being a good citizen with voting and helping others, and helping the community. Thus, Margaret equated the social studies with citizenship, which

seemed logical since she was currently teaching civics. In later interviews she again referenced the "good citizen," and I asked her to elaborate on what this term meant to her. She replied:

> [To] participate in a constructive manner where you are not hurting others, because of the way you feel about something at least that you can listen to other points of view and you might disagree with those points of view but you are not attacking the person. It is all right to attack their points of view, but you are not allowed to attack the person. I think if they could go through their life like that, that would make them a good citizen. To understand all sides. [It] takes pros and cons. Decide for yourself. You don't have to like everybody in the world, but don't dislike somebody because of their characteristics not of who they are.

Margaret began her elaboration with the word *participate*, but then she seemed to be describing tolerance. She wanted a "good citizen" to understand all sides and to see others' points of view. Margaret acknowledged that people can disagree with each other's point of view but not because of who they are. She reflected Parker (1994) and Jones' (2004) concern that citizens need to see their role in relation to a diverse population.

In accordance with her beliefs about citizenship, Margaret added a service learning component to her class that provided students with opportunities to contribute to their community. Parker (2003, 2001a) discusses "enlightened political engagement" and how students must be provided with opportunities to

act on their knowledge. This idea reflects Margaret's desire to take learning outside the classroom and show her students the real-world application of citizenship (Levinson & Brantmeier, 2006; Wade, 2008). Again, Margaret used the term "good citizen" when she talked about her students participating in the service learning project.

Citizenship and Critical Thinking

Margaret offered many additional qualities to her definition of citizenship. A concept she continually addressed was the need for citizens to be critical thinkers.

> I'm worried about teaching . . . students are not critically thinking.
> You give them this [content and] they give it back to you. I mean,
> what good is that? What kind of citizen does that make? Because I
> am the president, it's all right for me to tap your phones, [and
> citizens say] "okay." They're not thinking. You know unless we
> have critical thinkers like the Founding Fathers, what would
> happen to our nation if we didn't have them?"

Margaret shared her concern for the limitations of students memorizing facts without understanding context, cause and effect, and ramifications of the civic concepts she taught. Margaret used the example of the Privacy Act to suggest that students need critical thinking skills when considering the acts of government and how they affect individual rights. Margaret saw critical thinking as a fundamental quality that was necessary for the establishment of the United States. She mirrored the position of several researchers (Barr, Barth, & Shermis, 1977;

Martorella, 1996; Saxe, 1997), realizing how crucial it is for our students to be

equipped with critical thinking skills if our democracy is to continue.

When asked specifically what qualities a citizen should have in order to be

a productive, contributing member of society, Margaret stated the following:

> Think for themselves, be informed, be able to articulate what they
>
> are thinking, being able to have a discussion with somebody. Know
>
> what is out there. Keep informed, know where you stand on an issue,
>
> whether it's what everyone else agrees with or not. But know where
>
> you stand and the reasons why. Have your reasons why you believe
>
> in what you believe.

Margaret seemed to be describing a citizen who is intelligent and has the ability to

be an independent thinker, who also stays current on the events. Engle and Ochoa

(1988) use the term *countersocialization* to describe a citizen who is an

independent thinker and uses reasoning in dealing with politics. This concept

supports Margaret's perceptions of critical thinking. Margaret thought it was

critical for a citizen to be able to articulate and defend her or his position. She also

indicated that regardless of possible dissention, students needed to continue to be

knowledgeable about current events. Finally, she wanted students to not just take

a stand on issues but to understand their reasoning for taking that stand.

Margaret further described what she believed was important in

citizenship.

I would like [students] to take an active part in voting or running for

public office or at least somehow, take protesting, somehow be

active. I guess proactive in their citizenship life.

Margaret hoped through her class she conveyed the value of being active in the

political process as a necessary quality for citizenship. Saxe (1997) would agree

with Margaret's suggestion that voting and running for public office are seen as

traditional forms of being a citizen. Saxe believes these traits are a fundamental

goal of citizenship. However, Margaret stretched beyond the traditional picture of

citizenship and civic duty when she suggested protesting as a viable means to

active participation; one might infer that she believed that citizens need to voice

opposing views to issues if the need arises.

Global Citizenry and Human Rights

Margaret wanted there to be a more humane, moral approach to global

citizenry. To her it was important for students not to be ethnocentric in their view

of the world. Margaret reflects Nelson's (1997a) work on the need for students to

develop a global perspective and emphasized the importance of students

understanding their connection to the greater global community. She felt that by

providing students with opportunities to discuss global issues and the struggles of

other countries, students would develop sensitivity to how a crisis in one country

could affect the rest of the world.

I just have always felt that way. It started when I started teaching

32 years ago wanting kids to, one, stand up for themselves, and,

two, to stand up for others. Having a voice. I started way long ago

> that, you know, first they have to have a voice for themselves and
> then having a voice for others whether it is their neighbor or
> someone halfway around the world. Now it doesn't always hit with
> everybody but . . .

Furthermore, Margaret hoped that by helping her students understand human rights violations, they someday might be more likely to take action to correct the injustices they saw happening in the world. The theme of "having a voice" resurfaced, which indicates how fundamental a core value it is to Margaret. To her, having a voice also implied using discussion as a vehicle for examining these issues.

Margaret also wanted students to understand that there were differences between people that create a need for tolerance. She was passionate about wanting her students to recognize people's rights when it came to differences.

> Well, just again, not to stand by that there's many, many, many,
> differences in the world: skin color, sexual orientation, all different
> kinds, religion, and that everybody has the right. We do the
> Declaration of Human Rights a lot. That is my copy there.
> [*pointing*] Again, understanding, knowledge of what went on
> before.

Myers (2006) states, "Rarely are international treaties and covenants, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, covered in state curricula" (p. 382). Margaret covers those rights, but Myers is accurate; they are not

in the state curriculum framework. She made the choice to address these issues in her civics class on her own.

Because of her commitment to teaching students about global citizenry, Margaret created the human rights unit over 20 years ago when she first started teaching middle school. It became a project all civics teachers in her school were required to do. She elaborated on the project:

> It's cross-curricular. Everybody gets involved in it. The whole eighth grade does it, and they do a major research paper, so it's also learning research skills, which is all the English SOLs, but it has nothing to do with government or economics SOLs, so I am afraid it's going by the wayside.

Even with the SOLs directing the curriculum, this project had survived. But Margaret did not know how long it would last.

Margaret pointed out that the SOLs mention the word *global* in only one place, and that case related to the global economy (Curriculum Framework Civics and Economics, 2001, p. 40). As a result, "students are only getting an ethnocentric view of the world, government-wise." She contended that the Internet had made the world interconnected and felt a responsibility to help her students gain appreciation for other countries and cultures.

Beliefs about How Good Citizen Qualities Compete with Curriculum Standards

Margaret also commented on the civics curriculum guidelines regarding the qualities of a good citizen. Margaret believed she should teach her students to have a voice, understand the many perspectives inherent in our society, develop tolerance, and work to improve society. She saw the curriculum framework suggesting a set of citizenship qualities different from hers. When I asked her for specifics, she responded:

M: I think [the SOLs] are a little bit more structured when they talk about values and citizenship. A good citizen votes and is patriotic and is loyal. I think you should be patriotic; I am not against that all.

Int: What does that mean, "they are more structured"?

M: More black and white, more right and wrong than I am, maybe? More status quo?

Margaret, in attempting to define how her values were different from those defined in the SOLs, uses terms like *structured*, *black and white*, *right and wrong*, and *status quo*. The SOLs list the following as "personal traits of good citizens": "trustworthiness, honesty, courtesy and respect for the rights of others, responsibility, accountability and self-reliance, respect for the law, and patriotism." (p. 11).

Margaret added the word *loyalty* in trying to remember the SOL citizenship qualities. These qualities are consistent with Abowitz and Harnish's (2006) description of civic republican citizenship, in which the values of "self-

sacrifice, patriotism, loyalty, and respect" (p. 659) are stressed. It seemed that she saw the qualities set forth by the curriculum framework as more traditional and conservative, maintaining the dominant culture (Journell, 2007), Margaret hoped to teach her students the qualities and skills that would challenge the current society in order to improve it. Fore (1998) followed the creation of the social studies standards and concluded the standards were created as a result of a conservative agenda set forth by the current governor's committee. There were conscious decisions to omit historical social movements some people considered too liberal.

Summary of Margaret's Views on the Social Studies and Citizenship

Margaret taught eighth-grade civics and was required to follow a standard curriculum of knowledge, skills, and dispositions. When she talked about her beliefs about the social studies and citizenship, she shared her philosophy based on what she thought would make a "good citizen" and did not mention the standards. She wanted students to be active in making the world a better place. She also talked about citizenship in relation to the rest of the world and the need for students to understand the ramifications of crisis in one area of the world and its impact on the rest of the world. Finally, Margaret wanted her students to have "a voice" and to make sure they stand up for injustice and can express their perspectives on issues. In the following sections, Margaret elaborates on her beliefs about discussion and its relation to the social studies and citizenship.

Margaret's Beliefs About Discussion

"You know, the worst is to come in, sit down, open a book, and

read and answer questions. We don't do that." —Margaret

Margaret shared how she valued discussion and used discussion often in

her classroom. She saw little value in learning that is not interactive. She believed

that through dialogue, students made meaning of the content she covered. She

explained:

"If you are speaking it, you sort of understand it. If you talk about

something, in an intelligent way you understand it. And that is sort of what

I taught them."

When I asked Margaret to define discussion, she had a difficult time

putting her ideas into a definition. Her first comment was the following:

More than one person . . . talking on a topic, not a random but

specific topic, and getting beyond just the surface . . . being able to

have a topic, having ideas about that topic, and voicing those ideas

on that topic and even a little bit arguing pro or con for those ideas

on that topic. Restating things is discussion, bantering, getting your

views across good or bad, right or wrong.

Margaret stressed the importance of having a topic, as well as expressing points of

view. The act of formulating views and ideas seemed to be important to her too.

When she suggested that arguing pro or con can be discussion, it sounded like she

considered debating as a form of discussion. She did not consider conversations

between students as necessarily discussion for the purpose of learning. She

commented, "[at the] school level it's a little bit more than just a discussion between kids—conversation . . . I think there is generally a purpose—outcome."

When talking about defining discussion Margaret mentioned "getting beyond just the surface." When I asked her to clarify what *surface* means, Margaret described an example of her perception of *surface* verses *getting deeper into the material*.

> That means if you have two eighth graders who are talking about
> the Declaration of Independence, [they are] getting beyond that
> Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration and it was on July fourth.
> They really don't know why and what for, and they really had no
> idea what was in it. They heard about [the Declaration of
> Independence] all their life, but they had no idea what was in it.
> So, I think getting beyond and even the language of it was so
> difficult for them to be able to put into their own words and to
> discuss what does that mean.

Margaret clearly did not see discussion as reporting facts. She wanted her students to go beyond reciting general information on a topic. In this example it seemed that Margaret used discussion to help students examine the language of the Declaration of Independence in order to understand the document. She wanted students to examine the intent of the document instead of just knowing who wrote it and when. She seemed to imply she wanted students to get to the more complex levels regarding the fundamental points of the Declaration of

Independence. For Margaret, discussion as a teaching strategy within the social studies enabled students to explore content in more depth.

Yet looking at Margaret's definition of discussion and the example she provided, it seemed she regarded the act of putting one's thoughts into words as a way of gaining better understanding of a concept as an aspect of discussion. However, Margaret did not indicate she saw the interactive aspect of discussion as a way of constructing meaning (Vygotsky, 1978).

Goals, Purposes, and Importance of Discussion

Margaret had clear ideas about why she used discussion and why she regarded it as a process students should use to gain knowledge and understanding. When I asked her what the purpose was of discussion, her response was the following:

> To become a good listener. Another one is to impart your
> knowledge and take in knowledge and to have a voice. Because we
> are in school to learn knowledge content. I mean civics is a content
> subject. So you know that the purpose is the outcome . . . that you
> actually learn or have the knowledge about what you are studying.
> You can't do that by just reading a textbook.

Margaret reflected that the purpose of school is to learn. Discussion, for her, was a valid tool for learning. She articulated the limitations of reading a book and she implied that discussion, especially listening, was also necessary for the acquisition of knowledge. I then asked Margaret why she used discussion. She was more forthcoming in her ideas about this question. She began by talking about providing students with a "voice."

> Well, I think discussion in general gives someone a voice. If they
> are willing to speak about something in class, the more they speak,
> the more they feel [which] sort of empowers them to have a voice.
> When we do Society, I find that students are much more willing to
> speak up because there is not a right or wrong answer, so they are
> not afraid of that peer pressure as much.

What did Margaret mean when she talked about students having a voice? Did that mean having an opinion? Did having a voice mean being willing to speak out in class? She equated having a voice to empowerment. She believed that empowered students felt confident, and she liked when students shared their opinions in class. She gave the example of how students acted when they were in their Society activity, in which students were in charge of discussion without Margaret as a facilitator.

Margaret added that some students who did not participate in other aspects of her class were willing to discuss topics in this format.

> Now there is still some that have a very difficult time, but many
> that either don't speak up in class, don't do well in class, don't do
> homework . ... here, they are willing to participate . . . they're
> feeling they have a little power here. . . . And so they have a little
> voice, so they are much more likely to discuss.

Margaret believed that in their Society discussions, students had more freedom to share their thoughts, which she viewed as a positive thing. She observed that students were more willing to discuss when they were negotiating ideas that do

not have a right or wrong answer. Clearly, Margaret valued students sharing their thoughts and opinions. She saw it as a form of empowerment. Levinson and Brantmeier (2006) suggest simulations where students learn to self govern promote an "authentic learning experience" (p. 338) where students "practice the skills of deliberative democracy" (p. 338) they will be more empowered to participate in government as adults.

Margaret further explained how discussion in her class motivated students who were normally not involved in school. She described a scenario in which students, whom she identified as "oppositional," "defiant," and "normally disengaged," were more participatory when given a voice. Again, she referenced how these students reacted to her year-long project called Society. She did not moderate or involve herself in the Society discussion process other than to make sure students were respectful of each other.

Even the kids this year that are so disengaged when I am lecturing or [giving] notes—they just don't do anything, they just sit there. Totally disengaged. But if [the class is] into Society, those two, I am thinking of two young men, are totally engaged. They are sitting up, they are listening, and they are participating. They are talking and the other times [during lecture] they are not. They never turn anything in, zero. All of them are very bright. Put them in that square, give them a voice, they are going to use it . . . and well.

Margaret had found a process that engaged these intelligent boys who

were generally disinterested in school.

In another conversation Margaret identified how developing a

voice made discussion so engaging to students.

If they feel they have a voice in here, [students] tend to like

class better. I mean, they don't particularly like civics

anyway, just because it's civics and government and

economics—who cares? But if you can get them to discuss,

they'll actually enjoy the class a little bit better.

These comments indicate that Margaret seemed to think students enjoyed

the process of discussion, which motivated them to like her class better.

Recall that Margaret also viewed having a voice as an important

quality for citizenship. She wanted her students to speak out on topics that

may seem unjust. She also wanted students to voice their opinions and

their positions on topics. Again, Margaret provided them with practice in

how to articulate their positions and opinions in a public forum, which was

a discussion.

Being a Good Listener

When I asked Margaret about was the purpose of discussion, her first

answer was "to become a good listener." In another conversation, she talked about

the importance of listening, which she saw as a valuable element of discussion.

These students are developing into people that we want to be good

citizens, and a good citizen cares about what somebody else says. It makes

them become good listeners. 'Cause they need to listen to what somebody

else has to say. And I find there are lots of people in the world that are not

good listeners, so it's not only discussion. Maybe [what] needs to be

included into what's a good discussion is that the other person needs to be

a good listener.

Clearly, Margaret equated being a good listener to being a good citizen. At first

she saw listening as something apart from discussion when she said, "so it's not

only discussion." But as she continued to construct her thoughts, she then

included listening as a component of a good discussion. Margaret did not expound

on the concept of good listening other than it is "important to hear what others

say."

Discussion as a Tool for Remembering

After talking about why she felt discussion was invaluable, Margaret again

used the example of teaching the Declaration of Independence, when she was

maintaining an accelerated rate to teach the content in an attempt to keep pace

with a fellow civics teacher. Margaret talked about not being satisfied with her

students and questioned whether her students were learning the content.

Gotta get [all] this information in, and yet we get this [SOL]

information in but. I don't think they are going to remember it.

Because we are not doing the discussion, so it's sort of like

running circles on a tread wheel. . . Today I tried [to add

discussion]. I kind of have slowed down again. [I] just said, "This

is ridiculous, I need this," and so today we had this whole

discussion on why [do we have the] Declaration of Independence

and what it was good for.

In this case Margaret felt she was not doing enough discussion and was more focused on direct instruction. Covering content by giving information was like "running circles on a treadwheel." She worried that students would not remember the information for the state exams. Margaret's response to this concern was to "slow down" in order to incorporate discussion. That comment indicated that Margaret saw discussion as taking longer than just providing information. She also equated the act of discussion with students having a better chance at remembering and integrating the information.

Organizing a Good Discussion

I wanted to understand how Margaret constructed discussions in her classroom in order to gain insights into her conceptualization of what constitutes a "good discussion." Examining this topic also provided insight into how she used discussion in her classroom. In addition, I compared how Margaret spoke about organizing discussion with her actual practice in her civics classroom.

To begin, I asked Margaret, "What do you need in order to have good discussions in your class?" She responded, "willing participants," then, "good questioning techniques. Being able to probe. Open-ended questions." Although in this answer she verbalized the importance of the questioning process, she did not create question frameworks prior to her class discussions but instead asks questions on the spot. Brookfield and Preskill (1999) concur discussions are unpredictable and should evolve out of the responses of the participants yet a

question framework is also vital for a successful discussion. The following

transcript is an example of a discussion Margaret facilitated in her class. It serves

as an example of how she constructed her questions and responded to student

questions. It depicts a class Margaret taught during her human rights unit. She

showed several provocative movies about opposition to war from a German's

perspective, which brought up issues not usually addressed in a civics class. One

movie was a silent, brief dramatization of a real-life event concerning Joseph

Schultz. Margaret introduced the film and, in this instance, had to fast forward the

tape in order to have enough time afterward for some discussion. This transcript is

the discussion after the movie.

M: It's based on actual events. The film photographers were taken July 19th,

       1941, by Joseph Shultz, a soldier for the German 714[th,] and executed in a

       village in Yugoslavia. So, what do you think about that film?

Rose: [Garbled]

M: Was he okay with bombing the villages?

Bob: Yes.

M: Because what was he doing then?

Ron: He was doing his job.

M: Doing his job. He had a soldier's job, but what do you think happened?

Ken: Well, they were like innocent survivors and stuff, and he didn't want to

       kill them.

Rose: It's different when you actually see the people before and then after.

M: He was, yeah, bombing them was a whole lot different from shooting

        them. Were they the enemy?

Brian: They weren't armed.

M: They were just what?

Dale: Civilians.

Kai: Farmers.

M: Farmers, mostly, probably?

Carl: They probably weren't blindfolded so they [garbled].

M: Yeah. Well, if I had to guess, they were farmers from the village.

In this discussion Margaret used a variety of questions and responses. She did not

have a prescribed set of questions and seemed to ask follow-up questions based

upon how students responded. She began by asking students for their impressions

concerning the movie. She continued by asking two factual questions. She then

asked them an open-ended question and finally asked several more factual

questions. It seemed at this point the goal of the discussion was to hear students'

impressions of the movie and to analyze the movie.

        Furthermore, Margaret seemed to feel that the question framework was

affected by how students responded to the questions. She did not want her

questioning to be so rigid that it did not take into account how students interpreted

the information. In the next portion of the discussion, Margaret again formulated

questions based on students' prior response.

M: Any other observations you want to comment on?

Jean: His chain was a symbol.

M: His chain was a symbol. What was it a symbol of?

Jean: Army.

M: The Army, right? And then he just kind of . . .

Bill: Set it down.

M: I am done with that. I can't do it anymore. What were some other

        symbols? Paul?

Paul: His dog tag.

M: She just said that. Something else?

Kai: The camera.

M: The camera, very good. Why the camera?

Kai: They kept showing the camera, and it was just everywhere.

M: They took a lot of pictures. I know there are people that said the Holocaust

        never happened, but we had all of these pictures. Did we stage all of these

        pictures? I don't think so. They documented a lot; they wanted all the

        numbers. That is why all the prisoners were tattooed. They wanted

        documentation of what they had done.

In this instance Margaret asked for general comments about the movie, and

students were interested in the symbolism. She then used questions to probe how

students were interpreting the symbols. This example also illustrates Margaret's

propensity to answer her own question instead of asking clarifying questions to

help students think through the answer. For instance, a student suggested the

chain acted as a symbol. Margaret asked what the symbol meant. A student

responded with "army." Margaret asked once for more information. When the

student just described what the soldier did, "set it down," Margaret then suggested

setting down the tags symbolized the soldier saying, "I am done with that. I can't

do it anymore." Instead of asking an additional question, allowing the student to

think through the answer, Margaret answered the question.

From this discussion it was not clear what points Margaret wanted to make

about how the film related to the Holocaust and the human rights unit. Her

questions seemed to flow from prior responses when her only goal was to get

students' impressions. Margaret did ask for some critical thinking questions, but it

made me wonder about her goal for the topics she chose for discussion. Although

Margaret talked about the importance of questions in regards to discussion, in

practice her questions were often a result of the students' responses rather than the

result of specific points she hoped to make about the topic.

Summary of Margaret's Responses to Research Question One

When attempting to answer how teachers conceptualize discussion and its

purpose as a teaching strategy within the social studies, Margaret's case study

provides one teacher's perspective. Margaret viewed discussion as paramount to

learning. This belief seemed to originate from her views on the social studies and

citizenship. Margaret often emphasized wanting students to speak up about

injustice and learn how to accept the diversity of our society (Mitsakos &

Ackerman, 2009). She saw discussion as the forum in which students learned the

skills, dispositions, and processes that she thought were vital to citizenship.

Angela and the Social Studies

Angela's views of the social studies were a product of her experiences, more so than of the theories she learned in her teacher education program. Angela was very passionate when she talked about the importance of the social studies. She placed a great emphasis on the interconnectedness of humans and how that manifests in society.

> I see social studies as embracing the study of the history of the world, or a state, or a country, as a vehicle for us to live, to get to live together better. Our own history, as well as the history of our community, our world. My philosophical stance is that the teaching of history should be the understanding of the different voices in history. Women, different cultures, different places in the earth, on the earth, different time periods. But there are so many different voices telling us different things. And that is why it's human activity and why history is so interesting to me.

Immediately, Angela substituted the word *history* when talking about the social studies. It was unclear whether this was a product of her teaching U.S. history for many years or if she saw the social studies as mostly history, which is often a conflict within the field (Stanley, 2001; Whelan, 1997). Angela defined the social studies as "a relationship between aspects of nature and human activity." Her response reflected the sentiments of Houser and Kuzmic (2001), who also believe that the social studies are the relation between the individual and the rest of the world. Angela related understanding history to learning to "live together better."

When she talked about the different cultures and different voices in history, she seemed to emphasize that there are many varieties of perspectives.

Angela claimed that many of her beliefs stemmed from her spiritual upbringing. She described herself as a humanist "who has a deep faith in her fellow man, who is created by something outside this world." This core belief appeared to be the underpinning of her view of the social studies. Again, this is reflective of Barton and Levstik (2004) when they discussed the different approaches or "stances" (p. 7) to teaching history. The moral response stance of working to live together seems to better fit Angela's views of the purpose of history. To Angela the social studies were the point of view of people who lived on this earth and that the study of history of the world, state, community, is the vehicle for us to live together better.

Angela saw the concept of connection as fundamental to her views about the social studies. She alluded to the developmental nature of sixth graders and their need to understand why things happen.

> One of the biggest concepts of social studies is cause and effect and that certainly does fit a sixth grader. You can always bring back what happened in history. We could call it "prehistory." You can always make connections to what someone in history did compared to their lives now. So there is that connection.

Angela used the term *prehistory* to recognize core human experiences that transcend time. In my classroom observations, I saw Angela use discussion to connect the issues that characters faced in historical fiction to what her current

students experienced in their own lives. Specifically, she used a fictional story about slavery to examine the human qualities it took to challenge unjust issues. A young slave felt alone and discouraged; how did students identify with the character? Did they have similar experiences? She also related the perennial concept of family conflict when discussing the Civil War.

In our interviews Angela further explored the idea of the social studies and how the different disciplines were interconnected. As she described her thoughts, she used *history* and *social studies* interchangeably (Whelan 1997). Angela also acknowledged that her love of geography and traveling, and her voracious reading of political issues framed her construct of the social studies.

I think [about] social studies versus the term "history." It's funny

because elementary teachers and evidently some high school

teachers still see it as social studies and others are real specific

about their discipline. . . . I see civics as social studies; I see world

history as part of social studies because it is a small world. So it

isn't hard at all to connect social studies to their daily lives.

Although Angela generally used *history* when talking about the social studies, she ultimately did not make the distinction between the two. Angela was not rigid about teaching historical concepts; she also introduced geography and politics if it helped students make connections with the past. The NCSS believes students will understand social studies concepts better if they are taught in an integrative manner (NCSS, 2008). In addition, Angela recognized that this approach did not

always adhere to the state curriculum guidelines, which made covering all the content a struggle for her.

Angela was concerned with students understanding how they related to the world community and believed it imperative that students understood their connections to world events. "I don't think in this day and age we can afford to be teaching any United States history that doesn't have a tie to world history." However, Angela believed middle school students aren't exposed to enough global issues.

If we keep waiting until they're in high school, it's going to be too late for them to start seeing a worldview. And I don't even mean the world by being [other countries], but a worldview that's outside of their comfort level.

Angela wanted her students to stretch their thinking past what is familiar and comfortable, whether they expand their own paradigm or their understanding of the world (Jo, 2003; Zong, Wilson, & Quashinga, 2008).

Angela strongly felt students should acknowledge the different voices of our history as well as voices of different cultures because this is how they understand the complexities of humanity. "My philosophical stance is making sure children hear lots of different voices." Therefore, Angela introduced points of view not usually showcased in a mainstream textbook. She used Joy Hakim's alternative text *A History of US* to present different perspectives. As mentioned previously, Angela also had students read historical fiction about a slave's life during the colonial period. She wanted students to be critical thinkers who could

understand the many points of view about history. She stated this was fundamental to what she taught in her class. Angela reflected Shinew's (2001) position on how the critical-thinking approach to the social studies allows content to be studied from multiple vantage points. Shinew believes this provides a more accurate portrayal of our diverse heritage.

Angela's Concepts of Citizenship

Angela's construct of the social studies seemed to be based on what skills, dispositions, and attitudes she believed students needed in order to lead productive lives as citizens in society. Her beliefs about citizenship drove the direction her social studies classes took. Although she emphasized history, I noticed in my observations that Angela devoted a significant amount of time discussing themes and topics related to her concept of citizenship. Since citizenship was so intertwined with her concept of the social studies, it was important to examine her beliefs concerning the topic and then compare her beliefs to classroom practices.

Relating Character Education and Qualities of Citizenship

When I asked Angela to talk about what she thought were the most vital qualities of citizenship, she explained that her tenets "typically are religious in nature." She stressed responsibility, honesty, and respect, which are reminiscent of the qualities suggested in character education. Peterson and Seligman (2004) discuss inherent qualities seen as core for moral human beings that are also seen as fundamental for citizenship. Angela described herself as a good citizen by her actions as a moral human being.

> I don't know what it is, but I know that people count on me. My
> word. Being honest in deed no matter who is watching. When I am
> wrong in something, I will talk from my heart, how I feel, because
> if I say it, then it might cause a conversation that will help me
> understand better.

Here, Angela seemed to be addressing integrity in action. She viewed "good citizenship" as acting in a responsible manner, regardless if people noticed these actions or not. She seemed to suggest that citizenship is related to honesty in admitting wrongdoing. Interestingly, Angela said that she used conversation to give her insight in times of conflict or when she was "wrong in something." Her definition of a responsible citizen involved communicating honestly during conflicts and learning from them. So, for Angela discussion could be seen as a crucial part of acting with integrity toward others as part of her moral compass.

Angela also demonstrated a strong belief about responsibility and respect relating to collective space. She often shared with her class the compliments she received from the maintenance staff about how they never had to clean her classroom because her students were so vigilant in keeping their space neat.

> Another tenet of citizenship would be that in our classroom, which is our
> first line of defense, we clean every day. The physical places that we live
> in, our cars, our streets, our roads . . . maintenance of material things
> matter because we share them. I think that's citizenship.

Angela equated the act of taking care of one's surroundings with citizenship.

Peterson and Seligman (2004) echo this virtue in their concept of citizenship.

They quote William James to illustrate the point that citizenship is "a sense of

duty and responsibility to the common good" (p. 371). Angela created service

learning projects over the year that were in accordance with this belief. Moreover,

she reinforced this sentiment by having students volunteer to clean up at a local

park. Wade (2008) notes service learning results in social responsibility, positive

self-esteem, and "general self-worth" (p. 113).

Classroom Citizens

Above all, Angela reinforced a sense of community over and over again.

In many instances she modeled and verbalized the importance of working

together, community, and team building. At the end of the period, the room had to

be picked up before each group of four students would be dismissed. "I would

help each other" she often suggested to students who had not tidied their area.

"Did you help each other?" All of her students were partnered, and when a

student was absent, it was up to the partner present to write down the name on the

board. When assignments were due, Angela reminded students to make sure they

were clear regarding the directions so they could assist the student who was not

there.

I witnessed numerous acts where students helped each other, whether

giving feedback on a story, getting materials for fellow classmates, helping

someone clean up, or supporting someone's idea. Angela encouraged her

students to continually commit acts of kindness, which she explained as a way to

strengthen community; this idea is consistent with Noddings' (2005) premise in her approach to education. One example concerned a student who was in the hospital for an extended period of time. She made sure Mary was somehow included in group activities. Her goal was to demonstrate to her students that Mary was still a part of the community. For example, after a day's work Angela would pose the question for discussion, " if you were writing [Mary] an e-mail today, what would be something that you would tell her that would be positive, helpful, kind, and, knowing our [Mary], make her smile?" In another example, at the end of the year, Angela reminded her students about those who had summer birthdays and encouraged students to call each other. "You know a kind word is worth more than a million dollars in the long run," she said.

Angela consciously ran her classroom as a community of learners and stressed conduct that was supportive, caring, respectful, and responsible. She devoted a generous amount of time reflecting on these qualities, which she felt would serve her students well as future citizens.

Service Learning and Citizenship

Angela was an advocate of service learning as part of her students' educational experience (Scales, Blyth, Berkas, & Kielsmeier, 2000). Like Wade (2001; 2008). Angela believed if she provided her students with experiences in how to contribute to the community, they would remember that experience and continue to volunteer as adults. Twice a year, her team participated in a service project. They volunteered to clean up the local community park. They mulched the paths, weeded, planted, and picked up trash. Angela used this event as a tool

to help her students explore the concept of citizenship and their role in their community.

