The Great Lakes Social Studies Journal
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Literacy

In the Social Studies

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Michigan Council for the Social Studies

Tomorrow's Leaders Learn Today

From the Editor…

Dr. Annie McMahon Whitlock
University of Michigan-Flint

The Michigan Council for the Social Studies is excited to bring you the inaugural issue of the Great Lakes Social Studies Journal! In each issue we hope to bring you the most impactful research from social studies educators all over the country—research that you can use immediately in your classroom. Our first issue features three articles about literacy in the social studies. Terry Husband suggests children's literature that can be used to combat ableism in the classroom, Tamara L. Shreiner, Lauren McArthur Harris, and Brian Girard wrote an IDM Blueprint on gerrymandering using different literacies, and in our "Educator Corner," Jen Smielewski writes about her successes teaching social studies using historical fiction. We also have research from Brad Maguth, Hannah Bendelewski, and Jay Austin about teaching the Holocaust from an empowerment perspective and an article from Dean Vesperman about teaching democracy and citizenship to his preservice teachers.

We hope this is the first of many issues to come!

Using Diverse Picture Books to Combat Ableism in Elementary Social Studies Classrooms

Terry Husband

Recent census data point out that U.S. classrooms have become increasingly diverse with regards to race, class, gender, religion, and ability over the past two decades (NCES, 2016). In response to these changes, social studies scholars and practitioners (e.g., Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Banks & Banks, 2010; Gay, 2013) have argued for the incorporation of culturally responsive, culturally sustaining, and anti-biased curricula and pedagogies in social studies classrooms as a means of equipping students with the skills, knowledge, and dispositions needed to be productive citizens within in a global, pluralistic, and democratic society. Notably, much of the existing scholarship (e.g., Gay, 2013; Hammond, 2014; Irizarry, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2001) related to incorporating culturally responsive and culturally sustaining pedagogies and curriculum in elementary social studies classrooms has tended to focus primarily on issues of culture, race, gender, class, and language. Very little has been discussed related to designing and implementing pedagogies that respond to ability diversity in early childhood (P-2) social studies classrooms.

In order to help children develop a respect for all forms of diversity in the world, it is critical for social studies teachers to create curricular and pedagogical opportunities and experiences that reflect, affirm, and include the histories and experiences of individuals from a wide variety of different backgrounds and identities (Tisdall, 2012; Watson, 2012; Watson, 2017; Watson et al., 2015). In keeping with this line of thinking, it is my contention that multicultural picture books can and should be used to promote anti-ableist ideas in early childhood students (Bishop, 1990; Bishop, 2003). In this article, I discuss several reasons why it is important to discuss ableism with young children. Next, I outline some strategies to assist elementary social studies teachers as they use multicultural picture books to promote anti-ableism in their classrooms. Lastly, I conclude with examples of multicultural picture books that early childhood social studies teachers might incorporate in their lesson planning processes as they seek to promote anti-ableist attitudes, knowledge, and sentiments in their classrooms. It is important to note here that I fully recognize and acknowledge the fact that the term "disabled" is a somewhat problematic term, as it is often used to describe and define people with disabilities in deficit ways (Harry & Klingner, 2007). In an effort to respond to this issue in a humanizing manner, I purposely choose to prioritize the person/child over the disability in this article. Hence, I use the phrases "people or children with disabilities" as opposed to "disabled people or children" throughout this article.

Defining Ableism and Anti-Ableism

In short, ableism is defined as the process of developing and acting on negative attitudes, beliefs, and stereotypes towards people with disabilities (Bogart & Dunn, 2019). Unfortunately, ableism is pervasive in many aspects of U.S. society such as: business, media, literature, entertainment, sports, and education. Some examples of ableist views include but are not limited to the belief that children with disabilities are sad, burdensome, pitiful, and even evil (Baglieri & Shapiro, 2017). Because schools are microcosms of the larger society, children often consciously and unconsciously take in these beliefs with little or no resistance or disruption from adults or peers (Adams & Erevelles, 2016).

Anti-ableism is the process of using strategic actions, theories, and practices to identify, resist, and combat multiple and interconnected forms of prejudice, discrimination, inequality, inequity, and oppression toward people with disabilities. Anti-ableism typically involves actions aimed at disrupting and abolishing one or more of the following categories of ableism: internalized ableism, interpersonal ableism, and institutional ableism (Artiles, 2013; Watson, 2018). Internalized ableism pertains to the internal belief that one's identity or group membership makes them "better" than others who do not share the same identity or group status. In other words, this is when people who are not disabled begin to view people with disabilities as being inferior or having less value in society. The second category of ableism, interpersonal, occurs when people commit individualized acts of prejudice, discrimination, and violence against people with disabilities. Specific examples of interpersonal ableism include bullying, name calling, using slurs, and threats. Lastly, institutionalized ableism is when discriminatory views and actions toward people with disabilities are written into and carried out by the policies and practices that make up and govern various institutions in society such as: housing, government, medicine, education, politics, media, sports, etc. To this end, efforts toward recognizing, resisting, and reversing ableism might occur at each of these different levels.

Promoting Anti-Ableism in the Elementary Social Studies Classroom

Why discuss ableism with young children? There are multiple reasons why teachers should discuss ableism with elementary students. First, fewer than half of all 3 to 5 year olds in the United States are learning in classrooms with children with disabilities (Barton & Smith, 2015). Consequently, many children do not have the opportunity to develop positive, supportive, and authentic relationships with children who have a disability. Exposing non-disabled children to diverse picture books that center and celebrate children with disabilities, promotes tolerance and can help combat negative and biased attitudes and stereotypes about people with disabilities (Altieri, 2008; Bishop, 1990; Bishop, 2003). Diverse picture books provide opportunities for children who are not disabled to learn about children with disabilities. At the same time, diverse picture books also provide opportunities for children with disabilities to feel affirmed, valued, and celebrated in the social studies classroom. In a similar manner, diverse picture books can help eliminate stigmas related to being a person with a disability in society (Lalvani & Bacon, 2018). Pennell et al. (2018) point out that, unlike other forms of diversity, the label "dis-ability" often has a negative stigma attached to it. People who are labeled as being disabled are often perceived to be inferior and or in need of benevolence from non-disabled people (Lalvani & Bacon, 2018). As a result, children with disabilities are often stigmatized, ridiculed, bullied, and even discriminated against by other children. Interestingly, literacy scholars point out that reading inclusive picture books can help children develop positive attitudes for and toward diverse individuals in the world (Ostrosky et al., 2015). In other words, reading diverse picture books can help children develop a deep respect and affirmation for people with disabilities in the world. Furthermore, these qualities are absolutely critical for children to become humane citizens within a pluralistic and democratic society (Bishop, 1997).

Using diverse picture books (involving positive, nuanced, and diverse representations of people with disabilities) can provide opportunities for early childhood teachers to disrupt and dismantle ableism within the social studies curriculum as a whole. Unfortunately, in far too many early childhood classrooms, the histories, experiences, and

perspectives of children and adults with disabilities are often absent from the formal and informal curriculum that is delivered (Lalvani & Bacon, 2018). As a result, children with disabilities often feel alienated and or isolated in schools (Lalvani, 2015). Several scholars contend that ableism in educational contexts can only be dismantled if teachers are willing to construct spaces where children are taught to value and appreciate "all" human beings in society in an explicit manner (Connor & Gabel, 2010). To this end, using high quality and nuanced picture books that have children with disabilities as the protagonist help teachers create these anti-ableist social and educational spaces in the classroom (Botelho & Rudman, 2009).

Strategies for Using Anti-Ableist Picture Books

Inevitably, the dynamics and demographics in every early childhood classroom will vary from school to school and context to context. For that reason, there is not a single and universal way of using diverse picture books to combat ableism. Nonetheless, I outline a few helpful strategies early childhood teachers might consider as they endeavor to create and implement social studies curricula and pedagogies that reflect, honor, and affirm the experiences of children and adults with disabilities:

- **Consider topics related to family life as a starting point**--- It is common for early childhood teachers to teach about family life in their social studies curriculum. When teaching about different family structures, early childhood teachers might consider using diverse picture books to showcase and affirm the experiences of people with disabilities. This will help children develop an understanding that people with disabilities have many of the same family experiences as people without disabilities. For example, in an effort to help children understand how children with disabilities interact with their family members on a regular basis, a teacher might read the picture book entitled, *My Brother Charlie* by Holly Robinson Peete. This book captures the experiences of a girl who has a twin brother who is autistic and sometimes has difficulty communicating his thoughts and feelings. A book like this might help children better understand what life is like to live with a family member who has a disability.

- **Invite people with disabilities to read and share their experiences with the class**---If possible, early childhood teachers might consider inviting people with disabilities to read diverse picture books and share their personalized and nuanced experiences with the children in the classroom. This is a powerful way to destigmatize the notion of disability in the minds of young children. For example, to help children develop a destigmatized understanding of what it means to be diagnosed with ADHD, a teacher might read *Eddie is Enough* by Debbie Zimmett. This book tells the story of a third-grade boy who consistently finds himself in trouble at school until the teacher discovers that he has ADHD. The teacher works with the family of the boy and makes appropriate teaching and learning accommodations. As a result of these accommodations, the young boy begins to thrive socially and academically at school.

- **Make connections between ability diversity and other forms of diversity in and across the social studies curriculum**---It is not uncommon for teachers to discuss racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity in many classrooms. However, it is much less common for teachers to discuss ability diversity. When reading and learning about cultural, racial, and linguistic diversity, teachers should consider making connections to ability diversity. This will help children make long lasting and deeper connections between the concepts of diversity, inclusion, and equity. For example, to help children better understand the connection between ability and other forms of diversity, a teacher might read and discuss the book *Intersectional Allies* by Chelsea Johnson, LaToya Council, and Carolyn Choi. Essentially, this book explains the ways in which physical diversity is connected to other forms of diversity in the world. It also encourages children to take a position of allyship as they work for justice and equity alongside people who have a different social identity and position.

- **Apply broader critical literacy concepts and approaches**---When teaching about the histories, perspectives, and experiences of people with disabilities, teachers might consider using a thematic approach and teaching through broader lenses and concepts such as fairness, justice, discrimination, and social action. This will help children make deeper understandings of various forms of oppression and marginalization in society. This can also help children better understand how social action can be used to combat injustice against people with disabilities. For example, to help children better understand the power and potential of taking social action toward the injustice that many people with disabilities often experience in society, a teacher might read the book *All the Way to the Top: How One Girl's Fight for Americans with Disabilities Changed Everything* by Annette Bay Pimentel. This book tells the story of Jennifer Keelan, a disability rights activist, who helped organize and participate in public protests that brought more awareness about the injustices people with disabilities were experiencing. Ultimately, these protests lead to the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990.

- **Ensure that children have access to diverse picture books with disabled protagonists outside of the classroom**---Teachers might consider partnering with the school librarian to ensure that the school library is filled with significant numbers of picture books that represent the experiences of people with disabilities. In addition, teachers might contact his/her book fair vendor to make sure that children have the opportunity to purchase books about people with disabilities.

- **Critically interrogate diverse picture books for quality**--- In as much as it is important for early childhood teachers to incorporate diverse picture books that represent the experiences of children and adults with disabilities in positive, meaningful, and nuanced ways in their social studies classrooms, it is equally important for early childhood teachers to take effort to carefully and critically analyze the messages within these books. It is important to note here that all picture books with children and adults with disabilities as main characters are not the same in terms of quality. Unfortunately, there are still some books on the market today that portray the experiences of people with disabilities in a stereotypical and deficit manner. Some questions early childhood teachers might consider as they are selecting these types of books include but are not limited to the following questions:
  - Does the book portray people across the disability/ability continuum in rich and authentic ways?
  - Does the book provide powerful learning opportunities for non-disabled children to learn about children with disabilities in positive and meaningful ways?
  - Does the book capture and portray children with disabilities as they are engaged in everyday activities?
  - Does the book have rich literary content and elements?
  - Does the book provide nuanced representations of people with disabilities?

- Does the book illustrate characters and adaptive equipment accurately?

Conclusion

In this article, I have called for early childhood teachers to reflect on the books they commonly use in their social studies classroom and to consider including diverse picture books that represent, affirm, and celebrate the experiences of children and adults with disabilities (see Table 1). Not only will doing so create social and intellectual spaces for children with disabilities to feel less alienated and less isolated, it will also provide opportunities for children without disabilities to learn about children and adults with disabilities in positive and humane ways. Furthermore, it is my hope that through these processes children will develop the skills, knowledge, and dispositions needed to recognize ableism and work toward becoming anti-ableist agents and activists in their local communities and within the broader society.

Terry Husband is a Professor of Early Childhood Literacy at Illinois State University. He teaches undergraduate and graduate courses related to literacy theory, literacy pedagogies, and student diversity in P-12 classrooms. His research interests include social justice pedagogies in early childhood classrooms and literacy development in Black boys. Prior to his current position, he taught 1st and 2nd grade in Columbus City Schools for 10 years.