When they went on the service learning project, Angela explained how working together built their team and the community. When giving instructions about another field trip, Angela commented, "When you are on a field trip, do not take your earphones and your music because it is about being together, not being isolated. . . . This is a school trip, so we will have conversations about our trip."

Citizenship and Having a Voice

Like Margaret, Angela equated citizenship with having a voice and being ready, willing and able to speak up on important issues. She made a distinction about how people need to bring up issues in a constructive way, "where it matters," rather than "gossiping later."

> [A part of citizenship is] that everybody uses their voice and knows that it's their reality. That you try to get an environment where people would be comfortable using their voice that you would see the responsibility to share what you think where it matters instead of gossiping later. That is a citizenship thing to me.

Angela seemed to suggest that part of citizenship involved individuals understanding that their voice is "their reality" and that people's realities differ. Discussion was a vehicle for sharing and understanding each other's reality (Gergen, 1999).

Angela also recognized the importance of a safe and comfortable environment if people were going to be asked to share their voice (Frymier &

Houser, 2000; Harwood, 1992). During my observation, Angela constantly affirmed students who were willing to communicate their thoughts and insights in her classroom. This led me to believe an environment that was conducive to discussion was essential to Angela.

Citizenship and Lifelong Learning

I noticed Angela's interest in helping students become aware of how they learn. When I asked her about why she devoted so much time discussing student learning, her response was very emphatic. She said, "Because it's morally important. It is a moral issue." Angela did not think helping students analyze their learning was a content or educational issue, but a moral issue. She elaborated:

> Learning to me doesn't just occur when they sit in the seat. . . . We
> don't teach school like we believe that. . . . Processes give the
> learner, myself included, the opportunity to be thinking about how
> we learn and why we learn and what we want to learn so that we
> don't let the boundaries, the walls of the room we're in, define
> what we are learning. Now it's social studies. Now it's math . . .
> So any of the processes that I teach, to me can go beyond these
> four walls. The power of being a learner, to accept the
> responsibility, I want them to be active learners that are going to
> go through life learning.

Clearly, Angela believed that learning transcended the artificial boundaries of school. She wanted students to see learning as an evolving, interconnected process, not simply the accumulation of fragmented facts (Levstik, 2008). She

wanted her students to know that learning did not stop after school but will be a part of them for the rest of their lives (Morrison, 2008).

She suggested that, as a teacher, creating such an environment/framework for learning was her moral responsibility:

> So it's morally right because we are only on this earth for a very very small period of time in the course of what we know to be the earth's life. So we must use it, and to use it you must be a learner. You must use up your time here and we have things to learn; that's why we are here and processes don't define what that learning is; it helps you learn. So that's why it's moral. Does that make sense?

Angela viewed it as a moral imperative to help students understand their learning processes because the purpose in life is to learn.

Citizenship, Social Justice, and Minority Voices

Angela had a social justice bent to her views on citizenship; she was very sensitive to the needs of populations that were marginalized. In Angela's view of citizenship, it was not enough just to voice your opinion, but action was also a component of citizenship (Mitsakos, & Ackerman, 2009; Smith, 2003). Citizenship involved working towards solutions for injustices.

> If you see somebody being bullied, you act on your observations. If you are silent or you look the other way, you are part of the problem. So, silence is the voice of complicity.

She was vocal about her son's story and about how raising a son who is gay had strongly influenced her outlook on how society dealt with the disenfranchised.

For Angela, citizenship was action-oriented with the goal of improving society. Au, Bigelow, and Karp (2007) contend that students need to become activists and that part of a teacher's legacy is to provide students with a sense of empowerment to take action against injustice.

Furthermore, Angela was very passionate about how students get sorted and labeled. She wanted to make sure that students were not afraid of people who were not a part of the dominant paradigm. The minority voice was not to be feared.

> Citizenship to me means that we label no one. And I do it more than I should because it makes a long conversation short. You know. Labels I think get in our way as citizens. I believe in inclusion; I believe in an inclusive society in classrooms. That's citizenship to me. I believe citizenship that fits in social studies is that you listen to the voice of the majority. You gotta know what they are thinking. But that you make as much room for the minority voices and look at why they are minorities. What is it that makes them minorities? What are we so afraid of?

Angela equated citizenship with inclusion of all people. Both in her beliefs and actions, she demonstrated a strong conviction that students needed to have space and time to hear each other's realities and understand that there is room for everyone's voice (Shinew, 2001). Angela seemed to want her students to recognize those who were marginalized and disenfranchised (Green, 1988). She hoped they would understand the reasons why people had values and attitudes

about minorities. Often, fear was associated with "the other." Citizenship, for

Angela, seemed to be about acceptance and understanding of people, which was

at the core of her beliefs about the social studies as well.

Summary of Angela's Views on Social Studies and Citizenship

Angela's choices about what to teach or which teaching strategies to use

were partially affected by her values and beliefs relating to citizenship and what

students needed to learn. Her views on the social studies were closely aligned

with her views on citizenship (Houser & Kuzmic, 2001, Shaver, 1996). The goal

of identifying her beliefs concerning citizenship was to provide a window into

what motivates her choices in the classroom, especially when it came to her

choice to use discussion in the classroom.

Several themes on citizenship surfaced when interviewing Angela. She

had strong beliefs about instilling a sense of responsibility in her students. She

wanted them to emulate integrity and honesty (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). The

idea that citizens respect common space was manifested in Angela's classroom

organization. She also wanted her students to understand the value of having a

voice, speaking up, and correcting injustice. Finally, Angela was concerned about

the creation of an inclusive society in which all voices were recognized as

legitimate and equally valued (Zimmerman, 2002).

Interestingly, Angela placed quite a bit of emphasis on what it meant to be a

productive citizen and a decent human being, which took time away from the

content she was mandated to teach. The focus for sixth grade social studies was

U.S. history up to the Civil War. She covered the content through group projects,

fictional history, and other activities. She talked about wanting her students to do well on the Standards of Learning (SOL). Yet she also wanted her students to understand what it meant to be a caring, supportive, productive citizen, and there seemed to be a struggle to balance both the content her need to influence their citizenship ideals.

Angela's Beliefs About Discussion

"I'm very verbal. . . . If you are very verbal, you need to tell somebody.

That's kind of me." —Angela

Angela was a proponent of discussion and understood its value as a teaching strategy. Part of her convictions stemmed from her instinctual use of language to make meaning of her world. "Discussion is how I work through things. I'm either discussing to myself; I probably talk to myself. But I talk through things, with people, by myself; I'm talking in my head. I think things through, so it's all about language." Angela acknowledged she was a verbal learner and that the way she learned best was interacting with others. She confessed that she used self-talk as a way of processing her world (Gergen, 1999). From a personal point of view, she was very comfortable with discussion as a tool for self-reflection and learning. Often, the strategy teachers are most comfortable with is the one they use to teach their students (Larson, 1999).

Discussion Creates Tolerance and Respect

To Angela, discussion helped students experience differences and develop tolerance. She was convinced that since the social studies were about different voices, then understanding the field should start with the voices of her students,

which meant providing them with opportunities for discussion (deCastell, 2004). "We do need to care what other people think in time and place or at least discuss it so that you have more than one point of view." Angela felt that if she provided opportunities for students to recognize the existence of many perspectives, then "students may learn to be more tolerant of other points of view." She further explained that she was dedicated to inclusion because the different perspectives of all types of children brought richness to the discussion of issues, themes, and topics.

Through the use of discussion Angela believed students examined some of their core beliefs. By hearing each other's perspectives, students could begin to examine their family history, what core beliefs they possessed, and how other beliefs relate. "When you hear other people talk, you may start giving yourself permission to depart from prejudices that you're taught at home." Angela felt that discussion was the way to begin to examine prejudices that sometimes take root in communities or family structures. She felt middle school was an ideal age for students to begin to develop their own worldview and learn about other points of view. Atwell (1987) states that middle school students developmentally are beginning to individuate from parents and looking outside of family for answers which is similar to Angela's belief. Angela felt discussion was a vehicle for teaching respect—not necessarily to agree with but to respect the many voices that can be represented in a class, which, to Angela, ultimately led to a caring classroom.

Discussion Helps Students Learn Content

Angela also believed that the process of discussion helped students learn content. She thought that students who experience difficulty with reading and writing could still convey their thoughts orally. The process of talking out their ideas allowed them to bring clarity to their written work (Hess and Posselt, 2002). Angela realized her process of using discussion took more time but reasoned the payoff were worth it.

> For us our things [what she teaches] are social studies topics, [and]
> literature, but we talk a lot. Therefore, it does take a long time to
> get through things. But I think by talking they change their mind
> mid-sentence just like I do. They try things out before they put it
> on paper so they end up writing a lot more than they might have.
> And they also know that they can risk [through talking things out].

Angela liked discussion as a format because she could assess what students knew and their ability to think critically. "I learn from them. So I know what to do next, how to push, how to prod." Brooks and Brooks (1999) emphasize part of constructivist learning is to identify a student's thinking process in order to help move them to more complex concepts. To Angela, discussion was a vehicle through which students could begin the trial and error of constructing their thoughts and ideas related to content.

Discussion as a Tool to Gain Student Perspective

Angela thought by giving her students opportunities to voice their life experiences, she could often understand the perspectives they had on learning and

why they behaved the way they did. She illustrated the point with a story about a

boy who was bright but whose speech was very difficult to understand. She asked

the question, "Have you ever felt there was something about you that separated

you from others?" His response was based on a memory from second grade.

Angela recounted his conversation:

>Getting an envelope to take to my parents. And I knew I wasn't
>
>supposed to, but I tore it open and it said everything that I couldn't
>
>do or what was wrong with me. He said, "I was so mad." . . . And
>
>here he's in the sixth grade and he is talking all the time [now].

This middle school student's story provided Angela with a glimpse of

what emotional issues blocked him from being successful in school. This

student was firmly convinced his speech was an indication that he could

not learn anything. Angela used the information to create a supported

environment that allowed this student's strengths to emerge. As a result,

his speech limitations were no longer an obstacle for him. Angela

understood that her students' life stories helped to shape what happened in

her classroom (Epstein, 2001). She believed that the more she could

uncover these stories, the better chance she had to provide her students

with the tools they needed to become better learners. Discussion was the

method Angela used to learn these stories. Anfara (2004) defined the

effectiveness of middle school teachers through his analysis of the

research. Anfara reports that good listening and communication, along

with understanding students' needs, is a high indicator of teacher

effectiveness. Angela's story illustrated how listening and talking helped her to understand her students and be a more effective social studies teacher.

Elements of Effective Discussion

Angela recognized that there were many elements to an effective discussion and that to have her students become successful, she had to instruct them in the different elements. First, she worked with students to teach them how to listen which Brookfield and Preskill (1999) consider vital in effective discussions. "I think that you have to be strict about listening skills. . . . Everyone has to look at that person. We practice body language. . . . We model it."   She also worked with students on how to ask good questions. In pairs, students were required to ask questions about each other's work. Angela also had students in book groups discuss their books.

A second element of discussion is the questions that are asked. Angela believed that learning consisted of "questions we find answers to" (Hess, 2004). To her, questions were integral to any learning and were at the core of any meaningful teaching process, especially discussion. "It is human nature that we are curious and ask questions, and it is vital that teachers use this natural curiosity to motivate students to learn." Further, Angela's belief about questions was tied closely to her belief about discussion as an important strategy to help students understand themselves and others.

Questions, either formed or unformed, drive our learning. And the

processes that I use help them seek questions and find multiple answers

from multiple voices. I want them to pay attention to who they are

listening to and why they believe this person and not that person.

Clearly, the discussion questions were closely tied to the concept of understanding

how to listen to multiple perspectives on issues (Loewen, 1995) and learn to

discern the accuracy of information (Burke, 2001) and analyze points of view

(Simon, 2001).

Angela created a process based on Bloom's taxonomy to help students

form questions about a topic in which they were interested. Her ultimate goal was

to provide tools to her students so they could learn to synthesize information,

independently from the teacher, in order to construct new ways of thinking.   She

described the process in the following way.

Your level of one is a question that is factual. You pose it. It can be a

social studies book. I give you a text and this question has to be a reading

about the text. They have done that over and over in their social studies. I

say you get simplistic level one questions and it's differentiated.

Angela wanted students to be clear about the facts. She realized that students

often discuss topics without grasping the content. Starting at the factual level

helped students learn to clarify and correct any misinformation before they began

to discuss issues at a more complex level (Brookfield & Preskill, 1999). Angela

did not want students to only discuss on the factual level, however.

Then the level two question is still from the text but it is deeper

level and you can say Bloom's, but I say it's compare and contrast,

describe/analyze, explain. An answer might be lengthy but you

gotta take some thinking. But it's still in that one text. [A] level

three . . . question takes you to another source. Your opinion can

be in it but not without evidence and a resource, and if the resource

is another person they better be a specialist in that. And that's how

we do it.

Through this questioning technique, Angela taught students the importance of

backing up arguments or positions with evidence rather than opinion. Students

also learned how to integrate multiple sources into a cohesive position.

Angela used this questioning framework in her discussions. She observed

that when students were responsible for posing the questions, they took more

ownership of the discussion. Both Hess (2003) and Cazden (1988) researched

how poorly constructed question frameworks can derail discussions. Hess (2004)

suggested that the lack of authentic questions produce ineffective discussion.

Cazden (1988) talked about how poor questioning skills are a limiting factor in

discussion. Angela seems to instinctively understand the importance of questions

and goes to great lengths to scaffold them in such a way as to guide students

towards the complexities of the issues.

Discussion Processes

Angela created many processes to ensure that students felt comfortable in

the discussion process. She created student configurations, including first sharing

in pairs and small groups. Students were given a chance to begin to verbally formulate their ideas in front of a smaller audience before they discussed their ideas to a larger group. In some instances Angela had discussions with the whole group while students remained seated at their tables, but most of the time she used what she termed "the talking stool" as a method that was a physical representation to remind students when someone was talking.

To help students generate ideas, Angela used the talking stool as a public forum and noted this as vital to her classroom community. The talking stool was brightly decorated and stood out in the classroom. Students were encouraged to sit on the stool if they wanted to share something with the class. When someone was on the stool, students knew to stop what they were doing and focus on what the person was saying. This process was similar to Triplett and Hunter's (2005) use of the talking feather as part of their community building. When someone had the stick, everyone knew to pay attention and respect the speaker.

I observed the stool in use when students were asked to share their opinions on current events, or how the day went, or how to strategize getting a task completed. Students used the stool to help request information or share information with the group. Angela provided the following example of how the stool was used.

> So you're all reading and all and what we do is when someone
> would go to the stool they had to either find something neat that
> they knew somebody needed or they were looking for something
> that they couldn't find, and it meant they would stop, the class

would just stop for a minute, and they'd say, "I'm looking for, has

anybody found anything about Columbus' brother Diego" . . . it

could be about anything. And then we'd stop and they'd know to,

it makes the leadership shift in the room.

Angela encouraged self-efficacy, and her students seem empowered by the

stool. During my observations, I saw a variety of students use the stool in

order to provide a topic of discussion. Nystrand et al. (2003) viewed

discussions in which students posed questions as authentic discussion. The

stool enabled students to pose questions, which allowed for an authentic

discussion to unfold. I observed students use the stool to solicit word

definitions and other students respond by sharing strategies to locate the

word in question.

Summary of Angela's Responses to Research Question One

Angela viewed the act of discussion as essential to her classroom. Angela

acknowledged that she personally figured out her thoughts through discussion. As

a teacher she provided opportunities for her students to pose questions, analyze

and unpack different points of view, examine how historical concepts related to

their lives, and construct knowledge.

Similarities and Differences in the Case Studies for Research Question One

Margaret and Angela taught different grades of the social studies, which

most likely influenced their beliefs about the field. Margaret taught civics. Thus,

when attempting to define the social studies, she referred to governments, world

views, and people working together. On the other hand, Angela taught U.S.

history, so when asked about the social studies, her focus was framed in terms of history which is similar to Whelan's (1997) belief that history is at the core of social studies. Yet Angela viewed the social studies field through the lens of interconnectedness and how the individual relates to their community. Angela also described how she taught citizenship when she taught history.

Margaret and Angela mentioned many similar qualities when discussing citizenship. Both mentioned the importance of having a "voice," contributing to society, tolerating different perspectives, and the need for critical thinking. Margaret articulated a need to have students be global citizens and make the world better, a view affirmed by researchers (Bohan, 2001; Jones, 2004; Myers, 2006; Zong, Wilson, & Quashinga, 2008). Angela spoke again about the individual and equated citizenship to possessing individual qualities of honesty, responsibility, and being supportive of others.

In regards to using discussion as a teaching strategy, both Angela and Margaret acknowledged how discussion helps students engage in the content and explore deeper, more complex issues (Simon, 2001). They agreed that discussion is a process that teaches listening and empathy skills. Both articulated discussion as a process to help students use critical-thinking skills to analyze content and perspective. Margaret did not mention any specific process when using discussion, but Angela had a formal process in which she used the talking stool as a method to encourage students to discuss various topics.

Research Question Two

How do teachers describe and explain their use of discussion in terms of their

ongoing practice?

Margaret and Angela's teaching goal was to cover all of the content prescribed by the state of Virginia's curriculum framework. They covered this content by using many strategies. Their stated preferred strategy was some form of discussion, whether it was with the whole class or in small groups. When they considered the content, they made decisions about how much time should spend on concepts.

Over my eight weeks of classroom observations and interviews, I noted each teacher's choice of topics for discussion. When asked about why they chose the discussion topics they did, both offered similar definitive reasons that were based on a combination of their beliefs about what makes a good citizen and the curriculum standards that the state mandated. Three categories of topics for discussion emerged: content-driven topics, process-driven topics, and relationship-driven topics. Examining the types of topics each teacher chose for their discussions will help to clarify how teachers explain their ongoing practice within their classrooms.

Margaret's Responses to Research Question Two

As mentioned previously, Margaret taught eighth-grade civics and economics. When I began my observations, she was starting her human rights project, and she continued to work on the Society project. For Margaret the content and process were intertwined. For purposes of this study, *content* is

defined as information pertaining to curriculum standards as well as information

that Margaret deemed important for the topics she was teaching.

Content-driven Topics

Margaret used discussion to teach the content in her class. She would not

only cover what was expected in the curriculum guidelines but would also cover

content she deemed necessary in order to teach some of the complex concepts

(e.g., historical context to the constitution, global citizenry, community service

learning, human rights issues) she was teaching. Also Margaret taught content she

viewed as vital in civic practice. The following sections are ways Margaret taught

content by using discussion.

Current events.

Margaret used current events as a way to show students a real-world

application of the content they covered. Every Monday, students came to class

prepared with a copy of a recent newspaper article and a summary of facts about

the article. Students were also required to suggest what impact the topic might

have on society and how it related to the topics they had been studying. Finally, it

was up to listeners and presenters to pose questions that might generate

discussions. When I asked Margaret about her decision to discuss current events,

she reported how much both she and the students enjoyed the activity.

> Current events are probably my favorite part, and [the students] love it
>
> because they are bringing things from what they are interested in. . . . At
>
> this age they are beginning to be [critical thinkers]. That's why I do the
>
> impact on society because they have the impact on themselves, and it is a

little bit easier. And I am teaching civics, right? But impact on society, so what? I keep saying, so what? You know, to try to get them to look at the bigger picture.

Margaret thought students enjoyed the current events exercise because it gave them a chance to focus on their interests. Margaret assumed that students would appreciate a forum to present something they found interesting.

Margaret also saw current events as a way to help students begin to critically think about cause and effect. She reflects Barr, Barth, and Shermis (1977), when they emphasized effective citizens must have the ability to critically analyze issues that affect their community. It is interesting to note that Margaret saw critical thinking related to students' age, but also it seems that she believed that with practice some students were learning to look at issues in a more complex manner.

Although the current events chosen by students were not always directly tied to the standards-based curriculum, Margaret saw this activity as a crucial process that taught her students critical thinking. She also believed it was important to have her students examine the "bigger picture." Asking students to hypothesize causes and effect of events that happen in the world also helped them to understand the interconnectedness of the world.

Mock elections.

Concepts of elections, political parties, platforms, and voting were clearly content required for the eighth-grade curriculum standards. Margaret chose to cover those standards by providing students with an experiential project in which

students conducted mock elections. Students were exposed to the concepts in Margaret's class. However, what Margaret really saw as vital was to provide students with time to actually conduct an election and experience the process similar to how elections are run in this country. Gehlbach et, al. (2008) research indicated students who were exposed to simulations were more engaged in social studies concepts.

Discussions were an integral part of these mock elections; students were encouraged to listen to each others' ideas and positions on topics. In the following interview, Margaret shared the various ways students used discussion to cover content and to interact with each other.

> We have people that get up and give candidate speeches which sound better than the candidates themselves. And it's a debate—we do a mock debate. The moderators, they do a wonderful job. And the kids are so excited about their candidate that they fight in class in other classes about why their candidate should win. We have discussions all the time, then, parties, about platforms, how the press manipulates speeches. . . . We do a whole eighth-grade thing. In one room they write platforms and speeches, in another room they do local ads, and then in another room they create political tee shirts with the platform on the back. . . . And discussion is going on all the time.

This experiential process was similar to what Chilcoat and Logon (2003) call "democratic instructional laboratories" (p. 203). Students, as part of

their learning, used discussion as the vehicle to experience and process the mock elections.

Margaret covered many of the SOL objectives in this project. (See Appendix A.) Students learned about ad campaigns in which Margaret discussed concepts of propaganda, media issues, and separating fact from opinion. She also created discussions concerning the two-party and three-party system and platforms. Margaret felt that the ways in which she introduced and asked students to use the information not only provided them the exposure to content but also allowed them to understand from a participatory experience how they could be a part of elections.

Margaret recognized that if she used direct instruction as her primary strategy, it would take significantly less time to cover the material than it took to organize a mock election. However student discussion was a core citizenship quality to Margaret, and that fact was manifested in her teaching. Margaret wanted her students to be participatory citizens, and she was convinced that mock elections introduced students in an intimate way to the importance of taking part in the electoral process. The more simulation-type experiences students have, the more likely they are likely to become involved in the processes of citizenship (Hart, 1997; Kahne & Westheimer, 2003).

Society.

One of Margaret's favorite projects was what a year-long endeavor she called Society, in which students basically learned civics content and processes

through an experience of self-governing. The whole project was based on student

discussion. They had to discuss how they would formulate a society in order to

succeed in the task. Embedded in the project was the need for civics content

based on the curriculum guidelines. When Margaret described the project, it

seemed reminiscent of communities of practice discussed by Levinson and

Brantmeier (2006), in which they argue that learning conducted using this

experiential process has a lasting impact on learning.

   Margaret described Society as the following:

> Society is when I put them in a square; the rules are I don't get
>
> involved, unless it gets out of hand [and then] I give them certain
>
> goals. Make some class rules [about] what type of government are
>
> you going to have. So I give them certain things they have to do in
>
> their society and then they have to kind of come together. They
>
> have to figure out who are going to be the leaders, what are they
>
> going to do with kids who don't listen, how are they going to get
>
> everybody to participate . . . all this relates to civics.

Margaret attempted to provide her students with an experience in which

they had to solve problems on their own without intervention or structure

from an adult. In essence they were asked to create a system in which they

then existed and produced products of knowledge. Schimmel (2003)

echoes Margaret's sentiments concerning the importance of providing

students with practice at collaborative rule-making, in which students are

empowered to affect how rules are decided school-wide. Margaret gave

her students this experience on a smaller level, yet she noted how students enthusiastically met the tasks of self-governing in her class.

Process-driven Topics

Margaret also used discussion to instruct students in the processes necessary for citizenship. Through discussion she created projects and processes where students had to learn to voice their opinions and listen to others. Margaret also fostered processes which helped students practice critical thinking skills when analyzing their thought process on tests. The project Society not only provided students with the ability to learn content in an experiential way, but Margaret believed that through this simulation project, students also learned valuable processes vital for citizenship (Gehlbach et al., 2008). Society was Margaret's attempt to provide students real civic practice. This project forced students to communicate and collaborate to bring about some type of order in a collection of people. This process was very awkward and foreign to many students. Margaret knew it was difficult for them, but she also knew it was transforming.

> They are part of a group, a society group, where everyone is sort of equal, everybody has a voice. And they have to make a government, which is a very difficult thing to do. And they'll say, "We're not getting anywhere." And I'll say, "I know because you are arguing, but that's what it takes to [be a part of society]." They just want to have the answers, and I am not giving them the answers. So, they have to kind of formulate how to work in a

society. How to be a citizen of that society. And what does that

mean?

Furthermore, through Society Margaret wanted her students to

understand and learn how to have a voice and use that voice to the

betterment of society. She asked her students to be problem-solvers by

completing the tasks of forming a government and creating laws and

constitutions. She intuitively recognized the vital importance of learning

how to make decisions as a group. In their research, Engle and Ochoa

(1988) and Saxe (1997) stress the paramount importance of developing

decision-making or problem-solving skills to a democratic government.

All conclude students need to be provided with opportunities to practice

decision-making skills, which is exactly what Margaret does with her

Society.

Margaret also wanted students to realize the importance of

participation and what happens to their Society when students don't

participate. She saw Society as an important opportunity for students to

examine the historical context of how the framers of our Constitution

might have operated when forming our government.

> They form their own society and they have to work together. And
>
> discover. Kind of modeling after the framers of the Constitution,
>
> how they got together in a group and sort of argued over things,
>
> and these kids argue over what type of government they want so
>
> we learn about types of government. Lots of discussion because

the framers of the Constitution, I mean, they talked a lot about

what they wanted. What they didn't want because they had that

other in the past. . . . They have elections and they run their own

classroom. I give them objectives, but I allow them to run their

own classroom as much as possible but still get in the content. So

learning the content through that way.

To Margaret, learning what it takes to be self-governing and contributing

members of this society was an important aspect of citizenship. She wanted her

students to be exposed to the practice of how to run elections and to know the

meaning of independence and all that comprises providing people independence

in a government.

Discussion and the critical thinking process.

Margaret not only provided students experiences that mimic important

elements of citizenship, but she also provided students opportunities to examine

their own process of critical thinking, especially in the area of test-taking. I

observed Margaret when she was preparing students for the end-of-year SOL test.

She gave a series of practice tests that she would then go over with the students.

She would check their understanding by asking how they arrived at a certain

answer. When students did not know an answer, Margaret facilitated a discussion

in order to analyze the possibilities for the correct answer. She stressed the fact

that the material they were reviewing was information they covered over the year.

When she talked about a question and solicited the correct response, she took time

to help the students use their prior knowledge to think through the answer. The

following is an example of Margaret using discussion to help students learn the processes of test-taking and critical thinking.

M: All the following statements are true about the United States citizenship except?

Jeff: D.

M: All right, we got D. So, let's talk about D. The federal government has the right to deport illegal aliens from the United States?

(John declares that is true.)

M: That's true, so [the question] says what? Except?

(The students continue to talk about citizenship and when citizenship can be taken away. One student brings up Bobby Fischer. Margaret allows students to talk about Bobby Fischer's story and then redirects the students back to the question.)

M: So which one is it? Which one is it?

Jennifer: B.

M: The federal government is the only allegiance that can grant citizenship and take it away. Is that true or false?

(Jennifer says that it is true.)

M: It's true, right. So that's not the right answer either. What is the right answer?

Mark: A.

M: A. The federal government can take away a person's citizenship if they are convicted of a certain type [of crime]. Can they do that? No.

In this example, Margaret encouraged students to use their prior knowledge about citizenship and the story about Bobby Fischer to aid them in determining the answer to the multiple choice question. Margaret was not merely telling them the right answers. She was using discussion as a process and the test as a teaching tool to help students talk about their knowledge of citizenship. Again, Margaret made the choice to take time to engage students through discussion to help them critically sift through their knowledge in order to solve the test question.

Brooks and Brooks (1999) support the idea that helping students arrive at answers through discussion and questioning fosters critical thinking and lasting understanding of concepts. Margaret made a choice to use the standardized test as a springboard to engage students in a critical-thinking process concerning content rather than just encouraging memorization. This discussion did not involve learning content, but it helped students with the process of thinking through answers based on their prior knowledge and personal experiences.

Relationship Topics

In addition to its content- and process-driven purposes, Margaret believed the act of discussion helped to create a supportive classroom climate in which students were more likely to take part in a discussion. Some of the discussion topics had nothing to do with the curriculum guidelines, yet Margaret saw these discussions as invaluable tools that helped to build relationships among her students and motivate them to be more attentive in class. Loutzenheiser (2002) concluded that providing opportunities for discussions relating to students' lives fosters a positive climate so that future discussions may be entertained. Part of

Margaret's practice was the willingness to allow students to discuss issues that were not content-related but were ultimately important practice for future discussions where the content was the focus.

During one observation I was surprised at how Margaret's third period class started. Ryan came in rather quiet, which was not his typical nature. Most days Ryan entered early and scoped out whom he was going to sit next to. He always tried to sit next to Carl, but as soon as Carl realized whose pile of books were next to his, he would generally make an exclamation, "No Way!" and then move to another section of the table. Ryan's goal in life seems to be to create havoc and to generally "gross out" his fellow classmates. He was always moving and jostling other students, clearly invading invisible boundary lines that denote personal space. But on this day he was quiet, just sitting and looking around the room.

Most of the class was seated and the period about to begin. Then a student began an impromptu discussion. The following was an exchange where students were talking about a topic loosely connected to civics. .

Becky: Ryan is it your birthday today?

Ryan: Yes.

Becky: So how old are you?

Ryan: 15

Becky: Are you going to get your driver's license?

Ryan: Not yet"

Peter: He can't get his license until he is 16 and can pass the test.

Paul: Yea but when can he get his permit?

As I listened to the conversation between several students trading bits of

information about the license process, I noticed Margaret had been ready to start

class since the beginning of the discussion but was quietly sitting there as the

dialog unfolded.

The students were taking turns to enter the conversation, addressing each

other asking questions of each other, bringing in their expertise of what they knew

about licenses, permits and the DMV. More than 5 minutes after class should

have started Margaret seemed to take the lull in the conversation as a sign the

topic had been exhausted and started with her lesson for the day.

After the period ended I ask her why she let that conversation go on for as

long as it did? Was it on purpose or was she just curious about their responses?

This was Ryan's first day back at school after being gone a week. His father had

passed away last week. And Margaret wanted her students to get a chance to talk

with him. She saw this discussion as an opportunity for the students to connect

with Ryan where he was the focus in a positive way. Frymier and Houser (2000)

suggest students who are exposed to interpersonal interactions in the classroom

have more positive experiences in the classroom.

  Later when I further explored the episode, Margaret had this to say.

He'd been out a lot; he'd just lost his father. And so when [Ryan] was

asked the question, discussion is discussion.   It kind of promotes other

discussion even if it is not on the topic, and for him to be able to engage

and other students to engage him. Then when we are in a discussion, of

> something that needs to be discussed in the class he is much more likely to
> participate in that discussion. I think and again it's just a way of bringing
> him back into to the classroom making him feel comfortable. Kids are not
> going to discuss they aren't going to open their mouths unless they feel
> comfortable in your classroom.

Margaret believed any type of discussion ultimately will help the group feel more comfortable and more likely to participate in discussing content related topics.

Margaret took into account the needs of adolescents to be social (Atwell,1987). She believed her students could be single-minded in needing a forum in which to be heard. She was willing to allow the various tangential topics with the hope she could redirect the discussion back to the original purpose. She would often facilitate discussions about her students' lives because she believed building community created within her students an interest in learning.

When I asked Margaret the types of non-content discussions she would have, she talked about current events and topics relevant to their lives.

> It's generally social-related. And it can be it could be about football, the last
> week with the [The football star in trouble for drinking]. You know there's
> a bigger picture there, sportsmanship [and] how did you feel about that?
> What should be done? So it's a whole kind of social interaction. We do get
> off-topic [when we discuss] things that are important generally in their lives.
> . . . That's sort of how I can make connections. It all comes back even
> talking about, you know, appreciate every little thing. You are back to
> social context in being a good citizen.

Margaret saw these student-centered topics as relationship related. As a facilitator, she continued to make the topics teachable moments by bringing in the bigger picture implications to the topics in the attempt to show how their students' related to the civics curriculum (Anfara, 2004). Margaret attempted to reinforce values she believed help to make a "good citizen," such as sportsmanship.

Additionally, Margaret talked about using discussion in order to demonstrate her caring towards her students. She articulated that the discussion created connections in the group. For example, she talked about how she and her students discussed as a group what they were going to with their free time in a field trip to Washington, D.C. Her need to empower her students manifested in providing students the opportunity to brainstorm their itinerary for the next day of the trip.

> It's mostly factual about what we are going to do the next day and then that night what they did even at the shopping mall. What did you buy? Do you want to share? It's that whole making them again have that voice and making them feel important. And the more you do that, the better person you develop. These students are developing into people that we want to be good citizens and a good citizen cares about what somebody else says. It makes them become good listeners, because they need to listen to what somebody else has to say. And I find there are lots of people in the world that are not good listeners, so it's not only discussion maybe that needs to be included into what's a good discussion. It is that the other person needs to be a good listener.

Margaret viewed good listening as a tool that enhanced the individual and

demonstrated caring about people. This would ultimately create a stronger

classroom community.

Summary of Margaret's Responses to Research Question Two

Margaret chose to use discussion to cover many different topics that she

felt were important for her students. She followed the curriculum guidelines but

also covered content she felt was important as a foundation for effective

citizenship. She considered the strategy of discussion as a valuable process

whereby students would be able to entertain more complex issues surrounding the

content, enhancing their overall understanding.

Other discussion topics introduced by Margaret included learning

processes and experiencing aspects of citizenship. In her Society project,

Margaret created opportunities for students to experience the challenging process

of coming together as a group to form a type of society. She wanted students to

learn how to deal with opposing personalities and beliefs which Dore (2004)

would suggest would lead to more tolerance of differences. She allowed time for

leaders to emerge and conflicts to resolve themselves through the process of

discussion. She viewed this process as empowering for her students. She also

created a mock-election experience so that students could conceptualize how an

election unfolded and the possibilities of how they could participate.

Finally, Margaret allowed for discussion topics that helped build

relationships between her and her students, as well as within the class itself

(Harwood, 1992). Margaret understood how discussion could build trust and

safety in the group, which set the stage for even more in-depth discussions. Margaret believed that allowing topics to surface that were important to her students conveyed her caring to the group. She also understood the developmental nature of adolescents and used their social needs as a catalyst for more content-oriented discussions.

Understanding the topics Margaret chose for discussion provided insight about how teachers in general determine what to teach in their classes. She used her beliefs about citizenship and discussion and her obligation to cover the curriculum content as variables in her consideration about how to spend her valuable time. Those variables were often at cross-purposes with each other, which made Margaret's pedagogical choices difficult for her. Too often Margaret saw contradictions between her goal of preparing her students for citizenship and the mandate for them to successfully pass the high-stakes test.

Angela's Responses to Research Question Two

Angela often used discussion as part of her ongoing classroom practice. I observed how she would introduce a topic, and students were offered a chance to verbalize their insights and thoughts about it. Similar to my observations about Margaret, I noted three themes emerging concerning the choices Angela made when using the discussion, Content driven discussion, Process driven discussion and Relationship driven discussion.

Content-driven Topics

For purposes of this study, *content* is defined as information pertaining to curriculum standards as well as information that Angela deemed important for

teaching the content of history or civics. Angela's content choices were more complex because she taught both English and the social studies during the two consecutive period blocks. She often integrated the two content areas, which sometimes made it difficult to discern which tasks were considered social studies and which were English.

The content choices Angela made in her use of discussion reflected her values about what she considers "good teaching." She believed students needed to reach deep levels of understanding if the content was going to make sense and affect them. Angela referred to Loewen's book *Lies my Teacher Told Me* as an example of why she wanted her students to critically analyze the history we traditionally accept as fact/truth. She was conflicted about "teaching to the test," which she believed targeted just facts. "You know, I find that I am doing a lot more fill-in-the-blank stuff than I ever did and sound-bite stuff." Her comment is reflective of Jones, Jones and Hargrove (2003) when they noted a by-product of high stakes testing is the reduction of historical concepts into simplistic facts. Angela recognized the importance of focusing on deeper understandings

My observations did not always support Angela's belief that she covered material that included enduring understandings. She covered the information in a straightforward, factual way, with the content being teacher-driven. She taught content, but not through discussion. She lectured and then quizzed students on the material. The time of year may well have played a role in how she conducted her classes. I was in her classroom during the last months of the school year. The end-of-year test was looming, and Angela had not covered all the material

required in the curriculum standards. Thus, her teaching methods, she suggested differed from how she normally taught in order to prepare for the standardized test.

Content connections to students.

Angela was very vocal about how discussion was an important strategy for covering content. Yet Angela's application of the strategy appeared inconsistent with her beliefs about it. While she did pose questions to her students, she accepted and rarely pushed for more than brief responses before going on to offer her own thoughts and ideas (Hess, 2004; Nystrand et. al, 2003). In a true discussion, students' responses would be the focus after the question was asked. Her process of asking questions did not seem designed to illicit ongoing student dialogue.

In the following example, Angela attempted to facilitate a discussion. Note that she often talked in terms of "life lessons," even when conducting class assignments. She would ask the class to note life lessons or lessons that she termed "universal." Students seemed familiar with the life-lesson concept.

> While I am reading, you are listening for life lessons that we are learning from Kofi and his experience being an unwilling immigrant. We added some in the afternoon class yesterday, and we all collectively agreed that regrets are in vain. Friends are everywhere. Caring is universal in that you can have any number of friends and still want to add to the number. Did anybody pause a moment while I was reading and think that's a life lesson? Something that this story tells me that's specific to the story, yet

it's universal and can be applied outside of this book? Anybody hear

something?

In this example, Angela was asking her students to consider qualities that would

transcend the historical period and be applicable today. While such a question did

not necessarily prompt or promise a substantive student response, two students

did share their thoughts and make connections to the previous day's lesson about

a story of an African boy who was enduring a slave's life during the colonial

period.

Student: When Joseph gave Kofi the coconut and fish, that caring is

universal.

A: The caring is universal and nourishment is universal, yeah. And I

                 think any time in history when you see humanity, [that] often has

                 something to do with serving someone, serving someone food.

Student: And when Kofi decided to pray for the man.

 A: Yeah, the prayer for him. Even though this man in essence was his

                 captor; it was a crewman. . . .We don't understand people if we

                 don't know what they believe. And hearing that these Africans

                 from West Africa that were unwillingly brought to the "New

                 World," they brought with them their culture and their thinking.

                 And it wasn't savage. It was fairly refined. Kofi prayed for his

                 [captor].

When the student suggested the character in the book prayed for his oppressor,

Angela used that moment to ask students to examine how some values

transcended a culture. Interestingly, while Angela often talked about facilitating discussions in her classroom, my observations suggested that at best she was conducting a recitation or, more realistically, a lecture. Unlike Margaret, who did facilitate discussion related to content, Angela more often than not conducted recitations and lectures.

Process-driven Topics

The majority of discussions that occurred in Angela's classroom, involved helping students talk through their processes for completing a task or how they learn in general. Students would be encouraged to share ideas about how they approached a task or brainstorm ideas for an assignment. Angela would encourage them to talk through what worked and did not. It seemed she want them to be meta-cognizant. Beyer (2007) suggested that when we allow students to discuss their thinking processes and get them to critically analyze how they learn, it allows them to notice "gaps in their own thinking" (p. 197).

For instance, during one classroom observation, Angela was reading aloud from a nonfiction book, and a student asked about a vocabulary word. Rather than answer the question, she asked her students how they might figure out the definition. Students immediately began to brainstorm solutions, and they simultaneously went to different sources—Internet, dictionary, and textbook—to locate the definition without any prompting from Angela. Students discussed how sometimes definitions can be different depending on context. This exchange lasted about seven minutes. At the end of the class period, Angela asked students to share highlights of the class period or something they learned. One student

remarked it was "cool that everyone helped find the answers to Mike's question about the word." Several students agreed it was satisfying to work together. One student intimated a sense of surprise that hunting down the word was "sort of fun."

Angela often asked her students to describe their processes for how they think through tasks. In the following example, students had a writing task about early trading. Two students shared their ideas for this assignment using the talking stool.

A: Okay, does anyone have any suggestions?

George: I have a suggestion. On my paper it says, "Write a journal entry or write a letter." Well, instead of writing a letter, I wrote a journal entry on when they got there, and I wrote it about what they did all day. And I put what they did in the morning and when they landed, and that's what I did for my journal entry.

A: Okay, I said letter or journal . . .

George: That's it.

A: Okay, George.

Student: Beaufort and the beaver on number 37; I did an advertisement with a beaver going into his lodge, and I said like a beaver and it has the Netherlands Company. Or whatever. I did a colony. I said like you can be the beaver in the lodge. You can make a hole in the lodge and make the company fire someone or something like that

A: Well, you could.

Student: The beaver I think it said it symbolized trading. So, it means what

            we need halfway decent help and why.

A: Very good idea.

Angela encouraged students to share their thought processes about completing the

assignment. Students seemed to feel comfortable talking about what they have

tried. There was a sense of confidence when students reported from the stool.

There was more student voice in the conversation, and Angela's responses

seemed to focus on encouragement and moderation of the discussion rather than

on lecture.

        In the following observation, Angela began a discussion but ended up

lecturing.   This is another example of Angela lecturing about the process of

learning and how students needed to cooperate with one another.,

A: As you are working silently, some of you are going to come up with, I bet,

        a really good idea for your thinking cap. Or you might have a question

        about one of the guided reading questions for your ongoing reading. . . .

        When you come to a good idea, it is your obligation, Reece, your

        obligation, which means? Obligation. It's your obligation. It's a very

        good word.

Reece: Commitment.

A: Your commitment. Oh, I was going to say responsibility, but I love it's

        your commitment. That to me almost has a kind of a spiritual note to it. I

        love that. It's your commitment to a public school classroom, and you

know how [I feel about public school], that not only is it okay to share

ideas, it is your obligation because we are only as good as we are together.

Again, Angela made the point about how the sharing of ideas is important.

Although she asked a student a question, her process is more of a monologue than

a discussion.

Angela's choice to emphasize these processes of learning took time away

from the standard curriculum content. Regardless of the pressures Angela felt

about the end-of-year test that her students needed to successfully pass, she

continued to devote time to teaching students those skills and processes that

would help them to become lifelong learners. Grant (2007) noted teachers often

time made choices to continue the practices they thought were best for their

students even though there were pressures to prepare for the end of the year test.

At times Angela asked questions to facilitate students' understanding of their

learning processes, but often she would begin a discussion but end in a lecture.

Relationship Topics

Angela worked to build relationships in her classroom and to help students

realize the impact relationships between students have on the overall classroom

community. She created opportunities for students to talk about the importance of

working together.

One topic based on student relationships discussed in class had to do with

a student who had a tragic accident and was in a hospital for long-term

rehabilitation. Angela used this situation to help students understand the

importance of relationships and connections. She helped to keep this student

included in the team by encouraging students to contact her to let her know what was happening in class. Angela shared, "We already have a team spirit in that we have team meetings and things like that. . . . In fact, I had it up today to write a note to her from the kids."

Students were also provided with opportunities to discuss how to respectfully deal with all the misinformation that surfaced as a result of such a public tragedy which Simon (2001) would argue is the type of authentic discussions students crave. Angela made connections to how rumors impact relationships.

> We don't entertain anything someone heard or said unless it comes
> from that website or unless the family speaks directly because even
> if your daddy is a doctor, he's not her doctor . . . you know how the
> rumor mill is, even with teachers. Some of the rumors are true
> sometimes, and we were right in the middle of our push for the
> language that is character building like *respect*, *citizenship*,
> *helpfulness*, *trustworthiness*. So, we talked about what would be
> helpful and to be careful how we say things, so that has been a
> lesson.

The issue of rumors allowed Angela to talk about what was appropriate information to pass on. She helped her students discern helpful information from destructive information. She used a very public event as a vehicle for life lessons that she felt would ultimately strengthen the relationships among her students.

Relationships and citizenship.

Whereas Margaret's mandated curriculum directly deals with civics and citizenship, Angela's curriculum involved U.S. history up to 1877. Although Angela's curriculum did not directly relate to citizenship, she spent time on issues relating to citizenship. Her core beliefs about what students needed to be effective citizens resulted in her spending time on topics not really related to her curriculum.

The service learning project at Spring Park provided a focal point for several discussion opportunities. Angela had been coordinating this project for many years, and it was seen as an important tradition for the class. Angela used this service learning project as a way to help students learn to organize themselves. She had them discuss what tools and items they needed to be successful in cleaning the park. Another discussion focused on how working together built their team spirit and community.

One discussion Angela facilitated entailed helping the new students understand the concept of community service (Wade, 2001). Angela began the conversation while students were filling in their agendas for the end of the school year. They were to write down the service learning project at Spring Park. Angela began the conversation by asking students to describe what service learning is.

A: Tell me what a service project is. That's the easy part. Could
           someone describe what a service project is like? Wesley?

 Wesley: You go and you just help pick up stuff and we mulch the trails.

A: That's specific to Spring Park. And that's fine. That's a good example. Anybody else? Cindy?

Cindy: It's where you help the community like the park and you do it for free.

Student: Helping somebody.

A: Serving, helping. . . . We have got the word "service." Can I go back to the word Cindy threw in our mulching conversation when she said "community"? Would you tell me what is your community? What would you consider your community?

Student: Essex.

A: It could be Essex for us. What else?

Student: It could be the area.

Student: Like in Virginia. Essex, like around the area

A: Okay. The city limits of Essex that you're saying may go on out a bit. Could be.

Student: Well, it depends on what you mean. Something with the neighborhood or for some it would be their state or even their country.

Student: Or continent.

A: I am so glad you said that. Because there are many things you and your family do that help the world, and I am thinking about [garbled man's name] when he came to talk to us about his group of students he took to India to help out after the tsunami. He was

considering the community being the world? So, it's possible it's much beyond this, right?

In this discussion Angela was helping students formulate their concept of community. Then she questioned her students about the definition of service and what it entailed.

A: When you do service projects, what does learning have to do with it?

Student: You learn how to work and kind of get stuff done. Like if you are older, you should do stuff so that you will know how.

Student: You learn respect for the place that you are doing stuff.

A: Talk more about that.

Student: You might notice, like, if I've been reading a book on plants and I work there and see a rare plant and someone might go and try to pick it.

A: To me that's one of the biggest things to do [in] service learning. I would like to use the example in this room. There are very few days that you all leave school that this room would need to be swept by anybody. It's not somebody else's problem; it's our room whether we dropped the paper or not, right?

Levinson and Brantmeier (2006) talked about the importance of "connective practices" (p. 337) and how service learning projects like Angela's enable students to connect to the greater community. They believed "connecting students to vital spheres of social action outside the

school builds a sense of efficacy and responsibility" (p. 337). Clearly,

Angela wanted her students see the connection between citizenship, space,

and resources and how what they do impacts others and community.

     After the service learning project had taken place, Angela asked

students about their experience, and the students articulated the

importance of helping each other.

Student: You learn how hard it is for some to clean and stuff. It makes it so

     you respect his efforts and don't litter as much like drop any big

     litter and stuff, and you can meet new people and learn how to help

     people. Like, you see some guy who needs help, like help him lift

     his cart up the hill. Like, we're always pulling those wheelbarrows

     of mulch up the hill. We help him.

A: We help each other a great deal. Let's say if I send you out there,

     Chris, to do a certain amount of work one day and then the next

     day I send Charles, the next day I send Bob, on and on, and

     everyone had a day, but you had to work by yourself.

Student: That would be fun.

A: Would it be fun? *(Several students talking at the same time.*

Students all at once say, "No, No, NO!")

Student: Wow! Could you get up the hill with the wheel barrow?

Student: We couldn't get as much work done.

A: You wouldn't get as much done. It wouldn't be as much fun for

     me.

Student: I was thinking, doesn't everyone that said always about learning

and not always just like factual and we have lessons and stuff and

the more you practice the more you are going to like think and help

others.

Thornton (2006) also saw relevance in the importance of relationships as

an aspect of teaching when he stated, "teaching school history is about more than

'thinking like an historian. . . . Teaching is thoroughly relational and many of its

goods are relational" (p. 417). I saw several examples of Angela taking time to

facilitate discussions on relationship subjects even though the SOL test was

looming. Clearly she saw this as a priority.

Summary of Angela's Responses to Research Question Two

Unlike Margaret, who provided examples of discussion, Angela used more

lecture and recitation. When analyzing learning processes and building

relationships in the classroom to strengthen her classroom community, Angela did

use more discussion. Angela did not seem to spend a concentrated amount of time

using discussion for content related to the curriculum guidelines.

Similarities and Differences in the Case Studies for Research Question Two

Both Margaret and Angela suggested discussion was an important tool to

convey content and processes, as well as to build relationships. Margaret

demonstrated the use of discussion more frequently than Angela. Margaret and

Angela both believed they used discussion for a variety of reasons that can be

categorized into three themes: content-driven topics, process-driven topics, and

relationship topics. Margaret's use of discussion involving content was evident.

For some content, she went into more depth than was required in the state curriculum framework. Angela talked about using discussion relating to content, but I did not observe any specific examples.

On the other hand, I saw several examples of Angela using discussion in relation to process-driven topics. She used the talking stool when students were discussing how they approached a project or a task. Margaret also facilitated discussions regarding process topics when helping students learn strategies to figure out the correct answer on multiple-choice questions. I also witnessed students in Margaret's class use discussion to negotiate how their society would decide on the rules.

Finally, both teachers allowed discussion concerning relationship topics. Margaret and Angela both articulated the value they saw in providing students the opportunity to discuss events that affected individuals and the classroom. Margaret saw this as beneficial in promoting future content-driven topics, whereas Angela emphasized how these discussions helped build the classroom community.

<div align="center">Research Question Three</div>

How do teachers balance their use of discussion while meeting the expectations of

the standards-based curriculum?

Margaret and Angela were guided by their beliefs about the nature of the social studies and qualities their students needed to possess as future citizens. Margaret and Angela both knew there were state content requirements they were required to follow and high-stakes assessments that students needed to pass. There

is an interplay between these beliefs about teaching the social studies and citizenship, and the state-mandated curriculum framework and assessment. Margaret and Angela were continually negotiating and evaluating their classroom processes as these two frequently competing frameworks influenced their teaching.

Recall that in 1995 the Commonwealth of Virginia created a standardized curriculum framework for the core subject areas called the Standards of Learning (SOLs). This curriculum was reported to be created through a collaborative effort of educators, parents, students, and administration. In reality, the process was the result of a conservative agenda originating from the governor (Fore, 1998). Students must take an end-of- year, multiple-choice in each of the core subjects. Both Margaret and Angela were veteran teachers of more than 15 years before the implementation of the state core curriculum. Each entered the teaching field because of a desire to influence students and inculcate them with what they believed were vital skills, knowledge, and qualities necessary for them to positively affect society.

Angela and Margaret were passionate about wanting a better society. The question is: whose picture of society? Embedded in the content and the processes of the SOLs are the creators' visions of what students need to be viable citizens. Angela and Margaret had visions that often ran counter to what is set forth by the state. How they negotiated the discrepancy often brought tension to their work. In order to understand these tensions, it is first important to examine both teachers'

views concerning the curriculum standards and then to juxtapose their positions

with their beliefs about discussion.

Margaret's Responses to Research Question Three

As noted previously Margaret held strong beliefs about what students

needed in order to be productive citizens. She wanted her students to improve

society. Margaret talked about the "good citizen" as one who helps others and

helps to make society better (Glass, 2000). She had strong values about tolerance

and critical thinking (Fu & Stremmel, 1999). Margaret aspired to help students

find "their voice" and be able to articulate their beliefs and positions on issues.

Margaret also wanted students to understand the United States is part of the global

society (Gehlbach et al. 2008). Finally, she wanted her students to learn to

challenge injustice and help make the world more equitable. Margaret felt

passionately about helping students to become, in her definition, the best future

citizens they could be; yet, she had to consider the state curriculum guidelines,

which sometimes had a counter ideological standpoint of what constitutes a good

citizen.

Navigating and Negotiating the Curriculum Framework and Assessment

Margaret's core beliefs and values about teaching were a sum total of her

experiences and history. When the SOLs were introduced, Margaret had to

consider reconciling her beliefs with the new curriculum framework. This section

examines the extent to which Margaret's beliefs were affected by the curriculum

framework. How did the curriculum framework support her beliefs, and how were

her beliefs supported by the curriculum framework? While Margaret agreed with

the necessity of content guidelines, she had two main concerns regarding the civics framework. First, Margaret questioned whether these complex concepts were developmentally appropriate for this age group. An example of this was the strong emphasis on economics (Sleeter, 2008). A second concern related to an ethnocentric view of the world with the narrow focus and emphasis on Virginia's role in the establishment of our government. By only focusing on Virginia's contributions, there was a misleading assumption that democracy was a new idea born in this country. The content curriculum made no reference to how Europe greatly influenced the Founding Fathers ideas of a democratic government.

Issues with developmental appropriateness.

Margaret expressed concerns about the content mandated in the SOLs and her frustration with the heavy concentration of economics. She was concerned that students do not have much of a reference point for all the complex concepts that they are expected to know. In the following interview, she questioned the content and how much students can understand given their developmental stage.

Half the test is on economics and my whole philosophy on economics for this age is most of the concepts are above most of their heads. It's too conceptualized, too abstract. I was just doing geography bee with them today and they love geography, but they don't know [the content]. So I was thinking, "Wouldn't this be good to teach civics and geography instead of civics and economics because you know supply and demand all those Federal Reserve [concepts]?" They have to know all that. Banks systems—they could care less.

In this section Margaret weighed the importance of economics and how it related to civics. She personally could make more connections to the relevance of geography over economics. This emphasis on economics can be seen as evidence of neoliberal agenda (Barrett and Moore, 2009), or what Sleeter (2008) termed "'corporatocracy,' a political manifestation of neoliberalism" (p. 139). Sleeter made the case that embedded in the high-stakes testing and the standardized curriculum is a form of democracy whose emphasis is perpetuating the economic structure of our capitalist society. A specific example of this agenda was in evidence when Margaret continually questioned why eighth-graders needed a year dedicated to economics.

Student lack of interest in topics.

In addition to questioning their intellectual ability to unpack complex economic concepts, Margaret also struggled with her students' lack of interest in the required content that she sometimes saw as too specific.

> You know, we tend to teach what's important in our state, which I think is a little bit narrow focus. Who wrote the Declaration of Independence and who wrote the Virginia Declaration of Rights? And who wrote the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom? I didn't know who before I taught it. Who will remember it for three months? So you have to keep going over the same content, the same content, the same content, which is hard on these kids. And so many of them just don't care.

Margaret confessed that in her first year teaching she did not even know some of the specific content the students were required to know. Her solution was to get them to memorize material because it has no meaning for them. The need to constantly review some of the content meant less time for the concepts Margaret felt were of more value to her students.

There were times, in trying to review for the SOLs, when Margaret still tried to anchor the content to students' prior knowledge. For instance, when reviewing local government, students were trying to understand what constituted a city and why where they lived was considered a town. Students tried to relate the knowledge to their own county, questioning why some locales did not have governments and some did. She allowed this conversation, even though she was pressured to get through the content. Margaret continually had to negotiate time and whether she used time-consuming strategies or faster-paced direct instruction which is the same tension Grant(2007) noted in his study.

In teaching a citizenship concept, Margaret recounted a story to the class in which her son had to go in front of the town council in regards to the sales taxes levied on restaurants. She described how he had organized a group that attended the council meeting to protest the taxes.

So they got lots of people and they went to the council meeting and they turned over the decision. So you can make a difference. They are not going to raise the tax on meals in restaurants because they had about 30 or 40 people there and no one was for it so those

people made that change. You can make those differences: you

just have to get involved.

The pressure of the high-stakes test was present during this lesson,

but Margaret's core belief empowering students to positively impact their

community took precedent on occasion, and she supported the discussion

that she hoped would help students eventually on the test. Bender-Slack

and Raupach (2008) followed four high school social studies teachers as

they navigated the tensions between following a standards-driven

curriculum and the desire to emphasize social justice issues. The

researchers concluded it does not have to be an either/or prospect.

Margaret navigated that tension as well.

Curriculum content versus deeper meaning.

When Margaret made choices about what content to teach, she felt

compelled to take the information to a deeper level, providing students with a

deeper understanding rather than just identifying facts. Margaret used discussion

as the vehicle to unpack the complexities of civic issues. Margaret described an

assignment she gave her students called the Path to the Constitution. She asked

students to create a visual product illustrating all the documents that influenced or

helped to shape our constitution. She attempted to provide a historical context

along with the content of the documents. Here, she diverged from what was

required in the SOLs. Through the use of discussion, she asked students to

consider the contributions made by Greece and Rome, and continued with the

Magna Carta and English Bill of Rights. Following that exercise, Margaret

addressed the content in the SOLs. When I asked Margaret why she made that choice, she replied:

> Because if we did not do that, [students] would think that America was just this wonderful country that thought of all these things, but it didn't. [We] just copied completely. So we do all the English documents, Parliament . . . all of those things—Jamestown, Mayflower Compact—all of those things that led up to the Constitution, but the real work was done before in England and Greece and Rome. And they are getting it, because today I said, "So why have we looked at all these things? What's happening to these people?" And [the students] said, "[The people] are getting more and more rights with every document we look at." And really that's the concept you want. Now, if they were to ask that question on the SOLs that would be good. It's more complex.

Margaret wanted her students to know that the Constitution was a culmination of many documents from past history, not something created in a vacuum with concepts originating from the Founding Fathers. This example reflects the concept of teacher as gatekeeper (Thornton, 2005; VanSledright, 2006), wherein teachers ultimately make curriculum decisions regarding what students will be exposed to.

When I reviewed the SOLs for this section, I could see Margaret's point about how students could get the wrong impression of how the Constitution was constructed. The Essential Understandings of the SOLs state the following:

American constitutional government is founded on concepts

articulated in earlier documents, including the charters of the

Virginia Company of London, The Virginia Declaration of Rights,

The Declaration of Independence, The Articles of the Confederation,

and The Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom. (Commonwealth of

Virginia Board of Education, 2001, p. 3)

These documents are all germane to America's contributions to the Constitution

and, more specifically, Virginia's contribution. Margaret sought to present what

she considered a more complete picture regarding civic concepts, in this case, the

Founding Fathers' conceptualization of the Constitution.

When Margaret shared her belief about discussion, she regarded it as the

method to allow students to engage in the content at a deeper level. Margaret

talked about the need for the content to be presented in such a way that students

would critically understand the complexities inherent to the concepts she was

teaching. She saw the curriculum standards as incomplete and in some ways

misleading because of the lack of depth in what they required students to learn.

Fickel (2006) noted in her study social studies courses that were guided by

curriculum standards had syllabi that emphasized superficial content and direct

instruction strategies. When the courses were electives, the content emphasized

multiple perspectives and creative strategies and assessments. She concluded that

the standardized curriculum affected the content and the ways in which teachers

taught.

Content and Process: The Conflict Between Discussion and Covering

Content

Margaret clearly viewed discussion as a valuable tool for learning as well as a process to teach citizenship skills. But with so much content to cover, Margaret vacillated between providing discussion and direct instruction. She compared covering content by giving information to "running circles on a tread wheel," and she worried that students would not remember the information for the SOLs. Her response to this concern was to "slow down" in order to incorporate discussion. Her comment seems to indicate that Margaret saw discussion as taking longer than just providing information.

Evidently, Margaret saw an either/or proposition relating to success in the SOLs and teaching in a way that was engaging and that learning was lasting.

I think we have content that we need to get across. And so we try

to get it across [and] sometimes the only way we know how is

lecturing, even though they really don't learn; I even spent less

time this year on Society, but I had better SOL scores than I have

ever had. I see a big trade-off because what we went over the

month before SOLs they did very well on the SOLs. I raised up my

scores, not that it was the same class, but [it] actually sort of is. By

almost 20 percentile points, which is a big jump. I did more SOL

preparation. Now they have probably forgotten it all two weeks

later. Whereas, in the discussion I don't think they forget it like

that. So it is a trade-off. They are doing better on the SOLs [but] I

don't know if they're learning more content. Does that make

sense?

Margaret focused on SOL preparation, which consisted of review and

memorization, giving students various practice multiple-choice tests. She felt

successful at raising her scores but doubted her students would remember any of

the content. She contrasted that scenario with discussion, from which she believed

students remembered content when they were more actively involved through the

discussion process.

Attitudes About Assessment

In addition to her concerns about teaching the SOL-mandated content,

Margaret thought the multiple-choice, end-of-year test was limiting.

I think you tend to, if you are speaking it, you sort of understand it.

If you can either write something or talk about something, in an

intelligent way you understand it. If you [are] just picking it

ABCD, I don't know if you are really understanding it or

something in your brain clicks, "Oh, I think it's A." And that is

sort of what I taught them.

Margaret was worried that just because students were able to respond

correctly to a multiple-choice test did not mean they were grasping the

content. She firmly believed that when students have to talk or write about

the content, they have a better chance at comprehension.

Despite her convictions about the right way to teach the social studies, Margaret had changed her focus as a result of the end-of-year test. She now couched more of her teaching in terms of multiple-choice tests.

> This year I am even focusing more. I am gearing almost everything to multiple-choice to get them into practicing multiple choice [test questions]. But I do slip essays in there just because I think they need to learn how to write. I am hoping they'll do better. I'm trying to help them do better. I've sort of been told that we have to give multiple-choice tests.
>
> I've got lots of flash cards with concepts on them. And I expect a higher pass rate this year. But I don't think they are really learning any more. They are learning differently, maybe. Facts, maybe.

In this instance Margaret referred to teaching to the test and using more multiple-choice test assessments (Volger & Virtue, 2007). She was using flash cards to help students do better on the test. However, when she considered what type of learning was occurring, she wondered if they were just learning facts.

Negotiating the Contradictions of Belief and Practice

When I started my research in April, Margaret was beginning her human rights project, in which students studied past and present global human rights violations. Again, this human rights project was not a part of the standards-based curriculum. Over several weeks I saw examples of Margaret using discussion in her classroom to explore complex concepts, relevant movies, and current events.