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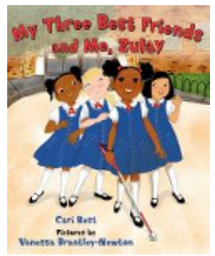
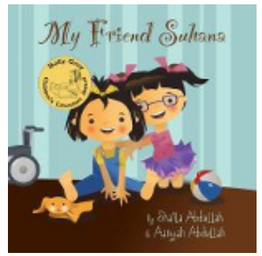
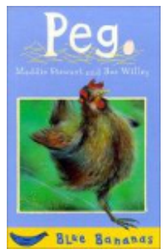
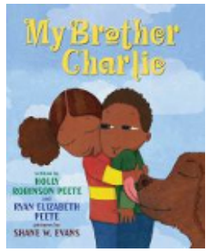
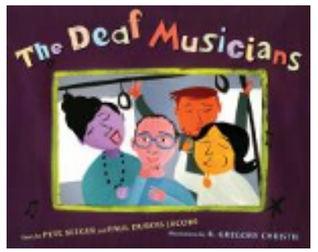
Table 1: Examples of Anti-Ableist Picture Books

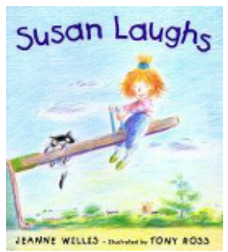


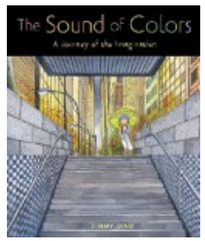


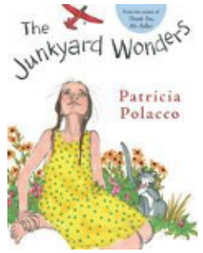












We're All Wonders (1 – G4.0.1) R.J. Palacio, 2017

My Three Best Friends and Zulay (K – H2.0.2) Cari Best, 2015

My Friend Suhuna (1 – G4.0.1) Shaila, Abdullah

Peg (2 – H2.0.2) Maddie Stewart, 2002

My Brother Charlie (2 – H2.0.2) Holly Robinson Peete, 2010

The Deaf Musicians (2 – H2.0.3) Peete Seeger, 2006

Susan Laughs (2 – H2.0.3) Jeanne Willis, 2000

The Sound of Colors: A Journey of the Imagination (K – C5.0.1) Jimmy Liao, 2006

My Friend Isabelle (2 – C5.0.1) Eliza Woloson, 2003

The Junkyard Wonders (2 – E1.0.1) Patricia Polacco, 2010

What an Integrative Approach to Disciplinary Literacy Can Mean for Classroom Practice in Social Studies

Tamara L. Shreiner, Lauren McArthur Harris, & Brian Girard

In this article we advance an argument about the value of an integrative approach to disciplinary literacy in social studies. We first review research that has discussed what disciplinary literacy means in four of the social studies subjects: economics, geography, history, and civics. We then build on this scholarship to identify for social studies teachers common practices that cross disciplinary boundaries through an examination of the case of gerrymandering. We use the C3 Framework's inquiry arc to show how students can engage in inquiry practices from across the four core social studies disciplines, while engaging in the model of inquiry that the framework suggests. Addressing democratic problems with an integrative approach to disciplinary literacy provides students with opportunities to engage in literacy practices deemed valuable within the separate social studies disciplines, while leveraging the opportunities inherent in the social studies disciplines' common practices.

Disciplinary literacy—the idea that academic disciplines have specialized knowledge and ways of knowing—has been part of the educational landscape for over a decade (Moje, 2008; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). Research has shown that disciplinary literacy practices are important for many school subjects (Doerr & Temple, 2016; Fang, 2013; Smagorinsky, 2015). In 2013, with the release of the National Council for Social Studies' College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework, disciplinary literacy became an integral part of the social studies curriculum, as the *C3 Framework* called for the use of disciplinary literacy practices across the social studies disciplines in order to address "the interdisciplinary challenges of our world" (National Council for the Social Studies [NCSS], 2013, p. 6).

However, much of the research on disciplinary literacy in social studies has focused on the individual disciplines—mainly history, geography, economics, and civics/political science. Fewer studies have addressed how separate disciplinary literacies can be integrated for meaningful and effective social studies teaching and learning or where there is shared ground among the disciplines (Barton, 2017).

This article begins to address this gap by examining how shared literacy practices from across the core social studies disciplines can support meaningful inquiry into social and political issues. We first review what scholars have written about disciplinary literacy for separate social studies subjects. Our goal here is to highlight the salient ways of knowing, thinking, and communicating deemed most valuable within disciplinary "communities of practice" (Moje, 2015), recognizing that these communities of practice have contributed the knowledge and texts that students will engage with when they address interdisciplinary problems. We then build on this scholarship to identify for social studies teachers common practices that cross disciplinary boundaries. Last, we use the case of gerrymandering to illustrate how an integrative disciplinary literacy approach might be applied in a social studies classroom using an

inquiry design model (IDM) (Grant et al., 2015).

Disciplinary Literacy Knowledge and Practice in Core Social Studies Disciplines

Disciplinary literacy is more than the knowledge base of each field; it encompasses the questions that drive inquiry in the field, organizing concepts, methods of inquiry (how scholars in the field answer the questions), and forms of knowledge sharing (e.g. writing, creating data representations). In the following sections, we showcase what researchers have argued literacy practices entail in each of the core social studies disciplines.

Economic Literacy

Economic literacy is the ability to analyze and produce a variety of texts representing contemporary and historical economic information in order to evaluate and solve economic problems at various levels of society (Akhan, 2015; Anthony et al., 2015; Miller &VanFossen, 1994, 2008). Fundamental to economic literacy is understanding concepts such as money, opportunity costs, inflation, poverty, and recession (Council for Economic Education, 2010; Miller & VanFossen, 2008). Economically literate people apply such concepts to work with visual representations of economic data, including time series or line graphs that show how economic variables change over time, or scatterplots that show relationships between economic variables (Council for Economic Education, 2010; Goodwin et al., 2017). They read and create theoretical explanations of economic phenomena through models, such as simplified stories, images, figures, graphs or equations, highlighting some aspects of reality while ignoring others or assuming all other variables remain constant (Goodwin et al., 2017). In addition, economically literate people comprehend and analyze multiple historical accounts and supply historical examples of economic phenomena. Inquiry might entail investigations of economic events like the Great Depression or the 1970's oil crisis, which requires careful consideration of the historical context, causes, and consequences (Council for Economic Education, 2010; Goodwin et al., 2017; Niederjohn & Schug, 2008).

Economically literate people are able to frame and clarify economic problems by considering historical and contemporary context and intentions. They can develop a theoretical framework for the problem and apply relevant economic models, concepts, principles, and facts to determine the policy's likely consequences, or to explain the actual consequences. In assessing consequences, economically literate people develop a complex causal chain, using if-then scenarios, and returning to policy goals (Miller & VanFossen, 1994). Furthermore, economically literate people use economic reasoning guided by understanding of concepts such as choice and opportunity costs (Niederjohn & Schug, 2008; Schug, 1996) to analyze economic policy and decision-making, something that perhaps gets lost in supply and demand curves.

Geographic Literacy

Geographic literacy is the ability to read and interpret the Earth-bound space and spatial interconnections represented by maps, globes, aerial photographs, and satellite data in order to reason about past and contemporary problems (de Blij, 2012; Johnson et al., 2011; Morin, 2012; National Geographic Society, 2016; National Research Council, 1997). Geographically literate people can understand and apply geospatial concepts from simple (e.g., location, direction, distance) to complex (e.g., distortion, projection, interpolation) (Golledge et al., 2008; Lobben & Lawrence, 2015). They use spatial reasoning to evaluate patterns, distributions, diffusions, circulations, interactions, juxtapositions, changes and continuitites, and relationships across space and time (de Blij, 2012; Gersmehl, 2014). Because they look for connections not only between different physical locations, but also between physical locations and human activities, geographically literate people use written texts, photographs of locations and people, magazines, and local news sources to understand human behaviors (Johnson et al., 2011).

Maps are critical tools in geography. They mediate a person's spatial understanding of the world by modeling vast spaces that humans can never directly experience (Uttal & Sheehan, 2014). Geographically literate people understand that maps are imperfect two-dimensional representations of three-dimensional space that present spatial data in a structured and scaled way (Golledge et al., 2008). They further recognize that maps are only partial representations of space, created by individuals who intend to represent space within a particular frame and whose interpretations of space can be influenced by information available at the time a map was made and by their motivations and biases (Gregg & Leinhardt, 1994). Geographically literate people recognize that maps are distorted, and understand why and to what degree they are distorted based on the scale of the map and the projection type (e.g., Mercator or Robinson projections). This understanding then allows them to overcome the distortion and use maps as representational systems for reasoning about the earth's surface (Golledge et al., 2008). Reasoning with maps also requires that they recognize the symbol system used to communicate data on the map, the relationships among symbols, and the way that the map is layered with physical, political, historical elements (Bausmith & Leinhardt, 1998; Gregg & Leinhardt, 1994; Uttal & Sheehan, 2014). Understanding the system used to communicate information on a map allows geographically literate people to make meaningful connections among the layers of the map, draw inferences, and reason about a problem (Bausmith & Leinhardt, 1998).

Historical Literacy

Historical literacy is the ability to analyze, interpret, and use a variety of primary and secondary texts, both verbal and visual, and construct evidence-based narratives, explanations, and arguments about the past. (Nokes, 2012). Literate practices in history begin with an understanding that history is interpretation based upon remnants from the past, that historical accounts can differ across time and space, and that interpretations are dependent on individual authors' biases and worldviews. When reading or writing historical accounts, historically literate individuals employ historical empathy and perspective, and draw upon ideas about significance, change, continuity, causes, and consequences (Lee, 2005; Nokes, 2012).

One initial step in working with texts is to classify them by type—as letters, newspapers, political cartoons, images, or accounts—which will then help one decide how to approach and analyze the text (Leinhardt & Young, 1996). Before reading a text, historically literate individuals source the text, which involves identifying the author and his/her biases and motivations, when the document was produced, and where the document was produced (Leinhardt & Young, 1996; Rouet et al., 1997; Wineburg, 1991). Closely related is contextualizing, which involves zooming out from the immediate context of the document itself and considering what other events are occurring at the time, as well as what preceded and followed the event represented by the document (Leinhardt & Young, 1996; van Drie & van Boxtel, 2008; Wineburg, 1991). Research has shown that when reading documents, historians engage in a close textual reading, considering the meaning of words and passages, connecting the documents to their background knowledge and historical theories, and making inferences (Leinhardt & Young, 1996). Historians also corroborate documents, checking for internal consistencies, comparing them with other documents, and looking for discrepancies in information among documents (Leinhardt & Young, 1996; Rouet et al., 1997; Wineburg, 1991). In working with multiple texts, historians recognize that all documents have biases and limitations but that these limitations do not necessarily render the document useless (Rouet et al., 1997; Wineburg, 1991).

When writing or otherwise communicating historical arguments, historically literate people attempt to weave together a meaningful and coherent story, while sup-

porting their claims with evidence that has been vetted through a process of sourcing, contextualizing, and corroborating (Schneider & Zakai, 2016). Historical writing is a cyclical process of finding evidence, fitting it together through writing, and identifying gaps in evidence. Rather than ignoring available counterevidence that does not fit neatly into an argument, historians account for contrary evidence by adjusting the claims they make (Monte-Sano, 2010; Schneider & Zakai, 2016).

Civic Literacy

Scholars have defined civic literacy as understanding history, law, governmental processes, and current events, and being able to use such knowledge to reason about political problems and participate in civic life (Carnegie Corporation of New York & CIRCLE, 2003; Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2007). People who are civically literate can parcel out responsibility for human activities and practices among families, markets, and states, recognize citizens' rights and responsibilities, and evaluate the legitimacy of governing units in exercising certain powers (Freeden, 2008). They also understand the significance of values and principles that undergird democratic societies. They know that people can have different conceptions of the same value (e.g., justice as fairness versus justice as desert) and that real-life situations sometimes involve tensions between core political values (e.g., justice and liberty), thereby requiring prioritization of certain values over others (e.g., justice over liberty) (Freeden, 2008; Swift, 2006). Furthermore, civically literate people recognize and can articulate different conceptions of the "good life," and competing viewpoints, arguments, and claims in society (Freeden, 2008).

A key part of civic literacy is identifying social and political problems, and how such problems affect different individuals (Epstein, 2014). In reasoning about civic and political issues, civically literate people can use a variety of texts, including survey and polling data, graphs of political trends and relationships, case studies, newspaper articles, and opinion pieces (Barbour & Wright, 2015). They comprehend and use texts like the U.S. Constitution, *The Federalist Papers*, Supreme Court cases, and historical accounts (Shreiner, 2009). They are careful to source and contextualize historical and contemporary documents to consider underlying values and assumptions, question authors' claims and assertions, and analyze political significance and implications (Barbour & Wright, 2015). When using visual representations of data to address an issue, civically literate people apply similar heuristics: considering the source, exploring contextual factors at play when data was gathered, questioning the methodologies, and critically evaluating the arguments implied by the data (Shreiner, 2009; 2014).

Common Practices Across Disciplinary Literacies: The Case of Gerrymandering

Though the core disciplines of social studies have some distinctive content and practices that warrant their place as separate branches of academic knowledge, they also share practices and acceptable forms of evidence that can connect them in meaningful service to the interdisciplinary problems that we face as citizens (Barton, 2017). These interweaving elements are not only complementary in the pursuit of understanding social problems, but also align with critical literacy practices, through which readers consider how existing authority and power structures are communicated and reinforced through text (LaDuke et al., 2016).