Her classroom was set up in a square so that students could see each other, which made the facilitation of the discussions easier. Her plan was to begin the SOL review right after the project was over.

One Monday I walked into class and it was clear something different was going to occur. The arrangements in Margaret's room changed. In place of the big square where everyone faced each other, were traditional rows of desks, all facing the board. Margaret proceeded to hand out SOL test preparation booklets. She made a point to come by my desk in the back. Margaret looked embarrassed. "This is not how I teach," she lamented. "This is not who I am as a teacher." Margaret echoed the sentiments many veteran teachers express in preparing for high stakes tests (Grant, 2007). Over the next weeks, the students more than once made statements about how long the days were and how tired they felt.

For Margaret the SOLs were a necessary focus that competed with her beliefs about good teaching practices and what dispositions, knowledge, and skills are necessary for students to become good citizens. In May most of my conversations with Margaret were related to the SOLs and her preparation for the test. I asked her how she has done in the past and what she did do to prepare for the end-of-year test. In the following interviews, Margaret recounted how she fine-tuned her test-preparation process.

The first year I didn't worry about it. I just taught what I thought

was important. And then, I went through and looked [at] the SOLs

and was trying to follow and do what I was supposed to do in

civics. Social studies don't have those [tests] online. You can't go

and look at a previous test. All the other [content areas] can go

online and look at a test [to] see what's going to be tested. So I

didn't have that. I really didn't know what they were going to ask.

In the first year of the SOLs, Margaret used the standards as a guide, but her first

instinct was to cover what she thought was relevant to civics. It seemed the SOLs

were secondary, and she used them only to identify content she had not covered.

Regarding test preparation, Margaret did not have a sense of how the material

would be formulated on the test. She saw this as a limitation in her ability to

prepare her students. She also did not mention any form of review in preparation

for the test.

When I asked Margaret how students did on their scores the first year, she

replied, "I think I had about 60 to70% pass rate, but that was average on the

whole in the state."

The second year of the SOLs, Margaret began to make concessions on

what she thought was relevant information in order to make sure she covered the

content standards.

So [in the] second year I focused a little bit more on what I kind of

knew. I threw out a lot of stuff and just narrowed it down. I don't

teach a lot about Massachusetts. I teach mostly about Virginia

stuff. I then did a lot of review. We played some jeopardy games

and things like that to try to get them to just remember content.

Three to four days before [the test] [the social studies coordinator]

sent us this 25-page packet that had some practice questions in it,

but it was so late. But, of course, as soon as the test was over they

are going to forget the content. 'Cause what can you remember

from eighth grade?

In the second year, Margaret shifted her focus more to Virginia, which is part of the standards curriculum. She also began to designate time for review and memorizing content. Although also received materials specifically for test preparation, she could not take advantage of them given the time when she got them. Again, she saw the test as a fleeting, short-term goal and did not feel the process helped her students to really master the information. This is reflective of van Hover, Hicks & Irwin's (2007) position that when teachers focus on passing Virginia's SOL test "historical inquiry" (p. 87) is stressed less as a goal. As a result of the changes Margaret made, in her second year of SOL testing, she received one of the highest pass rates in the school at 77%. She was thrilled but wanted to continue to do better.

In the year of my observations, I had a chance to not only observe Margaret while she was preparing for the end-of-year test but also to talk with her about her views and beliefs in general about the SOLs. When I specifically asked Margaret what course of action she took with covering the curriculum standards and getting ready for the end-of-year test, she said:

Compared to last year, I have more notes and lecturing time and

more where I am in charge. Last year, I would give out the notes

and they would discuss them. But they missed so much of the

important parts, I thought, I can't do that this year. So it's much

more me at the front of the class lecturing them; much less coming

from them and much more coming from me.

Here, Margaret indicates that she taught more in a direct-instruction style. The students had missed information in the previous year when she had allowed for discussion, so her solution was more direct instruction. This was a departure from how Margaret normally talked about discussion—that students would remember content better if they had a chance to interact with the information. Journal (2007) noted in the era of standardization, the use of discussion has lessened and rote memorization has increased.

When I asked her how she felt about being in front of the class more, Margaret replied, "I hate it." She further explained:

Well, because it should come from them. That's how they are

really going to learn. But then you know it's that whole dilemma

of they are not going to remember it. So it's better if they are doing

the processing. Kids learn by doing, processing, and thinking. A

lot of them don't think well anymore because we keep feeding

them this stuff and expect them to spit it out, and I am doing it

also. So, I have much less class discussion, which that's how you

should teach.

Margaret firmly believed students should somehow be engaged in the learning. She wanted her students to have some ownership of the knowledge. Clearly, she felt they needed to be actively processing the

information through discussion. She was worried that students were not learning to think if teachers continued to use mostly direct instruction.

I wanted to further explore the notion of why Margaret felt so adamant about students taking active part in their learning. I asked, "What do you think students come with when they are doing the processing?"

Empowerment. They at least have a voice in what they are supposed to be learning. At least they feel that way. It's the same notes. But it's not me saying, "All right, everyone needs to highlight this." And what does that mean and how important is that. "Now, copy this, you will see a chart. Copy this off the board. This is what you need to know," and then I test them on it. So it's much more lecture, copying notes, testing—multiple-choice testing, process. Three years ago, I don't know if I gave one multiple-choice test.

Margaret wanted her students to be active participants in the learning, and, contrary to that vision, she saw her teaching process being shaped by the curriculum standards (Journell, 2007). She talked about having a voice, or a say in their educational process, which is similar to democratic classrooms (Morrison, 2008). On one end of the spectrum are critical thinking, empowerment, discussion, and having a voice. On the other end of the spectrum are lectures, notes, and multiple-choice tests. Margaret was conflicted. How could she teach so she could empower her students but still be successful with meeting the curriculum framework guidelines and passing the end-of-year test?

Margaret attempted to describe the "trade off" regarding what happened when she focused more on lecture, review, and rote memorization. She was pleased with the gains this year on her SOL scores. This time, her third attempt, Margaret had an overall 86% pass rate.

When Margaret was reviewing for the SOLs, she focused both on facts and critical-thinking questions to help students logically figure out answers. However, when students asked questions, Margaret answered them, rather than asking further probing questions to help them ascertain the answer. In review she would remind them of topics they had covered. For example, "I put a court case in number six, Gideon versus Wainwright. Remember, we looked at that one? Remember, he couldn't afford a lawyer? So, they had to appoint him one? We went over that. . . . Seven, we did not go over, Chisum versus Georgia. . . . This is when South Carolina . . . in Georgia and said, no that couldn't happen. So, they made an amendment that said . . . federal courts are involved in state decisions."

Margaret helped students to organize the information by having an SOL section in their notebooks and putting in review notes from what they covered over the course of the year. Margaret would also stop after reviewing content and ask students to complete a short multiple choice quiz. These quizzes were part of a SOL practice guide Margaret purchased in order to help her students prepare for the end of the year test similar to what Grant (2007) encountered when he observed teaching practices impacted by standardization.

During these reviews, the students were restless and some were talking to each other. Margaret encouraged them to stay focused. "Half the battle, guys, is

focusing in class. Listening. It's really hard to do. When I teach, I am probably teaching to five or six of you, and the rest of you are somewhere else." This particular class had students with the most IEPs, and Margaret had an aide. Margaret continually reminded students that the goal was to prepare for the SOL.

Margaret's contradictions about SOLs and critical thinking.

Margaret began to tell me what she would do to improve her scores if she came back next year. I was curious about that; she spoke so negatively about the test, yet she was trying to achieve even higher scores. So, I asked her about her desire to continually improve.

M: *(Chuckling)* How come I want to get better?

Int: Yeah, yeah,

M: With the SOL testing?

Int: Yeah.

M: I guess it's that whole thing about [the fact that] it's a test. And they need

        to pass it, and you know the state does say. I guess I am a little bit of a

        little follower. And learning content is not all bad. They won't remember

        the content. I mean, I could just throw it off. Especially this year. . . .

Int: But, no, that is not what I am saying. I mean, if you have 70%. You are

        okay, right?

M: Yeah.

Int: But you are still trying to tweak it and get it better. I was just curious

        about that.

M: Because I feel bad for those kids that are not passing, because it hurts

         them. Ah, and maybe that is really it. Right there. That it is not really for

         me or for the testing, it's that they feel bad if they don't pass. They feel

         dumb and stupid. So, if I can help them in any way pass, at least they'll

         say, "Oh, yeah, I passed the SOL."

Margaret was embarrassed when I pointed out the inconsistency of her beliefs

about the limitations of the SOLs and her motivation to "do even better." At first,

she attributed the contradiction to her need to follow. But then she realized that

students who did not pass came away feeling bad about themselves, and she

wanted to prevent that from happening.

         Margaret's incongruent behavior regarding the SOLs was similar to the

findings of Rex and Nelson (2004) when they studied two English teachers as

they were preparing for an end-of-year high-stakes test. Both teachers were

conflicted about teaching using good practices while wanting their students to do

well on the test. Yet Gradwell (2006) discovered a different outcome in his study

of a social studies teacher who "taught in spite of the test" (p. 157). His teacher

allowed for depth and multiple perspectives when conveying the content, and as a

byproduct of using best practices, she had a high success rate when it came to

passing the test. So then, why did Margaret abandon her use of best practices in

favor of rote memorization?

Envisioning the Future

         Margaret recognized the trajectory she was on, which limited discussion

and did not value her beliefs about citizenship or the social studies. To her it

seemed the emphasis was placed on fragmented facts based on values that competed with her citizenship ideals. She worried about the students who would become casualties of the process, whether it was due to less critical thinking or failing the benchmark test. When I asked Margaret what impact the SOLs had on her teaching, she replied:

> It makes me not like teaching, is what it does. It makes me glad
> that this is my last year. It does. And I think that it has come more
> and more and more down the pike of teaching to the test. Get those
> scores up. And, you know, the children are thinking less. You
> know those that study and learn that way do fine. There are kids
> that, you know, that can read and remember everything off that
> paper. And they can spit that stuff back out. But there are a lot of
> kids that don't learn that way. And then they fail constantly. And
> what do you do with them?

Margaret admitted she was not as happy about this approach to teaching. She was worried about how teachers are teaching to the test.

Margaret continued by recounting a workshop she had attended that was sponsored by the school system. A social studies teacher created many engaging slides that focused on mastering the SOLs.

> But I wasn't so impressed. Everyone was just, "Wow." Where's
> the critical thinking? It's rote memorization. Will you remember it
> after the eighth grade, and, really what do you get from rote
> memorization? I would rather have the time for discussion more,

or writing, or some kind of critical thinking. So, I would hate to see

the way of teaching going cute and fun.

Margaret did not want learning to be fragmented, simplified, or trivialized. This idea reflects McNeil's (1986) assertion concerning the contradictions of control, whereby schools in their attempts to reform end up creating a curriculum that is watered down to its "simplistic forms" (1986, p. xix). She again emphasized the limitations of memorization versus understanding. She vocalized her concerns about how this process would limit critical thinking.

I'm worried about teaching, I'm worried that it's going to cutesy

little PowerPoint games and students are not critically thinking.

You give them this; they give it back to you. I mean, what good is

that? What kind of citizen does that make? We tell you [that]

because I am the President, it's all right for me to tap your phone.

The people say, "Okay." They're not thinking. You know, unless

we have critical thinkers like the Founding Fathers were. What

would happen to our nation if we didn't have them?

Margaret was reacting to new Homeland Security policy and was worried that people were being taught to not think through issues. She did not want citizenship to be compliance. She believed that if students just repeat back what we have taught them without devoting time also to critically analyzing the content, we will have future citizens who will not be able to challenge the government.

Summary of Margaret's Responses to Research Question Three

Margaret saw the curriculum standards as a framework with limitations. She believed that developmentally, some of the concepts were too abstract and uninteresting to this age group. She saw the framework as not presenting the complete picture of how the U.S. government evolved. Margaret also saw the SOLs as somewhat ethnocentric and containing little exposure to our role in the global community.

Furthermore, Margaret had issues with how the standards were assessed with an end-of--year, high-stakes test. She believed the test required students to memorize facts instead of critically analyzing the complexities of the concepts (Vogler & Virtue, 2007). Because some of the information was so difficult to scaffold onto students' prior knowledge, they had to be drilled over and over in order to remember the information. Even though the test was multiple-choice, there were times when Margaret continued to help them critically think through the process of how to take the test and reason through the answers.

Finally, although Margaret did not value the SOLs or the test, she was willing to abandon teaching strategies and projects she felt taught crucial citizenship skills. She lectured more and provided games to aid memorization. She also abandoned content she used to think was important because it was not a part of the curriculum standards. Each year, her SOL scores went up and she continued to assess how she could improve her them, even though she saw the limitations of the process.

Margaret's views on the SOLs seemed to be in opposition to everything positive about her views of effective teaching. She saw the curriculum standards as impeding her ability to teach students the content and processes she felt were vital to effective citizenship. Margaret did conceded the importance of curriculum guidelines, yet in almost every way she saw the SOLs as negative. To Margaret, it was a clear either/or position: follow the SOLs or be an effective teacher.

Angela's Responses to Research Question Three

As noted previously, Angela believed an important role of the teacher was to equip her students with the necessary skills, dispositions, and knowledge needed in order to be strong, active citizens. She spent time helping students to identify their learning processes with the belief they would then become lifelong learners. Angela also believed her students needed to have critical analysis skills in order to determine the legitimacy of various political perspectives and the information they are taught. Finally, Angela aimed to teach her students the importance of tolerance, acceptance, and having a voice in relation to being part of a community. Angela values these qualities and provides time in her class to teach these values and processes to her students.

Navigating and Negotiating the Curriculum Framework and Assessment

Although Angela had been familiar with the curriculum framework since its inception, Angela's experience with the SOL end-of-year test was a new one. Prior to the previous year, sixth-grade students were not tested on the SOLs. Rather, the eighth-grade test had been a cumulative test of sixth-, seventh-, and

eighth-grade information. The prior year was the first year that Angela had to deal with reviewing and preparing for the end-of-year test. She was not very positive when talking about the SOLs or the assessment process.

Angela believed very strongly that learning is about critical thinking and discovering the processes and structures that support knowledge acquisition. She saw a main role of teaching as assisting students in becoming lifelong learners. This entailed teaching them meta-cognition skills to help them examine how to learn. Angela also saw her role as producing future citizens who were productive and worked at making their world equitable and just. All of these goals and processes had, at their core, discussion as a strategy to facilitate the learning. In contrast, Angela saw the curriculum as limited and as a collection of facts to be memorized and recalled on a limiting assessment tool (van Hover, Hicks & Irwin, 2007).

In order to understand how Angela used discussion in the context of the curriculum framework and SOL tests, it first was important to understand her values and attitudes about the SOLs. Angela was very articulate about her views concerning the SOLs and their limitations, and the following three themes emerged:

1. Angela's beliefs concerning the content and assessment

2. How Angela's class was affected by the SOLs

3. How Angela negotiated the contradictions between belief and practice

Angela's Beliefs About Content

Angela was critical of the SOL's regarding the prescribed content. She saw the curriculum guidelines as lacking in several ways. This next section will showcase Angela's beliefs about the lack of student interest on the topics, the superficiality of the content, lack of global perspective and the volume of content.

Students' lack of interest in topics.

Angela felt that there were limitations to what was required to be covered in the sixth grade. Students were uninspired by the content. Angela felt the content she was being asked to cover was repetitive and [covered] a time period with which students made few connections.

> The other issue is it isn't the exciting stuff unless you think war is exciting, and some people I hear do. . . . This is not the time period of history that is the most inspiring for kids. They have had it over and over in elementary school. Anyway, I love the cultural aspect of things, so it does slow me down, and I purchase stuff; even if the school hasn't purchased it I can. You know here are the types of ways they might say things, and it will be in your notebook, you know, and it does cause me harm.

Angela says she liked the "cultural aspects of things." In other communications Angela had related her belief that students find more connections personally when the cultural and people aspect of history was stressed. When different cultural perspectives were a focus, Angela used discussion as one of the strategies.

Angela noted that the content framework seemed to focus more on the wars and political events. (See sixth-grade SOLs in Appendix C.) Thus, she was willing to spend the time to teach aspects of history that were not mandated by the curriculum framework, and she acknowledged that it "slows me down" and "it does cause me harm." One wonders if the harm it caused was related to her attempts to quickly rush through mandated material that she hadn't covered.

Curriculum content versus deeper meaning.

Angela believed her students should be exposed to various perspectives of historic events. In the following conversation, she wanted to make sure I understood that I would not see as much discussion since she would be preparing for the SOL test. She talked about how she normally taught versus what she did to prepare students for the end-of--year test.

> I don't know how long you are staying, but the tests are
>
> May 20th, the SOLs. I do [go] in-depth to make sure they
>
> get different voices of history and make sure they read and
>
> write nonfiction and discuss the concepts so they
>
> understand it. I run out of time, so the last few weeks it
>
> will be sound bites that I hope they recognize on the test.

Angela preferred in-depth coverage and presenting the different "voices" of history. She saw reading, writing, and discussing as necessary tools to get at the complex nature of history. When getting ready for the SOL test, Angela shifted to presenting content as facts or "sound bites" without the details she wanted her students to have that enabled them to understand

the complexities. In these conversations I began to see the dichotomy of

Angela's teaching process—when she felt unconstrained by the test versus

when she shifted to test preparation.

Angela validated Vogler and Virtue's (2007) research concerning

high-stakes testing and the social studies. Her voice echoed their findings

when they caution teachers to resist creating a classroom that will

"become nothing more than the ability to regurgitate a collection of facts

listed in a state-mandated curriculum framework" (p. 57). Bruner (1996)

contends the traditional culture of education validated rote memorization

of knowledge without students having an understanding of what they

learned.

A conversation Angela had with her class further illustrated this

concept of her need to help her students understand content by focusing on

the context in which events happen. She also wanted students to note

anywhere they were exposed to brief, fragmented information where they

needed to analyze what was said.

Student: I, uh, had two things. The more important thing is how

the war,   not really the war so much, but it started before

it started.

A: Before it started.

Student: Yeah.

A: Isn't that so true when you do sound-bites history . . . .

So, one of the things that is a big belief of mine, it's scary,

but even the news people on television, when they do the

news. Something happens in the world today and they

tell it in isolation. Nothing is in isolation. Things have

been happening to cause things that happen. All right?

Anyway, so you are saying a lot of stuff was happening a

long time before the day [the war] started.

Angela talked to her students about isolated facts or sound bites of history

and their limitations. Angela wanted to validate this student's need to

know what happened before the war to cause the war. She took this

moment to talk about the need for context and background in order to

understand issues. This was also an example of Angela's desire for

students to transfer the learning processes to their everyday lives. She

wanted students to understand how news events needed to be analyzed for

what was not being said.

In another conversation I had with Angela, she expressed her

concerns about the time of year I chose to observe. . She also articulated

that she would not be facilitating many discussions since she would be

preparing for the SOLs.

A: I am just saying there is not going to be the conversation

and the richness, but thank goodness you are staying until

the end of school.

Int: Absolutely.

A: And see the difference, and it is true, and I would say this

        to anybody even if meant my job tomorrow, I just don't

        cover things with the speed that other people do. That isn't

        meant to be critical, and also it just is.

Angela recognized the ramifications of taking so long to cover content so she

could use the strategies that, to her, were valuable at getting at the richness of

history. Van Hover and Heinecke (2005) found similar concerns among the

teachers they researched. Teachers did not have time to present the required

information using engaging strategies. The pressures of the SOLs forced them to

be more teacher-centered in their approach. It seemed to Angela an either/or

proposition. Either she taught the depth of history that she felt was necessary for

her students, or she taught isolated "sound-bite" facts that were required on the

SOLs. Angela also had concerns about the sheer volume of information she had to

cover in one year. She felt that it added to the dilemma of not finding the time to

cover all the content. In the following interview, Angela questioned the value of

what students would learn, given the amount of content they must master.

         But anyway, every time we spend so much time going that far

        back, and our country's getting older as we speak. What are they

        getting? We're not going into depth now. How much depth do you

        need to go into? Hundreds and hundreds of years ago? And it's

        really silly, you know. There are so many voices that when you

        pare it down to an SOL, you automatically are probably telling

> more untruths than truth. So we need to get over this idea of
>
> limiting history with these sound bites.

Angela worried about how students would interpret, what she believed, was a surface treatment of the content. She felt that, in some way, history had a potential to be misleading or untruthful unless a complete picture was developed.

Attitudes About Assessment

Angela believed that assessment needed to be comprehensive. Her teaching experience included learning how to write extensive narratives on student performance. Angela continued to assess her students in this manner. Thus, when she discussed the end-of-year test, she questioned its value and merit.

> Let's say you are very bright, you read a lot, but you just didn't
>
> pass it. Does that mean you don't go to seventh? No. Does that
>
> mean you don't know lots of valuable things? No. It only means
>
> that you did not remember on that day the things that the state of
>
> Virginia thought were the most important. That's all it means.
>
> That's all it means. And that is how I feel.

Angela did not believe the assessment necessarily evaluated student learning, and she came across as quite frustrated when talking about it. She viewed the SOL test as a very narrow measure of a selective body of knowledge. She emphasized it was the knowledge that "the state of Virginia" valued. Horn (2006) makes the point that using standardized tests limits content because the "development administration and interpretation" (p. 71) of the test is all under individual, political and cultural interpretation of what is valued. ,

As Angela taught the content, her goal was to provide the depth and richness of detail so that students could fully understand the complex issues related to history concepts. When it came time for the end-of-year test, she tried to distinguish between the simple answer and the complex answer. Angela taught students to take the test and then to look at complexities. In the following interview, she differentiated between what information was called for on the test and how she ultimately delivered the content.

> The question was, how do Native Americans, who we call Indians,
>
> how do they meet their basic needs of food shelter and clothing?
>
> And they think, they talk about it, and then they share. Then I put
>
> up the way they want it said in Virginia. And I say we can add lots
>
> more to this, but when you get the multiple-choice test make it
>
> simple.

In another interview Angela again communicated her fear about how students were impacted by the SOL test. She wondered how the high-stakes, multiple-choice test affected learning.

> Kids get so afraid, especially, I think, when they think they
>
> are supposed to have all the right answers and they don't.
>
> That's what learning is. And if you do provide them with
>
> lots of time to talk in-depth [about] what we are doing, I
>
> don't think they get as frustrated, which goes against every
>
> kind of SOL thing—rushing through.

To Angela learning was about making mistakes and not immediately knowing all the correct answers the first time. She was worried how students might be shaped by a test in which they had only one chance to succeed. Angela believed that depth provided students with a better chance at grasping the answers. She equated SOLs with rushing the material and not having time to fully explore concepts.

Angela then shared a conversation she had with another veteran teacher and a new teacher concerning the assessment. Her point in recounting the conversation was to illustrate that they were all in agreement regarding their concerns about the benefits of this high-stakes test.

> So, you know, some of us were talking the other day [about the SOLs], and one who has taught maybe, you know, has taught since her children have been in school and the other one is a young teacher and then me. We were just chatting [about] how we really do wake up and then think, uhhh, what is this test even doing? . . . What does it test? And you accompany that with adolescent issues.

This conversation was interesting because she was talking to both a veteran teacher and a new teacher who both had concerns about the test. Winkler (2002) conducted a study in Virginia comparing attitudes between new and veteran teachers concerning the SOL test. She discovered new teachers found the test positive and helpful when structuring classes. This is contradictory to what

van Hover (2006) found when she interviewed beginning history teachers and found SOLs were not influential on their planning.

In this interview Angela also referred to this age group and how that affected her students' success on the test. When dealing with middle school students, one had to acknowledge that they are fraught with developmental and social issues that can take precedent over any high-stakes test (Dore, 2004).

Angela valued processes and complex thinking, which she did not see as a component of the end-of-year assessment test. She also did not see the test as a vehicle to teach students the learning processes she believed were vital.

And I think that when you look at some of the questions and how they are supposed to answer, it doesn't even make sense. I mean, I'm not happy with them. Do I do the questions and use the things? Yes. But do I talk about cause and effects and more complex levels of questions? I use processes. . . . It's not a simple A, B, and C. I can't work like that. I don't think like that, but [a complex approach to learning] works for me and makes me happy in what I do. Process, when I get a process-like structure for kids, I want that process to be able to go in and out of all kinds of things.

What Angela valued cannot be reduced to multiple choice questions. Angela believed that as a teacher she was morally required to teach students the processes and skills that would enable them to be lifelong learners. The assessments did not address this issue.

Overall, Angela found the end-of-year test lacking for many reasons. The test only asked superficial, factual questions and validated one way of interpreting history. The test valued memorization over critical thinking. Finally, the test was counter to her beliefs about teaching her students the necessary thinking skills that engender lifelong learners.

Negotiating the contradictions of belief and practice.

Clearly, Angela had many issues with not only the curriculum framework but also the end-of- year assessment. The content was too superficial and fragmented in Angela's mind, and it was her belief that students would be better served if they were exposed to less material but in a more in-depth way. Still, Angela wanted her students to do well and articulated worry about the scores. In her first year of SOL testing, Angela's students did very poorly.

Int: Do you recall what your SOL scores were like last year and this?

A: I know that they were up by a good bit and because I didn't have them all in yet, I'm thinking they were like low 50s [to] high 60s. Yeah, they were, and I think they were like 30s the year before.

Int: Why do you think they doubled?

A: The group of kids I had; pure and simple. Pure and simple.

Int: Did you do any different processes?

A: No. That is not exactly true. What do I think was the difference? *(long pause)* I had a lot of absenteeism. Just last year I had one little boy who missed a lot but didn't have a lot. I got to about the same place. I may have reviewed more. I don't know; I probably should. I probably should

have an answer to that. But since they are different kids and different

questions, I don't really spend much time playing that game.

Int: Are you doing anything even more different to try to do better?

A: I start out every year thinking I will. And the answer is no.

Initially, Angela stated clearly that she did nothing different to account for the

higher scores. She suggested it had to do with a different population and a

different test. But then she considered that she might have had more review.

Although Angela was initially ambivalent about the SOLs, she thought she should

have entertained why her students were more successful this year, and she

considered changing her processes to improve her scores. But ultimately, she

reported she did nothing to try to do better.

In a later conversation Angela again seemed conflicted about

wanting to do well on the SOLs yet realizing it was competing with how

she felt students should be exposed to history and learning. Angela wanted

to do well, but she recognized her limitations.

[My students] did not do well last year. I was the lowest,

and that bothered me because I didn't have a particularly

low class. And, you know, I, naturally you want them to do

well, and I am a good soldier. My age tells you I am a

good little girl because that's how we were raised, but I

have to come in here every day, and when I leave [I] feel

like they felt success in something that would carry them

on to try something harder. [Depth] just takes longer, and

I, it makes me very sad the direction we are going. It does.

Similar to Margaret, even though Angela disliked the impact of the SOLs, she

was willing to do her best to help her students succeed on this test. She wanted

them to feel success, which she felt would motivate them in wanting to continue

to learn. Angela worried about the time she took in her coverage and viewed her

desire for depth as contrary to successfully passing the SOLs. She seemed to view

this issue as either teach sound bites or go into depth. This sentiment is echoed in

the research by Jones, Jones, and Hargrove (2003) regarding teachers seeing high-

stakes tests as forcing them to choose between student-centered, constructivist

teaching and direct instruction in which teachers provide students with facts.

Angela's process of getting ready for the test involved a shift in teaching

practices. At one point she abandoned her typical style of group work and

discussion in favor of slot notes, worksheets, and practice testing. She still had

remaining content that had not been covered for the first time. Students were

taking several quizzes a day to check their understanding and progress. Angela

kept reassuring them in regards to retesting.

Some of you are going to get a third chance because you failed it.

So I am not about trying to catch you doing something wrong. I

really need you to be thinking about what are some of the

right/wrong answers you are going to need to know.

 She wanted students to see these quizzes as a way to facilitate learning. She was

asking them to shift their thinking and look at knowledge in terms of right and

wrong answers. Salinas (2006) found that teachers might possess a rich breadth and depth of content knowledge but will limit how much they share in order for students to be successful on the test. Angela was just giving them the facts at this point.

At this point Angela was not taking the time to go over each possibility and think through why the answers were incorrect. Instead, Angela was doing more direct instruction.

A: Number five. The Constitution of the United States' system of separation of power divides power: A, between the national and state governments. B, between the democratic and republican parties. C, between the United States Senate and the House of Representatives. D, among the three branches of the national government? What is the answer? Gary?

Gary: D.

A: You know, I would have put that, and I would have been wrong.

Kim: A?

A: It's A. Between the national and the state government. The national government had no power. What the Constitution did was divide that power.

Angela believed she was still conducting discussions since she was asking students for clarification, but in accordance with Nystrand et al. (2003), she was demonstrating more of a call-and-response format.

In this part of the review, Angela helped students think through the answers using process of elimination. She reiterated that they needed to think

about main points and had to think like the test-makers in choosing the right answer. Angela made several references to the end-of-year test during her teaching that seemed cynical.

A: The MAIN argument, now, here is where they get tricky with these questions. The main argument. So, we have got to read their mind, right?

(Students chuckle.)

A: The main argument for the Bill of Rights was that it would: A, make the Constitution more like the Articles of Confederation. Boy, I would be crossing that one off right away, wouldn't you?

Bill: Yeah, because they didn't want it.

A: They didn't want it; more like it, they wanted it different. B, test whether the Amendment process works. C, win more public support for the new government. D, limit the Constitutional powers of the federal government. That one I don't know if you know. I think you might do the deductive reasoning. Let's talk about a bit what did you think.

Liz: Win more public support?

A: Yeah. It really was, that's a guess, isn't it? That is why it is A.

Liz: It sort of made sense.

A: Why did it make sense?

Bill: You are getting more rights.

A: You are getting more voice, and they are also knowing that together they stand and divided they fall. If they had stayed in their little 13 states, separate . . .

Bill: . . .all countries.

A: That's right. Well, there would have been a lot of little countries that

          didn't have a lot of power. Okay.

Instead of going over the information, Angela was trying to help her students use

reasoning to eliminate some of the answers. Again, by Nystrand's (2003)

definition of discussion, Angela was conducting a recitation-type process, not

using true discussion techniques.

     In preparing for the test, Angela was torn between helping her students

reason through the correct answers and validating their willingness to look at

other perspectives of history. Understanding varied perspectives was as integral

to what she taught in her class. Below is a conversation in which Angela tried to

help students see that there was a time for multiple ways of viewing history and

there was a time for just choosing the right answer.

A: Who invented the steam boat, and what did the steam boat do for

          America? Jim?

Jim: Robert Fulton.

A: Robert Fulton. And what did it do?

Jim: It, um, transportation on water

A: Okay. It connected two groups. What did it connect? Sam?

Sam: I just said it was better, faster water transportation.

A: Okay. I will take any of this and add this. Here is the north, here is the

          south; it connected the industry of the north to the south. Somehow put

          connect to the north and south. I like your other things, and it's fine to

have two, but I am giving the down-and-dirty of what the people that work

on the test say is the ultimate . . .

Sam: Okay.

A: . . . main reason. You disagree?

Sue: Didn't it begin to stage that . . .

A: Yes,

Sue: [Garbled.]

A: I have heard that before, but they ask who invented the steam boat and that

is going to be the answer. Okay? So, I do you no service; remember this

has happened over and over in these questions. *(Aside to the observer)*

The kids think beyond simple answers. I LOVE you for that. And there's

times you will use that thinking, but on this you've just gotta plug it in,

honey, and they want Robert Fulton.

Angela validated the students' critical thinking in attempting to understand how to

approach different questions, but she saw herself as a liability to the process at

this point. She talked about students moving beyond the simplistic answers, yet

this was what she saw the test requiring. Once again, when Angela talked about

this class, she saw herself facilitating a discussion, but this example is actually

considered recitation.

Envisioning the Future

Angela did not feel very positive about the future of education in Virginia.

The following account demonstrated her resistance to reducing her status as a

good teacher based on whether she was successful in following the curriculum

framework and having her students pass the end-of-year test.

> Do I enjoy where we are? No. It's just like, if I could you know.
>
> One of the teachers was so upset with her scores. And I said to her,
>
> "Well if you're upset and you think this makes you a bad teacher . .
>
> ." I mean, she was actually crying and upset. "You must have
>
> thought I was a piece of xxxx last year, 'cause mine were rock
>
> bottom." And I even had some [people] say, why did you tell her?
>
> No one needed to know I was the lowest.

Angela did not want her value as a teacher to depend on one test. She came across

as angry when she realized the test had enough power to reduce a teacher to tears.

She described a climate in which teachers are ashamed to share the fact that they

did not have a successful pass rate. Angela seemed defiant about placing so much

importance on an assessment tool she did not value.

> Angela was also worried about the future of schools. She did not want

schools to be reduced to making students regurgitate information. She questioned

what her success as a teacher would be if she were younger. The following

passage reveals again Angela's ambivalence about wanting to cooperate with the

goals of the school and following her moral compass and beliefs when deciding

what is best for her students.

> I think that there are a lot of things they need to know . . . I don't
>
> want to sound critical. I don't want to be the teacher that stands in
>
> front of the room and says, "Children, repeat after me." And that's

what we're moving toward, I think. And maybe they are right.

Maybe that is exactly what we should be doing, but and I wonder if

I were 30. That part I've wondered a lot. What if I were 30 and I

had the same belief system, basically speaking, in terms of

processes, and whole language, and that's how we learn, yada,

yada. I am thinking, is this going to end my career? You know?

Would I think differently? I think that I would, I might spend more

sleepless nights. I mean, I think I probably would because I do like

to succeed. I am competitive. Yeah, I think I would walk around,

probably have an ulcer.

In the end Angela hypothesized that she would be more conflicted and stressed if

she had to remain in this school system where her values are in conflict with the

state-mandated curriculum.

<center>*Summary of Angela's Responses to Research Question Three*</center>

Angela had strong feelings about the SOL test, which manifested in her

classroom. She felt that teaching the content on the test conflicts with her belief of

studying the complexities and multiple perspectives that history affords us. These

perspectives were shared with the students. Toward the end of the year, Angela

shifted her teaching style from recitation which she viewed as discussion to use

more direct instruction instead of discussion. When preparing students for the test,

she demonstrates frustration in the classroom and articulates to the students the

basis for her conflict. There are times to think critically about the material, but the

test is a time to just choose the answer preferred by the test-maker. It is not clear how students are affected by her very vocal opinions.

Although Angela utilized mostly direct instruction in preparation for the SOLs, she, believed she also managed to conduct some discussions about helping students to critically analyze the practice multiple-choice questions. However, her discussion process was more like a recitation rather than what Nystrand et al. (2003) consider authentic discussion.

Similarities and Differences in the Case Studies for Research Question Three

Both Margaret and Angela had strong values concerning what skills, knowledge, and dispositions their students needed in order to be active citizens. Discussion often was the strategy used to teach these qualities. Both teacher expressed concerns about the curriculum standards they were mandated to follow and the limitations of having to pass an end-of-year, high-stakes test. Like beginning teachers (van Hover, Hick, & Irwin, 2007), both felt pressured to cover everything in the curriculum guidelines, forsaking good teaching practices. These competing goals produced tension and discontent in both teachers. For Margaret the conflict between spending time on citizenship qualities versus curriculum standards was not as great, since she was teaching civics. For Angela, however, to teach the citizenship qualities she felt were vital took significant time away from the content mandated by the state.

Although Margaret had concerns about the end-of-year test, each year she spent more time preparing her students for the test. Each year Margaret's scores were higher than the year before. Even though Margaret was opposed to such a

superficial assessment process, she continued to take time away from what she thought were best teaching practices in order to for her students to be successful on the test.

Angela was also aware of her poor results in the first year her students took the SOL test. Her resolve was to focus more on review at the end of the year. I observed her frustrations because she still had content left to cover before she started her review. Her strategies totally changed from discussion and student-centered instruction to lecture and direct instruction.

Both teachers adamantly voiced how limiting the curriculum framework and end-of-year test were. Both teachers saw the SOLs as confining and the process of mastering the high-stakes test as a polar opposite to effective teaching. They felt the results of this standardization process stressed fragmented facts instead of exploring more complex issues. These processes validated students for rote memorization rather than critical thinking. Finally, because of this structure less time was spent on what Margaret and Angela felt were essential concepts and skills that students needed in order to participate fully as citizens of this country and the world.

CHAPTER 5: STUDY CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to provide insight about the influences that affect teacher decisions regarding their use of discussion in the social studies classroom. Current research shows that discussion is not truly used in the classroom. One study indicated only 10% of classes they observed had discussion episodes (Nystrand et al., 2003). When discussion is employed, it is generally not implemented well. Most of the time, the research concluded, teachers used recitation instead of discussion. This study focused on two middle school social studies teachers who reported to use discussion often. My intention was to investigate what influenced their decisions to use discussion in their classrooms. The research was guided by the following questions:

1. How do teachers conceptualize discussion and its purpose as a teaching strategy within the social studies?

2. How do teachers describe and explain their use of discussion in terms of their ongoing practice?

3. How do teachers balance their use of discussion while meeting the expectations of the standards-based curriculum?

Additionally, this chapter will also address another key question that emerged from the data: Are these teachers actually using discussion in the classroom?

Discussion as a Vehicle to Teach Processes and Skills for Citizenship

In order to address Research Question One—How do teachers conceptualize discussion and its purpose as a teaching strategy within the social studies?—it was necessary to probe the teachers' beliefs about teaching middle school social

studies. Margaret and Angela had deeply held philosophical beliefs about the most important skills and dispositions their students needed to possess in order to improve their society and world. Many of the philosophical underpinnings concerning why teachers use the methods they do are based on their beliefs, values, and experiences (Feldman, 1997). Angela and Margaret were no different. Their concepts of citizenship were often intertwined with their strategies, expectations, and outcomes of their teaching. Both Angela and Margaret believed using discussion modeled and taught their students valuable skills that were necessary to being effective citizens. Their priorities for what they felt was most important to teach took precedent over what the curriculum guidelines mandated.

Margaret taught civics and Angela taught the first half of U.S. history (with a strong Virginia focus). Margaret found it easier to articulate her need to teach citizenship skills since it was her content area. The civics SOL curriculum framework (see Appendix A) addresses the qualities of an effective citizen, which Margaret deemed as very traditional and lacking any elements of social justice. She therefore chose to embellish her curriculum to include skills and dispositions not mentioned in the curriculum framework.

More surprising, perhaps, was how Angela saw her job responsibility as instructing her students to be productive citizens. Many people do equate the social studies with the discipline that prepares students in the area of citizenship (Houser & Kuzmic, 2001; Shaver, 1997; Vinson & Ross, 2001; Zevin, 2000). However, the Virginia SOLs dictate otherwise for sixth-grade history, and Angela

was willing to take time away from the curriculum framework to concentrate on skills she thought were vital to her students' success as future citizens.

The social construction of knowledge is created when people verbally interact with each other. Berger and Luckmann (1966) propose that all of reality is socially constructed and maintained through conversation. Both Angela and Margaret chose discussion as a strategy in order to help their students to learn and practice citizenship skills. The case studies indicate that they understood that potential products or skills that can be developed through the use of discussion include critical thinking (Larson, 1997), socially constructing ideas (Brooks & Brooks, 1999), empathy (Frymier & Houser, 2000), listening (Effrat & Schimmel, 2003), identifying multiple perspectives (Frèire, 1998), being a part of a community (Parker & Hess, 2001), and tolerance. Furthermore, developing a voice and learning tolerance were major citizenship themes that emerged from my conversations with Margaret and Angela. Their rationale for discussions was based on their belief that if they created a supportive classroom climate in which students felt safe to practice speaking and listening to each other, then they would develop empathy and acceptance for their peers' positions. If the teachers introduced topics relating to injustices in the world and helped students learn to discuss their positions, then perhaps in their adult lives, they would be more inclined to speak out in order to make the world more just.

Angela's choice for using discussion was also greatly influenced by her belief that her students needed to develop an awareness of their learning process. I observed many instances in which Angela spent time asking students about their

thinking process when approaching an assignment. This concept is not found in the curriculum framework, yet Angela was emphatic that she was morally obligated to help her students understand their learning processes so they would become lifelong learners. Angela saw discussion as the most effective tool to accomplish this goal.

After analyzing the data about question one, my question for future research is: How did Margaret and Angela know if they were successful in teaching these skills and helping their students acquire the dispositions they valued so much? Their assumption was if they provided the opportunities, then students would learn. It would be interesting to try to measure their success in teaching these citizenship skills.

Discussion as a Vehicle to Teach Content, Learning Processes, and Relationship Skills

Research Question Two asked: How do teachers describe and explain their use of discussion in terms of their ongoing practice? Angela and Margaret were chosen for the study because they recognized the value of discussion as a strategy in their social studies classrooms. The following sections analyze their responses regarding their choices to use discussion for several key instructional purposes.

Teaching the Content and Processes of the Social Studies

Both Angela and Margaret discussed how using discussion helped students acquire deeper understandings of the content rather than just learning the facts. Both teachers also recognized the benefits discussion had on student learning when students could verbally share their different perspectives. Both

teachers covered content that went beyond the curriculum framework, and they believed discussion was integral in developing student understanding of some of the more complex concepts.

In addition to its value in teaching content, discussion was identified by Angela and Margaret as indispensible for helping students learn valuable processes. For instance, Margaret used discussion to help students learn the participatory skills that are instrumental to the democratic process. Angela was adamant about teaching her students meta-cognitive processes that aided them in analyzing their own learning processes. She believed this would ultimately support her belief in all students should be lifelong learners. Both teachers were emphatic about the importance of these process skills yet did the students develop those skills? How did Margaret and Angela know they were successful in equipping their students with these vital skills?

Toch (1991) discussed how teachers were wasting time by talking about social topics wholly unrelated to the content or "filling time on irrelevant digressions" (p. 242). To him this practice was a sign of poor teaching in which teachers were "putting as little energy into their work as possible" (p. 242). I wonder if he were observing Margaret and Angela's class, would he still think the same?

One factor that affected Margaret and Angela's choice to use discussion as a strategy acknowledged the developmental needs of the middle school age group. A position paper by National Middle School Association (2004) stated that, developmentally, middle school students are searching for an identity and look to

their peers for direction. In this way, relationships are at the core of adolescent development. They are at once preoccupied with themselves and others. Discussion is a process that gives students permission to verbally work through important issues and hear how other students think as well. A safe, supportive environment is crucial for this process to occur in the classroom.

Both Margaret and Angela embraced this belief concerning middle school students with adolescent needs. Both encouraged and allowed time for what I term relationship discussions. They fostered discussions that were social in nature in which students discussed affective, personal, and value-oriented subjects. Examples of this included how to keep a hospitalized student in touch with the classroom community, how to get a learner's permit, what happened on field trips, what they did over the weekend, plans for breaks, death, grief, personal conflicts, etc. Margaret and Angela believed time was well spent addressing these topics and allowing students the safe space to practice discussion. Simon (2001) showed that students found the conversations that had "moral or existential" basis were the most memorable and stimulating.

Although both teachers felt pressure as the SOL test loomed, they made choices to allow these relationship discussions to occur. These discussions had little, if anything, to do with the content curriculum. Still, each teacher expressed the belief that these types of discussions helped to sustain the positive climate of their classrooms and indirectly helped foster better content-related discussions.

According to Harwood (1992), it takes discussion to do discussion. Regardless of the content, discussion is a skill that requires self-confidence.

Developmentally, middle-school students generally lack self-confidence. Angela and Margaret realized if middle-school students first learned to discuss topics with which they were familiar (i.e., themselves), they may then learn the discussion skills and gain confidence. This, in turn, might translate into students who have mastered this technique when content-driven discussions occur. Both teachers were clear in their belief about the importance of these relationship discussions but the question then is: are their assertions true?

Tension Between the Use of Discussion and the End-of Year, High-stakes

Test

Research Question Three explored how and when teachers use discussion to support their philosophy for teaching the social studies while meeting the expectations of the standards-based curriculum. This question is especially thought-provoking because discussion is a student-centered instructional method while the standards-based curriculum often creates a direct-instruction environment.

Since my research began in the beginning of April, I recognized that I might observe teachers shift their focus from content to preparation for the end-of-year exam known as the SOL test. As the final six weeks progressed, their attempts at discussion were replaced by direct instruction and practice quizzes as methods of instruction. Both Margaret and Angela expressed embarrassment about this shift in pedagogy. On the first day of SOL preparation, as Margaret was passing out study guides, she apologetically commented to me, "This is not how I teach; this is not who I am as a teacher."

Margaret and Angela shared similar attitudes about the SOLs. Neither teacher saw the end-of-year test as an effective way to measure content knowledge. Both teachers articulated the concern that what was tested were fragmented facts and sound bites that did not ascertain student understanding of this complex field. Ross (2000) said one Virginia parents group complained that on the SOL, "many test items are more like Trivial Pursuit factoids" (p. 47).

Still, to accommodate the needs of the test, Angela and Margaret shifted their teaching processes to memorizing facts rather than social construction of knowledge. Hursh (2005) reported teachers who feel pressure to do well on high-stakes tests often will often neglect "more complex aspects of the subject and some subjects altogether" (p. 613). One of the complexities neglected by the test was the need for multiple perspectives in understanding the content. Both teachers communicated their belief that neither the SOL test nor the curriculum framework supports multiple perspectives in the social studies. Generally, one ethnocentric perspective was presented in history and civics. Angela and Margaret felt this was too narrow a focus. With such a one-sided focus, preparation for the test did not lend itself to using discussion as a strategy.

Moreover, Angela and Margaret both stated concerns about the content chosen for the framework and the test. The teachers thought some of the content was not essential and that there were gaps in areas they felt were essential. Specifically, both articulated a lack of connection to the global community. Margaret also felt economics was too abstract an issue for the developmental age of her students. Furthermore, although some of the content was relevant to the

lives of middle-school students, an equal portion comprised concepts she felt had little relevance to her students. Angela concurred and felt the content in the time period she had to teach was very hard to connect to middle school students' lives. A Virginia parent group also questioned the choice of content and stated "that Virginia's standards reflect the view of only a few members of the state board of education rather than a consensus of broad-based groups of educators and parents" (Ross, 2000, p. 47).

Most likely due to this philosophical conflict, the impending SOLs produced stress for both Angela and Margaret. Margaret had the luxury of positive experiences with SOL results. In 2004 over 90% of her students passed the test. She felt confident that she would have strong passing scores in the current year. Angela had low scores in the prior year, and, therefore, she was stressed because she had yet to cover some material that was going to be on the test. Consequently, she reverted to lecture notes and worksheets, and she attempted little discussion. Margaret apologized that I had to watch her give practice quizzes and go over the answers. However, even during test preparation, she sometimes used discussion rather than direct instruction to process the quiz. She helped students learn how to access their prior knowledge and critically think through the answers. Winkler (2002) conducted a study with veteran and new teachers and found that veteran teachers lost their sense of teacher efficacy as a result of SOL testing. I surmised both Margaret and Angela lost confidence when preparing for the SOL test because it required content and methods that conflicted with their core beliefs about teaching.

My research is focused on the concept of discussion and what affects teachers' decisions to use discussion in the classroom. Both teachers talked about the limitations of the SOLs as an assessment tool and both questioned the content assessed by the SOL. Still, both Angela and Margaret clearly articulated the SOLs affected how they teach and when they reportedly use discussion. Their responses reflect Vogler and Virtue (2007), who concluded that "high-stakes testing is a catalyst to move away from constructivist teaching" (p. 56).

It would be interesting to know how much the teachers altered their pedagogy during the rest of the year as a result of the curriculum and SOLs. I saw Angela and Margaret during the last two months of the year, and I noticed a shift in their teaching as they transitioned into reviewing for the test. So, prior to the test, one could conclude they used student-centered practices for getting at complex issues and multiple perspectives. Over the course of the year, how much did the SOLs really affect their use or nonuse of discussion?

Are These Teachers Really Using Discussion?

Throughout the course of this study I often asked myself whether the teachers were really facilitating Nystrand et al.'s (2003) definition of discussion. When I first observed Margaret and Angela in the fall, I described my research interest and asked how often they used discussion in the classroom. Both said they used discussion frequently and invited me to observe in the classroom. In the beginning of the school year, Margaret was beginning her Society project in which students were doing nothing but discussing. Margaret had minimal input. I remember thinking how she fit Nystrand et al.'s definition of discussion whereby

once the teacher provides the topic of discussion, the students talk to each other as well as to the teacher. This situation is not just a recitation or call-and-response model. I witnessed similar real use of discussion in Angela's classroom when students were discussing classroom activities. I observed student engagement during which they were in charge of the discussion with little direction from Angela.

However, when the time came for my actual research, there were fewer opportunities to observe discussion because of the time of year. Margaret had just started her human rights project, which is a paper-driven project. Angela had a few more discussion opportunities because of her emphasis on students processing their learning as well as relationship topics. Still, when it came to the actual discussions, Margaret and Angela more often than not did not conduct discussions (Cazden, 1988; Hess, 2004). Both demonstrated more of the recitation model defined by Nystrand et al. (2003) if not a lecture model with rhetorical questioning. The teacher would ask a question and the student would briefly respond. The teacher would then validate or respond to the answer, then ask another question and interact with another student.

Both Angela and Margaret strongly articulated the value of student discussion; consequently, it would be difficult to conclude that Angela and Margaret did not want their students to engage in critical thinking when considering the deeper meanings of the content. The question then is: Why were they not able to manifest their views of discussion in the classroom?

Hess (2004) noted that a common mistake in discussions deals with teachers dominating the conversation. Angela's transcripts show that she was clearly doing the majority of talking and her students were responding in a sentence or two. Instead of exploring their answers, Angela would share her perceptions and opinions. Similarly, Sizer concluded that "careful probing of students' thinking is not a high priority" for teachers (Dantonio & Beisenherz, 2001, p. 25).

Perhaps the disconnect between belief and practice of discussion stemmed from a lack of teacher skill. The research literature illustrates how teachers lack the skills to facilitate discussions (Houston, 2004; Milson, 2000; Parker & Hess, 2001). Parker and Hess (2001) traced the problem to teacher preparation courses, where students only see the model of recitation. Angela and Margaret believed in discussion and saw the importance of discussion, but perhaps they did not have the necessary skills to manifest their desired outcome.

Bruner (1996) used the term *folk pedagogy* to suggest that the acquisition of knowledge just grows as a habit "and is linked to neither theory nor negotiation or argument" (p. 54). Bruner suggested that ingrained in our culture is a belief about how students learn. He described this "folk pedagogy" (p. 44) in the following way:

> A teacher is an authority who is supposed to tell the child what the
> general case is, while the child should be occupying herself with
> memorizing the particulars. And if you study how most classrooms
> are conducted, you will often find that most of the teacher's

questions to pupils are about particulars that can be answered in a

few words or by "yes" or "no." (p. 46)

This folk pedagogy is especially evident in the social studies, in

which the content is reduced to facts and concepts prescribed by the state

curriculum standards and the most expedient way to teach the content is

by direct instruction (Journell, 2007; Wills, 2007). Angela and Margaret

voiced their disdain for this rote memorization and direct instruction, yet

often conducted a recitation process rather than a true discussion. Perhaps

Angela and Margaret were aware of the importance of discussion yet were

unable to break away from the ingrained traditions of schooling in which

the culture of folk pedagogy is prevalent.

Both Angela and Margaret indicated that the timing of my study might

have prevented me from observing them conducting discussions. In order to

prepare for the SOL test, they consciously made choices to revert to more direct

instruction. At times they used discussion as a tool to help students critically

analyze the testing process and how they should approach the test. This

observation is supported by the literature. Van Hover and Heinecke (2005)

researched history teachers to see how an end-of-year high-stakes test affected

teacher practice. They too found that teacher strategies shifted to the teacher-

directed practices of lecture and drills instead of strategies that resulted in student

critical thinking and analysis. Perhaps if I had studied both teachers at the

beginning of the year, their beliefs about discussion would have aligned more

closely to their classroom practice.

Finally, Grant (2005) explored "the notion of ambitious teaching" (p. 118) in his research regarding a social studies teacher and her practice. An ambitious teacher knows her subject matter in depth, knows her students in depth, knows how to connect students to the content, and creates an environment that allows both teacher and students to take risks in teaching and learning to allow best practices to occur. Angela and Margaret's report of their teaching mirrored elements of ambitious teaching by providing students with mock election simulations, service learning opportunities, Internet book buddy partnership with college students, and History Day opportunities. Yet, no matter how ambitious teaching qualities one has, many variables affect how a teacher is able to manifest ambitious teaching. Like Angela and Margaret, Grant's participant also had to sacrifice her preferred strategies in order to focus on curriculum content and a high-stakes test. For the sake of time, teachers can negotiate away their preferred pedagogical methods.

This negotiation is illustrated by Angela and Margaret. They strongly believed in the use of discussion; however, sometimes they thought they were conducting discussions but were actually lecturing or conducting recitation. Other times, they acknowledged they were making choices to lead direct instruction and were preparing their students for a test on which there was just one right answer. The disconnect between belief and practice may be the result of a combination factors, including a lack of teacher facilitation skills, the timing of the research, the folk pedagogy culture of schools, or the tensions caused by the state curriculum standards. All these factors influenced and constrained Angela and

Margaret's desires to be ambitious teachers. Regardless of how successful they were at conducting discussions, Angela and Margaret were clear about how powerful the strategy of discussion can be in the social studies classroom.

Study Limitations

The initial study called for observations to begin as the second semester started and to follow the teachers until the end of the school year. Ultimately, I did not begin my study until two months before the end of the school year. As a result I wonder how much of my observations were skewed by the transition to SOL review. Would I have seen different discussion patterns? Would I have seen more content-driven discussion?

An additional limitation to the case studies was the small sample size. With only two case studies, there are limitations for transferability or generalizations. In comparing the two teacher experiences, I can note interesting patterns that may or may not be consistent in a larger sample. Further, I used a purposeful sample, which also can limit the conclusions to be drawn. In hindsight it would have been a stronger study if I had conducted research using several more case studies at varying grade levels.

Role of the Researcher

As a researcher I acknowledge my biases and limitations. I knew both teachers professionally prior to my research, and we developed a collegial relationship during my study. Clearly, the relationship influenced my role and analysis of the data in ways unknown to me. Perhaps there were pressing

questions that I failed to ask because they might have emotionally upset my participants.

There were also limitations on my research process. Qualitative studies by nature are complex since there are so many layers to human interaction. In the beginning of the study, so many variables were interesting to me that it took awhile to understand how to focus on the phenomena to study. In addition, sometimes my note-taking encompassed a wide scope, whereas a narrower focus might have made data gathering and analysis more precise.

<div align="center">Implications and Suggestions for Future Research</div>

Although the limitations of the research prevent drawing any cause and effect, the research has validity for identifying themes that emerged from observing teachers facilitating discussion. For instance, the issue of using discussion, a time-intensive strategy (Cashin & McKnight, 2003), during a part of the year when covering content is emphasized, continues to be a conflict for teachers who desire to use best practices. A tension also exists between focusing on standards-based content and acknowledging the emotional and social needs of middle-school students.

I conclude that discussion is a vital tool for middle school social studies instruction that needs continued study. It would be interesting to follow several teachers over the course of a year to see how they facilitate discussion and what processes they teach their students in order to have a deeper experience. One specific area that begs a closer look is the connection between -relationship discussions and content discussions. Margaret and Angela believed that allowing

students to talk about issues that are related to the social arena would be good practice for when they are asked to discuss content-related issues. A closer look at how one impacts the other would help validate or question the middle school concept that incorporates the social aspects of middle school students.

Another opportunity for future research would be to teach specific facilitation skills—such as reframing and reflecting answers—to teachers and evaluate the impact of their classroom discussions. Teachers need not only to be exposed to various pedagogical skills but to actually master them. Additionally, one could examine discussion methods across disciplines and conduct a collaborative project between teachers and counselors to see what knowledge the therapeutic community can share in the area of discussion facilitation. Researching how teaching students these specific discussion skills would affect classroom discussions could potentially also provide the research community with a wider understanding of the influences that affect discussion.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, more research is needed regarding how high-stakes testing affects teachers' use of discussion in the classroom. Are teachers shifting their approaches to presenting material, how does the shift affect classroom discussions, and how does it affect both critical thinking and citizenship skills?

<div align="center">Final Thoughts</div>

Discussion is obviously is a powerful teaching tool, which, when executed well, can result in myriad learning opportunities for students. This study investigated two middle school teachers who reported the use discussion in their

classrooms. My goal was to understand what affected their decisions to use discussion and how did the tool of discussion interrelate with the pressures of content frameworks and high-stakes testing. I also wanted to understand how a teacher's belief system and history influenced her use of discussion in the classroom. This is a narrow, but effective, lens through I could gain more understanding into such a complex teaching method.

In searching for discussion in the standards-based middle school social studies classroom, I found myself reflecting on my own practice as an educator in a middle school teacher preparation program. This study has made me aware of how difficult it is to teach and model discussion processes. I understood the limitations Parker and Hess (2001) faced as they attempted to teacher their student teachers about the art of discussion. As a result of my research I made discussions more explicit in my class where I discuss the process of discussion, analyzing why a certain discussions were effective or why a certain discussion was unsuccessful. I now provide my students structures and processes to help them effectively participate and facilitate discussions. I want this generation of teachers to be more effective in orchestrating dynamic discussions.

Discussion has always fascinated me as a vehicle for self-understanding and understanding the world. From personal experience I have learned that social construction of knowledge is a powerful learning tool, and when discussion is done well, it can be an exciting and effective way to learn. My experiences with middle school students also suggest the effectiveness of discussion due to the

developmental needs of this age group and the importance of that social

interaction.

Nonetheless, I also know from experience that discussion is a complicated

skills-based process that few teachers know how to successfully employ. So many

variables and vantage points exist from which to observe this process that any

avenue of study on the topic could aid the research community in greater

understanding. My goal for this research was to unpack an aspect of discussion

and shed light on its applications to middle school social studies instruction. The

results of the study motivate me to continue researching this multifaceted tool.

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Appendix A

Eighth Grade Standards of Learning Curriculum Framework Guide

Curriculum Framework

Civics and Economics

STANDARD CE.1 a, b, c, d, e, f, g

The student will develop the social studies skills citizenship requires, including the ability to
a)   **examine and interpret primary and secondary source documents;**
b)   **create and explain maps, diagrams, tables, charts, graphs, and spreadsheets;**
c)   **analyze political cartoons, political advertisements, pictures, and other graphic media;**
d)   **distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information;**
e)   **review information for accuracy, separating fact from opinion;**
f)   **identify a problem and recommend solutions;**
g)   **select and defend positions in writing, discussion, and debate.**

The skills identified in standard CE.1a-g are cited in the "Essential Skills" column of each chart for *Civics and Economics* with the exception of "g" (select and defend positions in writing, discussion, and debate). Students should have opportunities to practice writing, discussion, and debating skills, but these skills will not be assessed on the Standards of Learning test. All other skills will be assessed on the Standards of Learning test. Teachers should incorporate these skills into instruction throughout the year.