Our aim in this section is to suggest how students could employ these overlapping disciplinary literacy practices while investigating a topic from the social studies curriculum: gerrymandering. Additionally, we connect the practices to the C3 Framework steps of the inquiry arc (see Figure 1), which highlights disciplinary literacy practices essential for inquiry in social studies. We also include a sample IDM for gerrymandering in the Appendix.

Figure 1

C3 Framework Inquiry Arc

1. Developing questions and planning inquiries;
2. Applying disciplinary concepts and tools;
3. Evaluating sources and using evidence;
4. Communicating conclusions and taking informed action.

Adapted from: National Council for the Social Studies [NCSS]. (2013). *The college, career, and civic life (C3) framework for social studies state standards: Guidance for enhancing the rigor of K-12 civics, economics, geography, and history*.

Gerrymandering, the practice of drawing district lines to favor one's political party or views, presents a robust concept to investigate with an integrative disciplinary approach. Indeed, all four disciplines have a role to play in understanding and addressing the issue of gerrymandering. Gerrymandering has been a part of United States politics since the early republic, and its historical evolution has been interwoven with changes in political parties, industrialization, and race relations. It is also a contentious contemporary issue, at the center of policy debates about how we might fix a seemingly broken electoral system and heal the partisan divide in the U.S. For example, in 2018 five states held ballot measures on gerrymandering; whereas in the previous decade only a total of five states had done so (Wines, 2018).

Because gerrymandering is a geographic enterprise, it necessarily involves the use of maps and geospatial data. Economics has a role to play as well, since gerrymandering can be analyzed by using economic reasoning principles, and has recently been shown to have an economic impact on constituents in a district (Akey et al., 2018). Additionally, the concept allows for a critical literacy perspective because it warrants an examination of how language used in gerrymandering debates reflects the social construction of power, and provides opportunities for students to "consider actions that can be taken to promote social justice" (Lewison et al., 2015, p. 3). In sum, gerrymandering represents a good case through which to examine integrated disciplinary literacy practices in social studies and connect to the C3 Framework's inquiry arc.

Problem-framing

A common practice among the major disciplines of the social studies is to frame and address problems as a first step in the inquiry process. "Developing and planning inquiries" is the first step in the inquiry arc. Inquiry across the social studies disciplines requires naming a problem, considering its historical and contemporary context—including antecedents and causes—and then laying out proposed responses or solutions. (Jones & Read, 2005; Voss et al., 1983). Indeed, disciplinary experts acknowledge the value of interdisciplinary knowledge and information in framing and addressing problems. For example, historians use geography and economics to understand contextual factors and human motivations, while geographers consider the historical, political, and economic aspects of people's culture to better understand human-environment interactions.

To frame a problem for gerrymandering, students can look not only at its history but also at recent developments. They might begin with the 2019 U.S. Supreme Court decision to decline cases regarding limitations on gerrymandering, and then examine reasons why the Court's decision was considered so important. Students might consider how increasing partisanship over time (Abramowitz 2012; Fiorina et al., 2005; Iyengar et al., 2012) and the self-sorting of people by political affiliation (Bishop, 2008; Chen & Roden, 2013) has contributed to the problem of gerrymandering. Additionally, students can examine state-specific cases to illuminate reasons for concern. For example, in a 2018 Pennsylvania case, the state legislature failed to meet its court-appointed deadline for a new legislative map, so the Pennsylvania Supreme Court drew a new map in their stead. There were notable disparities between voting outcomes and representation in the Pennsylvania Congress before and after the Pennsylvania Supreme Court drew new district lines. In the 2016 House races in Pennsylvania, slightly more people voted for Democrats than voted for Republicans in aggregate, but the Congressional delegation resulted in five Democrats and 11 Republicans. In the 2018 election with new districts, the delegation to Congress became nine Democrats and nine Republicans (of course, the result was complicated by midterm elections which generally favor the opposition to the President's party).

Gerrymandering that distorts votes such as in the case of Pennsylvania is a democratic problem, and addressing it is

complicated. There are competing goals and rationales for how to draw districts, including different notions of place identity, beliefs that districts should be compact or that political entities like townships should not be divided, and arguments that lines should be drawn by the existing majority in government versus drawn to maximize political competitiveness. The fundamental problem is: What is the fairest way to draw congressional districts? A teacher could pose this question for students and then encourage them to ponder it from different angles, investigating when and how the problem arose and considering proposed solutions (see Appendix). Alternatively, students can begin with an examination of contextual information—such as the Michigan case in the sample IDM—and frame a problem about gerrymandering for themselves.

Using Disciplinary Tools and Concepts with a Variety of Texts

Literate people in all the core social studies disciplines read and critically analyze a wide variety of textual forms. Although each discipline may privilege some types of texts over others—for example, data maps in geography, or historical newspaper articles and political cartoons in history—the texts that people use in each discipline may nonetheless be verbal, visual, graphic, or oral. Those who are literate in these disciplines can move between different texts, integrating information and conclusions they draw from them to reach their own conclusions. In making sense of these texts, they use disciplinary concepts and tools as suggested by the C3 Framework. For example, literate people across disciplines apply the heuristics of sourcing, contextualizing, and corroborating, recognizing that authors have their own motivations, biases, and theoretical frameworks. Furthermore, they all use understandings of key substantive concepts from their disciplines as a lens through which to make sense of information in various texts—whether it is recognizing opportunity costs and tradeoffs in economics, or acknowledging different conceptions of justice articulated in political theory.

Students could use a variety of texts and disciplinary concepts and tools to address the question about gerrymandering posed above. For example, students could consider how the issue of gerrymandering has changed over time by reading about its history through secondary sources such as historian David Stebenne's (2012) article, "Re-mapping American Politics: The Redistricting Revolution Fifty Years Later" (see Appendix), or the *Smithsonian Magazine* article (Trickey, 2017) on the history of the term "gerrymandering." Students could also use some of the primary sources featured in these articles, including the 1812 *Boston Gazette* print where the term gerrymandering was coined, or an 1820 broadside commenting on the results of Massachusetts' 1912 redistricting plan (see the Choices Program curriculum for additional historical sources http://www.choices.edu/teaching-news-lesson/gerrymandering-one-person-one-vote/). To put the current debate in a more recent historical context, students could read the opinion in the 1963 Supreme Court case *Baker v. Carr* which decided, first, that legislative apportionment is an issue for the courts, and, second, that legislative districts should be reapportioned with equal population across districts (see Appendix). In reading these texts, teachers could encourage students to use historical and contemporary information to source and contextualize, and to critically analyze the use of language and images in communicating messages about fair political representation.

Students could also use a variety of static and interactive data visualizations, applying multiple disciplinary concepts to understand and formulate arguments about gerrymandering. For example, they can use maps to apply geographic concepts like movement and regions while evaluating how shifts in population distribution throughout different states have influenced gerrymandering. Or, they can apply economic concepts like choice and tradeoffs as they consider the different political goals people have, and how these varying goals lead to different ways of gerrymandering district lines. In addition, students can analyze graphs and charts that help them better understand the issues of partisanship and political polarization that have influenced gerrymandering. The sample IDM in the Appendix contains several examples of data visualizations for students to analyze.

Forming Evidence-based Arguments

All of the core social studies disciplines value evidence-based arguments and explanations. Preferences for communicating arguments and explanations may differ among disciplines, but scholars nonetheless address problems with arguments and explanations supported by empirical evidence and sound reasoning. Showing how evidence is being used is also essential. As the *C3 Framework* suggests, by the end of 12th grade students can "identify evidence that draws information directly and substantively from multiple sources to detect inconsistencies in evidence in order to revise or strengthen claims" and also "refine claims and counterclaims attending to precision, significance, and knowledge conveyed through the claim while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both" (NCSS, 2013, p. 55).

In the case of gerrymandering students could use evidence to make claims about the fairest way to draw legislative districts. For example, websites like Flowing Data and FiveThirtyEight (see Appendix) offer resources to help students consider different ways to approach redistricting based on different goals—for example, by drawing district lines to promote highly competitive elections or by using an algorithm to promote district compactness. Using these websites as a starting point, students could hold a deliberative forum about the pros and cons of each of these different approaches. They could then build upon insight gained through such deliberations and choose historical, economic, and geographic evidence from sources mentioned above to develop an argument—and a counterclaim to their argument—about the fairest way to draw districts.

Students' arguments in answer to the question about gerrymandering could be a written essay or take other forms, such as a policy recommendation white paper. Students in states with citizens' redistricting commissions, such as the one that was passed in Michigan through a 2018 ballot initiative (Egan, 2018), could either write letters arguing for a particular approach, or pretend they are on the commission and write speeches to give to fellow commission members. Students could also work together to create blogs on a class website, imagining they are a team made up of an economist, geographer, historian, and political scientist using different forms of evidence, including verbal and visual, to build a case for a particular solution. No matter the form of the argument presented, students would be able to practice economic literacy skills by reasoning about choices and tradeoffs, geographic literacy skills by creating a map with their proposed district lines, historical literacy skills by incorporating multiple sources of evidence to establish a historical context, and civic literacy skills by demonstrating their knowledge of government and by appealing to values like justice and principles like rule of law.

Taking Action

Although each of the disciplines referenced above have ways of communicating knowledge to larger audiences, one area that the disciplinary literacy scholarship does not spend as much time is on students using their skills to take action in their communities. The C3 Framework, however, includes taking informed action as the final step in the inquiry arc. For example, by the end of 12th grade, students should be able to "present adaptations of arguments and explanations that feature evocative ideas and perspectives on issues and topics to reach a range of audiences and venues outside the classroom" (p. 60). In the case of gerrymandering, students could draw upon their understanding of gerrymandering's historical causes and consequences, as well as contemporary goals and debates, and then apply their own personal notions of fairness to develop an action plan.

One potentially compelling outlet for action as a culmination of a gerrymandering inquiry arc (included in the IDM) would be to have students communicate their conclusions by writing a letter to their governor or state legislative representative to make a case for what they believe to be the fairest way to redraw district lines, using claims, evidence, and reasoning. Alternatively, students could create a short video documentary to inform the public about the history of gerrymandering and current debates. Drawing on the Michigan example above, for example, students could send their letter to the citizens' redistricting commission or create, and perhaps present, comments at a public meeting of the commission. No matter the product, students could use interdisciplinary evidence to support their argument.

Conclusion

Scholars have mostly focused on disciplinary literacy in each of the core social studies disciplines by identifying specific characteristics central to them. To be sure, each of the social studies disciplines offers specialized concepts and skills useful for analyzing and understanding the myriad of questions and problems that we regularly face as citizens in a democratic society. However, we argue that weaving the disciplines together offers a more powerful way to tackle complex problems than any disciplinary approach on its own. We further argue that an integrated disciplinary approach need not be a disconnected mishmash of lessons or investigations. Indeed, the disciplines themselves honor and use concepts from different disciplines, and they share practices that lend themselves to an integrative approach. This article has attempted to illustrate how using an integrative approach to tackle a democratic problem provides students with opportunities to engage in literacy practices deemed valuable within the separate social studies disciplines, while leveraging the opportunities inherent in the social studies disciplines' common practices. The different disciplinary lenses used in this approach also give students the opportunity to critically analyze monodisciplinary answers to multidisciplinary problems, providing them with a range of disciplinary concepts and ways of knowing with which to make sense of an issue. Classroom experiences such as the one we have suggested with the case of gerrymandering have the potential to provide students with rich learning experiences that will prepare them well for the challenges of civic life.

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Inquiry Design Model (IDM) for Gerrymandering	
Compelling Question	What is the fairest way to draw congressional districts?
Standards and Practices	**D1.5.9-12.** Determine the kinds of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions, taking into consideration multiple points of view represented in the sources, the types of sources available, and the potential uses of the sources. **D2.Civ.13.9-12.** Evaluate public policies in terms of intended and unintended outcomes, and related consequences. **D2.Eco.1.9-12.** Analyze how incentives influence choices that may result in policies with a range of costs and benefits for different groups. **D2.Geo.2.9-12.** Use maps, satellite images, photographs, and other representations to explain relationships between the locations of places and regions and their political, cultural, and economic dynamics. **D2.His.5.9-12.** Analyze how historical contexts shaped and continue to shape people's perspectives. **D3.1.9-12.** Gather relevant information from multiple sources representing a wide range of views while using the origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection. **D4.1.9-12.** Construct arguments using precise and knowledgeable claims, with evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging counterclaims and evidentiary weaknesses. **D4.8.9-12.** Apply a range of deliberative and democratic strategies and procedures to make decisions and take action in their classrooms, schools, and out-of-school civic contexts.
Staging the Question	Ask students what they know about the term gerrymandering and then provide a definition (for example: https://www.britannica.com/topic/gerrymandering). Ask students to read an article about the 2019 U.S Supreme Court decision to decline cases regarding limitations on gerrymandering (see, for example, https://www.npr.org/2019/06/27/731847977/supreme-court-rules-partisan-gerrymandering-is-beyond-the-reach-of-federal-court), and then discuss reasons why the Court's decision was considered important. Make sure students understand that it is up to the legislative branch or individual states to police gerrymandering. To generate further interest, students can read and discuss state-specific cases such as gerrymandering in Michigan (see, for example, https://www.bridgemi.com/michigan-government/gerrymandering-michigan-among-nations-worst-new-test-claims). Pose the compelling question, making it clear that this is the question states like Michigan need to address.