STANDARD CE.2a

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the foundations of American constitutional government by
a)   explaining the fundamental principles of consent of the governed, limited government, rule of law, democracy, and representative government.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
Fundamental political principles define and shape American constitutional government.	What are the fundamental political principles that have shaped government in the United States?	**Fundamental political principles** • Consent of the governed—People are the source of any and all governmental power. • Limited government—Government is not all-powerful and may do only those things people have given it the power to do. • Rule of law—The government and those who govern are bound by the law. • Democracy—In a democratic system of government the people rule. • Representative government—In a representative system of government people elect public officeholders to make laws and conduct government on their behalf.	Examine and interpret primary and secondary source documents. (CE.1a) Distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information. (CE.1d)

STANDARD CE.2b

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the foundations of American constitutional government by
b) explaining the significance of the charters of the Virginia Company of London, the Virginia Declaration of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, and the Constitution of the United States of America, including the Bill of Rights.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

American constitutional government is founded on concepts articulated in earlier documents, including the charters of the Virginia Company of London, the Virginia Declaration of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom.	How does the Constitution of the United States of America reflect previous documents, including the charters of the Virginia Company of London, the Virginia Declaration of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom?	**Influence of earlier documents on the Constitution of the United States of America**
		• Charters of the Virginia Company of London
		  – Rights of Englishmen guaranteed to colonists
		• The Virginia Declaration of Rights
		  – Served as a model for the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the United States of America
		• Declaration of Independence
		  – Stated grievances against the king of Great Britain
		  – Declared the colonies' independence from Great Britain
		  – Affirmed "certain unalienable rights" (life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness)
		  – Established the idea that all people are equal under the law
		• Articles of Confederation
		  – Established the first form of national government for the independent states
		  – Maintained that major powers resided with individual states
			Examine and interpret primary and secondary source documents. (CE.1a)
			
			Distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information. (CE.1d)
			
			Review information for accuracy, separating fact from opinion. (CE.1e)

STANDARD CE.2b (continued)

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the foundations of American constitutional government by
b) explaining the significance of the charters of the Virginia Company of London, the Virginia Declaration of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, and the Constitution of the United States of America, including the Bill of Rights.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

		– Weakness of central government (e.g., no power to tax and enforce laws)—Led to the writing of the Constitution of the United States of America - Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom – Freedom of religious beliefs and opinions - Constitution of the United States of America, including the Bill of Rights – Establishes the structure of the United States government – Guarantees equality under the law with majority rule and the rights of the minority protected – Affirms individual worth and dignity of all people – Protects the fundamental freedoms of religion, speech, press, assembly, and petition	

STANDARD CE.2c

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the foundations of American constitutional government by
c) identifying the purposes for the Constitution of the United States of America as they are stated in its Preamble.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

The preamble of a constitution sets forth the goals and purposes to be served by the government.	What are the purposes identified in the Preamble to the Constitution of the United States of America?	The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States of America expresses the reasons the constitution was written. **Purposes of U.S. government** • To form a union • To establish justice • To ensure domestic peace • To provide defense The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States of America begins, "We the people," which establishes that the power of government comes from the people.	Examine and interpret primary and secondary source documents. (CE.1a)

STANDARD CE.3a

The student will demonstrate knowledge of citizenship and the rights, duties, and responsibilities of citizens by
 a)   **describing the processes by which an individual becomes a citizen of the United States.**

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

A citizen is an individual with certain rights and duties under a government and who, by birth or by choice, owes allegiance to that government.	How does an individual become a citizen?	The Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America defines citizenship: "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and the state wherein they reside." **Means of obtaining citizenship** • Birth • Naturalization Immigration and naturalization, particularly in the twentieth century, have led to an increasingly diverse society. To become a citizen through naturalization, a person must demonstrate knowledge of American history and principles and the ability to speak and write English.	Examine and interpret primary and secondary source documents. (CE.1a) Explain diagrams, tables, or charts. (CE.1b) Analyze political cartoons, pictures, and other graphic media. (CE.1c) Review information for accuracy, separating fact from opinion. (CE.1e) Identify a problem and recommend solutions. (CE.1f) Select and defend positions in writing, discussion, and debate. (CE.1g)

STANDARD CE.3b

The student will demonstrate knowledge of citizenship and the rights, duties, and responsibilities of citizens by
b)   describing the First Amendment freedoms of religion, speech, press, assembly, and petition, and the rights guaranteed by due process and equal protection of the laws.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

The Constitution of the United States of America establishes and protects the citizen's fundamental rights and liberties. Few rights, if any, are considered absolute.	What fundamental rights and liberties are guaranteed in the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution of the United States of America?	**First Amendment freedoms** • Religion—Government may not establish an official religion, nor endorse, or unduly interfere with the free exercise of religion. • Speech—Individuals are free to express their opinions and beliefs. • Press—The press has the right to gather and publish information, including that which criticizes the government. • Assembly—Individuals may peacefully gather. • Petition—Individuals have the right to make their views known to public officials. **Fourteenth Amendment** • Extends the due process protection to actions of the states	Examine and interpret primary and secondary source documents. (CE.1a) Distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information. (CE.1d) Review information for accuracy, separating fact from opinion. (CE.1e)

STANDARD CE.3c

The student will demonstrate knowledge of citizenship and the rights, duties, and responsibilities of citizens by
c) describing the duties of citizenship, including obeying the laws, paying taxes, defending the nation, and serving in court.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

| For government to be effective, citizens must fulfill their civic duties. | What duties are expected of all citizens? | **Duties of responsible citizens**
• Obey laws
• Pay taxes
• Serve in the armed forces if called
• Serve on a jury or as a witness in court

Citizens who choose not to fulfill these civic duties face legal consequences. | Analyze political cartoons, pictures, and other graphic media. (CE.1c)

Distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information. (CE.1d)

Review information for accuracy, separating fact from opinion. (CE.1e)

Identify a problem and recommend solutions. (CE.1f) |

STANDARD CE.3d

The student will demonstrate knowledge of citizenship and the rights, duties, and responsibilities of citizens by
d)   **examining the responsibilities of citizenship, including registering and voting, communicating with government officials, participating in political campaigns, keeping informed about current issues, and respecting differing opinions in a diverse society.**

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

A basic responsibility of citizenship is to contribute to the common good.	What are the ways individuals demonstrate responsible citizenship?	Civic responsibilities are fulfilled by choice; they are voluntary. **Responsibilities of citizens** • Register and vote • Hold elective office • Influence government by communicating with government officials • Serve in voluntary, appointed positions • Participate in political campaigns • Keep informed regarding current issues • Respect others' rights to an equal voice in government	Distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information. (CE.1d) Review information for accuracy, separating fact from opinion. (CE.1e) Identify a problem and recommend solutions. (CE.1f)

STANDARD CE.3e

The student will demonstrate knowledge of citizenship and the rights, duties, and responsibilities of citizens by
e)   **evaluating how civic and social duties address community needs and serve the public good.**

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

| A democratic society requires the active participation of its citizens. | In what ways do citizens participate in community service? | **Ways for citizens to participate in community service**
 • Volunteer to support democratic institutions (e.g., League of Women Voters).
 • Express concern about the welfare of the community as a whole (e.g., environment, public health and safety, education).
 • Help to make the community a good place to work and live (e.g., by becoming involved with public service organizations, tutoring, volunteering in nursing homes). | Identify a problem and recommend solutions. (CE.1f) |

STANDARD CE.4a, b, c, d, e

The student will demonstrate knowledge of personal character traits that facilitate thoughtful and effective participation in civic life by
a)   **practicing trustworthiness and honesty;**
b)   **practicing courtesy and respect for the rights of others;**
c)   **practicing responsibility, accountability, and self-reliance;**
d)   **practicing respect for the law;**
e)   **practicing patriotism.**

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

Thoughtful and effective participation in civic life depends upon the exercise of good citizenship.	How do individuals demonstrate thoughtful and effective participation in civic life?	**Personal traits of good citizens** • Trustworthiness and honesty • Courtesy and respect for the rights of others • Responsibility, accountability, and self-reliance • Respect for the law • Patriotism	

STANDARD CE.5a

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the political process at the local, state, and national levels of government by
a)   describing the functions of political parties.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

Political parties play a key role in government and provide opportunities for citizens to participate in the political process.	What roles do political parties play in the American political process?	**Functions of political parties** • Recruiting and nominating candidates • Educating the electorate about campaign issues • Helping candidates win elections • Monitoring actions of officeholders	Explain maps, diagrams, tables, charts, and graphs. (CE.1b) Analyze political cartoons, political advertisements, pictures, and other graphic media. (CE.1c) Review information for accuracy, separating fact from opinion. (CE.1e)

STANDARD CE.5b

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the political process at the local, state, and national levels of government by
b)   comparing the similarities and differences of political parties.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

A two-party system characterizes the American political process. Although third parties rarely win elections, they play an important role in public politics.	How are the major political parties similar, and how do they differ? How do third parties differ from the two major parties?	**Similarities between parties** • Organize to win elections • Influence public policies • Reflect both liberal and conservative views • Define themselves in a way that wins majority support by appealing to the political center **Differences between parties** • Stated in a party's platform and reflected in campaigning **Third parties** • Introduce new ideas or press for a particular issue • Often revolve around a political personality (e.g., Theodore Roosevelt)	Create and explain maps, diagrams, tables, and charts. (CE.1b) Analyze political cartoons, political advertisements, pictures, and other graphic media. (CE.1c) Review information for accuracy, separating fact from opinion. (CE.1e) Identify a problem and recommend solutions. (CE.1f)

STANDARD CE.5c

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the political process at the local, state, and national levels of government by
c)   analyzing campaigns for elective office, with emphasis on the role of the media.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

Voters evaluate information presented in political campaigns to make reasoned choices among candidates.

The media plays an important role in the political process. | How do citizens make informed choices in elections?

How does the media play a role in the political process? | **Strategies for evaluating campaign speeches, literature, and advertisements for accuracy**
• Separating fact from opinion
• Detecting bias
• Evaluating sources
• Identifying propaganda

Mass media roles in elections
• Identifying candidates
• Emphasizing selected issues
• Writing editorials, creating political cartoons, publishing op-ed pieces
• Broadcasting different points of view | Analyze political cartoons, political advertisements, pictures, and other graphic media. (CE.1c)

Review information for accuracy, separating fact from opinion. (CE.1e) |

STANDARD CE.5d

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the political process at the local, state, and national levels of government by
d)   examining the role of campaign contributions and costs.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

| Running for political office is expensive. | How has the high cost of getting elected changed campaigning for public office? | **Rising campaign costs**
• Require candidates to conduct extensive fund-raising activities
• Limit opportunities to run for public office
• Give an advantage to wealthy individuals who run for office
• Encourage the development of political action committees (PACs)
• Give issue-oriented special interest groups increased influence

Campaign finance reform
• Rising campaign costs have led to efforts to reform campaign finance laws.
• Limits exist on the amount individuals may contribute to political candidates and campaigns. | Explain diagrams, tables, and charts. (CE.1b)

Analyze political cartoons, political advertisements, pictures, and other graphic media. (CE.1c)

Identify a problem and recommend solutions. (CE.1f) |

STANDARD CE.5e

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the political process at the local, state, and national levels of government by
e)   describing voter registration and participation.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

Voting is a basic responsibility of citizenship. Voter registration is required before a citizen may vote. The number of citizens who register and vote is related to how important election issues are to citizens.	What are the requirements for voter registration in Virginia? What factors influence voter turnout and registration?	Only citizens who register can participate in primary and general elections. **Qualifications to register to vote in Virginia** • Citizen of the United States • Resident of Virginia and precinct • 18 years of age by day of general election **How to register in Virginia** • In person at the registrar's office, at the Division of Motor Vehicles, or at other designated sites • By mail application Registration is closed 29 days before elections. **Factors in predicting which citizens will vote** • Education • Age • Income **Why citizens fail to vote** • Lack of interest • Failure to register	Examine and interpret primary and secondary source documents. (CE.1a) Create and explain diagrams, tables, charts, and graphs. (CE.1b) Analyze political cartoons, political advertisements, pictures, and other graphic media. (CE.1c) Identify a problem and recommend solutions. (CE.1f)

STANDARD CE.5e (continued)

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the political process at the local, state, and national levels of government by
e) describing voter registration and participation.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

		The percentage of voters who participate in presidential elections is usually greater than the percentage of voters who participate in state and local elections. Every vote is important.	

STANDARD CE.5f

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the political process at the local, state, and national levels of government by
f)   describing the role of the electoral college in the election of the President and Vice President.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

The electoral college process is used to select the President and Vice President of the United States.	How does the electoral college select the President and Vice President of the United States?	**Electoral college process** • The slate of electors for each state is chosen by popular vote. • The electors meet to vote for President and Vice President. • The winner-take-all system leads to the targeting of large states for campaigning, although candidates must pay attention to small states whose electoral votes may make the difference in tight elections. The number of electors of each state is based on the state's Congressional representation. The requirements for a majority vote to win in the electoral college favors a two-party system.	Create and explain maps, diagrams, tables, charts, graphs, and spreadsheets. (CE.1b) Analyze political cartoons, political advertisements, pictures, and other graphic media. (CE.1c) Identify a problem and recommend solutions. (CE.1f)

STANDARD CE.6a

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the American constitutional government by
 a) **explaining the relationship of state governments to the national government in the federal system.**

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

The Constitution of the United States of America establishes the principle of federalism, which is the division of power between the states and the national government.	How does the Constitution of the United States of America outline powers divided and shared among the national, state, and local levels of government?	The Constitution of the United States of America establishes a federal form of government in which the national government is supreme. The powers of the national government are either enumerated/expressed or implied in the Constitution of the United States of America. The powers not given to the national government by the Constitution of the United States of America are reserved for the states. The Constitution of the United States of America denies powers to both the national and state governments. The powers of the local governments in Virginia are derived from the state. **Primary responsibilities of each level of government** • National—Conducts foreign policy, regulates commerce • State—Promotes public health, safety, and welfare	Create and explain diagrams and charts. (CE.1b) Distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information. (CE.1d) Identify a problem and recommend solutions. (CE.1f)

STANDARD CE.6b

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the American constitutional government by
b)   describing the structure and powers of local, state, and national governments.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

| Legislative, executive, and judicial powers are separated at the state and national levels of government.

All powers of local government in Virginia are created and controlled by the state. | What are the structure and powers of government at each level? | The powers and responsibilities of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches at both the national and state levels are limited. | Examine and interpret primary and secondary source documents. (CE.1a)

Create and explain tables and charts. (CE.1b) |

Branch of Government	Local Government	Virginia Government	National Government
Legislative	Makes ordinances for community; approves annual budget; limits power to that delegated by the state	Makes laws for Virginia; approves biennial (two-year) budget; exercises power under the 10th amendment	Makes laws for nation; approves annual budget; approves presidential appointments
Executive	Elected or appointed by the Board of Supervisors or City Council; city or county managers hired by local legislatures	Executes laws of Virginia; prepares biennial budget for General Assembly; appoints cabinet officers and boards; administers state bureaucracy; grants pardons	Executes law of the land; prepares annual budget for congressional action; appoints cabinet officers, ambassadors, and federal judges; administers federal bureaucracy
Judicial	Local courts—Hear cases under the authority provided by state legislation	Supreme Court—Has power of judicial review over state laws Circuit courts—Try civil and criminal cases	Supreme Court—Has power of judicial review Federal courts—Try cases involving federal law and U.S. Constitutional questions

STANDARD CE.6c

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the American constitutional government by
c)   explaining the principle of separation of powers and the operation of checks and balances.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

Separating power among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches helps prevent any one branch from abusing its power.
 	
A system of checks and balances gives each of the three branches of government ways to limit the powers of the other branches.
	How do the separation of power and checks and balances protect against an abuse of power by any one branch of the government?	**Legislative powers over**
		• The executive branch
		  – Overrides vetoes
		  – Impeaches a President
		• The judicial branch
		  – Approves federal judges
		  – Impeaches federal judges
		
		Executive powers over
		• The legislative branch
		  – Vetoes acts of Congress
		  – Calls Congress into special session
		• The judicial branch
		  – Appoints federal judges
		
		Judicial powers over
		• The legislative branch
		  – Declares laws unconstitutional
		• The executive branch
		  – Declares executive acts unconstitutional
			Create and explain tables and charts. (CE.1b)

STANDARD CE.6d

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the American constitutional government by
d)   identifying the procedures for amending the Constitution of the United States of America.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

The Constitution of the United States of America defines the process by which formal changes are made to the document.	How can the Constitution of the United States of America be amended?	**Process for amending the Constitution of the United States of America** • Action by Congress or convention • Ratification by the states The amendment process is complex; to date, only 27 amendments have been added.	Examine and interpret primary and secondary source documents. (CE.1a) Identify a problem and recommend solutions. (CE.1f)

STANDARD CE.7a

The student will demonstrate knowledge of how public policy is made at the local, state, and national levels of government by
a)   **explaining the lawmaking process.**

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

| Officials who are elected to serve in the state and national legislatures make laws. | How do the Virginia General Assembly and the United States Congress make laws? | **Terms to know**
• Bicameral: Having two houses (e.g., the Senate and the House of Representatives)

The Virginia General Assembly and the United States Congress are bicameral legislatures.

Legislative powers
• Expressed (specifically listed)
• Implied (used to carry out expressed powers)

The lawmaking process in national and state legislatures
• Working in committees
• Debating on the floor
• Voting on a bill by both houses
• Signing the bill into law by the President or governor

Elected officials write laws and take action in response to problems or issues.

Individuals and interest groups help shape legislation. | Create and diagrams, tables, and charts. (CE.1b)

Analyze political cartoons, political advertisements, pictures, and other graphic media. (CE.1c)

Review information for accuracy, separating fact from opinion. (CE.1e)

Identify a problem and recommend solutions. (CE.1f) |

STANDARD CE.7b

The student will demonstrate knowledge of how public policy is made at the local, state, and national levels of government by
b)   describing the roles and powers of the executive branch.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

The executive branch plays a key role in the policymaking process.	What are the roles and powers of the executive branch at the state and national level?	The powers of the executive branch are defined in the Constitution of the United States of America and the Constitution of Virginia.	Examine and interpret primary and secondary source documents. (CE.1a)
		The executive branch at the state and national levels carries out the law.	Create and explain tables and charts. (CE.1b)
		Ways the executive branch influences policymaking • Proposing legislation in an annual speech to the legislature (State of the Commonwealth or State of the Union Address) • Appealing directly to the people • Approving or vetoing legislation • Appointing officials who carry out the laws	Analyze political cartoons. (CE.1c) Identify a problem and recommend solutions. (CE.1f)
		Cabinet departments, agencies, and regulatory groups interpret and help with carrying out laws.	

STANDARD CE.7c

The student will demonstrate knowledge of how public policy is made at the local, state, and national levels of government by
c)   examining the impact of the media on public opinion and public policy.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

| The media informs policymakers and influences public policy. | What influence does the media have on public policy and policymakers? | **Ways media play an important role in setting the public agenda**
• Focusing public attention on selected issues
• Offering a forum in which opposing viewpoints are communicated
• Holding government officials accountable to the public

Government officials use the media to communicate with the public. | Examine and interpret primary and secondary source documents. (CE.1a)

Analyze political cartoons, political advertisements, pictures, and other graphic media. (CE.1c)

Review information for accuracy, separating fact from opinion. (CE.1e)

Identify a problem and recommend solutions. (CE.1f) |

STANDARD CE.7d

The student will demonstrate knowledge of how public policy is made at the local, state, and national levels of government by
d)   describing how individuals and interest groups influence public policy.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

| Individuals and interest groups influence public policy. | How do individuals and interest groups influence policymakers? | **Terms to know**
Lobbying: Seeking to influence legislators to introduce or vote for or against a bill

Ways individuals influence public policy
• Participating in politics (voting, campaigning)
• Expressing opinions (lobbying, demonstrating, writing letters)
• Joining interest groups

Ways interest groups influence public policy
• Identifying issues
• Making political contributions
• Lobbying government officials | Analyze political cartoons, political advertisements, pictures, and other graphic media. (CE.1c)

Review information for accuracy, separating fact from opinion. (CE.1e)

Identify a problem and recommend solutions. (CE.1f) |

STANDARD CE.8a

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the judicial systems established by the Constitution of Virginia and the Constitution of the United States of America by

a)   **describing the organization and jurisdiction of federal and state courts.**

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
The judicial function is exercised in a dual court system, which consists of state courts and federal courts.	How are state courts organized, and what jurisdiction does each exercise? How are federal courts organized, and what jurisdiction does each exercise?	Virginia, like each of the other forty-nine states, has its own court system whose organization and jurisdiction are derived from Virginia's constitution and state laws. **Virginia Court System** **Virginia Supreme Court** (Justices/no jury) • Court of final appeal (Appellate jurisdiction) • Limited original jurisdiction **Court of Appeals of Virginia** (Judges/no jury) • Appellate jurisdiction from circuit courts **Circuit Court** (Judge and jury) • Original jurisdiction for felony criminal cases and for certain civil cases • Appellate jurisdiction from district courts **General District Court** (Judge) • Original jurisdiction of misdemeanors • Civil cases generally involving lower dollar amounts **Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court** (Judge/no jury) • Juvenile and family cases Magistrates issue search warrants, subpoenas, arrest warrants, and summons and set bail.	Create and explain diagrams, tables, charts, and graphs. (CE.1b) Distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information. (CE.1d)

STANDARD CE.8a (continued)

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the judicial systems established by the Constitution of Virginia and the Constitution of the United States of America by
a)   describing the organization and jurisdiction of federal and state courts.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
		The United States has a separate court system whose organization and jurisdiction are derived from the Constitution of the United States of America and federal laws. **United States Court System** **U.S. Supreme Court** (Justices/no jury) Jurisdiction: Appellate and Limited Original **U.S. Court of Appeals** (Justices/no jury) Jurisdiction: Appellate **U.S. District Court** (Judge with jury) Jurisdiction: Original	

STANDARD CE.8b

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the judicial systems established by the Constitution of Virginia and the Constitution of the United States of America by
b) describing the exercise of judicial review.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

The power of judicial review is an important check on the legislative and executive branches of government.	What is judicial review?	The supreme courts of the United States and Virginia determine the constitutionality of laws and acts of the executive branch of government. This power is called judicial review. *Marbury v. Madison* established the principle of judicial review at the national level. The Constitution of the United States of America is the supreme law of the land. State laws must conform to the Virginia and United States constitutions.	Examine and interpret primary and secondary source documents. (CE.1a)

STANDARD CE.8c

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the judicial systems established by the Constitution of Virginia and the Constitution of the United States of America by

c)   **explaining court proceedings in civil and criminal cases.**

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

| Courts resolve two kinds of legal conflicts—civil and criminal. | What is the basic process for bringing civil and criminal cases to trial? | **Criminal law**
In a criminal case, a court determines whether a person accused of breaking the law is guilty or not guilty of a misdemeanor or a felony.

Civil law
In a civil case, a court settles a disagreement between two parties.

Criminal procedure in felony cases
• A person accused of a crime may be arrested if the police have probable cause.
• The accused may be committed to jail or released on bail.
• The case proceeds to an arraignment where probable cause is reviewed, the defendant may be appointed an attorney, and a plea is entered.
• A court date is set and a trial is conducted.
• A guilty verdict may be appealed to the Court of Appeals or directly to the Supreme Court in certain cases. | Create and explain diagrams, tables, and charts. (CE.1b)

Distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information. (CE.1d)

Identify a problem and recommend solutions. (CE.1f) |

STANDARD CE.8c (continued)

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the judicial systems established by the Constitution of Virginia and the Constitution of the United States of America by
c)   explaining court proceedings in civil and criminal cases.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

| | | **Procedure for civil cases**
• The plaintiff files a complaint to recover damages or receive compensation.
• Case can be heard by judge or jury.
• Case can be appealed to the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court.

Procedure for cases involving juveniles
• Judges have greater latitude in handling juvenile cases.
• Juveniles who commit serious crimes can be tried as adults. | |

STANDARD CE.8d

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the judicial systems established by the Constitution of Virginia and the Constitution of the United States of America by
d)   explaining how due process protections seek to ensure justice.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

| The right to due process of the law is outlined in the 5th and 14th Amendments to the Constitution of the United States of America. | How do the due process protections ensure justice? | **Terms to know**
Due process of law: The constitutional protection against unfair governmental actions and laws

Due process protections
• 5th Amendment—Prohibits the national government from acting in an unfair manner
• 14th Amendment—Prohibits state and local governments from acting in an unfair manner

The Supreme Court has extended the due process clauses to protect the guarantees of the Bill of Rights. | Examine and interpret primary and secondary source documents. (CE.1a) |

STANDARD CE.9a

The student will demonstrate knowledge of how economic decisions are made in the marketplace by
a)   applying the concepts of scarcity, resources, choice, opportunity cost, price, incentives, supply and demand, production, and consumption.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
People make choices about how to use limited resources, decide the ownership of resources, and structure markets for the distribution of goods and services.	How do people deal with scarcity, resources, choice, opportunity cost, price, incentives, supply and demand, production, and consumption?	**Scarcity** is the inability to satisfy all wants at the same time. All resources and goods are limited. This requires that choices be made. **Resources** are factors of production that are used in the production of goods and services. Types of resources are natural, human, capital, and entrepreneurship. **Choice** is selecting an item or action from a set of possible alternatives. Individuals must choose/make decisions about desired goods and services because these goods and services are limited. **Opportunity cost** is what is given up when a choice is made—the highest valued alternative forgone. Individuals must consider the value of what is given up when making a choice. **Price** is the amount of money exchanged for a good or service. Interaction of supply and demand determines price. Price determines who acquires goods and services.	Create and explain maps, diagrams, tables, charts, graphs, and spreadsheets. (CE.1b) Review information for accuracy, separating fact from opinion. (CE.1e) Identify a problem and recommend solutions. (CE.1f)

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STANDARD CE.9a (continued)

The student will demonstrate knowledge of how economic decisions are made in the marketplace by
a)   applying the concepts of scarcity, resources, choice, opportunity cost, price, incentives, supply and demand, production, and consumption.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
		Incentives Incentives are things that incite or motivate. Incentives are used to change economic behavior. **Supply and demand** Interaction of supply and demand determines price. Demand is the amount of a good or service that consumers are willing and able to buy at a certain price. Supply is the amount of a good or service that producers are willing and able to sell at a certain price. **Production** Production is the combining of human, natural, capital, and entrepreneurship resources to make goods or provide services. Resources available and consumer preferences determine what is produced. **Consumption** Consumption is using goods and services. Consumer preferences and price determine what is purchased.	

STANDARD CE.9b

The student will demonstrate knowledge of how economic decisions are made in the marketplace by
b)   comparing the differences among free market, command, and mixed economies.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

| The type of economy is determined by the extent of government involvement in economic decision making. | What are the basic characteristics of free market, command, and mixed economies? | **Characteristics of major economic systems**
• Free market
  – Private ownership of property/resources
  – Profit
  – Competition
  – Consumer sovereignty
  – Individual choice
• Command economy
  – Central ownership of property/resources
  – Centrally-planned economy
  – Lack of consumer choice
• Mixed economy
  – Individuals and businesses as decision makers for the private sector
  – Government as decision maker for the public sector
  – A greater government role than in a free market economy
  – Most common economic system today | Create and explain maps, diagrams, tables, and charts. (CE.1b)

Distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information. (CE.1d) |

STANDARD CE.9c

The student will demonstrate knowledge of how economic decisions are made in the marketplace by
c)   describing the characteristics of the United States economy, including free markets, private property, profit, and competition.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

| The United States economy is a mixed economy. | What are the essential characteristics of the United States economy? | In the United States private individuals, businesses, and government share economic decision making.

Characteristics of the United States economy
• Free markets—Markets are allowed to operate without undue interference from the government.
• Private property—Individuals and businesses have the right to own personal property as well as the means of production without undue interference from the government.
• Profit—Profit consists of earnings after all expenses have been paid.
• Competition—Rivalry between producers/sellers of a good or service results in better quality goods and services at a lower price.
• Consumer sovereignty—Consumers determine through purchases, what goods and services will be produced. | Create and explain maps, diagrams, tables, charts, graphs, and spreadsheets. (CE.1b) |

STANDARD CE.10a

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the structure and operation of the United States economy by
a)   describing the types of business organizations and the role of entrepreneurship.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

There are three basic ways that businesses organize to earn profits. Entrepreneurs play an important role in all three business organizations.	What are the basic types of profit-seeking business structures? What is an entrepreneur?	**Basic types of business ownership** • Proprietorship—A form of business organization with one owner who takes all the risks and all the profits. • Partnership—A form of business organization with two or more owners who share the risks and the profits. • Corporation—A form of business organization that is authorized by law to act as a legal person regardless of the number of owners. Owners share the profits. Owner liability is limited to investment. **Entrepreneur** • A person who takes a risk to produce goods and services in search of profit • May establish a business according to any of the three types of organizational structures	Create and explain diagrams, tables, and charts. (CE.1b) Analyze political cartoons, political advertisements, pictures, and other graphic media. (CE.1c) Distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information. (CE.1d) Identify a problem and recommend solutions. (CE.1f)

STANDARD CE.10b

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the structure and operation of the United States economy by
b)   explaining the circular flow that shows how consumers (households), businesses (producers), and markets interact.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
Resources, goods and services, and money flow continuously among households, businesses, and markets in the United States economy.	How do resources, goods and services, and money flow among individuals, businesses, and governments in a market economy?	**Economic flow** • Individual and business saving and investment provide financial capital that can be borrowed for business expansion and increased consumption. • Individuals (households) own the resources used in production, sell the resources, and use the income to purchase products. • Businesses (producers) buy resources; make products that are sold to individuals, other businesses, and the government; and use the profits to buy more resources. • Governments use tax revenue from individuals and businesses to provide public goods and services.	Examine and interpret primary and secondary source documents. (CE.1a) Distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information. (CE.1d) Review information for accuracy, separating fact from opinion. (CE.1e)

STANDARD CE.10c

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the structure and operation of the United States economy by
c)   explaining how financial institutions encourage saving and investing.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
Private financial institutions act as intermediaries between savers and borrowers.	How do financial institutions encourage saving and investing?	**Characteristics of private financial institutions** • Include banks, savings and loans, credit unions, and securities brokerages • Receive deposits and make loans • Encourage saving and investing by paying interest on deposits	Review information for accuracy, separating fact from opinion. (CE.1e)

STANDARD CE.10d

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the structure and operation of the United States economy by
d)   examining the relationship of Virginia and the United States to the global economy, with emphasis on the impact of technological innovations.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
Virginia and the United States pursue international trade in order to increase wealth.	Why do Virginia and the United States trade with other nations? What is the impact of technological innovation on world trade?	**Global Economy**—Worldwide markets in which the buying and selling of goods and services by all nations takes place **Reasons that states and nations trade** • To obtain goods and services they cannot produce or produce efficiently themselves • To buy goods and services at a lower cost or a lower opportunity cost • To sell goods and services to other countries • To create jobs Virginia and the United States specialize in the production of certain goods and services which promotes efficiency and growth. **Impact of technological innovations** • Innovations in technology (e.g., the Internet) contribute to the global flow of information, capital, goods, and services. • The use of such technology also lowers the cost of production.	Create and explain maps, diagrams, tables, charts, graphs, and spreadsheets. (CE.1b) Identify a problem and recommend solutions. (CE.1f)

STANDARD CE.11a

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the role of government in the United States economy by
a)   examining competition in the marketplace.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

The government promotes and regulates competition.	How does the United States government promote and regulate competition?	**Ways the government promotes marketplace competition** • Enforcing antitrust legislation to discourage the development of monopolies • Engaging in global trade • Supporting business start-ups **Government agencies that regulate business** • FCC (Federal Communications Commission) • EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) • FTC (Federal Trade Commission) These agencies oversee the way individuals and companies do business.	Analyze political cartoons, pictures, and other graphic media. (CE.1c) Review information for accuracy, separating fact from opinion. (CE.1e) Identify a problem and recommend solutions. (CE.1f)

STANDARD CE.11b

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the role of government in the United States economy by
b)   explaining the creation of public goods and services.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

Government provides public goods and services that individuals acting alone could not provide efficiently.	What are public goods and services? How do governments produce public goods and services?	**Characteristics of public goods and services** • Include such items as interstate highways, postal service, and national defense • Provide benefits to many simultaneously • Would not be available if individuals had to provide them **Ways governments produce public goods and services** • Through tax revenue • Through borrowed funds	Distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information. (CE.1d) Identify a problem and recommend solutions. (CE.1f)

STANDARD CE.11c

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the role of government in the United States economy by
c)   describing the impact of taxation, including an understanding of the reasons for the 16th Amendment, spending, and borrowing.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

The government taxes, borrows, and spends to influence economic activity.	How does the government influence economic activity?	Government tax increases reduce the funds available for private and business spending; tax decreases increase funds for private and business spending. Increased government borrowing reduces funds available for borrowing by individuals and businesses; decreased government borrowing increases funds available for borrowing by individuals and businesses. Increased government spending increases demand, which may increase employment and production; decreased spending reduces demand, which may result in a slowing of the economy. Increased government spending may result in higher taxes; decreased government spending may result in lower taxes. The 16th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America authorizes Congress to tax incomes (personal and business).	Examine and interpret primary and secondary source documents. (CE.1a) Create and explain diagrams, tables, and charts. (CE.1b) Analyze political cartoons. (CE.1c) Identify a problem and recommend solutions. (CE.1f)

STANDARD CE.11d

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the role of government in the United States economy by
d)   explaining how the Federal Reserve System regulates the money supply.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

The Federal Reserve System, acting as the central bank, regulates the money supply.	What is the role of the Federal Reserve System in maintaining a stable economy?	The Federal Reserve System (Fed) is the central bank of the United States. Federal Reserve banks act as a banker's bank by issuing currency and regulating the amount of money in circulation. To slow the economy, the Federal Reserve Bank restricts the money supply, causing interest rates to rise; to stimulate the economy the Fed increases the money supply, causing interest rates to decline. **Ways the Federal Reserve Bank slows the economy** • Increases the reserve requirement • Raises the discount rate • Sells government securities **Ways the Federal Reserve Bank stimulates the economy** • Lowers the reserve requirement • Lowers the discount rate • Purchases government securities	Create and explain maps, diagrams, tables, and charts. (CE.1b) Identify a problem and recommend solutions. (CE.1f)