Supporting Question 1	**Supporting Question 2**	**Supporting Question 3**
Why do people argue about gerrymandering?	How are the district lines drawn in my state and what are the consequences?	What is the best goal to adopt for redrawing district lines?
Formative Performance Task	**Formative Performance Task**	**Formative Performance Task**
Students create a pros and cons t-chart with various arguments for and against gerrymandering, and discuss how weighing these pros and cons differently can lead to arguments.	Students work in small groups to examine a map with district lines and hold a group discussion about what they believe the consequences of the lines are for politics in their state. They put their conclusions on poster paper and share with the class.	Students engage in a fishbowl deliberative discussion about the benefits and tradeoffs of different goals for redrawing district lines.

Featured Sources	**Featured Sources**	**Featured Sources**
Stebenne, D. (2012). Re-mapping American politics: The redistricting revolution 50 years later. *Origins, 5*(5). Retrieved from https://origins.osu.edu/article/re-mapping-american-politics-redistricting-revolution-fifty-years-later 1963 Supreme Court case *Baker v. Carr* (see https://www.oyez.org/cases/1960/6) and maps to help students understand population shifts (e.g., https://www.census.gov/history/img/urban-rural-distributionmap.jpg) Graphs demonstrating political polarization in the United States (e.g., http://www.pewresearch.org/topics/political-polarization/)	Maps about gerrymandering, such as: • FlowingData https://flowingdata.com/tag/gerrymandering/) • FiveThirtyEight https://fivethirtyeight.com/tag/the-gerrymandering-project/	Maps focused on different goals of gerrymandering, such as: • FiveThirtyEight https://fivethirtyeight.com/tag/the-gerrymandering-project/ • PolicyMaps https://www.policymap.com/2017/08/solutions-to-gerrymandering/)

Summative Performance Task	**Argument**	Students write an argument about the fairest way to redraw district lines, based on the problems that currently exist and what they believe to be the worthiest goal for redistricting.
	Extension	Students create a website page or blog post that includes visuals (see, for example, the visuals represented here https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/03/01/this-is-the-best-explanation-of-gerrymandering-you-will-ever-see/) to illustrate their argument about the fairest way to redraw district lines.
Taking Informed Action	Students write a letter to their governor or state legislative representative to make a case for what they believe to be the fairest way to redraw district lines, using claim, evidence, and reasoning.	

Inquiry Design Model (IDM) Blueprint™ (Grant, Lee, & Swan, 2014)

Download this inquiry here

Literature Application in the Social Studies Classroom

Educator Corner
With Jennifer Smielewski

Let's face it– the current state of world affairs does not create an environment of empathy and compassion. Pockets of single-issue unity have divided communities, states, and the nation. Cries of, "What about me?" send a message that I am more important than you are and that my needs are greater than yours. As adults, we have failed to model the collaboration we expect from our students. The young are told what to think rather than how to think.

As educators, we have amazing opportunities to teach students the skills needed to think critically and analyze information before drawing conclusions. We have the privilege of weaving the human story into what can sometimes be a dry, boring subject area. We have the privilege of helping our students tell their stories. The human story makes us pause when we look at a historical situation; we see what happened to real people in a real historical setting. Stories must be told and literature can help us do that, whether novels, non-fiction or primary sources. Some of the information here is my own original thought. Most of it is a conglomeration of ieas I seen, heard, run across, or read about over a span of five years.

Many social studies teachers already incorporate a wide variety of readings: primary sources, excerpts, novels. They also bring writing such as journals and diaries into the picture alongside their research and argument writing activities. This approach augments application of the Common Core State Standards for Literacy in Social Studies. This approach allows for differentiation as literature of different reading levels can be shared without diluting the social studies content. Different writing tasks can be assigned. When selected texts are presented within the appropriate historical context, students learn to see even historical fiction as examples of real people living through the social, economic and political environments of a multitude of eras. They see the human story unfold amid the names, dates, and events. They evaluate the intended and unintended consequences of both personal and political decisions. When they write from their own perspective, or by putting themselves in the shoes of another person, those evaluative skills motivate them to reflect on the story they are telling compared to the story they want to tell.

> "I WAS NOT SO NAÏVE AS TO BELIEVE EVERY FRESHMAN WOULD READ THE JUNGLE IN ITS ENTIRETY JUST BECAUSE I SAID SO. I KNEW I COULD GET EVERYONE TO READ SOMETHING IN IT. I WANTED THEM TO UNDERSTAND THE IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE, THE WORKER EXPERIENCE, THE SLUMS OF THE TIME PERIOD."

In elementary school, teaching with historical fiction helps educators teach students the difference between fact and fiction while honing reading and writing skills, and creating empathetic students. In *Seven Reasons I Teach with Historical Fiction,* Tarry Lindquist recounts one teacher's reasons for incorporating literature, including the fact that it puts people back in history. She also cites the value of accurate picture books for young readers who are attempting to visualize what clothing or transportation looked like during a period of study. People love stories. For those students who like to read, incorporating historical fiction introduces a genre they might not have encountered. For those who dislike reading or struggle with it, engaging content that highlights the struggles and successes of another child can provide the motivation to stick through a text to the very end. They want to know what happens next. They want to know what this child they are beginning to relate to will do.

In middle school, literature that accompanies the content can bring to life the study of cultures and civilizations that seem so distant. Using human stories bridges the disconnect between then and now by bringing events to life. Last year, we sought to include an important piece of literature in our sixth-grade geography class. Enter Jules Verne and *Around the World in Eighty Days.* In our curriculum, it is more like *Around the World in 180 Days,* but the kids are loving it. We changed the order of our regions of study and followed Phileas Fogg around the world, learning about cultures, people and political systems. We added an artistic map of the world to the walls with an icon of the novel to document Phileas' travels. A nice audio version of the text provides periodic read-a-louds to help students understand a vernacular they are unaccustomed to. One book, woven into the fabric of everything they do, has created interest and curiosity without creating additional "work" for anyone. It does not require worksheets, tests, or essays. We are not teaching "the book." Instead, we are teaching students to draw connections and parallels, to separate fact from fiction, to understand people and the role each plays in history.

High school literature integration is powerful, but please consult your English department. Perhaps a text can be moved from English to social studies, or the English classes might agree to let one go. In my ninth grade U.S. History class, students read excerpts from Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle,* and *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak and *Warriors Don't Cry* by Melba Pattillo Beals in their entireties. These were long-term readings and students had summative projects to do for each; the tasks leading up to the projects meant I had to let go of some of my traditional assignments. It was simultaneously scary and empowering. It was worth it as I watched students struggle with, "Why did they do that?" over and over again.

I was not so naïve as to believe every freshman would read *The Jungle* in its entirety just because I said so. I knew I could get everyone to read something in it. I wanted them to understand the immigrant experience, the worker experience, the slums of the time period. Structuring the process in a weekly book club format, I reallocated one 45-minute class period to a book club session six different times spread over eight weeks. The summative piece was each student's choice from among three options:

- On a poster board, provide 15 quotes from the novel that illustrate whether the novel was more about the plight of immigrants, or more about the meatpacking industry. All quotes must support the same position. Provide a brief explanation for each quote explaining how it supports your position.
- Use a Venn diagram to show the similarities and differences between what Sinclair hoped to accomplish with his book and what he actually accomplished. Provide citations for the actual accomplishments based on your research.
- Create a timeline with at least 15 actual, significant, historical events from the time period. Estimate dates for five events from the book and insert them appropriately in your timeline. For each of the actual events, provide a brief description as to why you consider it significant. For each fictional event, explain why you chose the date.

In U.S. History, students also read *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak and *Warriors Don't Cry* by Melba Pattillo Beals. Holocaust and World War II literature like *The Book Thief* is easy to get students to engage with. In the novel, readers repeatedly see aspects of the brutality of humans, and their beauty. In one project option, students are asked to choose, based on the book and their views of current events, whether humanity is brutal or beautiful. They have to provide examples from the books, history, and current events to support their position. It is argument writing without quite as much writing and it's beautiful to see their thought processes emerge. *Warriors Don't Cry* stimulates so many questions among freshmen who cannot understand why people treat others the way they do. Ironically, they exhibit the same behaviors in areas that are important to them. During a read-aloud time, I have had the privilege of hearing a student say, "I can't read that out loud. It feels like *I'm* saying it." Knowing, in that moment, a student understood the power of words and her own beliefs made the initial effort required to initiate any of this worth it.

Several years ago, I had the opportunity to develop a senior elective for our social studies department. Great Wars is a year-long study of World War I, the Interwar Period, and World War II. Needless to say, we created a class that did a deep dive into every aspect of war, its causes and consequences, as well as the actual combat side of war. Human beings with stories emerged in the history. Students read the young adult version of *Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption* by Laura Hillenbrand. Presented with themes and questions, students were asked to explain the behaviors and growth of those featured in the story. They are asked where they see character traits such as heroism and selfishness. One particular student noted the changes each went through during their ordeal, exhibiting different character traits at the end than they at the beginning.

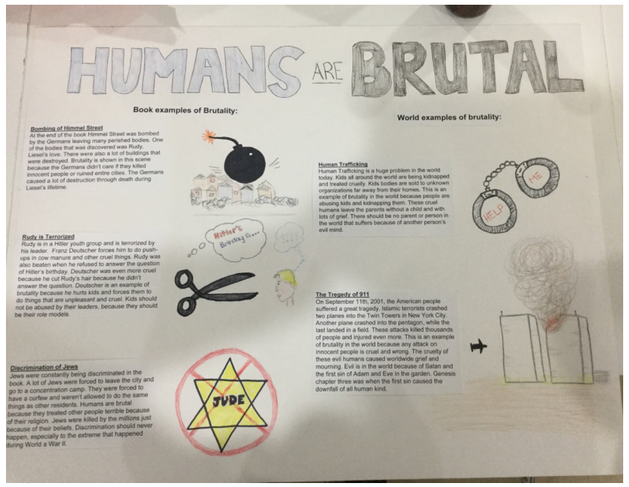
> *I felt Mac was far to[sic] selfish and did not try to help the group but instead was thinking about himself at the beginning. However, he started to accept death more and more and then he was a much less selfish person.*

People change. Whether fiction or non-fiction, the people in our stories change. Recognizing their growth over time provides opportunities for discussion about how we grow. Our students will not be the same in 10 years. Hopefully, they will be better versions of their current selves. I know they have made me a better version of myself.

Before you embark on a literature journey with your students, make sure you know your readers. Know their reading levels. Set reasonable expectations. You might need to address vocabulary in some texts. If your students use e-readers, don't bother with vocabulary assignments. Encourage them to long-press on unfamiliar words and read the definition in context. Coordinate with other teachers and departments. Explain to your administrators, parents and students up front what you are doing and why.

History is a collection of stories. Stories tell the tales our history books gloss over as we interweave the names, dates, and essential facts to create replicas of real experiences. Our students relate to the characters they read about and analyze the choices those characters made and the consequences that ensued. Students can apply and hone their critical thinking skills to their own decision-making while writing their own stories for the history books.

Jen Smielewski is in her 17th year as a second-career educator in mathematics and social studies. She is passionate about literature integration and the potential it carries for applications in social studies and the sciences. She has a bachelor of applied arts degree in journalism and political science from Central Michigan University, a bachelor of science in education in mathematics and history from Baker College, and a Master of Arts in K-12 school administration from Central Michigan University.



U.S. History
Warriors Don't Cry novel work

Project Options

- **Writing for Justice Narrative.** Individual project. *Warriors Don't Cry* illustrates how civil rights groups tackled school segregation. While it was Melba's story, it also is the story of an alliance of groups that came together to end the conditions blacks were subjected to. To show you understand how people working together can create change, write a narrative about a time YOU acted as an ally, perpetrator, target or bystander. Describe your role. If the situation repeated itself, what would you do the same? Differently?

- **The Coffee Shop.** Group project. Must have 4 or 5 students in the group. Write a script to enact a coffee shop gathering with at least four of these five characters.
  - Melba
  - Daisy Bates
  - Grandma India
  - Danny
  - Link

  They should interact as they would have in the novel. The skit should run about 10 minutes with props, appropriate attire, etc. Parts must be memorized and feel conversational.

- **Literary Postcards.** Individual project. Create a series of five postcards. On one side of each, *draw* images of significant scenes from the book. On the other side of each, write poetry, letters, messages, etc. from one character to another explaining what is happening in their lives at that moment. All postcards do not have to be from/to the same person. Artistic ability will not be graded as long as it appears effort was put forth. Be sure to accurately write about the characters' experiences and corresponding feelings.

- **Character Silhouette.** Group project. Groups of 2 or 3. On a sheet of roll paper, trace the silhouette of one of the group members and cut it out. Choose one character from the novel that your silhouette will represent. On the silhouette, write quotes with page numbers from the book. Place the quotes appropriately on your silhouette. Use at least 20 quotes from the book. On a separate document, provide rationale for choosing each quote and its placement. For example, one of Melba's thoughts might be placed on her head. Why did you choose that thought and put it on her head?