STANDARD CE.11e

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the role of government in the United States economy by
e)   describing the protection of consumer rights and property rights.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

The United States government passes laws and creates agencies to protect consumer rights and property rights.	What is the role of the United States government in protecting consumer rights and property rights?	Individuals have the right of private ownership, which is protected by negotiated contracts that are enforceable by law. Government agencies establish guidelines that protect public health and safety. Consumers may take legal action against violations of consumer rights.	Identify a problem and recommend solutions. (CE.1f)

STANDARD CE.12

The student will demonstrate knowledge of career opportunities by
a)   **identifying talents, interests, and aspirations that influence career choice;**
b)   **identifying attitudes and behaviors that strengthen the individual work ethic and promote career success;**
c)   **identifying skills and education that careers require;**
d)   **examining the impact of technological change on career opportunities.**

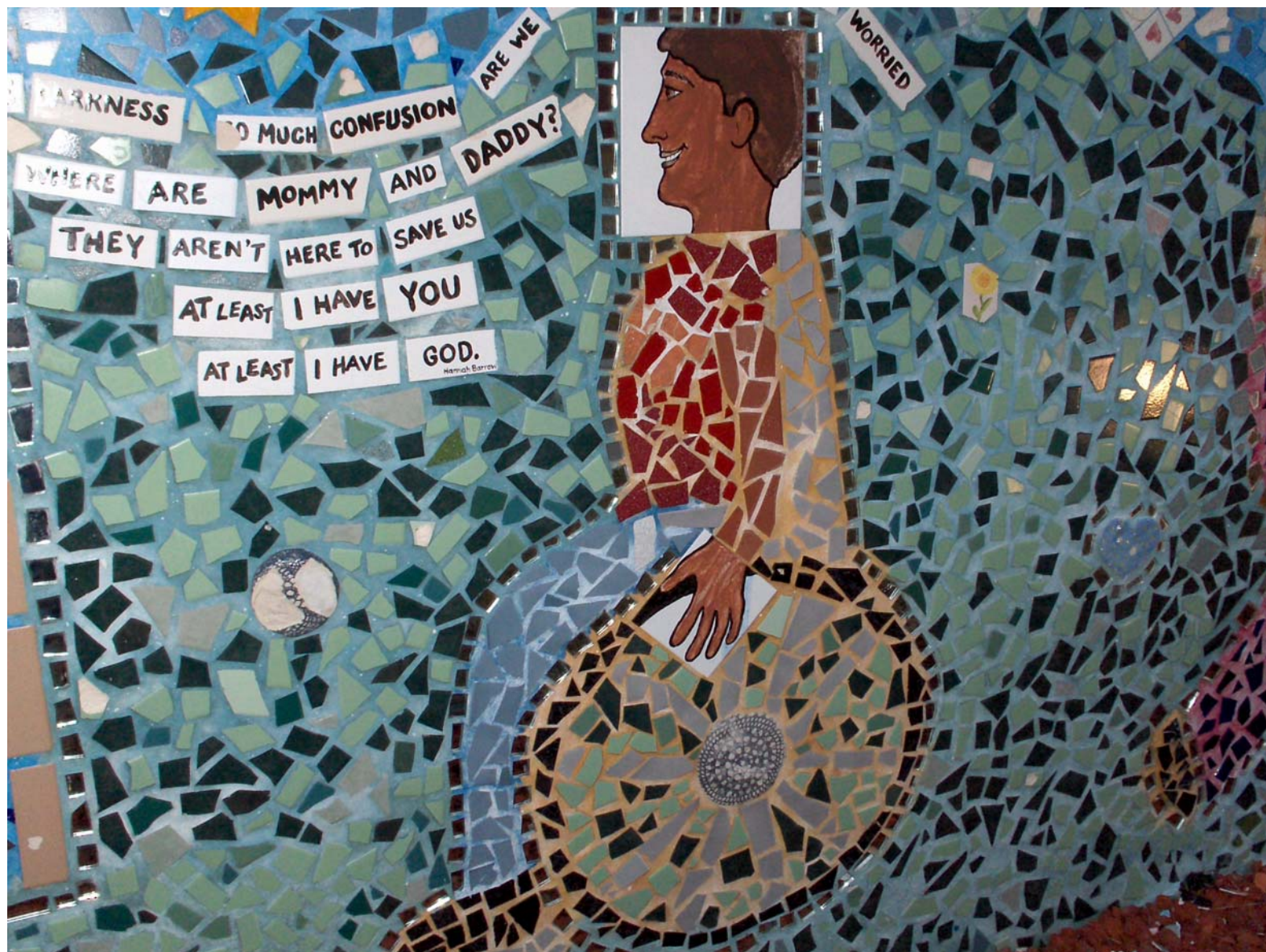| Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

An awareness of individual talents, interests, and aspirations is needed to select a career. Attitudes and behaviors that support a strong work ethic enhance career success. There is a correlation between skills, education, and income. Changes in technology influence the abilities, skills, and education needed in the marketplace.	What is the role of self-assessment in career planning? What is the role of work ethic in determining career success? What is the relationship between skills, education, and income? What influence do advances in technology have on the workplace?	Career planning starts with self-assessment. Employers seek employees who demonstrate the attitudes and behaviors of a strong work ethic. Higher skill(s) and/or education level(s) generally lead to higher incomes. Supply and demand also influence job income. Employers seek individuals who have kept pace with technological change/skills. Technological advancements create new jobs in the workplace.	Review information for accuracy, separating fact from opinion. (CE.1e) Identify a problem and recommend solutions. (CE.1f)

Appendix B

Pictures of Tolerance Wall

...SADNESS...STRETCH...
...LONELINESS...SINKING TO T...
...DESPAIR SO GREAT HE TH...
WOULD SWALLO...
CAN DARKNESS
CAN DESPAIR...
YOUNG FELLOW THE SUN
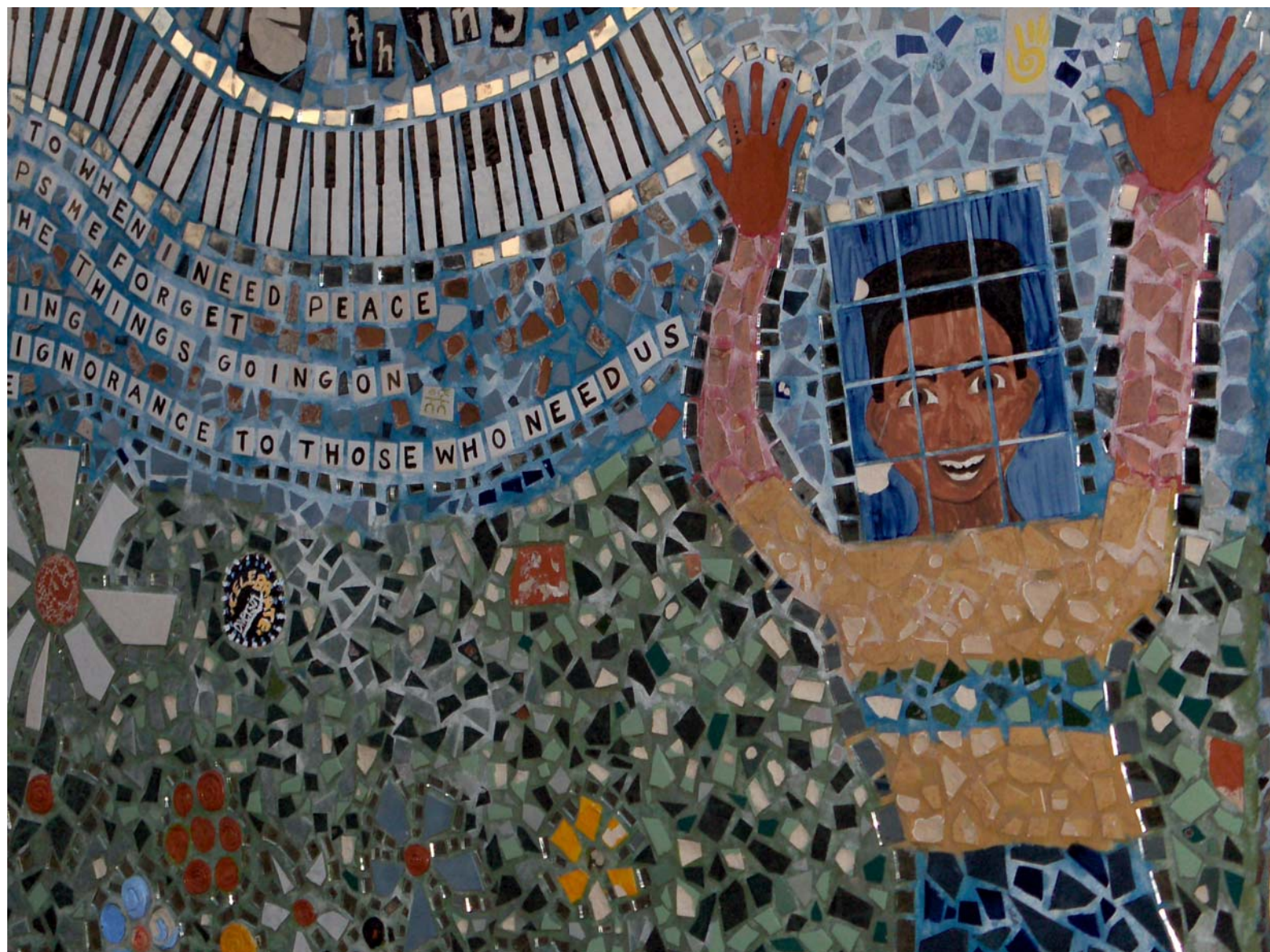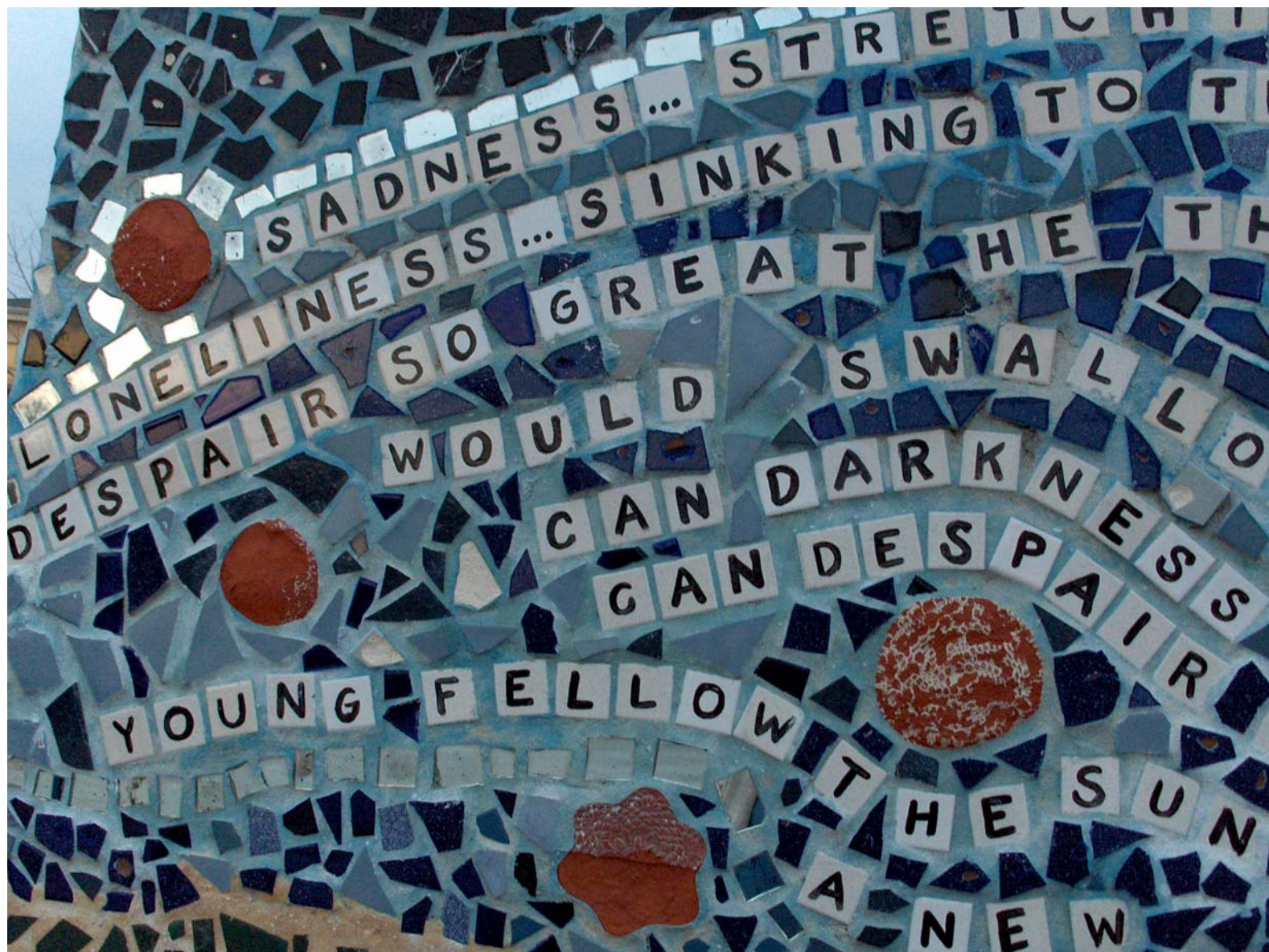A NEW

Appendix C

Sixth Grade Standards of Learning Curriculum Guide

Curriculum Framework

United States History to 1877

STANDARD USI.1 a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h

The student will develop skills for historical and geographical analysis, including the ability to
a) **identify and interpret primary and secondary source documents to increase understanding of events and life in United States history to 1877;**
b) **make connections between the past and the present;**
c) **sequence events in United States history from pre-Columbian times to 1877;**
d) **interpret ideas and events from different historical perspectives;**
e) **evaluate and discuss issues orally and in writing;**
f) **analyze and interpret maps to explain relationships among landforms, water features, climatic characteristics, and historical events;**
g) **distinguish between parallels of latitude and meridians of longitude;**
h) **interpret patriotic slogans and excerpts from notable speeches and documents.**

The skills identified in standard USI.1a-h are cited in the "Essential Skills" column of each chart for *United States History to 1877* with the exception of "e" (evaluate and discuss issues orally and in writing). Students should have opportunities to practice speaking and writing, but these skills will not be assessed on the Standards of Learning test. All other skills will be assessed on the Standards of Learning test. Teachers should incorporate these skills into instruction throughout the year.

STANDARD USI.2a

The student will use maps, globes, photographs, pictures, and tables to
a)   locate the seven continents.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
Continents are large land masses surrounded by water.	What are the seven continents?	**Continents** • North America • South America • Africa • Asia • Australia • Antarctica • Europe* *Europe is considered a continent even though it is not entirely surrounded by water. The land mass is frequently called Eurasia.	Analyze and interpret maps. (USI.1f)

STANDARD USI.2b

The student will use maps, globes, photographs, pictures, and tables to

b)   **locate and describe the location of the geographic regions of North America: Coastal Plain, Appalachian Mountains, Canadian Shield, Interior Lowlands, Great Plains, Rocky Mountains, Basin and Range, and Coastal Range.**

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
Geographic regions have distinctive characteristics.	Where are the geographic regions of North America located? What are some physical characteristics of the geographic regions of North America?	**Geographic regions—locations and physical characteristics** *Coastal Plain* • Located along the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico • Broad lowland providing many excellent harbors *Appalachian Highlands* • Located west of Coastal Plain extending from eastern Canada to western Alabama; includes the Piedmont • Old, eroded mountains (oldest mountain range in North America) *Canadian Shield* • Wrapped around Hudson Bay in a horseshoe shape • Hills worn by erosion and hundreds of lakes carved by glaciers • Holds some of the oldest rock formations in North America *Interior Lowlands* • Located west of the Appalachian Mountains and east of the Great Plains • Rolling flatlands with many rivers, broad river valleys, and grassy hills	Analyze and interpret maps to explain relationships among landforms and water features. (USI.1f)

STANDARD USI.2b (continued)

The student will use maps, globes, photographs, pictures, and tables to

b) **locate and describe the location of the geographic regions of North America: Coastal Plain, Appalachian Mountains, Canadian Shield, Interior Lowlands, Great Plains, Rocky Mountains, Basin and Range, and Coastal Range.**

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
		Great Plains • Located west of Interior Lowlands and east of the Rocky Mountains • Flat land that gradually increases in elevation westward; grasslands *Rocky Mountains* • Located west of the Great Plains and east of the Basin and Range • Rugged mountains stretching from Alaska almost to Mexico; high elevations • Contains the Continental Divide, which determines the directional flow of rivers *Basin and Range* • Located west of Rocky Mountains and east of the Sierra Nevadas and the Cascades • Area of varying elevations containing isolated mountain ranges and Death Valley, the lowest point in North America *Coastal Range* • Rugged mountains along the Pacific Coast that stretch from California to Canada • Contains fertile valleys	

STANDARD USI.2c

The student will use maps, globes, photographs, pictures, and tables to

c)   **locate and identify the water features important to the early history of the United States: Great Lakes, Mississippi River, Missouri River, Ohio River, Columbia River, Colorado River, Rio Grande, Atlantic Ocean, Pacific Ocean, and Gulf of Mexico.**

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
The United States has access to numerous and varied bodies of water. Bodies of water support interaction among regions, form borders, and create links to other areas.	What are the major bodies of water in the United States? What are some ways bodies of water in the United States have supported interaction and created links to other regions?	**Major bodies of water** • *Oceans:* Atlantic, Pacific • *Rivers:* Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Columbia, Colorado, Rio Grande • *Lakes:* Great Lakes • *Gulf:* Gulf of Mexico **Trade, transportation, and settlement** • The location of the United States, with its Atlantic and Pacific coasts, has provided access to other areas of the world. • The Atlantic Ocean served as the highway for explorers, early settlers, and later immigrants. • The Ohio River was the gateway to the west. • Inland port cities grew in the Midwest along the Great Lakes. • The Mississippi and Missouri Rivers were the transportation arteries for farm and industrial products. They were links to ports and other parts of the world. • The Columbia River was explored by Lewis and Clark.	Identify and interpret primary and secondary source documents to increase understanding of events and life in United States history. (USI.1a) Sequence events in United States history. (USI.1c) Analyze and interpret maps to explain relationships among water features and historical events. (USI.1f)

STANDARD USI.2c (continued)

The student will use maps, globes, photographs, pictures, and tables to

c) **locate and identify the water features important to the early history of the United States: Great Lakes, Mississippi River, Missouri River, Ohio River, Columbia River, Colorado River, Rio Grande, Atlantic Ocean, Pacific Ocean, and Gulf of Mexico.**

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
		• The Colorado River was explored by the Spanish. • The Rio Grande forms the border with Mexico. • The Pacific Ocean was an early exploration route. • The Gulf of Mexico provided the French and Spanish with exploration routes to Mexico and other parts of America.	

STANDARD USI.3a

The student will demonstrate knowledge of how early cultures developed in North America by
a) **locating where the American Indians (First Americans) settled, with emphasis on Arctic (Inuit), Northwest (Kwakiutl), Plains (Sioux), Southwest (Pueblo), and Eastern Woodland (Iroquois).**

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
Prior to the arrival of Europeans, American Indians (First Americans) were dispersed across different environments in North America.	In which areas did the American Indians (First Americans) live?	Inuit inhabited present-day Alaska and northern Canada. They lived in Arctic areas where the temperature is below freezing much of the year. Kwakiutl inhabited the Pacific Northwest coast, characterized by a rainy, mild climate. Sioux inhabited the interior of the United States, called the Great Plains and characterized by dry grasslands. Pueblo inhabited the Southwest in present-day New Mexico and Arizona, where they lived in desert areas and areas bordering cliffs and mountains. Iroquois inhabited northeast North America, the Eastern Woodland, which is heavily forested.	Sequence events in United States history. (USI.1c) Analyze and interpret maps to explain relationships among landforms, water features, climatic characteristics, and historical events. (USI.1f)

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STANDARD USI.3b

The student will demonstrate knowledge of how early cultures developed in North America by
b)   describing how the American Indians (First Americans) used their environment to obtain food, clothing, and shelter.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
Geography and climate affected how various American Indian (First American) groups met their basic needs.	How did geography and climate affect the way American Indian (First American) groups met their basic needs?	The American Indians (First Americans) fished, hunted, and harvested crops for food. Clothing was made from animal skins and plants. Their shelter was made of resources found in their environment (e.g., sod, stones, animal skins, wood).	Identify and interpret primary and secondary source documents to increase understanding of events and life in United States history. (USI.1a) Interpret ideas and events from different historical perspectives. (USI.1d) Analyze and interpret maps. (USI.1f)

STANDARD USI.4a

The student will demonstrate knowledge of European exploration in North America and West Africa by
a)   describing the motivations, obstacles, and accomplishments of the Spanish, French, Portuguese, and English explorations.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
Major European countries were in competition to extend their power into North America and claim the land as their own.	Why did European countries compete for power in North America? What were the obstacles faced by the explorers? What were the accomplishments of the explorations? What regions of North America were explored and settled by France, England, and Spain? What regions were explored by Portugal?	**Motivating forces for exploration** • Economic—Gold, natural resources, and trade • Religious—Spread of Christianity • Competitions for empire and belief in superiority of own culture **Obstacles to exploration** • Poor maps and navigational tools • Disease/starvation • Fear of unknown • Lack of adequate supplies **Accomplishments of exploration** • Exchanged goods and ideas • Improved navigational tools and ships • Claimed territories (see individual countries below)	Identify and interpret primary and secondary source documents to increase understanding of events and life in United States history. (USI.1a) Interpret ideas and events from different historical perspectives. (USI.1d) Analyze and interpret maps to explain relationships among landforms, water features, climatic characteristics, and historical events. (USI.1f)

STANDARD USI.4a (continued)

The student will demonstrate knowledge of European exploration in North America and West Africa by
a)   describing the motivations, obstacles, and accomplishments of the Spanish, French, Portuguese, and English explorations.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
		Regions of North America explored by Spain, France, and England • Spain – Francisco Coronado claimed southwest United States for Spain. • France – Samuel de Champlain established the French settlement of Quebec. – Robert La Salle claimed the Mississippi River Valley. • England – John Cabot explored eastern Canada. **Regions explored by Portugal** • The Portuguese made voyages of discovery along West Africa.	

STANDARD USI.4b

The student will demonstrate knowledge of European exploration in North America and West Africa by
b)   describing cultural interactions between Europeans and American Indians (First Americans) that led to cooperation and conflict.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

The interactions between American Indians (First Americans) and Europeans sometimes led to cooperation and other times resulted in conflict.	How did the American Indians (First Americans) and Europeans interact with each other?	**Cultural interaction**
		• Spanish
		  – Conquered and enslaved American Indians (First Americans)
		  – Brought Christianity to the New World
		  – Brought European diseases
		• French
		  – Established trading posts
		  – Spread Christian religion
		• English
		  – Established settlements and claimed ownership of land
		  – Learned farming techniques from American Indians (First Americans)
		  – Traded
		
		Areas of cooperation
		• Technologies (transportation of weapons and farm tools)
		• Trade
		• Crops
			Identify and interpret primary and secondary source documents to increase understanding of events and life in United States history. (USI.1a)
			
			Interpret ideas and events from different historical perspectives. (USI.1d)

STANDARD USI.4b (continued)

The student will demonstrate knowledge of European exploration in North America and West Africa by
b)   describing cultural interactions between Europeans and American Indians (First Americans) that led to cooperation and conflict.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
		Areas of conflict • Land • Competition for trade • Differences in cultures • Disease • Language difference	

STANDARD USI.4c

The student will demonstrate knowledge of European exploration in North America and West Africa by
c)   identifying the location and describing the characteristics of West African societies (Ghana, Mali, and Songhai) and their interactions with traders.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
Ghana, Mali, and Songhai each dominated West Africa in turn from 300 to l600 A.D. African people and African goods played an important role in arousing European interest in world resources.	What was the importance of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai? How did West African empires impact European trade?	Ghana, Mali, and Songhai became powerful by controlling trade in West Africa. The Portuguese carried goods from Europe to West African empires, trading metals, cloth, and other manufactured goods for gold.	Interpret ideas and events from different historical perspectives. (USI.1d) Analyze and interpret maps to explain relationships among landforms, water features, and historical events. (USI.1f) Distinguish between parallels of latitude and meridians of longitude. (USI.1g)

STANDARD USI.5a

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the factors that shaped colonial America by
a)   describing the religious and economic events and conditions that led to the colonization of America.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
Colonies in North America were established for religious and economic reasons.	Why did Europeans establish colonies in North America?	**Colonies and the reasons they were established** • Roanoke Island (Lost Colony) was established as an economic venture. The first permanent English settlement in North America (1607), Jamestown Settlement, was an economic venture by the Virginia Company. • Plymouth colony was settled by separatists from the Church of England who wanted to avoid religious persecution. Massachusetts Bay Colony was settled by the Puritans for the same reasons. • Pennsylvania was settled by the Quakers, who wanted to have freedom to practice their faith without interference. • Georgia was settled by people who had been in debtor's prisons in England. They hoped to experience a new life in the colony and to experience economic freedom in the New World.	Identify and interpret primary and secondary source documents to increase understanding of events and life in United States history. (USI.1a) Sequence events in United States history. (USI.1c) Interpret ideas and events from different historical perspectives. (USI.1d)

STANDARD USI.5b

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the factors that shaped colonial America by

b)   comparing and contrasting life in the New England, Mid-Atlantic, and Southern colonies, with emphasis on how people interacted with their environment.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

Life in the colonies reflected the geographical features of the settlements.	How did climate and geographic features distinguish the three regions from each other?
	
	How did people use the natural resources of their region to earn a living?
	
	How did political and social life evolve in each of the three regions?
		Interactions of people and environment
		New England
		• Geography and climate
		  – Appalachian Mountains, Boston harbor, hilly terrain, rocky soil, jagged coastline
		  – Moderate summers, cold winters
		• Economy
		  – Fishing, shipbuilding industry and naval supplies, trade and port cities
		  – Skilled craftsmen, shopkeepers
		• Social life
		  – Village and church as center of life
		  – Religious reformers and separatists
		• Political and civic life
		  – Town meetings
		
		Mid-Atlantic
		• Geography and climate
		  – Appalachian Mountains, coastal lowlands (harbors and bays, wide and deep rivers), rich farmlands
		  – Moderate climate
			Identify and interpret primary and secondary source documents to increase understanding of events and life in United States history. (1a)
			
			Interpret ideas and events from different historical perspectives. (1d)
			
			Analyze and interpret maps to explain relationships among landforms, water features, climatic characteristics, and historical events. (1f)

STANDARD USI.5b (continued)

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the factors that shaped colonial America by
b) comparing and contrasting life in the New England, Mid-Atlantic, and Southern colonies, with emphasis on how people interacted with their environment.

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Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
		• Economy – Livestock and grain, trading – Unskilled and skilled workers and fishermen • Social life – Villages and cities – Varied and diverse lifestyles – Diverse religions • Political and civic life – Market towns *South* • Geography and climate – Appalachian Mountains, Piedmont, Atlantic Coastal Plain, good harbors, rivers – Humid climate • Economy – Large farms/plantations, cash crops, wood products, small farms – Slavery • Social life – Plantations (slavery), mansions, indentured servants, few cities, few schools – Church of England • Political and civic life – Counties	

STANDARD USI.5c

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the factors that shaped colonial America by
c) describing colonial life in America from the perspectives of large landowners, farmers, artisans, women, indentured servants, and slaves.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
The colonies were made up of different groups of people whose lives varied depending on their social position.	How did people's lives vary among different social groups in colonial America?	**Large landowners** • Lived predominately in the South • Relied on indentured servants and/or slaves for labor • Were educated in some cases • Had rich social culture **Farmers** • Worked the land according to the region • Relied on family members for labor **Artisans** • Worked as craftsmen in towns and on the plantation • Lived in small villages and cities **Women** • Worked as caretakers, house-workers, homemakers • Could not vote • Had few chances for an education	Interpret ideas and events from different historical perspectives. (USI.1d)

STANDARD USI.5c (continued)

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the factors that shaped colonial America by
c) describing colonial life in America from the perspectives of large landowners, farmers, artisans, women, indentured servants, and slaves.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
		Indentured servants • Consisted of men and women who did not have money for passage to the colonies and who agreed to work without pay for the person who paid for their passage • Were free at the end of their contract **Slaves** • Were captured in their native Africa and sold to slave traders, then were shipped to the colonies where they were sold into slavery • Were owned as property for life with no rights • Were often born into slavery (Children of slaves were born into slavery.)	