Using the Despair to Empowerment Curricular Curve in Cultivating Informed Civic Action: Lessons from a 10th grade Unit on the Holocaust

Brad Maguth, Hannah Bendelewski, & Jay Austin

A recent survey, designed by historians and Holocaust survivors and commissioned by the non-profit Claims Conference of 11,000 Americans aged 18-29 found a pervasive lack of knowledge about Nazi atrocities against Jews in the 1930s and during the Holocaust (Conference on Jewish Materials Claims, 2020). Findings from this recent study include:

- 63% of respondents were not aware that six million Jews had been murdered, with only 36% believing two million or fewer had been killed.
- 48% of the respondents could not name a single concentration camp or ghetto (there were over 40,000) that Jews were taken during the Holocaust.
- 11% believed Jews caused the Holocaust and should be blamed for it.
- 10% believed the Holocaust didn't happen or are not sure.

While research reporting U.S. students' lack of knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust is not new (Totten & Fienberg, 2016), these findings suggest some initiatives taken by states to mandate Holocaust education may not be enough. For instance, Illinois became the first state in the nation to enlist this mandate in 1990. Yet, Claims Conference survey results disaggregated find more than half of Illinois survey respondents could not identify a single concentration camp or ghetto. Renee Silberman, a docent at the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center, expressed her frustration in an interview with the *Chicago Tribune* (Dorfman, 2020, September 30) at the survey results pointing towards the ineffectiveness of this mandate:

> I was really disappointed because even with mandatory Holocaust education in Illinois — and we have had it for so many years — it is really upsetting to know that young people still don't understand that this actually happened.

Results disaggregated for the state of Michigan also points towards additional efforts needed, outside of the state's mandate. In 2016, the Michigan Legislature and Governor passed House Bill 4493 resulting in Public Act 170 that required school districts to include age-appropriate instruction in grades 8 to 12 about the Holocaust (98th Michigan Legislature, 2016). Yet, the Claims Report finds still 14% of Michigan respondents believed Jews were responsible for the Holocaust; a score amongst the worst in the nation on this item. Fifty-nine percent of Michigan respondents did not know that six million Jews were murdered in the Holocaust, and 46% were not able to name a concentration camp or ghetto. Michigan respondents weren't alone, as other states with Holocaust Education mandates reported lackluster performance like Oregon, New York, and Virginia.

A Question of Pedagogy: From Despair to Empowerment

While mandates may be a part of the solution to ensure youth understand and learn from the Holocaust, additional efforts should be paid to how the Holocaust is taught in U.S. classrooms and communities. In an article for *National Affairs*, Ruth Wisse, a former professor of Yiddish and comparative literature at Harvard, described the dark side of Holocaust education and pedagogy (Wisse, 2020). Her research finds the perversity of educators *teaching about hate to prevent hate*. She notes "A pedagogical fixation by educators on teaching hate has been associated with societies like fascist Germany and Soviet Russia that wish to direct blame and hate against designated alien or undesirable groups" (Phillips, 2020, October 20, para. 4). Instead of educators memorializing hate, especially, of the Nazi German perpetrators' murder and hate towards Jews and other groups during the Holocaust, all in the name of preventing future iterations of hate, Wisse recommends educators stop showing indifference or apathy towards current acts of violence and discrimination.

To improve our instruction when teaching the Holocaust, we sought out instructional tools to promote youth empowerment and engagement over despair and apathy. This led us to Berman's (1990) *Despair to Empowerment Curricular Curve*. Berman observed that too often social educators (inclusive of the social studies) saturate students with depressing historical problems, along with accompanying disheartening accounts, that humans have and currently face. Students learn accounts of human misery and can easily be overwhelmed, desensitized to, or apathetic toward the problem because they rarely are given the opportunity to apply learnings gleaned to solve complex problems. History in classrooms can digress into the worst humans have to offer one another, as one horrible conflict, depression, disease, or episode follows one another (one chapter after another) to suck the life and industry out of youth (Maguth et al., 2019).

Berman's proposed curve draws from a socio-constructivist paradigm that captures the importance of learners interpreting meaning based on their experience, including curricular experiences (Vygotsky, 1978/1995). Instead of the teacher pouring knowledge into passive students—like an empty vessel to be filled—students in a constructivist classroom actively engage in curricular experiences that build on previous knowledge, promote inquiry and interactivity, make connections between the past and today, and apply their learning in a real-world context. Berman does acknowledge that after students gain a "threshold of knowledge," they must have a creative outlet to apply these understandings to move away from despair and towards empowerment. An empowering curriculum moves beyond students simply learning about a mass murder/genocide, conflict, economic depressions, and diseases and provides them with the opportunity to draw from gained understandings on suffering to take informed action on current issues. Such an instructional approach fights the normalization and desensitization of youth to injustice, conflict, and grief. Instead of fostering complacency, youth are prepared to apply their learning to take informed action. Students are allowed to explore problems that currently affect them, their family, neighborhood, our country, and planet to act and help others.

Despair	Empowerment
1. Teachers (or a text/media) only present a ready-made problem or issue to students. Issues may include death, warm famine, disease as a "stalemate" or norm in history and society. 2. Students have no classroom outlet to apply learnings to take informed action before learning about the next "disaster," and as a result, lose hope, become skeptical toward progress, and are pessimistic about a better future. 3. Employs Freire's critiqued "banking method" in which teachers simply deposit information into passive student recipients (Freire, 1993).	1. Real-World Problem-Based: Students identify a problem that affects them, their family, friends, neighborhood, country, or planet. 2. Opportunities to Care and Act: Provides students the opportunity to leverage their "threshold of knowledge gained" to act to help others. 3. Strengthen Social Skills: Students are asked to cooperate and collaborate with others, manage and successfully navigate conflict and complexity, and reflect on multiple perspectives. 4. Interdependence: Students understand the ways in which they are connected to other humans socially, politically, economically, and environmentally.

Table 1
Elements of despair and empowerment curriculum

The Despair to Empowerment Curricular Curve below depicts despair and empowerment on opposite sides of a curve. Time is represented on the x-axis, and the y-axis represents the scope of self-empowerment.

If not given the opportunity to delve deeply and meaningfully into a subject, like the Holocaust, students can fall into information glut and hopelessness (despair) as they traverse from one horrible episode or chapter in history to another in social studies. Berman contests rarely are learners afforded the opportunity to apply gained learnings to take informed action despite such activities moving learners beyond despair and information glut and toward empowerment.

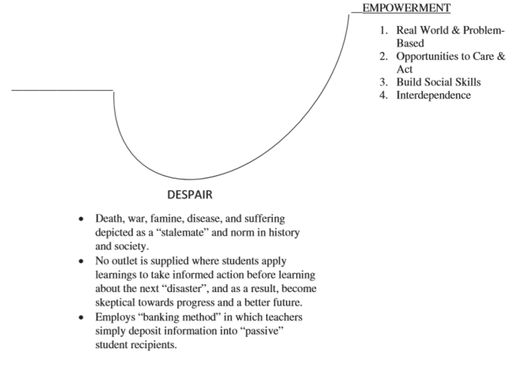


Figure 1
Despair to empowerment curricular curve

The College, Career, and Civic Life Framework (C3 Framework) is a framework for educators that can help operationalize Berman's (1990) Despair to Empowerment Curricular Curve. The C3 advances an inquiry-oriented social studies curriculum that successfully prepares youth for college, career, and active civic life. In these inquiry-laden units, students develop questions and help plan the inquiry, draw from the social studies disciplines (concepts and tools), evaluate sources and use evidence, and communicate conclusions all to take informed action (NCSS, 2013). The C3 Framework aligns with Berman's research and provides educators with an inquiry-laden framework to construct problem-based units in which students draw from content and tools in the social studies disciplines. Specifically, empowerment in social studies education can easily be aligned to the C3 Framework's inquiry arc that uses questions in the exploration of key issues faced by people in communities overtime (Grant, 2013). The importance of asking the right question is emphasized by Berman (1990) when he writes, "…educating young people for the development of social consciousness means posing a set of questions that emphasizes their social development" (p. 76). The C3 Framework provides students with the opportunity to ask such questions by stepping out of their shoes to better understand the perspectives and concerns of people from different cultures and communities.

Research into Practice: The Holocaust & the Despair to Empowerment Curve

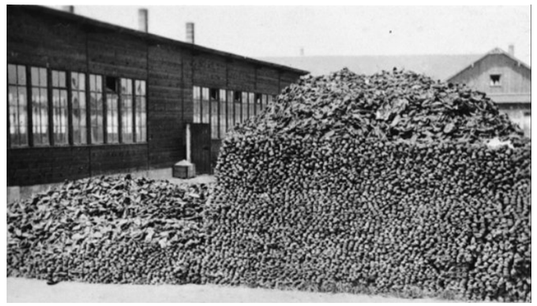
Below, the authors describe a tenth-grade U.S. History curricular unit on the Holocaust, which showcased elements of the empowerment curricular curve. Before learning about the curve, the authors planned and implemented a traditional unit on the Holocaust that unknowingly featured many "despair" elements. This traditional despair unit is described below.

This traditional unit on the Holocaust started with the teacher asking students to take off one of their tennis shoes and put it in a clear plastic produce bag. Afterward, learners were asked to exchange their shoe with a classmate. Once exchanged, students were informed they needed to investigate their classmate's shoe and record their answers to the following questions:

- What markings are visible? Any logos, names, or color scheme? What's its style? Is there any wear, tear, or debris?
- If someone was to locate this shoe 75 years from now, what story would this one shoe tell them about its owner? Who they are? Their interests?

Afterward, students discuss the picture below (Figure 2) of mounds of shoes that were stolen from Jews murdered by the Nazis at the Dachau concentration camp. Each of these shoes represents a life stolen, with family, friends, and communities impacted. The Nazis confiscated and seized Jewish property that included clothing, medication, tools, luggage, glasses, food, and other valuables.

Figure 2
Source A: View of a large pile of victims' shoes piled at Dachau



United States Holocaust Memorial & Museum. (2020). View of a large pile of victims' shoes piled up outside barracks in the Dachau concentration camp. Retrieved at https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa1158439

This picture helps in introducing the Holocaust as the systematic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators (United States Holocaust Memorial and Museum [USHMM], 2020). By the end of the war in 1945, Nazi Germans and their collaborators killed nearly two out of every three European Jews as part of the Final Solution, with 3 million Polish Jews murdered (Friedlander, 2009). The Nazis considered Jews to be an inferior race that posed the deadliest menace to the German volk (people). Soon after coming to power, the Nazis adopted measures to exclude Jews from German economic, social and cultural life and to pressure them to emigrate. World War II provided Nazi officials with the opportunity to pursue a comprehensive, "final solution to the Jewish question" in an attempt to annihilate all Jews in Europe.

Afterward, students were asked to review the table below (Table 2) from the United States Holocaust Memorial and Museum which provides statistics on the number of people murdered, by group affiliation, during the Holocaust. Guiding questions for discussion included: What groups of people were targeted by the Nazis? And, why did the Nazis target Europe's Jews and others during the Holocaust?

Group	Number of Deaths
Jews	6 million
Soviet civilians	around 7 million (including 1.3 Soviet Jewish civilians, who are included in the 6 million figure for Jews)
Soviet prisoners of war	around 3 million (including about 50,000 Jewish soldiers)
Non-Jewish Polish civilians	around 1.8 million (including between 50,000 and 100,000 members of the Polish elites)
Serb civilians (on the territory of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina)	312,000
People with disabilities living in institutions	up to 250,000
Roma (Gypsies)	up to 250,000
Jehovah's Witnesses	around 1,900
Repeat criminal offenders and so-called asocials	at least 70,000
German political opponents and resistance activists in Axis-occupied territory	undetermined
Homosexuals	hundreds, possibly thousands (possibly also counted in part under the 70,000 repeat criminal offenders and so-called asocials noted above)

Table 2
Source B: The number of dead
U.S. Holocaust Memorial and Museum. (2020). Documenting numbers of victims of the Holocaust and Nazi persecution. Retrieved at https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/documenting-numbers-of-victims-of-the-holocaust-and-nazi-persecution

Upon reviewing this table, we discussed the Nazi rise to power in Germany in January 1933 and their belief the Aryan race was superior to all others. During the Holocaust, German authorities targeted mainly Europe's Jews and other groups because of their perceived racial and biological inferiority. Other groups persecuted included Roma (Gypsies), people with disabilities, groups of Slavic people (Poles, Russians, and others), Soviet prisoners of war, Blacks, Communists, Socialists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and homosexuals.

In the next activity, students were asked to review one of the three pictures below (Figure 3, Figure 4, and Figure 5) independently on the history of antisemitism in Europe. Then, learners were placed in a larger group with other students that analyzed the same source to discuss what they learned. After discussing their source in their group, students from each group report to the entire class key information presented in their source. Through this Think, Pair, Share activity, and its accompanying analysis, students come to understand the enduring challenges of antisemitism in early Europe and how such murderous and incendiary attitudes didn't just emerge in Germany upon Hitler's rise to power in the 20th Century.