STANDARD USI.5d

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the factors that shaped colonial America by
d)   identifying the political and economic relationships between the colonies and England.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
England established and attempted to maintain control over the colonies.	How did England impose its political and economic control over the colonies?	**Economic relationships** • England imposed strict control over trade. • England taxed the colonies after the French and Indian War. • Colonies traded raw materials for goods. **Political relationships** • Colonists had to obey English laws that were enforced by governors. • Colonial governors were appointed by the king or by the proprietor. • Colonial legislatures made laws for each colony and were monitored by colonial governors.	Interpret ideas and events from different historical perspectives. (USI.1d) Analyze and interpret maps to explain relationships among landforms, water features, and historical events. (USI.1f)

STANDARD USI.6a

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the causes and results of the American Revolution by
a)   identifying the issues of dissatisfaction that led to the American Revolution.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
As England expanded control over the American colonies, many colonists became dissatisfied and rebellious.	What steps did England take to increase control over its colonies? Why did many colonists become dissatisfied with England's control over the colonies?	**England's reasons for control** • England desired to remain a world power. • England imposed taxes, such as the Stamp Act, to raise necessary revenue to pay the cost of the French and Indian War. **England's reasons for taxation** • To help finance the French and Indian War • To help with the maintaining of English troops in the colonies **Sources of colonial dissatisfaction** • Colonies had no representation in Parliament. • Some colonists resented power of colonial governors. • England wanted strict control over colonial legislatures. • Colonies opposed taxes. • The Proclamation of l763 hampered the western movement of settlers.	Make connections between the past and the present (USI.1b) Sequence events in United States history. (USI.1c) Interpret ideas and events from different historical perspectives. (USI.1d)

STANDARD USI.6b

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the causes and results of the American Revolution by
b) identifying how political ideas shaped the revolutionary movement in America and led to the Declaration of Independence, with emphasis on the ideas of John Locke.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

New political ideas led to a desire for independence and democratic government in the American colonies. The Declaration of Independence proclaimed independence from England. It stated that people have natural (inherent) rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.	What ideas/philosophies about government were expressed in the Declaration of Independence?	**Ideas of John Locke** • People have natural rights to life, liberty, and property. • Government is created to protect the rights of people and has only the limited and specific powers the people consent to give it. **Key philosophies in the Declaration of Independence** • People have "certain unalienable rights" (rights that cannot be taken away)—life, liberty, pursuit of happiness. • People establish government to protect those rights. • Government derives power from the people. • People have a right and a duty to change a government that violates their rights.	Identify and interpret primary and secondary source documents to increase understanding of events and life in United States history. (USI.1a) Make connections between the past and the present (USI.1b) Interpret ideas and events from different historical perspectives. (USI.1d) Interpret excerpts from notable documents. (USI.1h)

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STANDARD USI.6c

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the causes and results of the American Revolution by

c)   **describing key events and the roles of key individuals in the American Revolution, with emphasis on George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry, and Thomas Paine.**

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
Many individuals played important roles in shaping events of the American Revolution.	Who were some of the key individuals in the Revolutionary War? What role did key individuals play in the Revolutionary War? What were some of the key events that occurred during the Revolutionary War period?	**Key individuals** • King George III: British king during the Revolutionary era • Lord Cornwallis: British general who surrendered at Yorktown • John Adams: Championed the cause of independence • George Washington: Commander of the Continental Army • Thomas Jefferson: Major author of the Declaration of Independence • Patrick Henry: Outspoken member of House of Burgesses; inspired colonial patriotism with "Give me liberty or give me death" speech • Benjamin Franklin: Prominent member of Continental Congress; helped frame the Declaration of Independence • Thomas Paine: Journalist, author of *Common Sense* **Other important individuals** • Phillis Wheatley: A former slave who wrote poems and plays supporting American independence • Paul Revere: Patriot who made a daring ride to warn colonists of British arrival	Identify and interpret primary and secondary source documents to increase understanding of events and life in United States history. (USI.1a) Sequence events in United States history. (USI.1c) Interpret ideas and events from different historical perspectives. (USI.1d) Analyze and interpret maps to explain historical events. (USI.1f) Interpret patriotic slogans and excerpts from notable speeches and documents. (USI.1h)

STANDARD USI.6c (continued)

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the causes and results of the American Revolution by
c)   describing key events and the roles of key individuals in the American Revolution, with emphasis on George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry, and Thomas Paine.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
		Key Events • Boston Massacre: Colonists in Boston were shot after taunting British soldiers. • Boston Tea Party: Samuel Adams and Paul Revere led patriots in throwing tea into Boston Harbor to protest tea taxes. • First Continental Congress: Delegates from all colonies except Georgia met to discuss problems with England and to promote independence. • Battle of Lexington and Concord: This was the site of the first armed conflict of the Revolutionary War. • Approval of the Declaration of Independence: Colonies declared independence from England (July 4, 1776). • Battle of Saratoga: This American victory was the turning point in the war. • Surrender at Yorktown: This was the colonial victory over forces of Lord Cornwallis that marked the end of the Revolutionary War. • Signing of the Treaty of Paris: England recognized American independence in this treaty.	

STANDARD USI.6d

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the causes and results of the American Revolution by
d)   explaining reasons why the colonies were able to defeat Britain.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
Defense of the colonists' own land, strong beliefs, and capable leadership contributed to the American victory in the Revolutionary War.	What advantages helped the American colonists win the Revolutionary War?	**Colonial advantages** • Colonists' defense of their own land, principles, and beliefs • Support from France and Spain • Strong leadership	Interpret ideas and events from different historical perspectives. (USI.1d) Analyze and interpret maps to explain relationships among landforms, water features, climatic characteristics, and historical events. (USI.1f)

STANDARD USI.7a

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the challenges faced by the new nation by
a)   identifying the weaknesses of the government established by the Articles of Confederation.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
The Articles of Confederation was a constitution written during the American Revolution to establish the powers of the new national government.	What were the basic weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation?	**Articles of Confederation** • Provided for a weak national government • Gave Congress no power to tax or regulate commerce among the states • Provided for no common currency • Gave each state one vote regardless of size • Provided for no executive or judicial branch	Identify and interpret primary and secondary source documents to increase understanding of events and life in United States history. (USI.1a) Interpret ideas and events from different historical perspectives. (USI.1d) Analyze and interpret maps to explain historical events. (USI.1f)

STANDARD USI.7b

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the challenges faced by the new nation by
b)   identifying the basic principles of the new government established by the Constitution of the United States of America and the Bill of Rights.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

The Constitution of the United States of America established a federal system of government based on power shared between the national and state governments.
 	
The Bill of Rights provided a written guarantee of individual rights.
	What were the basic principles of governments stated in the Constitution of the United States of America and Bill of Rights?	**Terms to know**
		Federal system of government: A system that divides governmental powers between national government and the governments of the states
		
		Basic principles of government
		Separation of powers
		• The structure of the new national government was based on James Madison's "Virginia Plan," which called for three separate branches of government:
		  – Legislative Branch (Congress) makes the laws. Congress is a two-house legislature in which all states are represented equally in the Senate (two Senators per state) and people are represented in the House of Representatives (number of a state's representatives is based on state's population).
		  – Judicial Branch (Supreme Court) determines if laws made by Congress are constitutional.
		  – Executive Branch (President) carries out the laws.
			Identify and interpret primary and secondary source documents to increase understanding of events and life in United States history. (USI.1a)
			
			Make connections between the past and the present. (USI.1b)
			
			Interpret ideas and events from different historical perspectives. (USI.1d)

STANDARD USI.7b (continued)

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the challenges faced by the new nation by
b) identifying the basic principles of the new government established by the Constitution of the United States of America and the Bill of Rights.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
		Checks and balances • Each branch can check the power of the other. • These checks keep any one branch from gaining too much power. **Bill of Rights** • James Madison was the author of the Bill of Rights. • The first ten amendments to the Constitution of the United States of America provide a written guarantee of individual rights (e.g., freedom of speech, freedom of religion).	

STANDARD USI.7c

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the challenges faced by the new nation by
c) identifying the conflicts that resulted in the emergence of two political parties.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson had opposing views on the role of the national government. That opposition resulted in the creation of two political parties.
 	
The debate over the role of the national government has continued throughout United States history.
	What were the major differences between Hamilton and Jefferson?	**Major party differences**
		• Alexander Hamilton
		  – Leader of Federalists
		  – Favored strong national government
		  – Favored limits on states' powers
		  – Favored development of industry on a national scale
		  – Favored a national bank
		• Thomas Jefferson
		  – Leader of the Democratic Republicans
		  – Favored a weak national government
		  – Supported states' powers
		  – Favored small business and farmers
		  – Opposed a national bank
			Make connections between the past and the present. (USI.1b)
			
			Interpret ideas and events from different historical perspectives. (USI.1d)

STANDARD USI.7d

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the challenges faced by the new nation by
d)   describing the major accomplishments of the first five presidents of the United States.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
Congress and the first five presidents made decisions establishing a strong government that helped the nation grow in size and power.	What were the major national issues and events faced by the first five presidents?	All of the first five presidents were Virginians except John Adams. **Accomplishments during first five presidencies** *George Washington* • Federal court system was established. • Political parties grew out of the disagreements between Hamilton and Jefferson over the proper role of the national government. • The Bill of Rights was added to the Constitution of the United States of America. • Plans were initiated for development of the national capital in Washington, D.C. Benjamin Banneker, an African American astronomer and surveyor, helped complete the design for the city. *John Adams* • A two-party system emerged during his administration. *Thomas Jefferson* • He bought Louisiana from France (Louisiana Purchase). • Lewis and Clark explored this new land west of the Mississippi River.	Identify and interpret primary and secondary source documents to increase understanding of events and life in United States history. (USI.1a) Sequence events in United States history. (USI.1c) Interpret ideas and events from different historical perspectives. (USI.1d) Interpret excerpts from notable documents. (USI.1h)

STANDARD USI.7d (continued)

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the challenges faced by the new nation by
d)   describing the major accomplishments of the first five presidents of the United States.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
		James Madison • The War of l812 caused European nations to gain respect for the United States. *James Monroe* • He introduced the Monroe Doctrine warning European nations not to interfere in the Western Hemisphere.	

STANDARD USI.8a

The student will demonstrate knowledge of westward expansion and reform in America from 1801 to 1861 by
a)   **describing territorial expansion and how it affected the political map of the United States, with emphasis on the Louisiana Purchase, the Lewis and Clark expedition, and the acquisitions of Florida, Texas, Oregon, and California.**

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
Between 1801 and 1861, exploration was encouraged as America underwent vast territorial expansion and settlement.	What new territories became part of the United States between 1801 and 1861?	**New territories added to the United States after 1801** *Louisiana Purchase* • Jefferson bought land from France (the Louisiana Purchase), which doubled the size of the United States. • In the Lewis and Clark expedition, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark explored the Louisiana Purchase from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean. *Florida* • Spain gave Florida to the United States through a treaty. *Texas* • Texas was added after it became an independent republic. *Oregon* • The Oregon Territory was divided by the United States and Great Britain. *California* • War with Mexico resulted in California and the southwest territory becoming part of the United States.	Sequence events in United States history. (USI.1c) Analyze and interpret maps to explain historical events. (USI.1f)

STANDARD USI.8b

The student will demonstrate knowledge of westward expansion and reform in America from 1801 to 1861 by
b)   identifying the geographic and economic factors that influenced the westward movement of settlers.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
Westward migration was influenced by geography and economic opportunity.	What factors influenced westward migration?	**Geographic and economic factors that influenced westward movement** • Population growth in the eastern states • Availability of cheap, fertile land • Economic opportunity, e.g., gold (California Gold Rush), logging, farming, freedom (for runaway slaves) • Cheaper and faster transportation, e.g., rivers and canals (Erie Canal), steamboats • Knowledge of overland trails (Oregon and Santa Fe) • Belief in the right of "Manifest Destiny"—The idea that expansion was for the good of the country and was the right of the country	Make connections between the past and the present. (USI.1b) Interpret ideas and events from different historical perspectives. (USI.1d) Analyze and interpret maps to explain relationships among landforms, water features, climatic characteristics, and historical events. (USI.1f)

STANDARD USI.8c

The student will demonstrate knowledge of westward expansion and reform in America from 1801 to 1861 by
c)   describing the impact of inventions, including the cotton gin, the reaper, the steamboat, and the steam locomotive, on life in America.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
Prior to the Civil War, most industrialization in America was in the North; however, the equipment produced in the North had an impact on the farming society in the South.	How did the inventions affect the lives of Americans?	**New technologies** • The cotton gin was invented by Eli Whitney. It increased the production of cotton and thus increased the need for slave labor to cultivate and pick the cotton. • Jo Anderson (a slave) and Cyrus McCormick worked to invent the reaper. The reaper increased the productivity of the American farmer. • The steamboat was improved by Robert Fulton. It eventually provided faster river transportation that connected Southern plantations and farms to Northern industries and Western territories. • The steam locomotive provided faster land transportation.	Make connections between the past and the present. (USI.1b) Sequence events in United States history. (USI.1c)

STANDARD USI.8d

The student will demonstrate knowledge of westward expansion and reform in America from 1801 to 1861 by
d)   identifying the main ideas of the abolitionist and suffrage movements.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

The abolitionists worked to end slavery.
 	
The suffrage movement helped women gain equal rights.
	What were the main ideas expressed by the abolitionists?
	
	What were the main ideas expressed during the suffrage movement?
		Abolitionist movement
		• Most abolitionists demanded immediate freeing of the slaves.
		• Abolitionists believed that slavery was wrong.
		  – Morally wrong
		  – Cruel and inhumane
		  – A violation of the principles of democracy
		• Abolitionist leaders included both men and women.
		  – Harriet Tubman
		  – William Lloyd Garrison
		  – Frederick Douglass
		
		Suffrage movement
		• Supporters declared that "All men and women are created equal."
		• Supporters believed that women were deprived of basic rights.
		  – Denied the right to vote
		  – Denied educational opportunities, especially higher education
		  – Denied equal opportunities in business
		  – Limited in rights to own property
			Make connections between the past and the present. (USI.1b)
			
			Sequence events in United States history. (USI.1c)
			
			Interpret ideas and events from different historical perspectives. (USI.1d)
			
			Interpret patriotic slogans. (USI.1h)

STANDARD USI.8d (continued)

The student will demonstrate knowledge of westward expansion and reform in America from 1801 to 1861 by
d)   identifying the main ideas of the abolitionist and suffrage movements.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

		• The movement was led by strong women who began their campaign before the Civil War and continued after the war had ended.
		  – Isabel Sojourner Truth
		  – Susan B. Anthony
		  – Elizabeth Cady Stanton	

STANDARD USI.9a

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the causes, major events, and effects of the Civil War by
a)   describing the cultural, economic, and constitutional issues that divided the nation.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
Cultural, economic, and constitutional differences between the North and the South eventually resulted in the Civil War.	How did cultural, economical, and constitutional issues create bitter divisions between the North and the South?	**Issues that divided the nation** *Slavery* • While there were several differences between the North and the South, the issues related to slavery increasingly divided the nation and led to the Civil War. *Cultural* • The North was mainly an urban society in which people held jobs. • The South was primarily an agricultural society in which people lived in small villages and on farms and plantations. • Because of their cultural differences, people of the North and South found it difficult to agree on social and political issues. *Economic* • The North was a manufacturing region, and its people favored tariffs that protected factory owners and workers from foreign competition.	Make connections between the past and the present. (USI.1b) Sequence events in United States history. (USI.1c) Interpret ideas and events from different historical perspectives. (USI.1d)

STANDARD USI.9a (continued)

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the causes, major events, and effects of the Civil War by
a)   describing the cultural, economic, and constitutional issues that divided the nation.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
		• Southerners opposed tariffs that would cause prices of manufactured goods to increase. Planters were also concerned that England might stop buying cotton from the South if tariffs were added. *Constitutional* • A major conflict was states' rights versus strong central government.	

STANDARD USI.9b

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the causes, major events, and effects of the Civil War by
b)   explaining how the issues of states' rights and slavery increased sectional tensions.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
The South feared that the North would take control of Congress, and Southerners began to proclaim states' rights as a means of self-protection. The North believed that the nation was a union and could not be divided. While the Civil War did not begin as a war to abolish slavery, issues surrounding slavery deeply divided the nation.	How did the issues of states' rights and slavery increase sectional tension between the North and South?	**Issues that divided the nation** • An important issue separating the country related to the power of the Federal government. Southerners believed that they had the power to declare any national law illegal. Northerners believed that the national government's power was supreme over that of the states. • Southerners felt that the abolition of slavery would destroy their region's economy. Northerners believed that slavery should be abolished for moral reasons. **Compromises attempting to resolve differences** • Missouri Compromise (1820): Missouri was a slave state; Maine, a free state. • Compromise of l850: California was a free state. Southwest territories would decide about slavery. • Kansas-Nebraska Act: People decided the slavery issue ("popular sovereignty").	Sequence events in United States history. (USI.1c) Interpret ideas and events from different historical perspectives. (USI.1d) Interpret patriotic slogans. (USI.1h)

STANDARD USI.9b (continued)

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the causes, major events, and effects of the Civil War by
b)   explaining how the issues of states' rights and slavery increased sectional tensions.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
		Southern secession Following Lincoln's election, the southern states seceded from the Union. Confederate forces attacked Fort Sumter, in South Carolina, marking the beginning of the Civil War. Lincoln and many Northerners believed that the United States was one nation that could not be separated or divided. Most Southerners believed that states had freely created and joined the union and could freely leave it.	

STANDARD USI.9c

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the causes, major events, and effects of the Civil War by
c)   identifying on a map the states that seceded from the Union and those that remained in the Union.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

Southern states that were dependent upon labor-intensive cash crops seceded from the Union. Northernmost slave states (border states) stayed in the Union.	Which states seceded from the Union?
	
	Which four slave states stayed in the Union?
	
	Where were the other states that remained in the Union located?
		States that seceded from the Union
		• Alabama
		• Arkansas
		• Florida
		• Georgia
		• Louisiana
		• Mississippi
		• North Carolina
		• South Carolina
		• Tennessee
		• Texas
		• Virginia
		
		States remaining in the Union
		• *Border states (slave states)*
		   – Delaware
		   – Kentucky
		   – Maryland
		   – Missouri
		• *Free States*
		   – California
		   – Connecticut
		   – Illinois
		   – Indiana
		   – Iowa
		   – Kansas
		   – Maine
		   – Massachusetts
		   – Michigan
			Analyze and interpret maps to explain historical events. (USI.1f)

STANDARD USI.9c (continued)

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the causes, major events, and effects of the Civil War by
c) **identifying on a map the states that seceded from the Union and those that remained in the Union.**

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
		– Minnesota – New Hampshire – New Jersey – New York – Ohio – Oregon – Pennsylvania – Rhode Island – Vermont – West Virginia (Western counties of Virginia that refused to secede from the Union) – Wisconsin	

STANDARD USI.9d

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the causes, major events, and effects of the Civil War by

d) **describing the roles of Abraham Lincoln, Jefferson Davis, Ulysses S. Grant, Robert E. Lee, Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson, and Frederick Douglass in events leading to and during the war.**

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

Lincoln and Lee were men who represented views of the nature of the United States that were very different, leading to an unavoidable conflict.	Who are considered leaders of the Civil War?
	
	How did Lincoln's view of the nature of the Union differ from Lee's?
		Roles of Civil War leaders
		• Abraham Lincoln
		  – Was President of the United States
		  – Opposed the spread of slavery
		  – Issued the Emancipation Proclamation
		  – Determined to preserve the Union—by force if necessary
		  – Believed the United States was one nation, not a collection of independent states
		  – Wrote the Gettysburg Address that said the Civil War was to preserve a government "of the people, by the people, and for the people."
		• Jefferson Davis
		  – Was president of the Confederate States of America
		• Ulysses S. Grant
		  – Was general of the Union army that defeated Lee
			Identify and interpret primary and secondary source documents to increase understanding of events and life in United States history. (USI.1a)
			
			Sequence events in United States history. (USI.1c)
			
			Interpret ideas and events from different historical perspectives. (USI.1d)

STANDARD USI.9d (continued)

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the causes, major events, and effects of the Civil War by

d)   **describing the roles of Abraham Lincoln, Jefferson Davis, Ulysses S. Grant, Robert E. Lee, Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson, and Frederick Douglass in events leading to and during the war.**

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills

		• Robert E. Lee
		  – Was leader of the Army of Northern Virginia
		  – Was offered command of the Union forces at the beginning of the war but chose not to fight against Virginia
		  – Opposed secession, but did not believe the union should be held together by force
		  – Urged Southerners to accept defeat at the end of the war and reunite as Americans when some wanted to fight on
		• Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson
		  – Was a skilled Confederate general from Virginia
		• Frederick Douglass
		  – Was a former slave who escaped to the North and became an abolitionist	

STANDARD USI.9e

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the causes, major events, and effects of the Civil War by
e)   using maps to explain critical developments in the war, including major battles.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
Location and topography were critical elements influencing important developments in the Civil War, including major battles.	Where did critical events of the Civil War take place? Where were the major battles fought? What are the ways location and topography influenced important developments in the war, including major battles?	**Major battles and events** • The firing on Fort Sumter, S.C., began the war. • The first Battle of Manassas (Bull Run) was the first major battle. • The signing of the Emancipation Proclamation made "freeing the slaves" the new focus of the war. Many freed slaves joined the Union army. • The Battle of Vicksburg divided the South; the North controlled the Mississippi River. • The Battle of Gettysburg was the turning point of the war; the North repelled Lee's invasion. • Lee's surrender to Grant at Appomattox Court House in 1865 ended the war.	Identify and interpret primary and secondary source documents to increase understanding of events and life in United States history. (USI.1a) Sequence events in United States history. (USI.1c) Analyze and interpret maps to explain relationships among landforms, water features, climatic characteristics, and historical events. (USI.1f) Interpret excerpts from notable documents. (USI.1h)

STANDARD USI.9e (continued)

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the causes, major events, and effects of the Civil War by
e)   using maps to explain critical developments in the war, including major battles.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
		Influence of location and topography on critical developments in the war • The Union blockade of southern ports (e.g., Savannah, Charleston, New Orleans) • Control of the Mississippi River (e.g., Vicksburg) • Battle locations influenced by the struggle to capture capital cities (e.g., Richmond; Washington, D.C.) • Control of the high ground (e.g., Gettysburg)	

STANDARD USI.9f

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the causes, major events, and effects of the Civil War by
f)   describing the effects of war from the perspectives of Union and Confederate soldiers (including black soldiers), women, and slaves.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
Life on the battlefield and on the homefront was extremely harsh. Many died from disease and exposure.	What hardships were experienced during the Civil War? How did the Civil War change the lives of soldiers, women, and slaves?	**General effects of the war** • Families and friends were often pitted against one another. • Southern troops became increasingly younger and more poorly equipped and clothed. • Much of the South was devastated at the end of the war (e.g., burning of Atlanta and Richmond). • Disease was a major killer. • Clara Barton, a Civil War nurse, created the American Red Cross. • Combat was brutal and often man-to-man. • Women were left to run businesses in the North and farms and plantations in the South. • The collapse of the Confederacy made Confederate money worthless.	Sequence events in United States history. (USI.1c) Interpret ideas and events from different historical perspectives. (USI.1d)

STANDARD USI.9f (continued)

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the causes, major events, and effects of the Civil War by
f)   describing the effects of war from the perspectives of Union and Confederate soldiers (including black soldiers), women, and slaves.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
		Effects of the war on African Americans • African Americans fought in both the Confederate and Union armies. • The Confederacy often used slaves as naval crew members and soldiers. • The Union moved to enlist African American sailors early in the war. • African American soldiers were paid less than white soldiers. • African American soldiers were discriminated against and served in segregated units under the command of white officers. • Robert Smalls, a sailor and later a Union naval captain, was highly honored for his feats of bravery and heroism. He became a Congressman after the Civil War.	

STANDARD USI.10a

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the effects of Reconstruction on American life by
a) **identifying the provisions of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution of the United States of America and their impact on the expansion of freedom in America.**

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
The 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution of the United States of America address the issues of slavery and guarantee equal protection under the law for all citizens.	What are the basic provisions of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments?	**Basic provisions of the Amendments** • 13th Amendment: Bans slavery in the United States and any of its territories • 14th Amendment: Grants citizenship to all persons born in the United States and guarantees them equal protection under the law • 15th Amendment: Ensures all citizens the right to vote regardless of race or color or previous condition of servitude These three amendments guarantee equal protection under the law for all citizens.	Identify and interpret primary and secondary source documents to increase understanding of events and life in United States history. (USI.1a) Make connections between the past and the present. (USI.1b) Sequence events in United States history. (USI.1c) Interpret ideas and events from different historical perspectives. (USI.1d) Interpret excerpts from notable documents. (USI.1h)

STANDARD USI.10b

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the causes, major events, and effects of the Civil War by
b)   describing the impact of Reconstruction policies on the South.

Essential Understandings	Essential Questions	Essential Knowledge	Essential Skills
The Reconstruction policies were harsh and created problems in the South. Reconstruction attempted to give meaning to the freedom that the former slaves had achieved.	What were the Reconstruction policies for the South?	**Reconstruction policies and problems** • Southern military leaders could not hold office. • Southerners resented northern "carpetbaggers," who took advantage of the South during Reconstruction. • African Americans held public office. • African Americans gained equal rights as a result of the Civil Rights Act of 1866, which authorized the use of federal troops for its enforcement. • Northern soldiers supervised the South.	Sequence events in United States history. (USI.1c) Interpret ideas and events from different historical perspectives. (USI.1d)

Appendix D

Question Frameworks

Appendix D

Examples of Structured Questions

Why did you want to become a teacher?
Where did you go to school?
What did you want to teach?
Tell me about your teacher preparation program?
What was your student teaching experience like?
What type of school did you go to? What grades?
How did the experience unfold? When did you start taking over the class?
What was the teaching climate like?
What was your mentor teacher like?
What did you learn or not learn from them?
What was your first assignment like? What grade? What area?
What were the students like?
How long were you there for?
Where did you go next?
Tell me about all your different teaching experiences?
How did you get to this school?
How did you get into teaching social studies?
What are some of the things you do in your class?
Tell me how a typical day goes for you?
Why social studies?
What is social studies to you?
How does it relate to citizenship?
What skills dispositions knowledge do you want your students to have?
What are the qualities of an effective citizen?
Why do you think discussion is important?
How do you do discussion in the classroom?
How do you use discussion in the classroom?
How do you prepare for a discussion?
What are important elements of a discussion?
What do you need in order to have a good discussion?
Tell me about the SOLs?
How are they important?
How to they impact your classroom?
How does it impact your teaching?
How do SOLs impact schools?
How have you changed your teaching as a result of the SOLs?
How do the SOLs impact your use of discussion in the classroom?

Examples of Unstructured Questions after an Observation

 4-20-05- meeting after class
What student were they talking about? [a class mate who was in a fire]
How did it happen?
That must have been hard on the class… How did they deal with it?
When do you think she is coming back?
How is that going to be?
Looking at Photo of family
Tell me about him (pointing to one of his sons)
That's my dad's name too how did you choose it?
Do you think [his] having difficulties impacted your teaching?

4-27-05- after a difficult class
What happened?
How did you interpret what happened today?
(talking about a student)
Do you think he was insecure?
What about his partner?
Do you like pull outs or not? (Taking special ed. students out of the classroom)
What is a high I.Q.?
What is going to happen to him?

5-12-05- After class the day after the field trip
How was your field trip?
Where there any problems?
How did the kids react?
I see you are beginning multiple choice quizzes is this first?
Where are you getting your materials?
Yes I noticed you working with [student's name] what is his story?

5-23-09
Tell me about [Student]?
How do you put the boundaries in place?
Why is he different for you?
Why on probation?
How do you think he'll do?
How do you get supplies?
What do you do with kids who don't have them or forget?

Appendix E

Back Matter

Appendix E

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

Informed Consent for Participants (Parents)

In Research Projects Involving Human Subjects

Parent/Guardian Informed Consent Form

Title of Project   What Does Discussion Look Like in the Social Studies Classroom?

Investigators   <u>Dr. David Hicks, Ann Mary Roberts</u>

I. Purpose of this Research/Project

The purpose of this study is to examine teachers' discussion processes in the classroom. Research states that, although discussion is seen as a valuable teaching strategy, few teachers use discussion in the classroom. The goal of this study is to provide a rich descriptive portrait of the teacher's process of discussion in the social studies classroom.

II. Procedures

We will be observing your child's social studies teacher facilitating discussion in the classroom two class periods a week from April 2005 until June 2005. We will take detailed notes of the discussion process noting how student responses impact the teacher's question format and general facilitation process. There will be times when the discussion will be audio-tape recorded. The focus of the research is on the teacher; however, since students are part of the discussion process, they are indirectly involved. After each day of observation we will be interviewing teachers to discuss any questions we have about their discussion process in the classroom. We will not be present during SOL testing.

III. Risks

There are no expected risks related to your child by being part of the observation process. Your child will not be interviewed, identified or approached in any way. There will be no risks other than what your child would experience in everyday activity.

IV. Benefits

There are no specific benefits for students related to the participation of this study. If the teachers benefit from reflecting on their teaching process, students may benefit from improved instructional practices.

V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality

Your child's name will not be used when recording of field notes. Neither the teacher's nor the school's name will be identified in the results of the study. All notes and audiotapes will be locked in a file cabinet to ensure protection. Notes and audiotapes will be destroyed or erased when the data is no longer being used.

VI. Compensation

There will be no compensation for participation in the study.

VII. Freedom to Withdraw

        Students are free to withdraw from the study without any penalty.   To withdraw please contact either Ann Mary Roberts at (540-231-8332;amrober@vt.edu), David Hicks (540-231-8332; hicks@vt.edu) or David Moore, Chair of Virginia Tech's Institutional Review Board (540-231-4991; moored@vt.edu)

VIII. Approval of Research

        This research project has been approved, as required, by the Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, by the Department of Teaching and Learning.

_____ _____
IRB Approval Date Approval   Expiration Date

Your signature below indicates you have read the information and have agreed to participate.

_____   Date _____
Signature of Participant

_____   Date _____
Ann Mary Roberts, Virginia Tech

_____   Date _____
David Hicks, Virginia Tech

Should you have any questions about this research or its conduct, you may contact:

Ann Mary Roberts, 231-8332, amrober@vt.edu

Dr. David Hicks, 231-8332, hicks@vt.edu

Dr. Mary Alice Barksdale, 231-3166, mbarksda@vt.edu
Departmental Reviewer/Department Head Telephone/e-mail

David M. Moore, 231-4991, moored@vt.edu
Chair, IRB Telephone/e-mail
Office of Research Compliance
Research & Graduate Studies

Subjects must be given a complete copy (or duplicate original) of the signed Informed Consent.

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
Informed Consent for Participants (teachers)
In Research Projects Involving Human Subjects

Teacher Consent Form

Title of Project What Does Discussion Look Like in the Social Studies Classroom?

Investigators   Dr. David Hicks, Ann Mary Roberts

I. Purpose of this Research/Project

The purpose of the study is to examine how middle school social studies teachers conduct discussion in their classroom.

II. Procedures

From April 2005 through June 2006, we would like to conduct observations and interviews with you concerning your use of discussion in the classroom. We will initially conduct an interview lasting approximately an hour that will focus on your educational background and teaching philosophy. We will attend your class two half days a week and take notes on our observations of your discussion process. After each day of classroom observations we will interview you for approximately 30 minutes in order to discuss and ask questions regarding the observations. All interviews will be audio-tape recorded. We will also ask you for any classroom rules, discussion protocol, lesson plans, question frameworks that you may have in regards to your discussion process.

III. Risks

There are no risks in this project other than what you would experience in your normal day experience. You will not be asked to participate in any activity that would cause you physical harm or psychological stress. Interviews and observations are solely for the use of this research.

IV. Benefits

There are no rewards for your participation other than any insight you might gain from reflecting on your teaching process. Copies of the transcripts will be given to you in order for you to elaborate on or clarify the information you provided.   You will also be offered a copy of the research and the subsequent report on the findings. No promise or guarantee of benefits has been made to encourage participation in the study.

V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality

Every effort will be given in this project to ensure your confidentiality. Pseudonyms will be given in written or verbal reports involving this research. However, there is the possibility that colleagues could connect your participation in any publications written resulting from the research.   Audio-tapes and notes will be kept in a locked cabinet. Audio-tapes will be destroyed after the use of the data has been exhausted.

VI. Compensation

There will be no compensation for participation in the study.

VII. Freedom to Withdraw

Even if you sign this form, you are free to withdraw from this research at any time. In addition you may feel free to refuse to answer any of the questions asked during any interview. To withdraw please contact either Ann Mary Roberts at (540-231-8332;amrober@vt.edu), David Hicks (540-231-8332; hicks@vt.edu) or David Moore, Chair of Virginia Tech's Institutional Review Board (540-231-4991; moored@vt.edu)

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Your signature below indicates you have read the information and have agreed to participate.

_____   Date _____
Signature of Participant

_____   Date _____
Ann Mary Roberts, Virginia Tech

_____   Date _____
David Hicks, Virginia Tech

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Research & Graduate Studies

Subjects must be given a complete copy (or duplicate original) of the signed Informed Consent.