Figure 3
Source C: Medieval anti-Semitism

Wolgemut, Michel and Pleydenwurff, Wilhelm, Martyrdom of Simon von Trent (1493), woodcut, Hartmann Schedels Weltchronik (Nuremberg World Chronicle), Katz Ehrenthal Collection, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn545179

The picture above is a 1493 illustration of the Blood Libel from Medieval Europe perpetuating the claim that Jews murdered Christian children and used their blood for religious offerings. Due to existing antisemitism, Christians would allege Jews murdered Christian boys for their blood for religious rituals. This slander often led to attacks on Jewish communities despite the fact that human sacrifice and the use of even animal blood for any purpose are strictly forbidden according to Jewish law.

Figure 4
Source D: Medieval anti-Semitism

Representation of a massacre of the Jews in 1349 Antiquitates Flandriae (Royal Library of Belgium manuscript 1376/77)

The picture above is an illustration published in the 13th Century that shows two Jews about to be put to death as revenge for the death of Jesus, who looks on at the top left. In Medieval Europe, a rumor emerged that Jews collectively murdered Jesus which has been used to justify violence against Jews for centuries. Historians, as well as Christian theologians and leaders, have concluded these claims are baseless and incorrect.

Figure 5
Source E: Medieval anti-Semitism

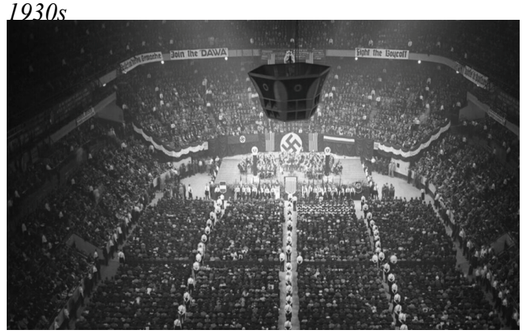
Artist unknown, Execution of the Faithful (c.1250), illustration in Bible Moralisée, Gallica digital library, Bibliothèque National de France https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-return-of-anti-semitism-1422638910

The drawing above is of the Strasbourg massacre on February 14, 1349, where several hundred Jews were publicly burnt to death, and the rest of them expelled from the city due to Christians blaming them for the Black Death. This plague killed 25 million in 14th century Europe, roughly 40 percent of the population. Due to antisemitism, Jews were shunned and tortured for misguided beliefs of their being responsible for the Bubonic plague.

In the final section of this unit, students were asked to review the following images (Figure 6, Figure 7, and Figure 8) focused on antisemitism within 20th century America. Specific questions included:

1. Who and what is depicted in the image?
2. What are people in the image doing?
3. How does this image relate to the Holocaust?

Figure 6
Source F: American Nazis in the 1930s



American Nazis in the 1930s—The German American Bund. Retrieved at https://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2017/06/american-nazis-in-the-1930sthe-german-american-bund/529185/

Six and a half months before Adolf Hitler invaded Poland, New York City's Madison Square Garden hosted a rally organized by the German American Bund to celebrate the rise of Nazism in Germany. This picture depicts this rally where more than 20,000 attendees raised Nazi salutes toward a 30-foot-tall portrait of George Washington flanked by swastikas.

Figure 7
Source G: Hitler in TIME magazine

Time Magazine retrieved from https://time.com/magazine

Hitler appeared on the cover of TIME Magazine on multiple occasions — most famously perhaps on Jan. 2, 1939, when he was named Man of the Year. Before and during World War II, antisemitism was a prevalent attitude in America and reached high levels in the late 1930s and into the 1940s. According to the American Institute of Public Opinion Poll, two-thirds of Americans believed Jews were at fault for their persecution by the Nazis in Europe. Rampant unemployment resulting from the Great Depression, and isolationist attitudes after World War 1, also led Americans to oppose allowing Jewish exiles from Germany into the U.S.

Figure 8
Source H: M.S. St. Louis

Passengers aboard the M.S. St. Louis ocean liner. Retrieved at https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/photo/passengers-aboard-the-st-louis

On May 13th, 1939, the German ship the *M.S. St. Louis* sailed from Hamburg, Germany for Havana, Cuba carrying mostly German Jewish passengers. Enroute the Cuban government revoked the ship's landing certificate and forced the ship to leave its harbor. Desperate, the ship sailed toward Miami, Florida pleading for assistance. U.S. authorities refused to allow the M.S. St. Louis' passengers to disembark, and the ship sailed back to Europe. Of the 937 passengers, 254 were murdered in the Holocaust

The traditional unit previously described, inclusive of its embedded activities and assessments, placed a focus on the death, destruction, discrimination, and human plight that was prevalent during the Holocaust. Upon learning about the Despair to Empowerment Curve, we began to understand how this traditional unit could easily leave students feeling powerless, overwhelmed, and desensitized to human suffering. While the unit provided insights and knowledge into the Holocaust, we knew the unit needed updates to ensure students did not walk

away with an overall impression of the normalization of death, destruction, and hopelessness.

To try and move students beyond despair, we added a new section immediately after the completion of the M.S. St. Louis ocean liner activity above. This section was added to our traditional unit to help fight the normalization and desensitization of human destruction and suffering. It also provided learners the opportunity to make real-world connections and take informed action to events unfolding today. As a disclaimer, we fully understand additional on-going edits are warranted to better embed empowerment elements throughout the entire unit, not just to its conclusion. Described below is the initial and immediate edit made after learning about the Despair to Empowerment Curricular Curve.

In this new section, we asked students to review the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). In part, this document approved in 1948 was a response to the atrocities of the Holocaust. This milestone document outlines the fundamental rights all people deserve, during peace and war. It also inspires people locally and globally to take action in the face of injustice and to be upstanders in working to protect human rights for all (United Nations, 1948).

After providing an introduction to the UDHR, students were asked to select one of its articles for a deeper investigation. In this segment, learners were asked to identify an article of the UDHR they felt their community had not lived-up to. For instance, one student selected Article 7 that reports all humans must be equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. In Ohio, the state where the authors teach, numerous studies find the state's application of the death penalty have disproportionality affected people of color (Death Penalty Information Center, 2020). Other UDHR articles students selected included the treatment of refugees and minorities, protections of freedom of speech, assembly, and religion, and the right to an education. Teachers may want to share the poster below which provides a listing of all 30 articles.

Figure 9
Source I: United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Irish Times. (2018). United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. Retrieved at https://www.ihrec.ie/app/uploads/2018/12/HumanRights-A1Poster-reduced.pdf

Once students connected the rights referenced by this global document to the needs of our local community, students were asked to create a public service announcement (PSA) about it. This announcement centered on the construction of an informative poster for display and presentation in the main corridor of the high school during Human Rights Day. These large (24" x 36") posters were hung in one of the most heavily trafficked sections of the school. We also had an unveiling ceremony for the posters where students were able to present them to their classmates, to school administrators, and for the videotaped school announcements that played for all students during homeroom that day.

Posters needed to include the following information: What UDHR article did you select, and rights does it protect? In what way(s) has our community not lived up to this article? Finally, what concrete steps can be taken by our community to better live up to it? As an extension, educators could have youth present their PSAs at locations outside of school (virtually or in-person) such as community events, or, neighborhood spaces to better inform others and take action on this issue. Examples of student work are included below.

Figure 10
Student poster on UDHR Article 7 with relation to local community displayed

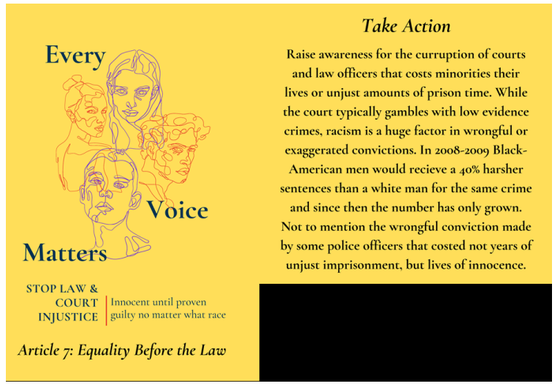


Figure 11
Student poster on UDHR Article 26 with relation to local community displayed

Comments and feedback from learners after completing this new activity suggest their appreciation for having the opportunity, beyond recall, to make real-world connections between course content and current issues in their community. One student noted, "I like how this project brought the historical problems we've been studying to life in our school and community today." Instead of serving as passive receptacles of knowledge, youth were provided with the opportunity to actively leverage their social studies research and talents to take action to help others. Another student explained, "I like how we gained confidence and learned how to jump in to make our community better." By adding this new component, we heard from students a sense of empowerment in gaining confidence and comfort in using their civic voices to collaborate with others to better the human condition.

We believe the addition of this new section better-provided learners with the opportunity to confront indifference or apathy towards current acts of discrimination and/or injustice. It moves our traditional unit closer towards an empowering curriculum where youth simply don't learn about harm and injustice but are provided with an outlet to draw from gained understanding on suffering to take informed action via a community issue. Such an instructional approach moves the unit closer to helping prepare youth to fight the normalization of injustice, violence, and suffering.

Conclusion

A strong and meaningful social studies education is front and center in the fight against youth feeling powerless and indifferent (NCSS, 2013). In teaching the Holocaust, new approaches and tools are needed that move beyond memorializing and recall of hate and towards pedagogies that cultivate civic action to confront existing violence and injustice. After all, the American Jewish community experienced the highest level of antisemitic incidents last year since tracking began in 1979, with more than 2,100 acts of assault, vandalism, and harassment reported across the United States (Anti-Defamation League, 2019). Berman's Despair to Empowerment Curricular Curve may be one such conceptual device for use in the movement towards civic empowerment in social studies. The use of this curve helped the authors to plan and enact an inquiry-oriented tenth grade U.S. History unit on the Holocaust. Too often information glut and hopelessness (despair) are manufactured in social studies classrooms. In an attempt to combat this problem, instructional time was devoted to providing youth with an empowering curricular experience that involved applying gained learnings to take informed action in their community. Future empirical research

is warranted to better understand how the teaching and learning of social studies can broker civic empowerment while minimizing despair; especially, when teaching about a topic as important as the Holocaust.

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"Just voting for the side you believe without understanding the other argument does nothing to further democracy": The evolution of preservice teachers' conceptions of democracy

Dean P. Vesperman

Schools actively and passively socialize students for participation in democracy (see Avery, 2007; Barton & Levstik, 2004; Goodlad, 1996; Guttman, 1999; 2000; Parker, 1996b; 2002; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004a; 2004b). Additionally, we know that how teachers conceptualize and teach about democracy matters because this influences how a teacher enacts the curriculum (Carr, 2006; 2008; Parker 1996a; 1996c; Ross & Yeager, 1999; Westheimer & Kahne 2004b). However, evidence of how teachers infuse democracy into the curriculum and the classroom is limited (Carr, 2006; Westheimer & Kahne 2004b), which leads to concerns (see Goodlad 2008a, 2008b; Neumann, 2008). Therefore, it is essential to aid preservice social studies teachers in the development of conceptions of democracy as a complex, cultural activity. If future teachers hold a complex conception of democracy, they will teach their students the complexity of democracy as an activity.

Literature Review

The research on preservice teachers' conceptions of democracy and citizenship displayed that many preservice teachers believed that citizens had only a limited number of actions they could take in a democracy. These actions focused on voting, following laws, staying informed, respecting the rights of others as well as preserving their rights, and occasionally performing community service (Boyle-Baise, 2003 Carr, 2006; Kickbusch, 1987; Ross & Yeager, 1999; Yeager & van Hover, 2004). This limited view of the role of citizens in a democracy fit within Parker's (2002) traditional and Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) personally responsible citizen frame.

Interestingly, some studies have found that preservice teachers hold more complex conceptions of democracy and citizenship (Dinkelman, 2000; 2001; Iverson & James, 2009; Ross & Yeager, 1999; Yeager & van Hover, 2004). They described democracy as a way of life, as an institution that is undergoing constant change and transformation, or as an activity. These complex conceptions of democracy appeared in two primary ways: a community-oriented perspective (Iverson & James, 2009; Ross & Yeager; Yeager & van Hover, 2004) and a social justice-oriented perspective (Dinkelman, 2000; 2001; Iverson & James, 2009). These complex conceptions of democracy fit within Parker's (2002) progressive and advanced and Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) participatory and justice-oriented citizen frames. It is important to note that these studies, while demonstrating that some preservice teachers might have complex conceptions of democracy, do not provide an explanation of how or why these were constructed.

Previous research demonstrates that preservice teachers present two contrasting findings. First most research found preservice teachers hold a limited, traditional conception of democracy. A few studies have shown that some preservice teachers either have or over time develop complex conceptions.

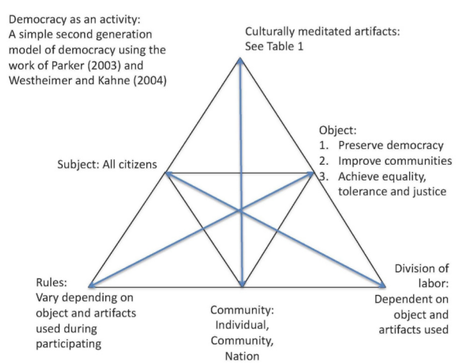
Conceptual Framework
Democracy as a Cultural Activity

There are numerous visions of democracy (e.g., Barber, 2003; Dewey 1916/2011; Guttman, 1999; Price, 2007; Urbinati & Warren, 2008), which share a commonality: citizens engage in the activity of democracy. Democracy is

described as a cultural construct with a cultural-historical origin, which has undergone an uneven pattern of evolution. Therefore, democracy is an activity in which citizens (subject) choose whether democracy's purpose (object) is to preserve the status quo, improve local communities, or achieve social justice (Parker, 2002; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004b). These visions further reveal that democracy has numerous culturally mediated artifacts, rules for participation and artifact use, several visions of how labor should and could be divided, and a plethora of communities citizens inhabit (see Barton & Levstik, 2004; Dewey, 1916/2011; Gutmann, 1999; Nie et al., 1996; Parker, 2002; Patrick, 2005; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004b) (see Figure 1). Given the complexity of the activity, and using second generational activity theory (Cole & Engeström, 1993; Engeström, 1987, 1990; Sannino, 2011; Yamagata-Lynch & Haudenschild 2009), it is apparent that citizens in a democracy do not hold a specific or singular (limited) role within a democracy, nor is there only one set of rules, artifacts, community, or division of labor.
(See Figure 1)

Figure 1

Democracy: A second-generation activity theory model.



Consequently, citizens act within a democracy, democratic institutions, and their community in numerous ways given particular situations (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Gutmann, 1999; Parker, 2002, 2005; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004b). Thus, any conception of democracy or democratic citizenship should account for the various and complex ways that citizens might participate within the diverse communities that make up a democracy (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Dewey 1916/2011; Gutmann 1999).

Democracy as Activity Frame

The work of Parker (2002) and Westheimer and Kahne (2004b) provide a heuristic for capturing the complexity of democracy as an activity and the artifacts citizens use when participating in the activity. The melding of these two typologies provided a frame for consideration of democracy as a dynamic cultural activity (Vesperman, 2015; Vesperman & Caulfield, 2017).

Table 1

Democracy as activity frame (Vesperman, 2015).

	Democracy as Activity Typology		
	Traditional/Personally responsible citizens	Progressive/Participatory citizens	Advanced/Justice-Oriented citizens
Actions of citizens	Citizens: • Vote for representatives • Have a universal set of political knowledge (including the functions of government) • Participate in their community (driven by self-interest).	Citizens: • Vote for representatives who work to improve local communities • Have knowledge of politics, culture, and economics • Use discussion and deliberation of public issues to solve problems • Participate in a variety of ways (volunteering, community service, and protesting).	Citizens: • Vote for representatives who work to address issues of social inequity • Are aware of the flaws in current cultural, political, and economic institutions • Deliberate and discuss controversial issues related to the politics of diversity and multiculturalism. • Participate in their community to address the underlying causes of inequity (protests, marches, community service).
Purpose of participation	• To maintain the current political system.	• To solve local political, economic, or social problems	• To create a more just society.

Qualitative Transformations

Another key aspect of activity theory is that subjects go through qualitative transformations as they engage in an activity (Cole & Engeström, 1993; Engeström, 1987, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978). Qualitative transformations are possible when subjects engage in activity that leads to the creation of primary contradictions (Engeström, 1987, 1990; Vesperman & Leet-Otley, 2021; Yamagata-Lynch & Haudenschild, 2009). Primary contradictions occur when there is a conflict between value systems held by the subject(s) and the activity. As primary contradictions appear, subjects seek to resolve the contradiction by replacing or modifying existing values, beliefs, norms, and conceptions (Engeström, 1987, 1990; Vesperman & Leet-Otley, 2021; Yamagata-Lynch & Haudenschild, 2009). Additionally, subjects may shift the object of their participation (Chaiklin, 2003; Veresov, 2004) or how they use artifacts of an activity (Gutierrez, 2002; Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003; Rogoff & Angelillo, 2002). Thus, leading to ontogenetic evolution, which can be mapped out as subjects engage in activity (Cole & Engeström, 1993; Griffin & Cole, 1984; Rogoff & Angelillo, 2002).

A key to uncovering preservice teachers' or students' conceptions of democracy and its artifacts is to create a space for them to examine their personal beliefs. This space allows for the appearance of primary contradictions. Research on the socialization of preservice teachers noted the importance of critical reflection about the practical and philosophical aspects of teaching (Flores, 2007; Niesz, 2010) and the purposes of teaching social studies (Dinkelman, 2000, 2001; Iverson & James, 2009). Therefore, preservice social studies teachers need a space to reflect upon democracy. Consequently, does the introduction of primary contradictions lead to qualitative transformations of participants' conceptions of democracy?

Research Method

This is a case study of 13 secondary social studies pre-service teachers (PSTs). The 13 participants were enrolled in consecutive social studies methods courses at a large Midwestern University. The demographics of the 13 participants were five women and eight men. There were 12 Caucasian participants and one African-American participant. The researcher observed all class sessions and was not the instructor on record.

This case study used a concurrent mixed-methods research design to achieve complementarity of the data collected and to provide a more nuanced explanation of this social phenomenon (Greene, 2007; Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006). An enhancement of interpretations of the qualitative findings with quantitative data provided a fuller interpretation and understanding of the data collected (Collins et al., 2006; Jang et al., 2008). Data was analyzed using a dialectic stance to allow tensions between the qualitative and quantitative methods to develop an enhanced view of the phenomenon studied by including data that was contradictory or contrary to the overall findings (Greene, 2007).

The study used several elicitation techniques that required participants to explore their conceptions of democracy. The use of multiple methods of data collection and the triangulation of data increased the reliability of the findings. The elicitation techniques include the use of a pre and post-questionnaire, pre and post-interviews, and a pre and post-photo elicitation activity designed from using findings from previous studies (Boyle-Baise, 2003; Yeager & van Hover, 2004) and the work of Parker (2002), Westheimer and Kahne (2004), and Wartofsky (1979). Participants also journaled about democracy using elicitation prompts designed using the work of Dyment and O'Connell (2003), Hubbs and Brand (2005), Flores (2007), and Niesz (2010). The prompts were meant to promote critical reflection on participant's beliefs about democracy and various visions of democracy.

Analysis of data from this study occurred concurrently. I analyzed qualitative data using open coding (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The coding schema was developed during a pilot study (Vesperman & Caulfield, 2017) using grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). These themes were then mapped onto democracy as activity frame. Quantitative data was analyzed to describe overall patterns in the qualitative findings.

Findings

Initial Conceptions of Democracy

Fifty-eight percent of all coded comments during the first eight weeks fit a traditional/personally responsible citizen view of democracy, which had three salient points (see Table 2). Participants tended to focus on a limited set of knowledge citizens need to participate in a democracy.

Table 2

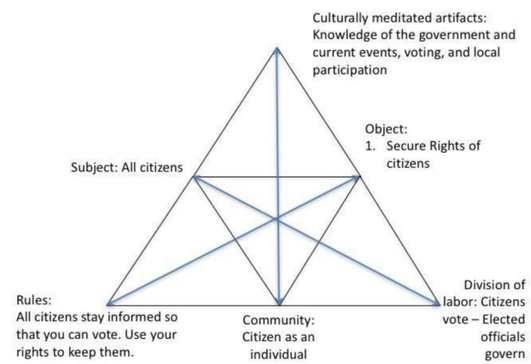
Percent of coded comments during first eight weeks using the Democracy as activity frame.

	Traditional/ Personally responsible citizen	Progressive/ Participatory citizen	Advanced/ Justice-oriented citizen
Percent of coded comments	57.98	24.14	17.88

The participants focused on the need for citizens to acquire particular sets of common political knowledge (13% of all coded comments). They focused on the need to know how the government functions including knowledge of political parties and a strong working knowledge of current domestic and global political events. Participants believed the acquisition of a common set of political knowledge would become a

Figure 2

Participants' initial conception of democracy: A traditional/personally responsible citizen mediational triangle.



foundation for further learning and create better citizens (see Figure 2).

The participants felt that basic knowledge was the basis upon which their students would construct all other understanding of democracy. For example, Douglas stated, "I believe it [learning about democracy] starts with the government because it sets out the laws of the land to decide how our society runs. But I mean like you have the basics. You have what's laid out in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights" (pre-interview). Students need to understand the basics of how the government functions by learning about the Constitution and Bill of Rights. For example, Mary wrote, "First and foremost [,] I would elaborate on the functions of government because that is the basis of American government. To understand anything, those functions have to [be] clearly understood" (pre-questionnaire). Elaborating on the functions of government allows their students to understand they are part of a political system. They noted that without this basis what students will learn in the future could be meaningless. For example, Micah wrote, "I would most likely spend the most time on the functions of government. I believe to understand something[,] you have to have a firm understanding of the basic[s] and to discuss the other issues without making sure my students know the basics . . . could prove fruitless" (pre-questionnaire). Thus, having this firm understanding of basic information will allow their future students to effectively and efficiently participate in a democracy: "You need to understand the basic facts of government [referring to Federalism] to build a foundation for future learning" (Douglas, Georgia, Victor, and Hank, pre-photo-elicitation activity). Therefore, the acquisition of a common set of knowledge was the only way that citizens could ensure that their vote matters. (See Table 3)

Table 3

Amount of time participants would spend on certain objectives in an American Government class (pre-questionnaire).

Objective	Average % of time	Number of PSTs who would Spend 20% or more time on an objective
Functions of government	20.77	11
Using knowledge of politics to discuss public problems	18.46	8
Shared history and common culture	17.69	7
Struggling for tolerance, equality, and social justice	16.15	5
Deliberating controversial issues	15.00	5
Working to improve their community(ies)	11.54	0

Every participant espoused the belief that citizens, including their future students, needed to stay informed about important political events. They noted that many voters are not sufficiently informed about important political events. For example, Hank wrote, "students are not informed on the topics at hand and when they vote, they are either doing so blindly or picking their own poison" (journal week 1). This lack of information made voters unable to use their right to vote effectively. Therefore, as Douglas noted, "We [citizens] have to do what we can to inform ourselves and be up-to-date on current events, or our government representative's policies" (journal week 2). It is the responsibility of citizens to inform themselves in numerous ways, including knowing the current issues, ideologies of political parties, and the beliefs of individual candidates. Knowing about current events was not enough; citizens also needed to understand the implications of such events. For instance, Mary noted, "We [teachers] have to emphasize for our students the importance of staying current with the news, being comfortable with questioning their sources, and [being] willing to engaging in political debates in an open and productive platform" (journal week 1). They believed that teachers have a responsibility to help their students become informed citizens and make informed decisions when voting.

Evolution of Conceptions of Democracy

Over the next twenty weeks, there were several significant shifts in the participants' conception of democracy. As the participants engaged in the activity of reflection about democracy and their future classrooms, their conceptions of democracy became more complex.

Shift Toward Progressive/Participatory Citizen and Advanced/Justice-Oriented Citizen

Over the course of the study, there were several shifts in how the participants conceptualized democracy (see Table 4). Participants' conception of democracy shifted away from a traditional/personally responsible citizen frame toward the progressive/participatory citizen and advanced/justice-oriented frames. This shift manifested itself in participant's descriptions of new sets of knowledge citizens were to use when participating in democracy.

Progressive/Participatory Citizen

Participants increasingly described new sets of knowledge that fit the progressive/participatory citizen frame (see Table 5). The percent of comments coded as progressive/participatory increased from 24% (weeks 1-8) to almost 40% (weeks 23-28) (see Table 4). A key shift was including the concept that citizens need to know how to deliberate and compromise with others to find the *common good*.

Table 4

Percent of coded comments by Democracy as activity frame (weeks 1-28).

	Weeks 1-8	Weeks 9-15	Weeks 16-22	Weeks 23-28
Traditional/ Personally Responsible Citizen	57.98	30.89	31.77	24.40
Progressive/ Participatory Citizen	24.14	34.99	47.66	39.76
Advanced/ Justice Oriented Citizen	17.88	34.13	20.57	35.84

Table 5

Participants' conception of knowledge needed in a democracy: Progressive/Participatory citizen.

	Majority of participants, Weeks 1-8	Majority of participants, weeks 9-28 Progressive/ Participatory Citizen
Knowledge	• Knowledge of the functions of government. • Knowledge of current events.	• Knowledge of how to work with others to find the common good. • Knowledge of how to deliberate and compromise.

Participants further noted that citizens needed to know how to deliberate issues to find solutions to common problems. For example, Martin wrote, "We need to move away from debate - it creates conflict – we need deliberation and work for a real solution" (journal week 21). Citizens need to know the skill of deliberation to find solutions to common problems. For instance, Maxwell wrote, "In democracy, there needs to be disagreement and deliberation to be effective. Everybody has the freedom to voice his or her opinions no matter what. I agree with this conception of democracy because it is necessary for us to hear many different perspectives to come up with the best solutions" (journal week 26). Democracy requires citizens to disagree and yet deliberate to find the best solutions to problems. Lastly, compromise allows for the creation of larger groups that can work together to solve common problems. Micah wrote, "Our system takes a lot of compromise and working together like a network of people" (journal week 26). Citizens need to know how to compromise and work with others to form larger networks and solve communal problems.

Common good. Participants noted that citizens needed to be able to work with others to find the common good to solve issues within their communities (see Table 6). Olivia stated, "It is important to have discussions to know what the common good is, and then decide what is good for the future" (field observation week 16). Citizens need to know what the common good is so they can understand how to improve their communities. They also noted that citizens needed to know how to work collaboratively. For example, Douglas wrote, "My vision of democracy is a society in which all the citizens work together for a common goal through deliberation and civic participation. The more they work together[,] the more they will see what they really need as a society" (journal week 24). Thus, citizens need to know how to deliberate and find common goals to improve society. Furthermore, they need to be able to work collaboratively to achieve the goal of improving society and their community. This requires citizens to know how to listen to each other and to understand multiple perspectives of a common problem. For example, Micah wrote,

> I think we [Georgia, Amber, and Micah] all believe that democracy is not a simple yes or no answer to a question . . . but a constant deliberation on what is best for our society. You have to hear both sides of an argument to really understand the other side or your own. Just voting for the side you believe without understanding the other argument does nothing to further democracy or solve an issue. (journal week 26).

The common good requires citizens to deliberate, to listen to other opinions, to understand the perspectives of others, and to work toward a common solution.

Table 6

Change in the amount of time participants would spend on progressive/personally responsible citizen objectives in an American Government class.

Objective	Pre-Questionnaire	Post-Questionnaire
	Number of PSTs who would spend 20% or more time on an objective	Number of PSTs who would spend 20% or more time on an objective
Using knowledge of politics to discuss public problems	8	5
Deliberating controversial issues	5	6
Working to improve their community(ies)	0	7

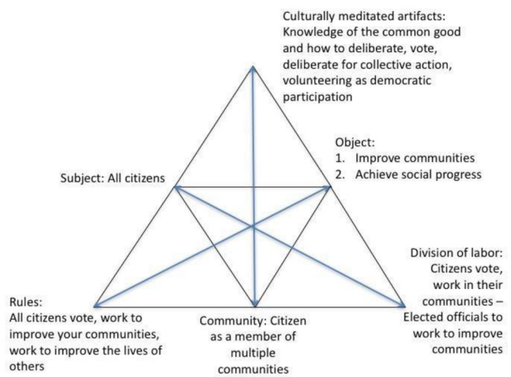
Participants further noted that knowing how to find the common good was important because of the diversity of opinions and people within a community. For instance, Shelia and Micah wrote, "It is important to have diversity and common interest because you don't have common interests all the time. But working towards a common interest helps in tackling is-

sues" (field observation, week 16). They believed that diversity and common interests were not opposing concepts, but something needed to find solutions to common problems. Furthermore, democracy has a role in finding common interests. Martin stated, "People have some common interests. We have a democracy because we have differing ideas about the common good; democracy allows us to find that common good" (field observation, week 16). The diversity of opinions within a community or various communities helps citizens reveal the common good.

Participants focused on new sets of knowledge they believed citizens needed to participate in democracy (see Figure 3). They believed that citizens needed to know of the need to work for the common good to solve problems in various communities. Participants noted this required citizens to know how to compromise when working toward the common good. Lastly, they believed that citizens needed to know how to deliberate public issues to find the common good.

Figure 3:

Participants' evolved conception of democracy: A progressive/participatory citizen mediational triangle.



Advanced/Justice-Oriented Citizen

Participants increasingly referenced knowledge sets that fit within the advanced/justice-oriented citizen frame (see Table 7). The percent of coded comments that fit within this frame increased from almost 18% (weeks 1-8) to almost 36% (weeks 23-28) (see Table 4). They noted that citizens need to know of the flaws of democracy and the need to combat these flaws. Participants further called for citizens to have knowledge of diversity in society and how this diversity improves democracy and its institutions. Lastly, they noted that citizens needed to know of equality, tolerance, and justice.

Table 7

Participants' conception of knowledge needed in a democracy: Advanced/Justice-Oriented citizen.

	Majority of Participants, Weeks 1-8	Majority of Participants, Weeks 9-28 Advanced/Justice-Oriented Citizen
Knowledge	• Knowledge of the functions of government. • Knowledge of current events.	• Knowledge of the flaws of democracy (inequality, racism). • Knowledge of diversity. • Knowledge of equality.

Participants noted that citizens needed to understand the flaws that exist within the current state of democracy. Citizens needed to know how democracy has not met various ideals or has not yet achieved its goals. They argued that several flaws prevent democracy from attaining its overall goals. Mary stated, "Democracy is not a spectator sport. There is a call to arms to no longer be passive about issues of inequality; people can't allow inequality anymore. If people don't have the same rights, you no longer have a democracy, [you have an] empire" (field observation, week 27). The flaws of democracy, especially inequality, could only be solved through democracy.

Some participants noted that democracy's flaws are linked to income inequality. For example, Mary wrote,

> It's hard not to agree that there are some seriously broken institutions in this country, when we see the kinds of wealth disparities that we have here. Anything seems functional when compared to totalitarian regimes in countries fractured by civil war. Making that comparison[,] though, doesn't diminish the fact that there are communities right here where poverty, violence, and crime are the norm, and institutions designed to help them consistently fail to create a solution for the problem. (journal week 9)

Because of the flaws within democracy, some communities are unable to solve communal problems. Some participants noted that increasing income equality became a major flaw within a democracy. For example, Georgia wrote,

> However, there are going to be flaws in every system. For ours in particular[,] it seems that the old saying of the rich keep getting richer and the poor keep getting poorer is true. It seems especially [true] for those who were born into low SES and minorit[ies] that there are so many barriers that they have to breach and prejudice to confront that one could have a hard time recognizing any power that they hold in society. If one feels like they have no power to change their circumstances . . . at the bottom of the social ladder, then they might feel as if they have nothing to lose. (journal week 9)

The flaw of increasing income inequality prevents some citizens from having the efficacy to press for change or have faith in democratic institutions. For example, Peter stated, "Economic inequality prevents even having a democracy . . . [because] the poor don't have the same opportunities as everyone else" (field observation, week 15). Thus, this flaw prevents the creation of a true democracy since not every citizen can exercise his or her role in a democracy.

Participants noted that citizens needed knowledge of the flaw of racism. They noted that this flaw posed a threat to the achievement of democracy's goals. Victor noted, "I do not think 'equality' will ever really become reality. For one, I could simply argue that people will always not like people, namely because of another's difference(s). For some reason, a number of people cannot get past the fact that others are different, and most importantly, [they cannot accept that] there is nothing wrong with said differences" (journal week 11). Racism prevents democracy from achieving equality for all citizens. Participants noted some citizens are unable to give up their discriminatory or bigoted beliefs. For example, Samuel wrote, "I want equality! But do the people really want an equal democracy where every voice is heard and appreciated with similar value and weight, or do they only want it if [it] follows along the same ideological principles that are similar [to] and in line with their own? So, equality is something that people are striving for and want in this democratic society" (journal week 11). Not all citizens, while claiming to want equality, actually want equality; however, it is the goal toward which all citizens should strive.

Tied to the knowledge of the flaws of democracy was the idea that citizens needed to have a knowledge of and appreciation for diversity. They noted that diversity improves democracy and its ability to achieve its goals. For example, Olivia wrote, "I think that when many people think about democracy, they forget about the importance of diverse perspectives within democracy, and that is something that hopefully will change" (journal week 16). Democracy thrives on diverse perspectives. For instance, Victor wrote, "To put in better terms, just because one thinks something is right does not make it actually right. This is why it's good to hear and genuinely be open to differing viewpoints, ideas, and perspectives" (journal week 21). Differing perspectives allow for citizens to possibly see or understand the fallibility of their ideas and to possibly understand viewpoints that contrast with their own. Furthermore, preservice teachers argued that democracy thrives on diversity of opinions, beliefs, and values. For example, Martin wrote, "A society will have people who have their own opinions, different from others. Indeed, that is why we have democracy and other systems of government. If we were to agree on everything, collectively, there would be no need for democracy for people to govern themselves because everyone would already know what everyone already wants" (journal week 22). Therefore, a vibrant democracy requires knowledge of the diversity of people and their beliefs, values, and opinions. This vibrancy allows citizens in a democracy to solve various issues. For example, Peter wrote, "While groups can come from different backgrounds and beliefs[,] . . . in actuality[,] this diversity provides a different perspective on how to solve a situation, allowing the democracy to work together to find the best solution overall" (journal week 16). Therefore, knowledge of diversity permits the finding of common interests. Furthermore, this knowledge allows people with common interests to work collectively.

Participants argued that citizens needed to know the goals of democracy, especially equality. They noted that democracy had not achieved this goal. More importantly, citizens needed to understand this goal and how to achieve equality. For example, Samuel wrote, "The idea of democracy, as I see it, is to live aware of social, racial, and economic injustices, and then use that knowledge and power, whether in the majority or minority, to make the world a better place than when you left [found] it" (journal week 26). Knowledge of these injustices allows citizens to work to improve democracy. Participants believed that the appropriation of this knowledge must start in schools. For example, Martin wrote, "I would have them [future students] start by giving their interpretations of what equality is and what it looks like. I would also see how equal they think American society is" (journal week 11). Citizens need to explore the concept of equality to ascertain if democracy has achieved this goal yet.

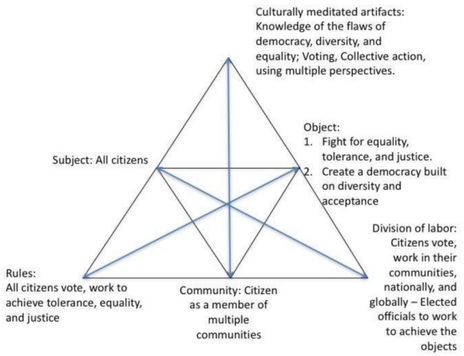
Participants noted that citizens must know how to work towards the goals of equality, tolerance, and justice. For instance, Amber wrote, "A true democratic citizen will seek questions and answers, and will not just be content always wanting to improve the government for the equality of all" (journal week 24). Democratic citizens seek to improve democracy to achieve equality. They noted the need for students to begin the process of learning about these objectives. For example, Martin wrote,

> For the lesson, I will have a class discussion based on what some of these words mean [freedom, democracy, and equality]. I will use guiding questions like: "What does it mean to live in a democracy?" or "Are we really free?" I will pull from and provide some examples of what other people (authors, politicians, etc.) have said that these words mean to them. After the class discussion, they will have a short page or so essay [in which] to reflect. (journal week 24)

Thus, citizens need to understand the goal of equality and how democracy has failed to achieve this goal. This knowledge becomes a tool used by citizens to achieve the goal of equality, tolerance, and justice.

Participants noted that citizens need to have new sets of knowledge that they would use when working toward achieving equality, tolerance, and justice (see Figure 4). They noted the need for citizens to know how democracy is a flawed system, which has prevented democracy from achieving its goals.

Diagram 4: Participants' evolved conception of democracy: An advanced/justice-oriented citizen mediational triangle.



Discussion and Implications

The initial findings of this study mirrored the findings of previous studies of preservice teachers' conceptions of democracy and citizenship (Boyle-Baise, 2003; Carr, 2006, 2008; Kickbusch, 1987; Yeager & van Hover, 2004). This vision of participation fits within Barber's (2003) conception of a thin democracy and Westheimer and Kahne's (2004b) personally responsible citizen framework.

Similar to the findings of Dinkelman (2000; 2001;) and Iverson and James (2010), who found their participants underwent qualitative transformations of their beliefs after engaging in critical reflections, the participant's conceptions of democracy changed over the 28 weeks of journaling. The cause of this transformation can be explained using second-generation activity theory. When the participants engaged in their reflections about democracy and citizenship the activity influenced how participants reflected upon democracy. Thus, the activity leads to qualitative transformations (Chaiklin, 2003; Veresov, 2004; Vygotsky, 1978). These qualitative transformations of the activity led to the rise of primary contradictions (Engeström, 1990; 2001; Russell, 1997; Yamagata-Lynch & Haudenschild, 2009). The primary contradictions appeared when participants examined the value systems of various visions of democracy and their conceptions of democracy and citizenship. In the case of this study, the participants resolved primary contradictions by adding more layers to their conceptions of democracy. Leading to an ontogenetic evolution of their conception of democracy. Lastly, the participants' conceptions of how they will teach about democracy went through a clear qualitative transformation.

This study demonstrates that social studies methods courses should provide preservice teachers space to reflect upon and write about democracy and citizenship. This space should allow preservice teachers to consider their conceptions of democracy as they enter the social studies methods program. Next, preservice teachers should also explore their personal practical theories of teaching social studies as they explore their conceptions of democracy and citizenship. Additionally, this study demonstrates that we should provide a similar space to explore democracy and citizenship to middle and high school students. Through journaling students would be able to consider their role as a citizen in a vibrant and pluralistic democracy.

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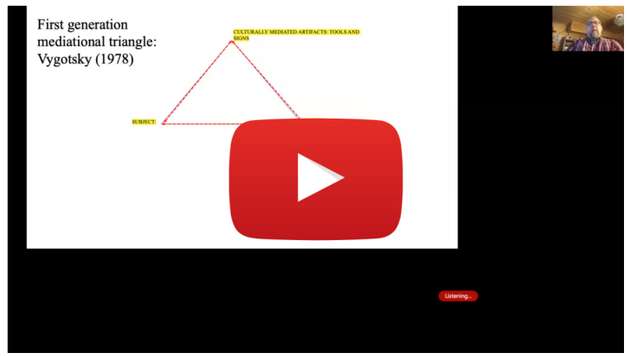

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